The SAGE Handbook of

Qualitative Research in Psychology

Second Edition

Edited by

Carla Willig and Wendy Stainton-Rogers

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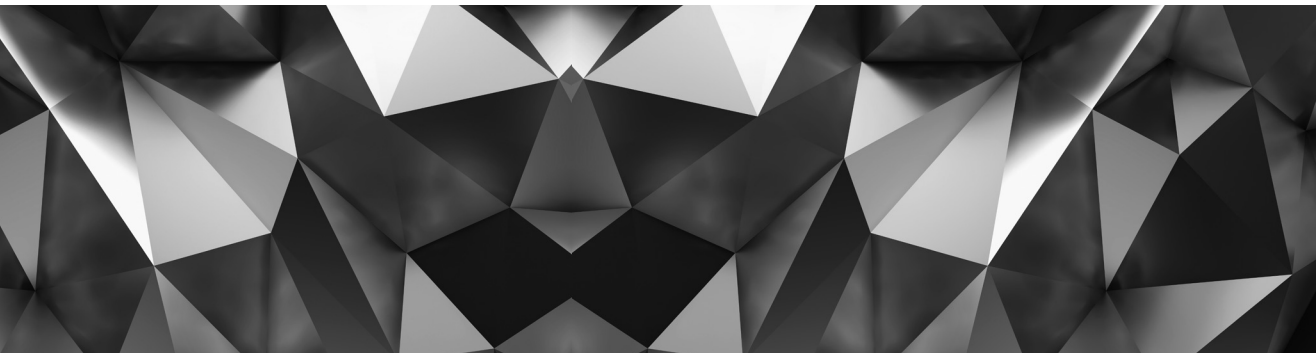

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This book is dedicated to the memory of
Precilla Choi (1962–2005)
who was an inspiration to many

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THE EDITORS

Carla Willig is a Professor of Psychology at City, University of London. She has a long-standing interest in qualitative research methods and their usage in psychology. Ever since she chose to use a qualitative research method for her doctoral research in the late 1980s, when such approaches were still very much at the fringes within the discipline of psychology, she has engaged with questions about the nature, status and legitimacy of knowledge claims. She has used a variety of qualitative research methods in her own research, including grounded theory methodology (for her doctoral research in the 1980s), discourse analysis (throughout the 1990s) and, more recently, phenomenological research methods (2000 onwards). She is currently conducting qualitative metasynthesis research into the experience of living with terminal cancer. Carla's most recent publications include *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology* (McGraw Hill/Open University Press, 3rd edition 2013) and *Qualitative Interpretation and Analysis in Psychology* (McGraw Hill, 2012).

Wendy Stainton Rogers is Professor Emerita in the Faculty of Health & Social Welfare at the Open University, UK. Following several episodes of catastrophic surgery starting in 2011, she is now back, able to actively engage in academic work once again. Wendy was one of the 'founding mothers' of critical psychology, publishing *Explaining Health & Illness* in 1991. She was thereafter a founding member of ISCHP, the International Society of Critical Health Psychology. As a member of the Beryl Curt collective she helped to create *Textuality and Tectonics: Troubling Social and Psychological Science* (1994). Her most recent publication is *Social Psychology*, a second edition of her earlier text, published in 2011.

THE CONTRIBUTORS

Michael Arribas-Ayllon is Senior Lecturer at Cardiff University, UK. His research interests include medical sociology and science studies. He has conducted research on risk communication, genetic testing, genetic counselling and psychiatric genetics. He is the author of *Genetic Testing: Accounts of Autonomy, Responsibility and Blame* (Routledge, 2010), and is currently writing a monograph on psychiatric genetics.

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consultancy, where she delivered training and consultancy services on fair selection and assessment, competency analysis and the use of psychometrics for individual and team development.

Linden J. Ball is Professor of Cognitive Psychology and Dean of the School of Psychology at the University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK. He pursued his PhD at Plymouth Polytechnic, UK in the late 1980s on cognitive processes in engineering design. This PhD led him to appreciate the value of combining qualitative and quantitative approaches for understanding the richness and complexity of situated cognitive processes such as those arising in design reasoning. Since his PhD he has continued to adopt a mixed-methods approach in both his laboratory-based 'in vitro' studies of fundamental thinking processes and in his real-world 'in vivo' studies of reasoning in domains such as professional design practice and investigative decision making. He is currently Editor for the *Current Issues in Thinking & Reasoning* book series published by Routledge and is an Associate Editor for *Thinking & Reasoning* and for the *Journal of Cognitive Psychology.*

Peter Banister is the retired Head of Department of Psychology at Manchester Metropolitan University in the UK. He is still involved in teaching, research, writing, examining and with the British Psychological Society (BPS). His own psychology degree contained no mention of qualitative methods and it became obvious to him in his early prison research that often it was the unsolicited comments made by prisoners that provided the most fruitful lines of enquiry, rather than the slavish following of the results of psychometric tests. With a number of colleagues at the university he set up postgraduate and undergraduate teaching in qualitative methods, which led to the successful textbook *Qualitative Methods in Psychology*, which was adopted as an Open University set book. In addition he has helped to ensure that qualitative methods have been included in the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) Benchmark for Psychology in England and in the BPS criteria for the undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum in Psychology.

Andrew Bengry-Howell is Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Bath Spa University, UK. He has worked in higher education for over ten years and has held positions at the University of Bath, University of Southampton and University of Birmingham. His research interests are in youth and identity, and how culture shapes social identification and identity construction processes. He is currently researching how students from different socioeconomic backgrounds experience higher education and constitute their graduate identities, and how sociocultural factors influence student career trajectories and progression strategies. He has co-developed the NERUPI framework for evaluating the impact of Widening Participation activities, which is currently being piloted by a number of higher education institutions in the UK. He has also conducted research on youth consumption practices and identity, focusing specifically on music festivals and free party networks (illegal raves), alcohol consumption and young men's consumption of motorcars and car-based identity practices. He has a broader interest in qualitative research, particularly the areas of innovation, methodology and ethics. He has written on contemporary challenges concerning field access, field-based ethics and researching hard-to-reach groups. He has published in journals including the International Journal of Social Research Methodology, Qualitative Research, Journal of Youth Studies, Sex Education, Sociology and has co-authored a number of chapters in edited volumes.

Kimberly Bess is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Human and Organizational Development at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee. She received her PhD from Vanderbilt University in Community Research and Action. Her current research investigates the ways in which community-based organizations (CBOs) serve as agents of social change. Her work has developed along two principal lines of inquiry, the first of which focuses on the internal dynamics and organizational practices within each CBO, while the other examines the strategies pursued by CBOs as they seek to improve conditions within their communities. In both cases, her research seeks to identify the ways in which CBOs seek to improve the efficacy of their action over time – whether internally, as a well-run institution, or externally, as agents of tangible change among the urban constituencies they serve. Kimberly is currently exploring data-use partnerships between local schools and after-school programme-provider networks in Nashville.

Sunil Bhatia's research focuses on the development of self and identity within the context of postcolonial contexts of migration, globalization, neoliberalization and formation of transnational diasporas. His scholarship specifically examines how concepts such as culture, power and representation shape theories of acculturation, racial, and cultural identity in human development and cultural psychology. His publications include the book, *American Karma: Race, Culture and Identity in the Indian Diaspora* (New York University Press, 2007). Sunil has published over 35 articles and book chapters on issues related to transnational migration, identity, and cultural psychology. His articles have appeared in a number of journals including: *American Psychologist, Human Development, Theory & Psychology, History of Psychology, Culture and Psychology, Journal of Intercultural Studies* and the *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*. His forthcoming book, *Decolonizing Psychology: Globalization, Social Justice, and India Youth Identities*, examines how neoliberal globalization is creating new discourses of self and identity in the narratives of urban Indian youth.

Felicity L. Bishop is an Associate Professor in Psychology at the University of Southampton, UK. Her research examines psychological aspects of complementary therapies and placebo effects, and develops and tests novel interventions in these fields. She uses mixed methods throughout her research programme, delivers workshops on how to effectively combine qualitative and quantitative methods, and has published articles on the design and conduct of mixed-methods research.

Virginia Braun is Professor in the School of Psychology at the University of Auckland. A critical and feminist psychologist, her research explores gender, bodies, sex/sexuality and health, and she has published extensively in these areas. She also writes around qualitative research in general – she is co-author of *Successful Qualitative Research* (SAGE, 2013; with Victoria Clarke) and co-editor of *Collecting Qualitative Data* (Cambridge University Press, 2017; with Victoria Clarke, and Debra Gray) – as well as thematic analysis in particular. She is currently working on a book on thematic analysis for SAGE (with Victoria Clarke).

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Sarah L. Bulloch, received her PhD from the University of Surrey, UK, and has experience working with multiple methods and in multiple contexts. She has analysed large UK and international datasets, applying advanced quantitative analysis, including structural equation modeling and multilevel analysis. She has also worked to apply qualitative analysis approaches to video, textual and image data, often using a range of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). Sarah has worked at various UK universities, as well as at a large disability charity. At the time of publication she teaches at the CAQDAS Networking Project, University of Surrey as well as providing consultancy in research methods training.

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Mark Burton is Independent Scholar Activist, Manchester, UK. After a career as a psychologist and manager in large yet innovative public health and social care services, Mark concentrated on the relationships between economy, environment and social justice in the context of the Manchester city region. In both periods Mark drew upon community and liberation psychology as conceptual and practical frameworks, and on action research as a framework for integrating practice, policy and lived experience.

Ivo Čermák is a researcher at the Institute of Psychology at the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Brno. He is Professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic, and at the Faculty of Arts and Letters, Catholic University in Ružomberok, Slovakia. His professional interests are qualitative research, hermeneutic and narrative approaches in psychology, psychology of art, and projective methods. The books *Suicidal Triad: Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Plath and Sarah Kane* (with Ida Kodrlová), and *Thematic Apperception Test: Interpretive Perspectives* (with Táňa Fikarová), represent his efforts in these areas. In the early 1990s he met Jitka Lindén, who encouraged him to take up qualitative inquiry. This bore fruit in a joint book, *Profession: An Actor*. Encountering Wendy Stainton Rogers, her charm and critical spirit, he committed to qualitative research forever. This '*forever-ness*' is significantly supported by his friends David Hiles and Vladimír Chrz with whom he co-founded the Narrative DreamCatcher Circle dedicated to understanding human being through story.

Kerry Chamberlain is Professor of Social and Health Psychology at Massey University in Auckland. He is a critical health psychologist who has published widely on health issues and qualitative research and methodologies. His research focuses on health and the everyday, with specific interests in medications, media, materiality, mundane ailments, food, and disadvantage, and in innovative qualitative research methodology.

Kathy Charmaz is Emerita Professor of Sociology at Sonoma State University, California. Her research interests include the experience of illness and disability, the social psychology of time, and the conduct of qualitative inquiry. She has written, co-authored, or co-edited 14 books including two award-winning books: *Good Days, Bad Days: The Self in Chronic Illness and Time;* and *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*, which has been translated into Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Polish and Portuguese and now appears in a much-expanded second edition. She co-authored *Five Ways of Doing Qualitative Analysis: Phenomenological Psychology, Grounded Theory, Discourse Analysis, Narrative Research, and Intuitive Inquiry*; and *Developing Grounded Theory: The Second Generation;* co-edited *The SAGE Handbook of Grounded Theory* and the *SAGE Benchmarks in Social Research Methods 4-Volume Set: Grounded Theory and Situational Analysis;* and has written or co-authored over 50 articles and chapters about conducting and writing qualitative research. Throughout her career, Kathy has given professional development workshops and classes on grounded theory methods, intensive interviewing, symbolic interactionism, and writing for publication.

Eric C. Chen is an Associate Professor of Counseling Psychology in the Division of Psychological and Educational Services at Fordham University, New York. Born and raised in Taiwan, he taught Chinese in a high school before coming to the US to pursue his graduate degrees. From 2007 to 2010, he was an Associate Editor of *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*. His research interests, publications

and professional presentations over the past two decades have encompassed topics of clinical supervision, group counselling process and outcome, multicultural issues and competencies, affirmative counselling for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals, and educational and career pursuits of immigrant youths. Informed by developmental-contextualism and a social justice perspective, his current research programmes focus on the identity formation and negotiation of legal and undocumented immigrant students and of transgender women, mainly through the use of qualitative research methods.

Vladimír Chrz is a researcher at the Institute of Psychology at the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague, and lectures in the Departments of Psychology at the Faculty of Education, Charles University, Prague, as well as at the Faculty of Arts and Letters, Catholic University in Ružomberok, Slovakia. Vladimír is the author of two books: *Metaphors in Politics* and *Potential of Narrative Approach in Psychological Research*. The key point in his research journey was an encounter with Ivo Čermák and David Hiles with whom he shares the idea of 'story as the main building block' in human meaning-making. He regards qualitative methodology in research as opening a path to semiotic concepts such as metaphor, symbol, narrative, genre, and style as 'instruments' of psychological understanding of human story-telling. He also explores various aspects of expression and expressivity from depth psychological, hermeneutical and semiotic perspectives.

Victoria Clarke is an Associate Professor in Qualitative and Critical Psychology in the Department of Health and Social Sciences at the University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol, UK. Her research centres on the intersecting fields of feminist psychology, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer (LGBTQ) psychology and qualitative and critical psychology. In particular, she has interests in appearance and embodiment, family and relationships and qualitative methods. She is co-author of *Successful Qualitative Research* (SAGE, 2013; with Virginia Braun) and co-editor of *Collecting Qualitative Data* (Cambridge University Press, 2017; with Virginia Braun and Debra Gray). She is currently writing a book on thematic analysis for SAGE (with Virginia Braun).

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Virginia Eatough is a Reader in the Department of Psychological Sciences at Birkbeck University of London. Her research interests focus on understanding emotional experience, especially feelings from a phenomenological psychology perspective. She uses a range of experiential approaches and has particular expertise with interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Current projects include happiness, working women with breast cancer and neurophenomenology. She has an ongoing interest in adult crying.

Scotney D. Evans is a community-engaged researcher working to understand and support the role of community-based organizations, networks and coalitions in building collective power to promote community wellbeing, social change, and social justice. He is an Associate Professor in the Department of

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Uwe Flick is Professor of Qualitative Research at the Freie Universität in Berlin. He was trained as psychologist and sociologist in Munich and Berlin. Research interests in everyday knowledge and practices of professionals and laypeople motivated an orientation, first to qualitative research, and then in social representations in such fields as health and illness. After studying social representations of health and ageing held by general practitioners and nurses, and the health concepts and practices of homeless adolescents, his current research is about migration and social problems. Uwe's most recent publications include *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (SAGE, 5th edition 2014), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis* (2013) and *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Collection* (2017), and he is editor of the boxed set, *The SAGE Qualitative Research Kit* (2007, 2nd edition 2017).

Juliet Foster is a Senior Lecturer in Social Psychology in the Department of Psychology and Senior Tutor of Murray Edwards College, both at the University of Cambridge. Her main interests are social psychological perspectives on health and illness, especially mental health and ageing. In particular, she has focused on mental health service clients' representations of mental health problems, and on wider understandings of mental health problems, including those found in the media, and amongst mental health professionals. She has a particular interest in ethnography and also in different forms of interviewing, as well as the assessment of qualitative analysis.

Stephen Frosh is Pro-Vice-Master and Professor in the Department of Psychosocial Studies at Birkbeck College, University of London. He has a background in academic and clinical psychology and was Consultant Clinical Psychologist at the Tavistock Clinic, London, throughout the 1990s. He is the author of many books and papers on psychosocial studies and on psychoanalysis, including *Hauntings: Psychoanalysis and Ghostly Transmissions* (Palgrave, 2013), *Feelings* (Routledge, 2011), *A Brief Introduction to Psychoanalytic Theory* (Palgrave, 2012), *Psychoanalysis Outside the Clinic* (Palgrave, 2010), *Hate and the Jewish Science: Anti-Semitism, Nazism and Psychoanalysis* (Palgrave, 2005), *For and Against Psychoanalysis* (Routledge, 2006), *After Words* (Palgrave, 2002) and *The Politics of Psychoanalysis* (Palgrave, 1999). He is a Fellow of the UK's Academy of Social Sciences, an Academic Associate of the British Psychoanalytical Society, a Founding Member of the UK's Association for Psychosocial Studies, and an Honorary member of the Institute of Group Analysis, also in the UK.

Mary Gergen is Professor Emerita of psychology and women's studies at Penn State University, Brandywine. Her major works are involved at the intersection of feminist theory and social construction ideas. In 2001 she published *Feminist Reconstructions in Psychology: Narrative, Gender, and Performance*. Her other published pieces focus on dialogue, narratives, collaborative practices, education and qualitative inquiry. Most recently she has written *Playing with Purpose: Adventures in Performative*

Social Science, with Kenneth J. Gergen, as well as editing a book on the process of retirement, *Retiring, but not Shy: Feminist Psychologists Create Their Post-Careers*, with Ellen Cole.

Amedeo Giorgi received his PhD in Experimental Psychology from Fordham University, New York, in 1958. He worked as a human factors specialist for Dunlap & Associates for several years and then moved on to an academic career teaching at Manhattan College, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, and University of Quebec at Montreal, and currently at Saybrook Graduate School in San Francisco. He studied phenomenological philosophy and developed the application of the phenomenological method for psychological problems based upon the work of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. He has directed over 100 dissertations that have used the method on all sorts of psychological problems and he has published over 100 articles on the phenomenological approach to psychology. He has been invited to lecture on phenomenological psychology in Europe, Asia, Latin America, Australia and South Africa. He is the founder and original Editor (25 years) of the *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* and the author of *Psychology as a Human Science* and *The Descriptive Phenomenological Method in Psychology*. He is now retired and Professor Emeritus at Saybrook University.

Barbro Giorgi† received her PhD in Clinical Psychology and Research at the University of Quebec at Montreal, Canada in 1998. Her research orientation was qualitative in general but primarily phenomenological. Her own research focused on the therapeutic process and she published an interesting study on the experience of pivotal moments in therapy as defined by clients in the *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*. She was an adjunct faculty member at Saybrook Graduate School, San Francisco and Research Adjunct faculty at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, Palo Alto, California. She used to give workshops on phenomenology as a research method in California. Unfortunately, Barbro passed away in October, 2007 at the relatively young age of 50.

Christine Griffin received her PhD from the University of Birmingham, UK, and is Professor of Social Psychology at the University of Bath, UK. She is a member of the UK Centre for Tobacco and Alcohol Studies funded by the UK Clinical Research Collaboration. Christine has a long-standing interest in young people's experiences, as shaped by gender, class, race and sexuality, and the relationship between identity and consumer culture. She was a founding member of the editorial group that launched the international journal *Feminism & Psychology* in 1991. She is currently investigating alcohol marketing to young people via social media in the ROAM project funded by Alcohol Research UK, and a previous study supported by the Royal Marsden Fund, New Zealand (the latter project led by Dr Antonia Lyons of Massey University, New Zealand).

Carrie E. Hanlin received her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology at Hendrix College in Conway, Arkansas, 1999. She received graduate training in Community Psychology from the University of Missouri-Kansas City's and in Community Research and Action at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee. She taught undergraduate research methods and was the lead author of the first edition of the chapter on 'Qualitative Methods in Community Psychology'.

David Harper is Reader in Clinical Psychology and Programme Director (Academic) on the Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology at the University of East London (UEL). He is a co-author of *Deconstructing Psychopathology* (SAGE, 1995). He also co-authored and co-edited *Psychology, Mental Health & Distress* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) which both critiqued traditional approaches to this topic and offered constructive alternatives, working within a consistently psychological approach rather than one dominated by heavily contested diagnostic categories. It won the 2014 British Psychological Society Book Award. He also co-edited *Qualitative Research Methods in Mental Health and Psychotherapy: An Introduction for Students and Practitioners* (Wiley, 2012) and is the editor of *Beyond 'Delusion': Exploring Unusual Beliefs and Experiences* (ISPS/Routledge, forthcoming). He was one of the contributors to *Understanding Psychosis and Schizophrenia*, edited by Anne Cooke and published by the British Psychological Society's (BPS) Division of Clinical Psychology (DCP) in 2014.

Nikki Hayfield is a Senior Lecturer in Social Psychology in the Department of Health and Social Sciences at the University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol, UK. Nikki's research interests are in heterosexual, lesbian, gay and bisexual identities and relationships, and various forms of alternative families, such as women who choose not to have children. She teaches social psychology and qualitative research methods and methodologies to students at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Nikki has published journal papers and book chapters on a range of topics, including bisexual identities and bisexual marginalization and qualitative data collection and analysis.

Karen Henwood is Professor in the Cardiff School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University, UK. She has long-standing research interests in qualitative, interpretive and critical approaches to psychology, and in the development of methodology within interdisciplinary social science. She has participated in a number of interdisciplinary research networks, supported mainly by the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), on topics that are of social psychological and broader social and policy relevance (environment and risk; masculinities, identities and fatherhood; everyday energy use and systems change). Her most recent study, *Energy Biographies*, was part of a collaborative joint venture on community energy initiatives part supported by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC). Study findings from this research focused on lifecourse and identity issues, along with historically embedded socio-cultural transitions. Publications are in journals dedicated to building knowledge of socio-technical transitions in the context of environmental sustainability. As well as using established methodologies (interpretive thematic approaches, such as grounded theory, and discursive and narrative methods), her work has involved developing methodologically innovative approaches, especially within the field of qualitative longitudinal research and encompassing issues of temporality. Overall, her research interests are in questions of risk, identity, and the relations between biography, identity and wider socio-cultural change.

David Hiles is Honorary Research Fellow at both De Montfort University, Leicester, UK, and the Centre for Counselling & Psychotherapy Education (CCPE), London. He has been a psychologist for some fifty years, training as a transpersonal psychotherapist in the 1980s. He has pioneered teaching qualitative methods at undergraduate, master, doctoral and post-doctoral levels, and has delivered masterclasses in qualitative inquiry in Brno, Czech Republic, and Jenna, Germany. His research interests lie in an expanded vision of cognitive psychology that is inclusive of human experience, empowerment, and cultural practices. His research with Czech colleagues has focused on narrative in everyday human cognition. He is critical of the naivety in some of the thinking underlying psychological research methods, especially with respect to paradigm assumptions, mixed methods, and inference processes used in qualitative data coding. He especially enjoys the opportunities phased retirement offers for reading philosophy (Heidegger), and the history of ideas.

Katherine Johnson is Reader in Psychology in the School of Applied Social Science, and leads the Transforming Sexuality and Gender research cluster at the University of Brighton, UK. She is known for her focus on issues of social justice in LGBT lives, particularly on LGBT mental health and health inequalities. Her research interests include topics such as transgender embodiment, LGBT mental health, sexuality, shame and suicidal distress, global mental health and neocolonialism, feminist and queer theory, and qualitative research methods. In her research she has used a range of qualitative approaches including discourse analysis, memory work, photography and creative-arts based visual methods and participatory-action research. Her publications include *Community Psychology and Socio-economics of Mental Distress: International Perspectives* (Palgrave, 2012) and *Sexuality: A Psychosocial Manifesto* (Polity, 2015). Her current projects include the Marie Curie-funded ACCESSCare project to improve end-of-life health care practice for LGBT people and writing a book based on her research with a trans youth group called '*Trans Youth: What Matters?*'

Carolyn Kagan is Professor Emerita, Community Social Psychology at Manchester Metropolitan University, UK. Carolyn has worked for many years on collaborative and participative action research projects (both in research and teaching) with a social justice and policy focus. These have included the

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Shose Kessi is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Psychology at the University of Cape Town (UCT). Her research centres on community empowerment and mobilization, decoloniality and social change. A key focus is the development of Photovoice methodology as a participatory action research tool that can raise consciousness and mobilize community groups into social action. She has written on race, class, and gender identities, and how these impact on participation in social change. Before joining UCT, Shose worked in the development sector in the area of reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and programme evaluation. She completed her PhD in 2010 at the London School of Economics and was the Mandela Fellow at the W.E.B. DuBois Research Institute, Hutchins Center, Harvard University for 2014.

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interested in the way basic psychological notions such as 'socialization' can be reconfigured as an object in and for interaction. Working with naturalistic materials has provided a way of unlocking fundamental and subtle issues about the nature of 'cognition' (in *Conversation and Cognition*, with Hedwig te Molder). This sits alongside a long-term critical and applied interest in topics such as racism (in *Mapping the Language of Racism*, with Margaret Wetherell) and, more recently, morality, asymmetry, and emotion in family-mealtime and child-protection settings (with Alexa Hepburn).

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software designed to facilitate qualitative and mixed-methods research. She has trained thousands of researchers to harness CAQDAS tools powerfully and undertaken her own research using qualitative technologies. Christina has published widely in the field, including co-authoring *Using Software in Qualitative Research: A Step-by-Step Guide* with Ann Lewins (SAGE) and has developed Five-Level QDA with Nicholas Woolf, a CAQDAS pedagogy that transcends software products and methodologies (www.fivelevelqda.com).

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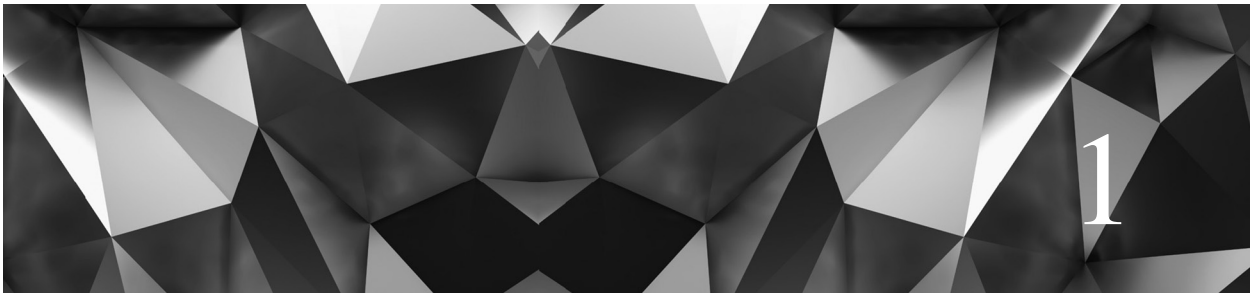
Acknowledgements

For this new edition we were less anxious about the task in hand, but recognized that it was going to be a serious amount of work for all concerned and that we needed lots more 'big asks' again to make sure we produced a second edition that was truly up-to-date and comprehensive. Also, as we had the opportunity to include new chapters and provide feedback to our authors about what they needed to do to revise their chapters, our aim was to make it, if possible, even better than the first. We were helped in this by some very insightful and sophisticated advice from our Editorial Board, and we do indeed think we have managed to create a really effective and useful Handbook. It also turned out to be as enjoyable as the first time, if somewhat more fraught with external limitations.

Once again we have been completely bowled over by the enormous efforts put in by our chapter authors, both old and new. Once more the process was undertaken with great willingness, a commitment to rigour, and with dedication, big heartedness, creativity and enthusiasm. The growing recognition in 2017 of the benefits and potentials of qualitative research in psychology has helped us a lot – our new chapters and our revised ones reflect the current mood of optimism and positive progress. They are insightful, wide-ranging and provocative in all the right kinds of ways. A great wealth of new information has been marshalled for the chapters about the innovations in methods, and forms of analysis and how they can be used together to gain 'more than the sum of the parts' that have made such a great contribution to progress. So once again, our gratitude is to our 'awesome authors' and our sincere thanks to them for working so hard, being so constructive and making this an even more damn' fine book.

However, this time Wendy Stainton Rogers would also like to acknowledge the medical care, help and support I have been given by the British National Health Service. I would like to especially thank the medical teams at St James Hospital in Leeds who have brought me back from the brink and helped me to recover from a series of medical catastrophes. It has taken more than five years and it is truly wonderful to be able to function competently as an academic once more. Alongside them, I must also mark my appreciation of my husband Robin Long, who has been my constant and dedicated carer throughout that time. Who knew that that a Red Course in Home Nursing and voluntary work in ambulances as a teenager could have such benefits!



1 Introduction

Wendy Stainton Rogers and Carla Willig

In this second edition of the Handbook we celebrate the amazing diversity and reach of qualitative research in psychology, its burgeoning innovations and its growing capacity to influence policy, practice and activism. Moving on from the first edition, we continue to witness a process of expansion of qualitative research going on in psychology, and growing recognition of its merits and usefulness – even in the USA where psychology's establishment had for so long been dismissive towards it. Elsewhere, including in Australasia, Europe, Canada, South America and South Africa – but especially in the UK – qualitative research has been growing for fifty years.

In the UK, for example, qualitative methods are increasingly being integrated into the curriculum. UK funding bodies (such as the Economic and Social Research Council) now increasingly favour research proposals which use a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. UK Government sponsored bodies (such as NICE – the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence which makes recommendations for policy and practice) have become much more willing to consider evidence based on qualitative research in fields like public health. Indeed, in the health and social care field we are now seeing a growth in the use of metasynthesis techniques, where qualitative data and interpretation from a number of different qualitative studies are brought together to provide evidence useful for informing practice and theory, and, indeed activism.

Notable progress has been made in the last ten years in the amount and quality of qualitative research in psychology that is being published (Gough and Lyons, 2015, provide an excellent review of recent developments). It is also evident that both undergraduate and higher degree students in psychology are becoming more and more likely to want to use qualitative methods for their dissertations. This raises problems, however, as there is currently a lack of systematic and effective training available to those seeking to conduct qualitative research projects – training that properly encompasses its epistemology, its purpose, its theory, its methods and skills (see Breen and Darlaston-Jones, 2010). No longer can qualitative methods be treated as an abbreviated 'add-on' to the traditional 'research methods' curriculum, if it is to be done with appropriate rigour and insight. In particular, the skills, tasks and insight required to introduce appropriate reflexivity into research designs need to be included, not just in practical terms but in respect to the particular ethical issues arising when conducting qualitative studies (Gough and Madill, 2012; Gough and Deatrick, 2015).

Even despite this serious gap in training, it continues to be the case that more qualitative

research is being published (Gough and Lyons, 2015). More new journals have been established since the first edition of the *Handbook* was published – and some notable ones, at that. Following *Qualitative Research in Psychology* (*QRiP*) being established in the UK by the British Psychological Society (BPS) in 2003, in 2013 the American Psychological Association (APA) established its journal, *Qualitative Psychology.* Given how hostile so many US psychologists have been, historically, to qualitative methods, this was a real breakthrough and will undoubtedly have a considerable impact, opening up the acceptability of and knowledge about such work globally. Effective dissemination matters, and both associations now run dedicated conferences: the BPS Qualitative Section has biannual ones (with other events in between); the APA qualitative group now meet annually, providing for the key discussions needed.

It is worth noting that within certain fields of psychology, their subdiscipline conferences have had, for some considerable time now, qualitative research and theory dominating the programme. Examples include the BPS Psychology of Women (PoW) annual conference, starting in 1991; and the International Society for Critical Health Psychology (ISCHP) that has been holding biannual conferences since 1999. Both are designed to specifically encourage and support students, early-career academic researchers and, indeed, activists and practitioners, whose active participation is positively encouraged. Both, alongside the BPS Qualitative Methods in Psychology Section journal and conferences, are very open to innovative research methods and strategies, and to alternative ways of communicating, such as PechaKucha (Japanese for chit-chat, a short presentation of 20 slides, each shown for 20 seconds alongside a commentary), art exhibitions and films. The focus is less on simply reporting studies and more on stimulating debate and discussion.

Not only is more qualitative work thus being promulgated, academics who are active in the qualitative field have been 'brought in from the cold'. Established journals like the *British Journal of Social Psychology* and the *Journal of Health Psychology* are building up greater numbers of qualitative psychologists on their editorial boards. Most notably, *Feminism & Psychology* has, since its inception, had an editorial board consisting of mainly qualitative researchers and has a policy of encouraging qualitative research. Furthermore, the APA journal the *Psychology of Men & Masculinity* specifically recruited Brendan Gough, Editor of *QRiP*, as an Associate Editor to attract more qualitative papers. A number of psychology journals have recently devoted whole editions to qualitative work, guest edited by qualitative researchers and usually devoted to a particular field or approach (e.g. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology* in 2000: 9(4), *Canadian Psychology* in 2002: 43(3), the *Journal of Counseling Psychology* in 2005: 52(2) and *Health Psychology*, in 2015: 34(4)).

Nobody is claiming that the dominance of quantitative research is threatened by immanent overthrow. As the status quo, it continues to permeate psychology's regulatory frameworks, student grading and research funding decisions, albeit, in some locations, somewhat less dogmatically than it did before. The 'physics envy' of psychology's establishment continues to rule. But, in our 2008 edition we noted that something was stirring, and hence it was an ideal time for the handbook to appear. This is even more the case in 2017, as the stirring has been, in some places, more productive.

Once more the *Handbook* has provided us, as its editors, with a fascinating and rewarding opportunity to trace its further trajectory into the future. Its updated version, we hope, retains the rich knowledge base and other features of the original, while presenting an ideal opportunity to identify new, fascinating and sophisticated debates, new insights into history and their implications for future developments, and to map how qualitative perspectives have been accommodated and operationalized across the various and expanding sub-disciplines of psychology and beyond. As qualitative psychologists we are contributing to far more interdisciplinary ventures and we will return to this later.

ABOUT THE HANDBOOK

As we found as editors of the earlier edition, there is not a lot of agreement about what kind of 'beast' a handbook actually is! A good place to start may well be what it is not. Certainly an academic handbook like this one is not like a manual for a car or a washing machine – lots of 'how to get it up-and-running' information together with advice for troubleshooting when the various bits go wrong. It is more conceptual and contextual than that. But neither, we were determined, should it be an off-puttingly erudite collection of obscure technical, speculative or rhetorical articles intended only for elite in-groups preoccupied with teasing out the more arcane or procedural minutiae of this or that methodology (or its application). Thankfully for all of us, it is much more down to earth than that.

A handbook like this is designed to be useful, especially to those with an interest (either in

qualitative research in psychology generally, or in a specific method or field more precisely) but who come to it with limited prior knowledge or understanding. It is more of a 'get-to-know-you' device, an up-to-date map of qualitative research methods in psychology in the early twenty-first century. It is all about what these methods are; how they do (and do not) fit together; how and where they are being used (and by whom, for what); and in what ways some key, overarching positions and standpoints (such as ethics, feminism and post-colonialism) frame, and are framed by, the qualitative research agenda in psychology. Our aim has been for the map to be rich in its coverage, reviewing, reasonably comprehensively, the wide diversity of approaches to qualitative research in psychology that have been developed over the years. To do so we have added two chapters, lost one and replaced one. All of the chapters have been brought thoroughly up to date. These chapters also explore how and why the various approaches have been brought into play at a particular time and in particular ways.

As editors of the book, we invited our contributors to review the use of qualitative methods within their area of expertise, to evaluate the contribution these methods have made and to critically examine the ways in which qualitative research has informed both theory and practice. Finally, we asked contributors to anticipate possible future developments and trends in the application of such methods.

As we completed the first edition, we were struck by the sheer diversity and range in positions and approaches. For example, it became clear that practitioners (i.e. those whose work primarily involves the application of psychological knowledge to 'real world' problems), academics (i.e. those whose work primarily consists of producing and evaluating knowledge) and activists (i.e. those who seek to bring about change, based on political and humanitarian principles which inform their action) work to different concerns and priorities and thus experience (and construct) different cultures within which qualitative perspectives are used and evaluated. We shall return to the themes of diversity and plurality in our concluding chapter.

WHO IS IT FOR?

This *Handbook* was particularly designed for students – our original target audience was postgraduates, but we were delighted to find that many undergraduates have also found it accessible and useful. We want, particularly, to support students when they start out on a piece of their own psychological research (possibly their first, and probably for a dissertation). Our intention is to take these students beyond what they gained from their basic research methods training and to offer them a 'first port of call' to gaining a more in-depth knowledge and understanding both about a specific qualitative method and/or qualitative approaches more generally. We also hope that academics and students in other disciplines will find it useful; also practitioners (such as nurses and community workers), activists and policymakers will find the *Handbook* helpful in their broader endeavours as well as research.

However, the *Handbook* is also very much intended for our peers – more established researchers and teachers in and beyond psychology. Given the historical lack of undergraduate training in qualitative research, we particularly hope it will attract those who are interested in moving into – or at least becoming better informed about – the expanding range of different qualitative methods, techniques and applications currently being developed by psychologists. We ourselves, working on both editions, have learned an enormous amount from all the other authors, even given that we have 'form' in this field. The sheer amount and diversity of information and analysis, and the incredible range of studies used to illustrate qualitative research 'in practice' that have been brought together in the *Handbook* is impressive and exciting. It is what the multi-authored format of a handbook does so well!

The *Handbook* is divided into three Parts: Methodologies; Perspectives and Approaches; and Applications. In Part I, Methodologies, each chapter offers an up-to-date review of a specific methodology, each written by authors with considerable experience in using them. We have included an additional chapter at the start of this section, on Thematic Analysis. This method was always (but often covertly) popular, but as a methodology it lacked coherence and rigour. This situation was changed by a paper on thematic analysis by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, published in the then newly-established journal, *Qualitative Research in Psychology* (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This paper offers an elegant epistemological framework for and clear advice on how to conduct thematic analysis from different standpoints. It also provides excellent guidelines for how to judge (and attain) high quality in research using this methodology. We know this chapter will add real merit to the *Handbook*.

To write the chapters in this methodology section we chose people who know the methodology well, can enthuse about its merits, point out

its pitfalls, illustrate what it can do and speculate where the methodology is going. For the first edition, we specifically invited our 'experts' to co-author with one or more less experienced – or maybe just less well known – colleagues or graduate students, and many of them did so. Our plan was to get on board co-authoring partnerships and teams who could, between them, combine the sagacity and shrewdness of experience with the passion and freshness of the newcomer. This strategy proved highly successful and we can see this approach has been beneficial for some chapters in the second edition too.

The chapters in this section are not detailed 'how-to-do-it' manuals – although many have useful summaries in them to outline the different elements and stages involved, and reference is made to sources of more detailed methodological information. The purpose of these chapters is to provide a sufficiently detailed review and overview to help the reader decide whether the method is worth considering, and, if so, where to go next to get themselves up to speed.

Part II, Perspectives and Approaches, encompasses a range of chapters that are focused less on a particular methodology, but rather on broader concerns and positions informing the ways in which qualitative research is conducted and disseminated. To start there are chapters that examine issues and standpoints, including: Ethics (Chapter 15); Interpretation (Chapter 16); Feminism (Chapter 17); and Post-colonialism (Chapter 18). Then there are two chapters that set out overall approaches to qualitative research: Community Psychology (Chapter 19); and Social Representations (Chapter 20). Next there are chapters on specific modalities and technologies: Visual Approaches (Chapter 21); Netnography (a new chapter, Chapter 22); and Using Computer Packages (Chapter 23). The section ends with a chapter on Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Methods (Chapter 24).

Finally, Part III on Applications gives readers an alternative 'take' on the *Handbook* by choosing to focus on the context within which qualitative methods are used. This section contains reviews of qualitative methods as used in nine of psychology's subdisciplines, each demonstrating the ways in which context interacts with methodological concerns. Each of these chapters (Chapters 25–33) have been revised and renewed to provide a thorough update, introducing and illustrating recent work in the field, new initiatives and issues that have grown in prominence.

As such, the three sections of the book constitute different kinds of maps (and useful commentary from satnav) that readers can use to navigate the terrain of qualitative research in psychology. Depending on their objectives (that is, their destination) readers may require lexical direction from Part I, topological guidance from Part II, and/or a view from one or more perspectives identified in Part III; or some other mix to suit their situation and goals. Overall, the purpose of this *Handbook* is to help its readers to gain a sense of the territory and to enable them to make well-informed methodological, theoretical and ideological choices.

HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Our triumphal start to this introductory chapter superficially buys into a common perception that 'qualitative psychology' is a new phenomenon which has emerged over the last 30–50 years and which has finally succeeded in establishing itself as a distinct branch of psychology. This position is well exemplified by Kelley:

> Qualitative methodology has emerged as part of a broad movement that Rabinow and Sullivan (1979) call an 'interpretative turn' in social science epistemology … There can be little doubt that this 'turn' has had a pervasive influence, and qualitative research has become much more widely accepted as a valid approach within the social sciences. (Kelley, 1999: 398)

We challenge this version of history. It is not to say that qualitative psychology is *not* blossoming – it is – but rather that qualitative approaches have been part and parcel of psychology from its very beginnings, when, for example, phenomenology was a common approach. Using informal interviewing methods, Bartlett (1932), the originator of cognitive psychology, explored the qualities of how memory changed over time in a book he called *Remembering*. He did this by telling people weird and wonderful stories and then, on various occasions afterwards, asking them to recall the story again and again. By looking at the ways in which their memories of the stories were distorted and rationalized over time, Bartlett was able to speculate about the meaning-making processes involved in short- and long-term memory.

Going back a good way to Vico's *Scienza Nuova* (1752), the idea that, for instance, knowledge is contingent on circumstances and context is a very old one indeed. It is encapsulated in his *verum ipsum factum* principle that we can only logically guarantee the truth of that which we ourselves make (see Shotter, 1981: 267). From the start both Wilhelm Wundt and William James, who are often associated with the founding of psychology as a discipline, acknowledged the

importance of both subjectivist (introspection) and objectivist (measurements of behaviours) approaches to psychological research (see Farr, 1996; Jones and Elcock, 2001). Both of them were also concerned with meaning, culture and identity (see Richards, 1996; Stainton Rogers, 2011) because, for both of them, mind was still the object of study in psychology (Farr, 1996). Moreover, as Kvale (2003) has pointed out, key figures like Freud, Piaget and Adorno used the qualitative interview as the basis of researching into substantial areas of psychological knowledge (about child development, personality, sexuality, prejudice, motivation and so on).

Danziger (1990) provides a fascinating and detailed account of how research in psychology began as a subjective, if not qualitative endeavour, and then how quantitative methods systematically gained dominance, 'relegating any other method … to the realm of the unscientific' (Danziger, 1990: 107). This shift from introspection to experimental and survey research also involves a 'demotion' of the subject of the research from expert observer of the self to naïve response unit. Danziger describes how in the early days, experimental subjects were highly trained, their names or initials identified in research reports, and their responses almost always reported at the individual level. Theoretical discussions centred around the nature of the individual response patterns, even where average responses were included. It was only when scientific enquiry began to be preoccupied with aggregates and generalization that the object of psychological study was reconfigured into the experimenter's quantitative measurement of the 'mindless' response of the experimental subject.

It has been argued (e.g. Jones and Elcock, 2001; Richards, 1996) that this shift was at least partly driven by a socioeconomic demand for psychology to become more utilitarian (today we talk about 'having impact'); for it to generate knowledge which could be useful for managing society and its problems (in areas like crime, mental hygiene, selecting children for schools and people for jobs). One of the consequences was the marginalization and consequent devaluing of subjectivist methods of psychological enquiry. Another was a tendency for psychological research to be used to justify making judgements on the basis of aggregate data. Questionnaires allowed social scientists to create and then statistically interrogate data gathered from large samples (such as crime rates) and then, using indices (such as age, gender and 'race'), to 'discover' associations – for example, that criminal behaviour is more common among the 'lower social orders'. From there, it was not hard to make the conceptual leap to, say, viewing 'the poor' as collectively more prone to criminality. And then all too easy to go one step further and transform these associations found within aggregate data into evidence for individual 'predispositions' (for instance, towards crime, to suicide, to insanity). Through this tortuous logic, simply by being a member of a particular group defined by demographics (e.g. living in a certain neighbourhood) individuals became imbued with what Quetelet (1842) called 'propensities'.

A preoccupation with quantification was also reinforced by a more general movement in the social sciences at the end of the nineteenth century towards the view that there was a single 'philosophy of science' – a single set of principles that underpin research. As a young man Sigmund Freud, too, declared his goal was to 'furnish a psychology that shall be a natural science' (Freud, 1950: 295) and for most of his career at least saw this as an ideal to be pursued. However, in later life he became convinced that 'mental events seem to be immeasurable and probably always will be so' (see Jones, 1955: 470). The construction of 'scientific psychology' as natural science (hence 'proper psychology') and the consequent rendering of soft/unscientific psychology as human science had serious consequences for the development of the qualitative research tradition. The dispute about whether psychology was a natural science, or whether it was part of both the natural and human continues. Several of our authors offer reflections on the history of qualitative research methodology within their contributions to this *Handbook*. In particular Brown and Locke (Chapter 25) develop some of the themes raised in this introduction.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH 'HIDDEN' WITHIN QUANTITATIVE STUDIES

Today, as mixed methods research becomes increasingly popular, qualitative research in psychology has increasingly become viewed by mainstream psychologists as a useful preparatory or even exploratory stage in a project; as a means of comprehensively reviewing the field of the topic or process being studied. The data this stage yields are then seen as a rich resource for the development of hypotheses and the construction of instruments with which to carry out a 'truly scientific study'.

However, this is only part of the story. With a little careful scrutiny, it becomes clear that the role of qualitative research in traditional quantitative studies is actually a lot more pervasive than just this kind of preliminary stage. Indeed, it is startling that when looking closely at some of the

best known of psychology's experimental studies, just how often the qualitative data obtained in, say, debriefing interviews become part of the dataset used to inform the researcher's conclusions. A good illustration (see Stainton Rogers, 2011: 110–112) is the classic 'bystander apathy' research instigated by John Darley and Bibb Latané (1968) following the murder of a woman, Kitty Genovese, apparently in front of 38 of her neighbours in the apartment building where she lived. The two researchers conducted two parallel studies to investigate the impact of being observed by others upon social behaviour. They set up experiments that examined behaviour in response to an apparent emergency.

Going back to the original papers, Darley and Latané include lengthy reports in each of them based on the interaction between the experimenter and subject at the end of each trial (often referred to as debriefing interviews). The quantitative data obtained from these studies are well known for demonstrating that people who are on their own when they observe another person getting into trouble are more likely to intervene than people who are part of a group. The 'hard numbers' show a strong significant effect. With such convincing results the 'bystander effect' thus made its way into Psychology's history.

What is often overlooked with research of this kind is those other 'results' in addition to the quantitative data that were reported by the two papers, when the researchers described what happened when the participants were debriefed. They reported that subjects who reported the emergency mentioned it in their debriefing interviews, but said little more and showed no great emotion. By contrast:

> Subjects who failed to report the emergency showed few signs of the apathy and indifference thought to characterize 'unresponsive bystanders'. When the experimenter entered her room to terminate the situation, the subject often asked if the victim was 'all right.' 'Is he being taken care of?' 'He's all right isn't he?' Many of these subjects showed physical signs of nervousness; they often had trembling hands and sweating palms. If anything, they seemed more emotionally aroused than did the subjects who reported the emergency. (Darley and Latané, 1968: 381)

In these studies on bystander apathy – and others like them, such as Asch's (1956) studies on conformity; and Milgram's (1965) studies of obedience where similar accounts were obtained – what appear to be simple psychological experiments are often not all that simple nor entirely experimental. In many experimental studies, researchers obtain qualitative data in addition to the bald numbers of the measures that they varied. It's not hard to speculate that in such situations, where there is both quantitative and qualitative data available, researchers often make use of these qualitative data to help them understand what is going on. This potentially important qualitative component of experiments has been consistently obscured by virtually every mainstream social psychology textbook (Stainton Rogers, 2011: 112). Psychology students are thus left completely unaware that this is so, and, in consequence, students become convinced that experimental work is all about the numbers, when it is seldom quite so clear cut.

POSITIVISM

In the context that qualitative research in psychology has commonly been portrayed as 'failing' the gold standard methodological rigour, it is not surprising that a number of authors in this *Handbook* have chosen to clarify their perspectives by way of contrast with what is often glossed as 'positivist' approaches to psychological research. For those using qualitative methods, 'positivism' usually carries negative connotations. Someone new to the world of qualitative research may well find it difficult to come to grips with the tangled complexities of social constructionism, hermeneutics and post-structuralism. But they would soon realize that being a 'positivist' is something to be avoided at all cost! However, it is not always clear what is actually involved in 'being a positivist'. This is because, sometimes, the label 'positivist' is deployed for polemical purposes, in place of an argument. This can create confusion and misunderstandings, especially since people may have different definitions of what the term designates.

So, to clarify, in contemporary discourse, 'positivism' refers to a set of beliefs about how legitimate knowledge about the world may be acquired. Key positivist ideas are that:

> philosophy should be scientific, that metaphysical speculations are meaningless, that there is a universal and a priori scientific method, that a main function of philosophy is to analyse that method, that this basic scientific method is the same both in the natural and social sciences, that the various sciences should be reducible to physics, and that the theoretical parts of good science must be translatable into statements about observations. (*Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* 2000: 696)

This has meant that in psychology, positivism has been associated with a preference for quantitative data and controlled experimental or quasi-experimental research designs. Positivist principles have also been invoked in order to undermine knowledge claims and critiques generated on the basis of qualitative and/or critical perspectives.

As a result, it is often forgotten that positivism has a radical history. It was originally conceived as a challenge to religion and metaphysics; regimes of truth which had functioned to perpetuate society's approval of 'common sense' and the socioeconomic structures which it supported. In nineteeth-century France and Latin America, Comtean positivism drove anticlerical and anti-conservative politics and activism. 'Progressive' political ideas were associated with scientific progress and the victory of reason over prejudice and superstition. It was only later, during the twentieth century, that positivism lost its connection with radicalism and that its commitment to scientific objectivity began to take on a more conservative hue.

A similar argument could be made in relation to 'science', although this concept is much more ambiguously positioned within qualitative methodology discourse. Some of our authors very explicitly claim the term (e.g. Giorgi, Giorgi and Morley in Chapter 11), using the word 'science' in its broadest sense – as a systematic, rigorous, empirical endeavour that needs to be carried out properly if it is to produce knowledge which is trustworthy and reliable. They are taking a stance – as advocated by Brickman, for example – that:

> [c]ontrary to what is sometimes asserted, science is a question of aim, not method. Science is an effort to make accurate observations and valid causal inferences, and to assemble these observations and inferences in a compact and coherent way. (Brickman, 1980: 10)

From this perspective science does not have to be defined solely in terms of hypothetico-deductive methodology. Other – qualitative – methods can be equally rigorous and valid.

The identification of 'science' with hypothetico-deductivism is a relatively recent development (Popper, 1963). Before that time, 'science' was treated as a much more malleable concept. Until the end of the eighteenth century, for example, it was natural philosophy that concerned itself with experimentation and the identification of factual knowledge about the natural world, whilst 'science' was concerned with something more akin to logic and with knowledge of what is necessarily the case. If we accept that 'science' is an historical concept, and that arguments around the extent to which qualitative methods can be 'scientific' contribute to its definition and evolution, then we should not be overly concerned with whether or not to invoke the concept. Rather we should focus on the various ways in which qualitative researchers have tried to inspire confidence in the value of their findings. We shall return to the question of quality (and its appraisal) in qualitative research in our concluding chapter.

As a concept, 'empiricism', captures a variety of meanings. In one sense, all qualitative research in psychology is 'empirical' because it gathers data, analyses or interprets it and draws conclusions from them. Claims made and conclusions reached are based upon an engagement with material that is, in one way or another, part of the social world that is being studied. Whether we work with interview transcripts, soap opera scripts, video recordings of an event, virtual banter going on in a 'chat room', written memories, paintings or photographs, we are researching 'the world'. On the other hand, we know that there is no simple and direct relationship between 'the world' and people's experience of it, let alone our accounts of those experiences, or indeed interpretations of those accounts. Our analyses and interpretations of the data we obtain will always be mediated by us, the researchers. Reflexivity, is therefore, an essential element of all research, but particularly of qualitative research. We cannot pretend that we are simply 'uncovering' meaning. What we most certainly cannot claim is that 'themes', for instance, somehow magically 'emerge' from the data, as if there were no human meaning-making going on. Empiricism in this context is best thought of as a reference point in our reflections about our relationship with 'the world' rather than as a label which we either identify with or reject.

The concept of 'reductionism' is perhaps the hardest to salvage for qualitative research. In frequent use since the mid twentieth century, it describes an approach to knowledge which aims to reduce complex phenomena to more fundamental, underlying (usually material) causal factors. These tend to be seen as pre-existing, self-contained and as such not subject to processes of transformation and feedback loops. As such, reductionist versions of scientific thought contrast sharply with systems approaches and dialectical perspectives. It is probably safe to say that reductionist thinking is incompatible with most qualitative approaches to research in psychology.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

To pick up on our historical thread, quantitative research came to dominate psychology at the turn

of the previous century (1890–1912). Mentalism gave way to behaviourism (Leahey, 2000) and introspection as method and consciousness as the subject of study were abandoned by the mainstream. At this point psychology, as a discipline, became reformulated as the science of behaviour (see, for example, Farr, 1996). Qualitative research was marginalized and obscured for about the first 80 years of the twentieth century, but it never completely disappeared.

A major challenge to psychology's claim to natural-scientific status did not emerge until the 1970s when the ideas and experiences of the emancipatory movements of the 1960s filtered through into the discourse of academic psychology. For example, feminist psychologists questioned research methods which had produced 'findings' confirming women's inferior intellectual abilities and moral character (e.g. Gilligan, 1982). The nature of psychological knowledge itself was interrogated and its reflexive, historical character was exposed (e.g. Gergen, 1973). Far from simply describing human behaviour and its causes, psychology as a discipline and a practice was regarded as actively shaping people's experience. It took until the 1980s for *Changing the Subject* (Henriques et al., 1984), possibly the most influential critique of mainstream psychology, to hit the streets. It was an overt challenge to the subjectification imposed by the 'psy complex' (Rose, 1979). We can see in all this the stirrings of a revolution, albeit, at first a small and highly localized one, encompassing two main 'turns': first the 'turn to language' and then the 'turn to interpretation'.

The 'Turn to Language'

The 'turn to language' describes an intellectual orientation which pays attention to how our ways of talking about and representing 'reality' contribute to its very appearance and effects. Such a perspective provides the motivation and tools for a fundamental critique of the type of psychological research which uncritically deploys commonsense concepts (such as prejudice, anger, aggression, self-esteem, intelligence) and seeks to measure them. The 'turn to language' allowed researchers to deconstruct the very concepts that appeared to underpin psychological knowledge (e.g. Parker, 1992).

Since it is concerned with the construction of meaning (and its consequences), the 'turn to language' gave rise to a burgeoning of qualitative research in psychology. Through the 80s and 90s and into the twenty-first century, a range of approaches to discursive analysis have emerged, the most influential of which are discussed in Chapters 6 and 7 of this volume. Some researchers (e.g. Chapter 7) are particularly concerned with the ways in which talking about, and therefore representing, 'reality' feed into wider power relations, that is, with how discourse maintains the institutions and commonsense of a society. Others (e.g. Chapters 5 and 6) are more interested in the ways in which individuals deploy discursive resources in particular social situations and with what effects. Yet others (e.g. Wetherell, 1998) prefer not to choose between these two foci and aim to integrate them in their discursive analyses.

Over this time, other qualitative traditions continued to develop and thrive alongside work that concentrates on language. For example, at Duquesne University in the USA, phenomenological research procedures were refined and disseminated throughout the 1960s and 1970s (Georgi, 1967, see also Chapter 11), whilst in the UK, Harré and his colleagues (e.g. Marsh et al., 1978) formulated the ethogenic approach to the study of (dis)ordered behaviour. Both descriptive and interpretative (hermeneutic) forms of qualitative research operated alongside discursive perspectives. For some time discursive approaches were better at attracting attention amongst psychological researchers. These days we are now seeing a broadening of theorizing around extra-discursive phenomena, such as embodiment (e.g. Cromby, 2015). Crucially 'interpretation' is becoming a major concern among qualitative psychologists, which is why we have included a new chapter on it (Chapter 16).

The 'Turn to Interpretation'

Recent years have seen a growing interest in the role of interpretation in qualitative research. Although there has, of course, always been a hermeneutic tradition within qualitative research, many qualitative psychologists had avoided overt interpretation and, instead, preferred to use qualitative methods as a way of capturing and systematically re-presenting participant-generated meanings in the form of descriptive themes.

It has been argued (e.g. Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2002) that until recently much qualitative research has implicitly adhered to a positivist epistemology. The format in which such qualitative research was presented tended to mirror the structure of the quantitative research report (introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussion). Data, they argue, are taken at face value and the work of analysis consists of a process of careful and systematic categorization of

participants' statements into themes which are then presented as 'findings'. Interpretation does not enter the picture until the very end, when the 'findings' are reflected upon in the discussion section of the report. This approach to qualitative research has been strongly encouraged by the format and style conventions adopted by the vast majority of psychological journals. It probably also helped qualitative researchers to gain acceptance among their quantitatively oriented peers, as it lends an air of objectivity to the research. Curt (1994) and Chamberlain (2000) have identified this tendency to avoid theory and to fall victim to 'methodolatry'.

Increasingly, however, qualitative psychologists are engaging with the question of interpretation. They are asking questions about the social and/or psychological structures and processes which may generate the themes which are identified in participants' accounts, and they interrogate existing psychological theories in the light of qualitative data. Qualitative research is becoming more interpretative, less content to see careful description as the endpoint of the research. Frosh and Young (Chapter 8) advocate 'binocularity' as a way of combining 'ground up' (i.e. descriptive, focus on 'what is there') with 'top down' (i.e. theory-driven, interpretative) approaches. They propose that thick, detailed description followed by an attempt to draw on psychological theory in order to explain phenomena can enrich our understanding. In their chapter, they demonstrate how qualitative researchers can produce analysis which is both grounded in data *and* theoretically driven.

Eatough and Smith (2008: 192) address this question in relation to interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) and they acknowledge that for both IPA and for qualitative psychology as a whole 'what is actually involved in interpretation … is … a pretty neglected or undeveloped area'. Interestingly, the preferred theoretical orientation towards interpretation within this movement has, up until relatively recently, been largely psychodynamic. Nevertheless, more explicitly political perspectives such as Feminism (Wilkinson, 1991); Marxism (Parker, 2009); and Postcolonialism (Macleod, 2004) have also been adopted.

There is also a difference between qualitative methods of analysis which presuppose a clearly defined theoretical orientation and those which do not. For example, discourse analytic research presupposes that discourse constructs rather than reflects versions of reality, and that language-in-use is performative. This means that what research participants say is not taken simply at 'face value' and that the application of the methodological procedure itself constitutes an act of interpretation, generating a theoretically informed reading.

By contrast, methods such as IPA offer methodological guidelines for the identification of themes, but they do not specify how, or even whether, these ought to be linked theoretically. Here, interpretation comes after representation, although it is clearly acknowledged that the researcher's identity and standpoint will inevitably colour the way in which s/he represents participants' material thematically. Eatough and Smith (Chapter 12) identify differing 'levels of interpretation' ranging from the empathic-descriptive where the researcher tries to 'stand in the shoes of the participant' and produces a rich experiential description, to the critical-hermeneutic level where the researcher builds an alternative narrative which differs from the participant's own account of what is going on and which offers a deeper understanding of the participant's experience (see also Larkin et al., 2006).The latter may be informed by existing psychological theories.

What distinguishes qualitative research concerned with description from qualitative research concerned with interpretation is that the interpretative approach aspires to generate an understanding of how people come to experience the world and themselves in a particular way. In other words, there is an attempt to understand, as well as to describe, social phenomena. This also means that interpretative work is based on the premise that people may not be aware of all that is involved in their behaviour and experience, and that the task of psychological research is to bring these otherwise 'hidden' elements to light.

Interpretation, then, means seeking to gain a deeper and more sophisticated understanding of particular phenomena than the people who manifest or enact them would normally have themselves. Thus interpretation raises issues of ownership and power. It entails addressing questions such as who has the last word (e.g. does the research report constitute the last word and where does that leave the research participants?) and what happens when the research participants do not agree with the researcher's interpretation (e.g. does such disagreement get further interpreted, for instance, as resistance to the emotional significance of the interpretation; and where, then, does that leave the participant?) (see Willig, 2012, for a more detailed discussion of the ethics of interpretation in qualitative psychology).

Some emerging perspectives on interpretation adopt an explicitly pluralistic outlook (e.g. Frost, 2009). Here, a qualitative dataset is approached from more than one angle to allow for interpretations that transcend method-specific meaning-making. This is an ambitious project which requires the researcher to think their way around the phenomenon of interest, rather than

looking at it from one particular vantage point only. Pluralistic qualitative research generates multiple interpretations which can be integrated to provide a more complete picture of the phenomenon of interest or alternatively they can be left sitting alongside one another to allow the reader to reflect on their relationship with one another. The former approach to pluralistic research has much in common with triangulation which, as the name suggests, seeks to gain a better understanding of something by looking at it from different reference points. Chapter 20 discusses the use of triangulation in the study of social representations and Chapter 24 shows how different methods can be triangulated in a 'composite analysis'. Chapter 16 provides a more detailed discussion of the interpretative possibilities associated with pluralistic approaches to qualitative research.

One of the reasons for adopting qualitative methods in feminist research was to give voice to participants and to allow their own perspective and understanding of their experiences to be foregrounded. This was partly a response, and challenge, to traditional ('male-stream') research which had discounted women's voices and interpreted the meaning of women's behaviour and experiences through the lens of theories which had been developed on the basis of male research participants' responses (e.g. Gilligan, 1982).

We believe that it is important that a 'turn to interpretation' in contemporary qualitative research does not mean a return to the unreflected imposition of meanings upon participants' material. There has already been some debate regarding the ethical implications of reading research participants' accounts through a set of pre-defined theoretical constructs (e.g. Hollway and Jefferson, 2005a, 2005b; Spears, 2005; Wetherell, 2005). Whilst established theories provide powerful tools for analysis, they can also create blindspots and projections which can cover up meanings as much as reveal them. It is important to bear in mind that interpretation ought to be concerned with understanding rather than with explanation (cf. Dilthey, 1976), and, as such, it should not aspire to the production of certainties, of definitive knowledge and facts, of last words.

Cohn (2005: 221) reminds us that interpretation is inexhaustible – what Curt (1994) termed the *interrogation interminable*. Moreover, all understanding is partial: 'something always remains un-understood'. Pujol and Stainton Rogers (1996: 17) describe this as 'the irritating little bits and bats that cannot be neatly accommodated within pre-existing theoretical frameworks'. The phenomenon of interest should not become something different through being interpreted; it does not get translated into, and thus replaced by, its underlying meaning because it is not 'a disguise for what is "real"' (Cohn, 2005: 222). Instead, interpretation means amplification of meaning, an exploration and clarification of the many strands of meaning which constitute the phenomenon of interest. This includes paying attention to absences and their significance. Cohn (2005: 224) writes, 'We need … to remember that the process of revealing the unknown part of a phenomenon does not replace a deceptive manifest utterance or symptom with the reality of a true meaning which invalidates what we have seen so far. On the contrary, the perceived phenomenon gains clarity, richness and meaningfulness whenever a new aspect of its totality is discovered'.

The challenge to qualitative researchers is, therefore, to go beyond what presents itself, to reveal dimensions of a phenomenon which are concealed or hidden, whilst at the same time taking care not to impose meaning upon the phenomenon, not to squeeze it into pre-conceived categories or theoretical formulations, not to reduce it to an underlying cause. In practice, it may not always be easy to distinguish between the two which means that sustained attention needs to be paid to the ethical dimensions of qualitative research.

METHODOLATRY

Curt (1994: 106) defined methodolatry as the worship of method (notably scientific method), according it a separate, revered status as the only self-respecting means by which 'true knowledge' can be discovered. Method is idolized because it portrays research as exacting and highly skilled, the province of 'experts'.

> Methodolatry thus serves the purpose of enabling psychologists to cast themselves as the sole architects of legitimate knowledge about 'the science of behaviour' … The ability to select and use appropriate methods of enquiry (and their associated statistical techniques) is held to be the key to extracting the 'gold of pure truth' from the dross of opinion, prejudice, folk-tale and superstition. Methods are the alembics of these modern day alchemists. In marking its territory with the Academy, mainstream psychology, almost throughout its history, has presented scientific methods of empirical enquiry as the antidote to the ills of 'armchair psychology'. (Stainton Rogers, R. et al., 1995: 226)

Although the target of these critical comments is 'mainstream psychology' using 'scientific methods', qualitative psychology is not immune to

methodolatry. There are times when methodological preoccupations and conflicts continue to dominate the debate at the expense of ethical and political concerns. There is also a range of views, within the qualitative research community, about the relationship between methodological and ideological considerations.

At one end of the continuum, there are those who argue that qualitative (and indeed all) research serves a political purpose in that it either challenges or supports the (political, economic, social, cultural) status quo, and that, therefore, ethical and political issues need to be at the top of the research agenda (e.g. Parker, 1992, 2005). From this point of view, the methods we use in our research are essentially a means to an end such as the empowerment of socially disadvantaged groups of people. Researchers in community psychology (see Chapter 19) are likely to take this position.

At the other end of the continuum, there are those who are rather more agnostic about values and who prefer to focus on the specific ways in which a particular method can shed light on specific processes or phenomena. From this point of view, research has no purpose other than to increase understanding and this is made possible by the application of the method (which is not to say that such understanding cannot also be used in order to bring about positive change). Such a position is likely to be taken by phenomenological researchers (e.g. Chapters 11 and 12) or by those whose work is influenced by conversation analytic principles (e.g. Chapter 5). An example of an engagement between these two positions can be found in the exchange between Sims-Schouten et al. (2007a, 2007b), and Speer (2007). Most researchers will choose a position somewhere in between the two ends of the continuum and it is likely that one's position evolves over time. The chapters in this handbook offer a wide range of positions on this and related questions.

TO GO FORTH AND PROSPER

Throughout this introduction, we have emphasized that qualitative psychology is characterized by a range of positions and approaches regarding epistemology, ethics and politics. There is also a difference in priorities and concerns between academic researchers, practitioner researchers and activist researchers. We have drawn attention to qualitative methodology's complex relationship with knowledge, and we have stressed that this *Handbook* is about mapping and navigation rather than about specific recipes and strict rules.

Whilst these are all worthy sentiments (as well as, in our view, inevitable features of a qualitative perspective), we have to admit that our task as editors would have been a lot easier, had we been able to use a positivist framework from within which to read our contributors' chapters! As it was, we were presented with the challenge of having to ensure that a hugely diverse range of treatments of the topic of 'qualitative research in psychology' was presented within the confines of the aims and objectives of a research 'methods' handbook. This was no easy task. As there is no single authority on what is 'right' or 'wrong' in qualitative research, we decided to use our contract with the reader as our guide to the editorial process. This has meant that, as editors, we tried to ensure that each chapter presents a comprehensive overview of the 'state of the art' within a particular area of work. We encouraged authors to write clearly and accessibly so that readers new to the field would be able to understand and appreciate the ideas presented. Although we encouraged authors to position themselves in relation to other approaches and perspectives, we did not feel that partisan treatments of the subject matter would be helpful. We hope that we have achieved the right balance between description and interpretation within these pages, and that readers will be able to use this *Handbook* as a clear, comprehensive and reliable guide on their journey through qualitative psychology.

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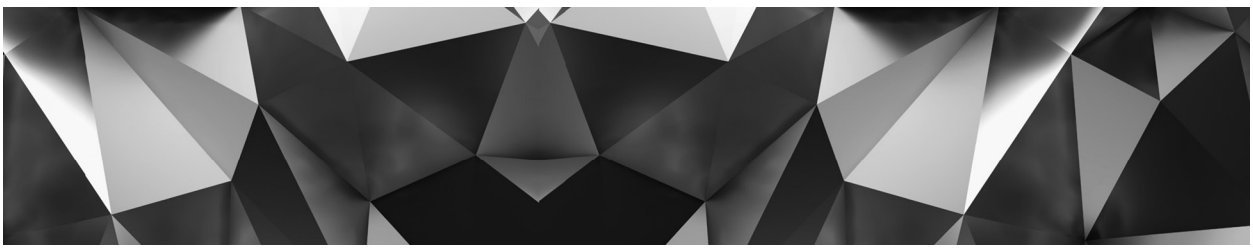
PART I

Methodologies



2

Thematic Analysis

Gareth Terry, Nikki Hayfield,
Victoria Clarke and Virginia Braun

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces thematic analysis (TA), a method that has become a widely-used tool for analysing qualitative data, both in psychology and beyond. We first outline the history and context of TA, and identify key issues that need to be considered when conducting TA. We discuss the flexibility TA can offer, and highlight the need for deliberate and careful research. This flexibility can apply to theoretical assumptions, research questions, data collection and analysis. We include a detailed worked demonstration of the processes and procedures of undertaking a TA, illustrated with examples from Nikki Hayfield, Victoria Clarke, Sonja Ellis and Gareth Terry's research on the lived experiences of childfree women (see Box 2.1). Our discussion of how to complete a TA is based on a widely used version of TA – the approach developed by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006). We conclude by considering the limitations and applications of TA, as well as future directions.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS: HISTORY AND CONTEXT

What is thematic analysis (TA)? This question invites many different answers. TA practitioner Joffe (2012) credits philosopher of science Gerald Holton with founding TA in his work on 'themata' in scientific thought (Holton, 1975), but the term does seem to pre-date Holton's use of it. Since the early part of the twentieth century, if not earlier, the term 'thematic analysis' has been used to refer to a number of different things, including, but not limited to, data analysis techniques in the social sciences. Some earlier instances of the use of TA are similar to contemporary use – a method for identifying themes in qualitative data (e.g. Dapkus, 1985). It has also been used interchangeably with content analysis to refer to both qualitative (Baxter, 1991) and quantitative (Christ, 1970) content analysis, and some have claimed that TA developed from content analysis (Joffe, 2012). Procedures for using TA as a qualitative technique only began to be published in the 1990s (e.g.

Box 2.1 Introducing the lived experiences of childfree women (child-freedom) study

Women's choice to be childfree has recently become a focus of both academic and social interest in Western contexts. Researchers have identified a motherhood 'imperative' or 'mandate' in the wider culture (Giles, Shaw and Morgan, 2009), which creates an expectation that all women want, and have, children (Basten, 2009). The pervasiveness of the motherhood imperative is such that women who remain voluntarily without children are often perceived as deviant, maladjusted, emotionally unstable, unfeminine, unnatural, unhappy, immature, selfish and self-centred, and less sensitive or loving than women with children (Blackstone and Stewart, 2012). However, minimal research has explored women's experiences of *being* childfree (Peterson and Engwell, 2013). Little is understood of how childfree women negotiate and make sense of their identities and life course in relation to a supposedly stigmatised status and in a strongly pronatalist socio-cultural context. This project aimed to offer such insight. Our research team (Nikki Hayfield, Victoria Clarke, Sonja Ellis and Gareth Terry) interviewed 23 UK-based women across a number of social categories (e.g. sexuality, class, country of origin, age), to help understand their diverse and shared experiences and lives as childfree women. Data were analysed using TA within a critical realist framework, and meaning and experience were examined at both semantic and latent levels.

Aronson, 1994), but qualitative researchers have described their approach to analysis as 'thematic', without an explicit reference to a developed method, both pre- and post-specific procedural advice being published.

This complexity is why, in 2006, Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke described TA as 'a poorly demarcated and rarely acknowledged, yet widely used qualitative analytic method' (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 77). Since the publication of what became a landmark paper, TA as a 'named and claimed' method has gained hugely in popularity and has entered the qualitative canon as a recognisable and reputable method of analysis. Other notable accounts of TA procedures published prior to Braun and Clarke's have also grown in popularity (e.g. Boyatzis, 1998). However, some confusion remains about what TA is, and indeed whether it is anything in particular. Our task in the remainder of this section is to map the terrain of TA, and identify some of the similarities and differences between various approaches to TA. This provides context for our subsequent discussion and demonstration of what has become the most widely used approach to TA – although claimed use does not always fit with the guidelines we have outlined.

In seeking to clarify what TA is, our aim is not to suppress diversity and difference, but rather to acknowledge that the terrain of qualitative research is confusing and complex, and often unnecessarily so, because of poor practices in methodological writing – and particularly a failure among some methodological scholars to locate their stance. In our view, this complexity is a hindrance to high-quality qualitative research, and so our aims are for clarification, demystification, and contextualisation.

One debate that continues among some psychologists is whether TA is a fully-fledged method in its own right, or whether it is simply a tool that underpins many different qualitative approaches (Willig, 2013). Some argue that TA is not a specific analytic approach, but rather a meta-analytic technique, and that most qualitative approaches involve themes in some way (Gibson and Brown, 2009); others maintain that TA is a specific analytic approach, but even if they do, it's usually presented as a singular approach. For instance:

> In a thematic analysis three levels of codes are usually recognised … These are 1st, 2nd and 3rd level (or order) codes … Most people begin with a very basic descriptive level of coding and work upwards in a systematic manner towards a more interpretative level. (Langridge, 2004: 267)

These types of claims imply that qualitative researchers agree on what TA is, and how TA gets done. Few authors identify different versions of TA and when they do it is usually different versions of one underlying approach (for example, inductive and deductive versions, Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). In addition, many texts present more or less idiosyncratic TA procedures as definitive, or reduce the diversity of approaches – and, there are many different versions and varieties of TA – down to a singular method. For example:

> there are a few useful guides [on how to carry out TA], including Boyatzis (1998), Braun and Clarke (2006) and Joffe and Yardley (2004). This chapter moves to laying out *the* set of key steps involved in a TA. (Joffe, 2012: 215, our emphasis)

Hence authors of methodological texts thus often fail to acknowledge diversity within TA. This is potentially confusing for qualitative beginners seeking clear guidance, but much more importantly, it obscures important theoretical and conceptual differences between different TA approaches. This diversity covers the overall conceptualisation of what TA is or offers, where it sits theoretically, and processes and procedures for (best practice) analysis.

For a first broad categorisation, we find a distinction between 'experiential' and 'critical' orientations to qualitative research useful (Braun and Clarke, 2013; Reicher, 2000). Experiential orientations focus on what participants think, feel and do, and are underpinned by the theoretical assumption that language reflects reality (either a singular universal reality, or the perspectival reality of a particular participant). Critical orientations seek to interrogate dominant patterns of meaning and theoretically understand language as creating, rather than reflecting, reality. Some writers situate TA as only and always an experiential approach. Others describe TA as a theoretically independent – and thus flexible – approach, but still see it as particularly compatible with certain theoretical orientations, such a particular kind of phenomenology, or phenomenology in general (Guest et al., 2012; Joffe, 2012). It is rarely explained why TA is seen as particularly compatible with these approaches – and the claimed compatibility seems to rely on the assumption that TA is an experiential orientation.

Moreover, any claimed theoretical independence is often circumscribed in two (related) ways. First, TA is often described as an approach that bridges a quantitative (positivist) and qualitative (interpretative) divide (Boyatzis, 1998). The idea that TA can bridge a divide between quantitative and qualitative research depends on a particular definition of qualitative research as offering techniques or tools for collecting (and analysing) qualitative data. With a conceptualisation of qualitative research as (only) about techniques and tools, TA is understood as offering a bridge over a divide, because it either provides qualitative techniques for use within a (post-)positivist paradigm, and/or allows for (post-)positivist standards like reliability to be utilised. However, this idea of what qualitative research offers is remarkably limited, and dominated by (post-)positivism, a framework that many qualitative researchers reject. An understanding of qualitative research as a paradigm (or multiple paradigms, Grant and Giddings, 2002) characterised by values and standards quite different from those espoused within (post-)positivist empiricist traditions dominates much qualitative scholarship. Therefore, any attempt to bridge qualitative and quantitative through TA therefore relies on limited conceptualisation of what qualitative research is (and can be). The second way the flexibility of TA is circumscribed stems from this point: critical orientations within qualitative research are rarely acknowledged. This absence results in a very limited account of what TA can offer. The approach to TA we have developed and that we expand on in this chapter offers full theoretical flexibility, potential for an experiential or critical orientation, and locates TA fully within a qualitative paradigm (e.g. Braun and Clarke, 2006).

The importance of these broader tensions is revealed through looking at the different procedures for conducting TA that are described. Despite variations across different versions, there seem to be two basic approaches: (1) an approach defined by an emphasis on coding reliability; (2) a more qualitative approach that advocates for a flexible approach to coding and theme development. Coding reliability approaches are often deductive, and echo the scientific method – moving from theory (deduction) to hypothesis/prediction (identifying themes), to evidence gathering/testing hypotheses (coding). This means analysis moves from familiarisation to some form of theme development then to coding. Themes are often at least partly determined in advance of full analysis, guided by existing theory and reflected in interview questions (in some instances, it is recommended that interview questions form the themes, Guest et al., 2012). The purpose of coding is to find the 'evidence' for the themes – but the distinction between codes and themes is often not very clear. You also find inductive (or data-driven) examples of 'coding reliability' modes of TA, but these seem to be less common (Boyatzis, 1998).

What is key in 'coding reliability' versions of TA, is that the coding process is designed to allow the researcher to test and report on coding reliability – indeed, it is seen as essential for quality. One crucial aspect of determining coding reliability is the 'code book' or 'coding frame' – a tool that guides the coding process. A code book consists of a definitive list of codes – for each code, there is a label, a definition, instructions on how to identify the code/theme (a distinction that is not always clear), details of any exclusions, and examples. Codes are either determined in advance on basis of pre-existing theory (deductive coding), or inductively, based on familiarisation with the data, or sometimes a mix of both. The code book is then used by at least two independent coders to code all, or (more commonly) a sample of, the data. The level of agreement between the coders is then calculated to give an inter-rater reliability score (using Cohen's Kappa; a Kappa of > .80 indicates a very good level of coding agreement and supposedly reliable coding, Yardley, 2008). This model

is based in a thoroughly positivist conception of reliability – success is determined on the basis of different individuals achieving the same outcome (identical coding) through the administration of the same measure (the code book). In our view, this approach to coding is founded on a number of problematic assumptions: (1) that it is possible – and desirable – for qualitative coding to be 'accurate' and 'objective'; (2) that your findings already exist in the data, waiting to be discovered; (3) that researcher subjectivity is flawed; and (4) that minimising the influence of researcher subjectivity leads to better analysis. A qualitative paradigm troubles these assumptions. Within a qualitative paradigm, there is no one right way to analyse data, because there is no single truth. Therefore, we argue that, at best, inter-rater reliability can only show that two coders have been trained to code the data in the same way, not that the coding is somehow 'accurate' (Braun and Clarke, 2013).

In contrast, in more qualitative versions of TA such as our own (e.g. Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2013; Clarke et al., 2015a; Braun et al., 2015), the subjectivity of the researcher is seen as integral to the process of analysis. Within such approaches, an inductive approach to coding and theme development is more common. Analysis once again starts with familiarisation, but close similarities with 'coding reliability' approaches to TA end there. Coding is treated as an organic and flexible process, where good coding requires a detailed engagement with the data. The assumption is that coding 'gets better' (i.e. develops depth and moves beyond the obvious surface level) through immersion in, or repeated engagement with, the data – something unlikely to be achieved with a codebook approach. Themes are developed from coding and working with the data and codes, rather than pre-existing the coding process. They are the outcome of the analytic process, rather than a starting point. They are not imagined or anticipated early on, and do not drive analytic direction. Coding and theme development are assumed to be subjective and interpretative processes. This means the outcomes of these processes can be stronger or weaker, but they cannot be right or wrong in any objective sense. The analysis is seen as something created by the researcher, at the intersection of the data, their theoretical and conceptual frameworks, disciplinary knowledge, and research skills and experience; it is not seen as something waiting 'in' the data to be found. Quality remains a vital concern, but quality-assurance strategies, such as a review of candidate themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006), are focused on encouraging reflection, rigour, a systematic and thorough approach, and even greater depth of engagement, rather than focusing on coding 'accuracy'.

Considering the differences among published existing versions of TA, we think they can be divided into two broad 'schools': (1) 'Small q' TA that retains a foothold in positivist research (e.g. Boyatzis, 1998; Guest et al., 2012; Joffe, 2012) and is concerned with establishing coding reliability; (2) a 'Big Q' approach to TA, that operates within a qualitative paradigm and is characterised by (genuine) theoretical independence and flexibility, and organic processes of coding and theme development (e.g. Braun and Clarke, 2006; Langridge, 2004). For readers unfamiliar with the small q/Big Q distinction, small q qualitative research describes the use of qualitative tools and techniques, particularly around data generation, within a positivist framework; Big Q refers to the use of these tools and techniques within the qualitative paradigm (Kidder and Fine, 1987). As our discussion above has illustrated, this distinction is important with regard to TA, because small q and Big Q approaches are underpinned by very different conceptualisations of knowledge, research, and the researcher. In small q TA, the researcher is like an archaeologist sifting through soil to discover buried treasures. Analysis is a process of discovering themes that already exist within a dataset, or finding evidence for themes that pre-exist the data. In Big Q TA, the researcher is more like a sculptor, chipping away at a block of marble. The sculpture is the product of an interaction between the sculptor, their skills and the raw materials. Analysis becomes a creative rather than technical process, a result of the researcher's engagement with the dataset and the application of their analytic skills and experiences, and personal and conceptual standpoints.

This section has highlighted that TA is far from the singular, homogeneous approach it is often treated as being, and the diversity within TA is consequential for research. Researchers need to both understand, and then locate their use of TA in relation to, this diversity – we often see authors stating they are doing TA, then referencing two different and contradictory approaches. We advocate an approach that is theoretically independent and flexible but clearly situated in practice, through a number of choices the researcher makes, and positionings to which they align. The next section highlights the ways TA can be flexibly applied across a number of theoretical frameworks.

THE FLEXIBILITY OF THEMATIC ANALYSIS

The approach to TA we have developed is characterised by independence from any particular

epistemological and ontological base – and this 'flexibility' is partly what makes it distinct from other qualitative analyses (as well as many other versions of TA). Many approaches to qualitative analysis are better described as methodologies, as they are situated within particular theoretical frameworks, which inform the methods of data collection and analyses that can be used within that approach (see Clarke et al., 2015a). Unlike approaches such as interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (e.g. Langridge, 2004; Smith, 1996), grounded theory (e.g. Charmaz, 2000; Glaser and Strauss, 1967), and discourse analysis (e.g. Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell, 1998), TA can be used within most theoretical frameworks. This flexibility, alongside its accessibility, makes TA particularly suitable for those new to qualitative research.

Theoretical Flexibility and Research Questions

TA can be conducted within various ontological frameworks, which in turn will relate to epistemological approaches to data (see Table 2.1). This does not mean that TA is atheoretical! TA needs a theoretical underpinning, and researchers need to be clear about what this is. Indeed, it is precisely because of the theoretical independence of (our

Table 2.1 Ontologies and research questions

Type	*Definition*	*What the research question captures*	*Aims/research questions from an example study*
Realist/ essentialist	Reality is 'out there' and discoverable through the research process; people's words provide direct access to reality.	An understanding that language captures participants' experiences of reality.	Moller and Vossler's (2015) research question of 'how infidelity is defined by practitioners, and how they experience the ways their clients understand and define infidelity' fits with their ('tempered', p. 489) realist approach to analysing their interview data.
Critical realist/ contextualist	Reality is 'out there' but access to it is always mediated by socio-cultural meanings, and, in the case of qualitative analysis, the participants' and the researcher's interpretative resources (so direct access to reality is never possible). People's words provide access to their particular version of reality; research produces interpretations of this reality.	An understanding of participants' experiences as lived realities that are produced, and exist, within broader social contexts.	Adams, McCreanor, and Braun (2013) used a critical realist perspective to explore gay men's 'explanations of health and well-being' including 'their accounts of how to improve it' within '(dominant) individualistic framings and the (alternative) social/ community framings of gay men's health and well-being evident in these data' (pp. 888–889).
Relativist/ constructionist	There is no external reality discoverable through the research process. Instead versions of reality are created in and through research. The researcher cannot look through people's words to find evidence of the psychological or social reality that sits behind them. Rather, people's words become the focus of research, and the researcher interprets how these words produce particular realities within the speaker's and hearer's culture.	An understanding that language does not simply mirror a world 'out there', but instead is used to *construct* realities, and taken for granted knowledge can – should! – be queried.	Frith's (2015) examination of the ways that 'women are instructed that the body needs to be trained to meet the requirements of a (multi) orgasmic sexual subject' (p. 318) and how orgasms are constructed, in *Cosmopolitan* magazine.

Table 2.2 Project sample size recommendations (adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2013)

	Interviews	*Focus groups*	*Qualitative surveys*	*Story completion tasks*	*Media texts*
Undergraduate or Honours project	6–10	2–3 (4–8 participants in each group)	20–30	20–40	1–100
Masters or Professional Doctorate project	6–15	3–6	30–100	40–100	1–200
PhD/larger project (TA data as only a part of the whole project)	15–20	3–6	50+	100+	4–400
PhD/larger project (TA data as whole project)	30+	10+	200+	400+	4–400+

version of TA) that it is particularly important for researchers to make their theoretical approach explicit to the reader – it does not come 'inbuilt'.

Due to this theoretical independence, TA can be used to address a really wide range of research questions – which stem from, or require, quite different theoretical frameworks. Table 2.1 offers definitions of three broad ontological orientations typical within TA, and what the research is then assumed to capture, as well as offering some example questions.

Methods of Data Collection and Sample Size

The flexibility of TA means it is suitable to analyse a wide range of data types: TA can be used to analyse data from 'traditional' face-to-face data collection methods such as interviews (e.g. Niland et al., 2014) and focus groups (e.g. Neville et al., 2015). It can also be used with textual data from qualitative surveys (e.g. Hayfield, 2013; Terry and Braun, 2016), diaries (e.g. Leeming et al., 2013), story based methods such as vignettes and story completion tasks (e.g. Clarke et al., 2015b), as well as online discussion forums (e.g. Bennett and Gough, 2013), and other media sources (e.g. Frith, 2015). The most important aspect of data type or mode of collection is quality of the data. Rich and complex data on a given topic are the crown jewels of qualitative research, allowing us deep and nuanced insights. Quantity (e.g. sample size) is also a consideration, but should not be conflated with quality. Key in thinking about sample size in TA is to recognise that it produces accounts of patterns across the dataset (this is not intended as a case-study approach, although some researchers are using TA in case studies, see Cedervall and Åberg, 2010). Sample size is a fraught, contentious, and debated topic in qualitative research. We offer some broad indicative size recommendations across TA projects of different scale for reference in Table 2.2 – linked to student projects. However, what is deemed 'publishable' is an entirely separate, and also fraught, issue, often linked to an editor's view, but not necessarily shared by all qualitative scholars.

Possibilities for Coding

The flexibility of TA applies also to the analysis, where the researcher again needs to make some deliberate choices about their approach to data and analysis. One consideration is theoretical stance (as outlined above). Another is whether to approach the data *inductively* or *deductively* – either exclusively, or as a primary mode of engagement. Inductive coding and theme development involves working 'bottom up' from the data, and developing codes (and ultimately themes) using what is in the data as the starting point; the data provide the bedrock for identifying meaning and interpreting data. Of course, there is some fallacy in this idea, as the researcher is never a blank slate, and inevitably brings their own social position and theoretical lens to the analysis, but an inductive orientation signals a data-led analysis. In a deductive approach, the analytic starting point is more 'top down' – the researcher brings in existing theoretical concepts or theories that provide a foundation for 'seeing' the data, for what 'meanings' are coded, and for how codes are clustered to develop themes; it also provides the basis for interpretation of the data (Braun et al., 2015). A deductive orientation is less bound by the semantic meaning in the data than an inductive orientation.

Whether to focus *semantically* or *latently* (again, exclusively, or primarily) is a second analytic choice. In *semantic* coding, codes capture explicit meaning; they are identified at the surface level of the data. In *latent* coding, the codes capture implicit meaning, such as ideas, meanings,

Box 2.2 Semantic versus latent codes

Semantic (or descriptive) codes identify and summarise the content of the data. They are built around what participants *say*, mirroring their meanings. They capture the surface meanings of the data, but that does not need to equate to a superficial or purely descriptive reading. In the selection of codes in Table 2.3, semantic codes include 'having children limits capacity' and 'invested in being competent at job'.
Latent (or interpretative) codes go beyond participant-expressed meanings, to the underlying patterns/stories in the data. They tend to bring the analyst's theoretical frameworks to bear on the data, and are built around concepts that help explain the data, and thus require more interpretation or insight. In Table 2.3, some latent codes including 'still engaging in features of the feminine role' and 'reluctance to engage in superwoman/supermum position'.

concepts, assumptions which are not explicitly stated; a 'deeper' level of analysis is required to code in this way (see Box 2.2). In the early stages of coding, particularly for those new to qualitative analysis, the analysis is often more semantic/surface. However, with 'immersing yourself in' the data – and/or becoming more experienced – analysis can develop towards a more latent orientation. The appropriateness of each approach needs to fit with research question, and overall theoretical framework too: on the whole, more experiential and realist approaches align with inductive and semantic approaches to coding and theme development; more critical and relativist research often requires more deductive and latent analysis. But we are not suggesting that one approach is inherently superior to another – what is crucial is that the approach to coding is appropriate to the analytic purpose and research question.

DOING TA: DESCRIPTION AND WORKED EXAMPLE OF PHASES OF ANALYSIS

Our version of TA involves a six-phase analytic process. We use the term 'phase' to highlight that TA, like most approaches to qualitative analysis, is not a strictly linear process. Instead, it is iterative and recursive: the researcher often moves back and forth between the different phases. The first phase of TA, **familiarising with the data**, is a process that can begin during data collection. The second phase involves **generating codes** to immerse the researcher more deeply in the data and create the building blocks of analysis. It is likely that as coding progresses, the researcher starts to see similarities and notice patterns across the data. However, it is important to stay focused on coding the entire dataset before moving from coding to **constructing themes** in the third phase. The themes the researcher develops at this point are like draft versions of a piece of writing – not fixed, and flexibly open to change – with the fourth phase involving **reviewing potential themes**. There are a number of techniques and questions to guide progress to **defining and naming themes**, and then finally developing the entire analysis during the sixth and final phase, **producing the report**. Writing the report offers the final opportunity to make changes that strengthen the analysis and effectively communicate the analyst's story of the data.

Familiarisation and Coding (Phases 1–2)

Familiarisation, a process common across many qualitative analytic approaches, is the bedrock for doing good TA. Familiarisation provides the researcher with an entry point into analysis – it's a way of engaging with, and gaining insight into, what can sometimes appear to be an overwhelming mass of data. When done poorly, or not at all, the rest of the analysis often suffers. So as tempting may it be, skipping over familiarisation, or only doing it once over lightly, does not provide the best launching pad for a high quality TA.

Familiarisation is the researcher's first opportunity for what's referred to as immersion in the dataset. While the term evokes a very passive, and possibly terrifying-sounding, process, like floating in a tank of water, it is nothing like that. Familiarisation is about intimately knowing the dataset – this facilitates a deep engagement with the data. It requires the researcher to get into a mode of reading that actively engages with the data as data – this means being observant, noticing patterns or quirks, starting to ask questions, and so on, rather than *just* absorbing the information therein, as when reading a good crime novel. In practice, this means reading and re-reading all textual data, making casual observational notes. It might involve (re)listening or (re)watching, if the dataset is audio or video.

This first phase is about generating very early and provisional analytic ideas, and this requires being curious, and asking questions of the data. The sorts of questions vary by form of TA, combined with the research question: they could be about the way participants orient themselves to questions; about assumptions they make; about worldviews they are drawing from; about the implications of their accounts for themselves and those around them; about (more semantically) the different emotional responses to the research topic; and so on (but keeping the general research question in mind). Familiarisation involves moving through the entire dataset. Keeping notes (e.g. in transcript margins; in a separate notebook) ensures these early analytic observations are remembered and can be referred back to. To make the most of this process, the researcher can synthesise observations and notes into ideas or insights related to the dataset as a whole, related to the research focus. Box 2.3 provides examples of familiarisation notes from the child-freedom

Box 2.3 Familiarisation notes from one interview and the entire dataset

Examples of familiarisation notes from interview with P17 (Pseudonym 'Millers')

-Holds strong opinion that pregnancy will ruin your life.
-She loves working with children, but does NOT want them at home.
-Sleep, silence, and space are all-important.
-Speaks a lot about her independence and unconventionality, a lot of examples deployed.
-Demands excellence from herself – couldn't live current life with children without something giving way.
-Views children as innately good, but would only settle for a *great* one. Gamble is too much.
-Being grown up is about responsibility, putting yourself second.
-Sees others who have had children, lives not ruined, but different expectations of self.

Examples of familiarisation notes for the entire dataset

-Often quite individualised, neo-liberal rhetoric, being childfree framed simply as a choice/lifestyle choice.
-Elsewhere there is contradictory framing: Born that way/essential ontological state (non-accountable, no agency).
-Precariousness of the stories, not a central identity, not a master status, not an identity category.
-Being childfree gives freedom, flexibility and control (but really unclear what this is from or for).
-Criticisms of contemporary parenting culture.
-Deterioration of children's behaviour in recent decades – children are spoilt and over-indulged (and this makes children unlikeable/this is why I don't like children), all children are a constant noise and relentless, children keep coming back, you can't get rid of them (out of the house) these days.
-Not stigma in an obvious sense of being abused or harassed, but a sense of childlessness being stigmatised/unspeakable.
-Stories of old people's homes and people not being visited by children, expecting a fully competent and able old age.

study – related to one single participant and then across all transcripts.

In the child-freedom study, the four researchers – Nikki Hayfield, Victoria Clarke, Sonja Ellis and Gareth Terry – each independently familiarised themselves with some or all the transcripts, and a research team meeting was held to discuss the insights generated. As Box 2.3 shows, one of the notes from across the dataset was about the precariousness of many of the women's accounts. When reading the transcripts, Gareth noted early on that many of the women spoke about the various points in their lives at which they might have had children, or stages where, if they had made different choices – such as when partners put them under pressure – it may have resulted in rethinking their identity as childfree. This stood out to him, as in his previous research with vasectomised childfree men (see Terry and Braun, 2012), the participants instead emphasised a distinct, lifelong, unyielding resistance to children, a much more fixed identity. This demonstrates the way research is a subjective process (this is illustrated further in Box 2.4, where Nikki and Gareth reflect on what they brought to the project, and how it impacted on their analytic process). An overenthusiastic researcher might take a familiarisation noticing like this, and attempt to turn it into a theme early on, before it has been identified across the data. There are two risks of a 'fast and loose' approach like that, which impacts quality: (1) the risk of 'cherry picking', or selectively choosing data to suit an argument; and (2) not providing the best explanation for the data as a whole, the best answer to the research

Box 2.4 What you see in the data (to some extent) reflects who you are

Reflexivity is an important element of qualitative research because it enables researchers to consider the (inevitable) impact they have on data collection and analysis (Shaw, 2010). In order to be reflexive, it is useful to consider *personal* interest in the topic.

Nikki: I do not want children, and have been intrigued by the contentiousness of childlessness. I have encountered strong responses to my decision that have consisted of two diametrically opposed reactions. Some have dismissed my decision and seemed to want to convince me that I would (and should) change my mind. Others, usually those who also did not want children, were particularly interested in my decision and keen to talk about the topic. My own personal experiences sensitised me to particularly noticing accounts in the dataset where participants reported that others had dismissed and challenged their decision to be childfree, because I had *similar* experiences. This was helpful because it provided me with insight into the data. On the other hand, women's accounts of being childfree that were very different to my own also stood out. I became particularly interested in some of these women negotiating their ongoing relationships when their partners wanted children - this was not an issue I had encountered, but one I would find difficult. What I noticed then, was partly informed by my own experiences and whether participants' accounts were resonant or discordant to mine. My position was a strength in that I had some particular insights that the rest of the team may not have had. However, were I working alone, or not being thorough, this could become a weakness, as there could be a risk that I overlooked some aspects of the dataset that were less striking in relation to my own experiences. As a research team we all noticed some patterns in the data, and all contributed our own additional 'noticings', informed by our own perspectives and our wider academic knowledge of the topic.

Gareth: My partner and I have been working through the decision not to have children for some time. As a small part of this process, I included men who had had 'pre-emptive' vasectomies in my PhD research (see Terry and Braun, 2012), to try and academically 'unpick' why other men had made a decision I was personally interested in. Due to this academic and other personal experience, I had a number of ideas about 'childfree' as a category coming into the project. But these ideas were not always reflected in the data we were generating. One of these idea 'conflicts' was surprising to me: the identities of the women seemed more fluid, or they felt more ambiguous about their decision, than the men that I had interviewed in the previous project. I started to see this everywhere, and was sure it would end up being a theme. This had the potential to be a trap, and one that new players (and even experienced researchers pressed for time!) can easily fall into. Being part of a diverse team of people, with various levels of experience, helped here, as we were able to put the brakes on and examine what was going on together, bringing the insights of our experience and various social positions (mine being heavily marked as privileged: white, ostensibly middle class, heterosexual, and male) to the data. Although the kernel of the idea I was seeing *was* prevalent, it was only a very small part of the overall picture. Through the systematic work of coding and bringing our broader theoretical understandings to the data we were able to identify a meaningful pattern with greater explanatory power.

question. This approach does not provide the evidence needed for a quality TA.

Having developed a sense of the overall dataset, the researcher now begins **generating codes**. Where familiarisation was a process of making casual observational notes, coding is the systematic and thorough creation of meaningful labels attached to specific segments of the dataset – segments that have meaning relevant to the research question. Coding involves identifying these relevant data within each data item, and then 'tagging' them with a few words or a pithy phrase (e.g. hates the idea of pregnancy) that captures the meaning of that data segment to the researcher. As noted above, codes vary in what they capture or highlight, from the semantic obvious meaning through to more latent or conceptual ideas (see Box 2.2 for examples).

Good coding is open and inclusive, identifying and labelling all segments of interest and relevance within the dataset, and everything that is of relevance within those segments. Sometimes a data segment might be tagged with more than one code; other segments might not be coded at all, as they have no relevance to the research question. This latter point is particularly important: TA does not require the researcher to code every line of data (some other approaches do advocate this). There are no 'right' or 'wrong' codes: codes generated need to be meaningful to the researcher, capturing *their* interpretations of the data, in relation to their research question. However, it is good to remember that coding is a process both of data reduction (a way to reduce down and start to synthesise a mass of data), and a way of starting to organise the data and researcher observations of it into patterns. So a good code (label) ideally contains enough information about the content of that data extract, and sometimes analytic interpretation, that it is meaningful without needing to refer back to the data. We've called this the 'take away the data' test (Braun and Clarke, 2013). This might seem annoyingly pedantic, but it becomes particularly important later in the process, when developing themes from codes.

Table 2.3 gives an example of a coded data extract for the child-freedom project. The broadly semantic codes (e.g. quality of life would be impacted) reflect what the participant ('Millers') explicitly said about, and the meanings *she* ascribed to, being childfree. More latent codes capture ideas or concepts embedded within, or underpinning, the explicit content (e.g. resistance to engaging in superwoman/supermum position). Millers did not talk explicitly about a supermum/superwoman discourse – the notion that women should be able to be primary caregivers of their children, hold down a full-time job, and still do both with high levels of competence (e.g. Sasaki and Hazen, 2010). However, this concept was useful for making sense of her logic when she talked about 'spreading herself thin' – an idea that is part of the discourse.

The coding process is iterative and flexible, and code revision and development is part of this. Codes developed later in the process might capture a particular concept more clearly than earlier ones, and researchers tend to refine and revise codes throughout the process – it pays not to get too attached too early on (this is a bit of a mantra for doing our version of TA). The researcher often circles back through data items to clarify, or modify, earlier coding, which also helps with coding consistency – avoiding having hundreds or even thousands of unique codes with lots of overlap.

Coding is there to help the analyst make sense of the data, develop insight, and provide a rigorous and thorough foundation for the analysis (it can also help to tighten or modify a research question). In terms of the practicalities of coding, we recommend researchers use whatever method works best for them: write codes in the margins of hard copies of the data items; use Microsoft Word's comment function; use computer software designed for qualitative coding (see Chapter 23) to tag and collate data. People also use file cards, or cut and paste (either physically or digitally) data segments into new files or onto clean pages. Recently, we have seen people start to claim that computer programs provide the *best* way to code. We definitely do not agree with this sentiment as a generic position. Any researcher needs to identify the right tools for them, in the context of their particular project. For instance, software might facilitate code sharing and development in a large team project; a low-tech researcher working on a small individual project may find file cards work best for them. Coding is a process not a technology, and the same quality can be achieved through various means. Poor quality coding is thin, with limited interpretative work, and/or sloppy – inconsistent and partial; good quality coding is the opposite, deep, consistent and thorough.

After coding all data items thoroughly, this phase ends with the production of a compiled list of codes that adequately identify both patterning and diversity of relevant meaning within the dataset. Collating associated tagged data segments is the last task before moving on to theme development.

Theme Development (Phase 3)

Establishing a deep understanding of the dataset through familiarisation and coding sets up the

Table 2.3 Example of coding of P17 ('Millers')

Data	*Code*
I could do a different job but I wouldn't be able to do the job that I do and enjoy and have a child. There just isn't enough in me to do that, or to do either well.	Having children limits capacity Invested in being competent at job
I think you know I would be spreading myself really thin in that respect, and also that would mean giving up my salary and I earn a decent wage and I enjoy the trappings that that allows me. You know if we want to go on holiday we can go on holiday, we can afford a nice car, we can afford a nice flat.	Reluctance to engage in superwoman/supermum position Quality of life would be impacted Loss of lifestyle more than gain from having a child
I wouldn't want to trade any of those in for having a child and I think (pause) people automatically become (pause) more selfless when they have a child and something that I've always taken great issue with people saying how not having children is selfish.	Acceptance of 'selfless parent' discourse Questioning selfish/selfless binary Resists pronatalist argument
I've always thought that's a really odd one and (laughs) that selfish implies that somebody is missing out on something, surely I'm the only one that's missing out on anything if I'm missing out at all but you know, and that sense that I can put myself and my boyfriend first.	Putting partner before self and relationship highly valued Still engaging in features of feminine role
He is my priority, he's my priority over myself and I really cherish that relationship, and from the outside looking into it, it would feel like there's no part of that that I would want changed and I've seen couples who	Having children negatively affects intimacy Relationship focus changes from partner focus to children focus
have children and what their relationship was like before and what it's like after, and in some ways they're closer, but in other ways, you know, they don't have time for each other, they don't have patience for each other, they don't have that kind of quiet intimacy. You know of just sitting reading the papers in silence for three hours	Good partnerships means quality, uninterrupted time Primacy of the dyadic relationship

Transcription notation: underline: participant emphasis; (pause): pause in speech; (laughs): laughter from speaker

researcher well to begin **constructing themes**. Rather than describing themes as 'emerging' (like Mr Darcy from a murky pond in the BBC version of *Pride & Prejudice*), we think of this phase as a very active process of pattern formation and identification. The researcher now builds on earlier engagement to shape a first version of salient patterning in the data. The research question acts as a guide for this, as it helps determine what is, and what is not, relevant in terms of potential clusters of patterned meaning. It provides a foundation for the researcher, as they make choices about what data segments are relevant, and what is important to say about them, ensuring the themes tell a coherent and relevant story about the data. As qualitative data are often rich and enticing, it is easy to get lost in analysis; keeping oriented to the research question helps keep the analysis relevant.

Theme development first involves examining codes (and associated data), and combining, clustering or collapsing codes together into bigger or more meaningful patterns. Sometimes, this is as simple as identifying a rich and complex code that

potentially captures a number of other codes within its boundaries – such codes can be 'promoted' into a provisional theme (Charmaz, 2000). More commonly, thinking and effort is required to identify features of similarity and relationship across a range of different codes that means they can be clustered together into a possible theme. In this process, the researcher needs to identify a *central organising concept* – a 'clear core idea or concept that underpins a theme' (Braun et al., 2015, p. 102) – that is shared across the range of codes. This central organising concept helps the researcher determine what a theme is all about, and whether or *not* any particular code fits within it. This is not because of some essence or hidden value that the researcher uncovers; rather it helps the researcher gain clarity about what sense they are making of the codes and the data. Key to remember at this stage is that patterning has to be identified *across* your dataset – not just within a single data item.

At this point in the analysis, it is really easy to get attached. But it is extremely rare that first attempts at theme development will produce a final thematic mapping. If themes emerged preformed, this might be an understandable way of looking at the process. However, as we view themes as constructed or generated through a productive, iterative, reflective process of data-engagement, it makes more sense to treat each clustering of codes as possibilities. At this stage, they are provisional or 'candidate' themes – imagining them as candidate themes gives the researcher the opportunity to discard them, to explore other possibilities, before eventually settling on a final set of themes.

In order to facilitate this process of shifting mapping of various patterns, we encourage researchers to make use of visual aids, such as thematic maps (see Figure 2.1) (see also, Braun and Clarke, 2013; Braun et al., 2015) or tables (see Table 2.4). As with coding, such (visual) mapping aids are tools that enhance the researcher's ability to identify and understand potential themes in relation to each other, and the overall dataset. Such tools provide a way of identifying what the boundaries of, and the relationships between, each theme might be, as well as how different themes work together to tell an overall story about the data. Good quality themes should be distinctive, with little 'bleeding' of codes between themes; themes should also be linked to, and work alongside, the other themes in the analysis – and each needs to have its own distinct central organising concept. Which mapping tools the researcher uses to construct themes, how they work with those tools, and whether they ever present the maps or tables in a research write-up, is dependent on what works best for them – and the context of the study (we, for instance, would be unlikely to report thematic maps, unless we were writing a methodological piece, like this one, but encourage undergraduate and postgraduate students to do so in the appendices of their projects).

In the child-freedom study, the idea of a 'precarious identity' noted earlier continued to appear across the dataset. Women spoke of the decision to be childfree as one that wasn't always straightforward, linear, or even at times, coherent. One of the women, Mary, spoke of this 'precariousness' in terms of percentages: 'We might have a really nice interaction with a child and you're like "ooh I'm seventy-five percent today" or "sixty percent today"' (see Box 2.6). Thus, following a thorough coding, we did have evidence of a prevalent pattern across the data (a large number of data extracts across different interviews), and therefore a potential candidate theme – this addressed an important aspect of the lived experiences of

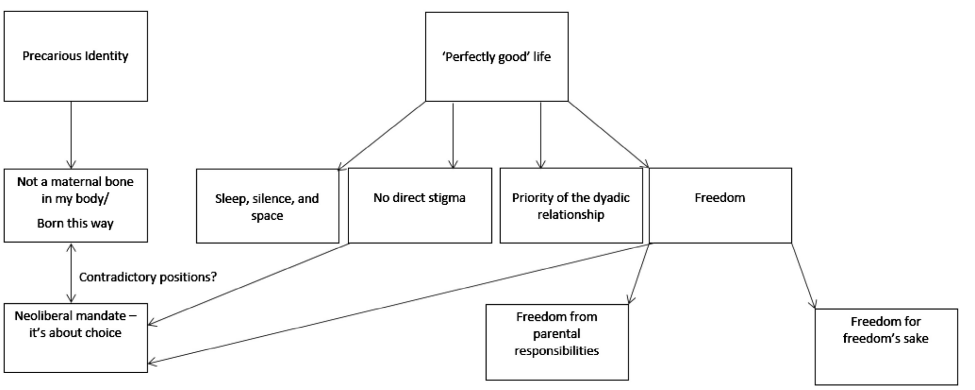


Figure 2.1 An early thematic map

Table 2.4 Four candidate themes from the child-freedom study, with example codes

Theme 1: A 'precarious identity'	*Theme 2: A 'perfectly good life'*	*Theme 3: Childfree position as marginalised*	*Theme 4: 'Not a maternal bone in my body'*
• Precarious identity position • Keeping options open (not getting sterilised) • Can't make decision for older self • Percentages for/against having children • Not always sure • Risk to relationship means rethinking childfree status • Twinges of regret, but never enough to want children • Wants grandchildren without the hard work of parenting • Balancing freedom of not having children/family with isolation of not having family/children	• Children as self-sacrifice • 'Perfectly good life' as free of children • Children ruin your life • Life cannot remain the same • Inevitable upending change • Anger over 'unfair' responsibility – looking after siblings when a child • Unrestricted freedom/ time/career options • Unmitigated freedom to be self • Time consuming hobbies open to childfree • Children are expensive by default • Choosing jobs easier as less ties • Children negatively affect intimacy • Loss of lifestyle more than gain from having a child	• Organising holidays is more expensive (package holidays are for families or the old) • Has to tolerate children's spaces for sake of relationships with friends • Childfree people expected to adapt to others' children even though chosen not to have children • 'Oh you'll change your mind' • Trouble getting sterilised • Explicit denial of stigma • Booked holidays 'usurped' by workmate with children • Not fitting in with friends whose identity is now focused on parenting • Being asked to take holidays at a different time to accommodate those with children	• Hard to fathom why anyone would want children • 'Lacks' the ingredients to do such a difficult task • Not an identity, a state • Sisters have 'something' she does not • External 'reminders' to have kids (i.e. friends getting pregnant) – not internal • No biological urge

childfree women. Two other candidate themes we generated also related to the lived experiences of childfree women: first, that children would interfere with the freedoms and quality of life the women enjoyed; second, that living in a pronatalist society meant they experienced marginalisation, but simultaneously, they would often deny any explicit stigma. All three themes spoke, centrally, to our research question, which was to '*explore the lived experience of voluntary childlessness across the life course for a diverse group of women*'. A fourth candidate theme 'not a maternal bone in my body' (see Table 2.4) captured a prevalent meaning, but proved not to be of value to the research question, because it related more to women's initial reasons for not having children, rather than to their current lived experiences of being childfree. This discrepancy was addressed as we reviewed and defined our (candidate) themes.

Reviewing and Defining Themes (Phases 4–5)

With codes collated and a table or thematic map of candidate themes developed, the researcher can be tempted to draw the conclusion that they've got their themes, and all that's required is a little polishing. However, the analysis so far has only developed *candidate* themes – the next phases of **reviewing** and **defining** are a vital part of the TA process, as the themes are further shaped, clarified, or even rejected. The **reviewing** phase is like a quality control exercise, to ensure that the themes work well in relation to the coded data, the dataset, and the research question. In some instances, the review of themes alongside the dataset confirms that they actually do work well and tell a distinctive and meaningful story that answers the research question. If so, fantastic. But more commonly, and particularly for novice analysts, or those working with larger datasets, the review process leads to adjustments to the candidate themes and/or thematic map, or even considerable further analytic work – sometimes at this stage, the researcher even starts theme development afresh.

The first stage of review involves checking whether your candidate themes capture the meaning in the collated, coded data segments. Does the analysis work at this level? For each candidate theme, this means that all the data extracts

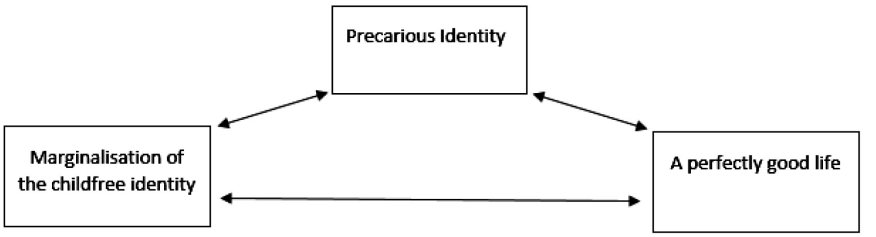


Figure 2.2 A final thematic map

that this theme represents are clearly related to the central organising concept of the theme, and that the diversity of meaning around this central organising concept is captured. This applies for each candidate theme, and across all the candidate themes. Basically, each theme needs to 'account for' the important things captured by the coded data relevant to the central organising concept, and the *range* of those important meanings, and each theme needs to be distinctive. Mismatch between what is contained in data extracts, and what the researcher claims those extracts demonstrate (which could reflect poor coding, or poor theme development), either produces a poor quality analysis, or a headache for the researcher later, when they have to redo the analysis. This reviewing phase also requires the researcher to check that their candidate themes work well across the whole dataset – so going back to the entire dataset, rather than just working with the collated coded segments. The analysis has moved on since coding; rereading the dataset helps ensure nothing has been missed, and that as the analysis has been developed, it has not moved too far away from the key (often most prevalent) stories in the data. It asks the researcher to evaluate whether their themes meaningfully and usefully capture what the dataset itself (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

There is a balance between making sure that themes are distinct from each other, and ensuring that they relate to each other. The research builds an overall story about the data through the themes they present. If themes are distinctive, most of the codes will only be allocated to one theme. If many are allocated to more than one theme, they risk blurriness – note that this is not the same as having the same segment of data coded in different ways. Reviewing analysis involves making choices about the best and sharpest boundaries for inclusion and exclusion. In our analysis of the child-freedom data, we could have included the code 'no biological urge' in the 'precarious identity' theme, as the data (partly) related to women's discussions of certainty about being childfree. However with review, there were enough data and diversity around this code to develop it as a theme in its own right – it became 'not a maternal bone in my body'. This example demonstrates the utility of the central organising concept in theme review: the central organising concept of 'not a maternal bone in my body' is a 'fundamental' lack of desire for children, which was often articulated as something biological. This central concept is quite distinct from that of the 'precarious identity' theme (discussed above). Our finalised thematic map (Figure 2.2) visually captures this development in our TA from the earlier map, based on our review process.

The final review consideration is whether the story told through the themes answers the research question. If the analysis is strong and captures the meaning in the data well, but does not quite fit the research question, this may mean tweaking the research question, rather than restarting the analysis. How is that not cheating? The open and unanticipated nature of data in qualitative research means the researcher's imagining of the data they will get – which is captured by the research question – often falls somewhat off the mark. The stories the researcher hears from participants, for instance, can show that the original research questions were limited, or did not quite provide the best question to capture the data. This openness and flexibility to shift focus is one of the joys of qualitative research, and one of the reasons why researchers value it over more fixed or closed response modes common in quantitative research.

The reviewing process is continued as the researcher moves into **defining and naming themes**. By this point in the analysis, the researcher should have started to move away from a summative position (thinking about these themes as lists of codes and collated data) to an interpretative orientation. This involves telling a story that is based on, and about, the data, that makes sense of the patterning and diversity of meaning. This involves writing the analysis – the analytic narrative that

encases the presented data extracts. This phase is about ensuring clarity, cohesion, precision and quality of the developing TA. If themes are still not clear, the practice of writing short theme definitions can help determine clarity and scope (content) for each theme, and provide a stronger sense of each 'chapter' of the analytic story, and is also a good time to double check that each theme coheres tightly around a central organising concept. Theme definitions are short summaries of the core idea and meaning of each theme – like an abstract for each theme (see Box 2.5). The process of writing definitions can confirm whether there is enough depth and detail for each theme to stand alone as a key chapter in the analytic story. If a theme is too thin, there will not be much to say. If it's a bit like listening to one music track over and over, rather than a playlist of great songs, the theme probably is not working as it should. A theme, since it captures richness and diversity around the core meaning, should provide lots to write about (as the example in Box 2.5 shows), rather than a line or two. A thin theme might need to be dropped from the analysis, unless it can be expanded and enriched by going back to the coded data/dataset without being forced. Another question is whether it might work as a subtheme. A subtheme captures a distinct aspect of a theme, but shares the same central organising concept – hence it is not a standalone theme. The theme definition exercise might also reveal the opposite: too much to say about the data, which may mean the meanings contained are too complex, or they lack coherence and a unifying thread. If so, revision might involve splitting a theme, developing clear subthemes, or discarding it. The quality checklist for good TA (see Table 2.5) offers useful pointers around this.

Most researchers will have given their themes working titles – titles that are far more engaging than 'theme 1', 'theme 2'. We suggest (again) keeping these as 'working titles' until this final stage. Some of us really like engaging, sometimes witty, theme names. But coming up with these early on, means we can find it hard to let go of them, even when they do not work well with the finalised themes. Researchers should ask whether another – or a refined – name better captures each theme. In the child-freedom study, the theme 'a precarious identity' was originally called 'ambiguous identity'. As we developed our analysis and defined the theme more clearly, it became apparent that the women did not feel ambiguous about their decision per se; they were clear and confident in their decision not to have children in the present time. Rather, at other points in the interview, many seemed to be open to reconsidering their decision if circumstances changed in the future (see Box 2.5). The term 'precarious' better suited the content of the data than the word 'ambiguous', because although the identity was clear now, it wasn't necessarily fixed for eternity. Theme names need to give a clear indication of the content within the theme, and draw the reader into the analysis. Given our noted predilection for fun names, we like incorporating data quotations, or using alliterations or plays on words in theme names. But straightforward descriptive theme names work better than a 'fun' name that does not capture the theme.

Producing the Report (Phase 6)

At the point the researcher gets to **produce the report**, they will have already done a lot of

Box 2.5 An example of theme definition for 'childfree as a precarious identity'

Our participants self-identified as childfree by choice and at some points in the interviews they were clear and confident about the absolute certainty of their decision to be childfree. However, in other parts of the interviews, it became clear that they were open to possible change in the future – they were 'keeping their options open'. For example, some women talked about not being willing for they, or their partners, to be sterilised. They also articulated the relevance of their partner, or future partners, in their decision to be childfree. They made clear that their relationships were of great importance to them, such that a compromise about children may become necessary to maintain the relationship. It was clear that their childfree identity existed within the wider context of a pronatalist society. Women with children, and others including authoritative figures such as doctors, reiterated to them the possibility that they could (and should) change their minds. This meant that while they articulated their decision as permanent, they also reflected on their childfree identities, and described them (also) as potentially negotiable. Hence their position as childfree was provisionally open to possible change, and not as fixed as it may have first seemed at the beginning of the interview. There was liminality to their childfree identity; it was an identity category that was worked, reworked, and constantly in negotiation, and in this way, it seemed precarious rather than entrenched.

writing – qualitative analysis involves writing from early on. Familiarisation notes, codes, theme definitions, and a broad range of other writing, all help in the development of the final analysis, be it a journal article, short report, or dissertation/thesis. The reason we discuss this as a separate phase for TA is that there is a distinct final period of focus and refinement, where the researcher weaves together data, analysis, and connections to scholarly (and other) literature into a singular output that answers their research question(s). Here, the researcher moves from a 'purely' analytic point in the research process, coming back to the bigger picture of the overall project.

A key decision – which often is effectively made earlier in the analytic process – is how any quoted data extracts are treated. Broadly, there are two styles for writing around data in TA: illustrative and analytic. If data extracts are used primarily as examples within the analytic narrative, evidence from the data that illustrates key elements of the story, they are being used *illustratively*. Writing *analytically* about the data is quite different: particulars of extracts are discussed by the researcher, with specific aspects or features forming the basis for analytic claims. Many analyses contain both styles, and there is often some blurring between the two, such as some analytic commentary about extracts otherwise used illustratively. Our example in Box 2.6 illustrates both styles in relation to the 'precarious identity' theme. We treat the first two extracts illustratively: Mary and Annie's words provide examples of the points made in our analytic write-up. We treat Louise's account initially

Box 2.6 Excerpt from the write-up of the 'precariousness' theme showing data extracts used illustratively and analytically

Many of the women spoke about their childfree identity as something that began forming at a very early age, or even something they had been 'born with'. This bears some similarity to the accounts of men in Terry and Braun's (2012) study, who argued their vasectomies were simply a physical manifestation of a longstanding (and complete) rejection of fatherhood. However, in contrast to these men, almost all of the female participants in our study discussed moments of precariousness in their childfree identity. For instance, Mary and her male partner would speak about their 'sureness' in terms of percentages:

Mary: We might have a <u>really</u> nice interaction with a child and you're like 'ooh I'm seventy-five percent today' or 'sixty percent today' (36, white, middle class, heterosexual).

In many cases, the significance of these moments of precariousness would be minimised, as if they were simply brief moments, easily moved past. Annie spoke of a desire for children as like a 'radio signal' that would sometimes come into range, but would disappear just as quickly:

Annie: [S]ometimes when I've been in the supermarket and I see a gorgeous lit- I mean just today I was I saw a little gorgeous little girl going all mushy with her mother and I thought 'how sweet' and I just, and then it I just moved on to think of something else. It's like that thing of 'ooh I fancy some ice cream' and five minutes later you've completely forgotten about it (58, Jewish, middle class, heterosexual).

For others though, it was a little more complicated. Even when they had no strong interest in children, external factors, such as a partner desiring children, would create a precariousness that was harder to dismiss. For instance:

Louise: I don't regret my decision though

Int: Yeah but it it's been a pretty constant thing?

Louise: It's been a constant thing. I mean at one point I was in a relationship with another woman who really wanted a child and so I was trying to help her get pregnant and I felt very, very ambivalent through that process because I knew she wanted me to co-parent and I wasn't <u>that</u> comfortable with it (59, white, middle class, lesbian).

Here, Louise describes her internal state, her own orientation toward being childfree, as 'constant'. Elsewhere in the interview, she pinpointed a moment at twelve years old as her first point of awareness of not wanting children. In this account though, the desire of her partner to have children created conflict with her 'internal' state. Despite strong assertions of the constant nature of her childfree identity, she describes her co-parenting in minimally resistant terms ('I wasn't <u>that</u> comfortable with it'). Such 'moments' can be understood in terms of the dominance of the 'motherhood mandate' (Giles, Shaw and Morgan, 2009), and the potential this can have to override earlier decision making and identity processes, especially when a partner is involved.

in an illustrative way, but we then shift to an analytic style, making analytic points about specific details of her data extract, and building connections to literature. A simple test illustrates the difference between these styles: can you remove an extract and have the narrative still make sense? If yes, the style is illustrative; if no, analytic. Mary and Annie's extracts in Box 2.6 could be removed and the reader would still follow the argument; the analytic writing following Louise's extract only makes sense if the reader can see her quotation.

QUALITY

When supervising students and looking at published examples of TA, we often identify problems – many of which we have discussed above. One of the most common problems is inconsistency between the theoretical approach claimed by the researcher and the analysis that is actually presented. For example, new-to-qualitative researchers might claim their research has been informed by a social constructionist perspective, yet the way they analyse their participants' words treats language as though it is a direct conduit to the participants' experience (i.e. a realist perspective). For people new to such theoretical frameworks, a way to tackle this kind of problem is to spend time reading peer-reviewed literature from that position – it can also be good to look at the counter-position as well. This helps identify the ways writers describe their participants' words and the claims they make from them. We have also noticed the use of combinations of different versions of TA, which are theoretically and/or methodologically incompatible (e.g. discussing a code book when the author's claims to be doing TA according to Braun and Clarke, 2006). Another issue we see, from particularly novice analysts, is 'themes' which are actually the questions participants have been asked about – such 'themes' usually contain quite diverse or even contradictory answers to the questions, rather than reporting a shared, cohesive meaning across the dataset. Another common problem is when features of the data, or data domains, are presented as themes (Connelly and Peltzer, 2016; Sandelowski and Leeman, 2012). For example, talk about biology was a *feature* of the child-freedom data, but without additional content related to how biological explanations were used to frame childfree positions, 'biology' on its own was not particularly useful. More analysis is needed in such instances to draw out what about these features may be interesting and important, and to develop a theme around a clear central organising concept. Our checklist for good TA (see Table 2.5) is a useful

Table 2.5 15-point checklist for a good TA (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 96)

Process	*No.*	*Criteria*
Transcription	1	The data have been transcribed to an appropriate level of detail, and the transcripts have been checked against the tapes for 'accuracy'
Coding	2	Each data item has been given equal attention in the coding process
	3	Themes have not been generated from a few vivid examples (an anecdotal approach), but instead the coding process has been thorough, inclusive and comprehensive
	4	All relevant extracts for each theme have been collated
	5	Themes have been checked against each other and back to the original dataset
	6	Themes are internally coherent, consistent, and distinctive
Analysis	7	Data have been analysed – interpreted, made sense of – rather than just paraphrased or described
	8	Analysis and data match each other – the extracts illustrate the analytic claims
	9	Analysis tells a convincing and well-organised story about the data and topic
	10	A good balance between analytic narrative and illustrative extracts is provided
Overall	11	Enough time has been allocated to complete all phases of the analysis adequately, without rushing a phase or giving it a once-over-lightly
Written report	12	The assumptions about, and specific approach to, thematic analysis are clearly explicated
	13	There is a good fit between what you claim you do, and what you show you have done – i.e. described method and reported analysis are consistent
	14	The language and concepts used in the report are consistent with the epistemological position of the analysis
	15	The researcher is positioned as *active* in the research process; themes do not just 'emerge'

shorthand guide to ensure an analysis that is rigorous and robust (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

CRITICAL APPRAISAL

What are the strengths and weaknesses of TA? As noted previously, TA has been critiqued for not really being a particular or distinctive method, but as simply referring to a process for identifying patterns, something common to many qualitative approaches. Such critique relies on the conflation of method and methodology, where the former refers to tools for data analysis (as is the case for TA), and the latter refers to broader frameworks for research, which more or less predetermine factors like theoretical frameworks, orientation to data, modes of data collection, and so on. As we have discussed elsewhere (Braun and Clarke, 2013), most approaches to qualitative data analysis are really methodologies, and many of those oriented to identifying patterning in data do, indeed, share similarities in process with TA. But we do feel that TA offers qualitative researchers something specific (if not entirely unique) – a process for ensuring rigorous and systematic engagement with data, to develop a robust and defensible analysis, that is independent of any predetermined particular theoretical framework or cluster of other design considerations.

A bigger – but not unrelated – limitation relates not to what TA is, but to how it is sometimes used. In describing TA as a tool, we do not advocate its use outside of theory, or outside of interpretation – in purely descriptive, or in effectively summative, ways. But we see this happening. We fear that the idea that (good quality) qualitative research can proceed without a theory of what language is, and where meaning resides, and, indeed, what the relationship between the two is, stems from a paucity of engagement with qualitative research in learning environments. It may also be related to a failure to interrogate the commonsense idea that language is simply a mode of communication, reflective of reality (objective or subjective) and experience. We believe that we need to do better than that as a community of scholars, and ensure the theoretical foundations of our work are explicated – even if only briefly. However, by thinking about theory as a co-requisite, rather than a pre-requisite, TA can provide an easy entry-point into the wonderfully diverse world of qualitative researching. The clear set of steps our version of TA provides are also particularly helpful for the beginner: like the handrails around the edge of an ice rink, they provide a reassuringly firm grip when the world feels like it's slipping away in someone's first attempts on the ice. With experience, there is less need to cling to them in the same way, but they provide a foundation and guide that bounds good practice.

APPLICATIONS

TA has been used in almost every conceivable field of scholarship in the social and health sciences, and suits any subdiscipline and area where general qualitative research questions about experience, understanding, social processes, and human practices and behaviour make sense. We have noticed, in particular, a widespread uptake of TA in some of the applied areas of psychology – where researchers potentially have more realist-oriented research questions, and where qualitative research is often part of a larger mixed-method project, or directly intersects with policy development. It is rewarding to see that TA has clear value for such researchers, and offers a tool useful to practical application. But a more critical perspective is, however, often overlooked – possibly because, as noted at the start of the chapter, others writing around TA often situate it as a realist method. This is a shame, as the approach as we have articulated it works just as well within critical fields of scholarship – such as critical health and social psychology, or critical sexuality studies. Indeed, our own use of the approach predominantly falls within this camp (e.g. Adams et al., 2013; Braun, 2008; Braun and Clarke, 2006; Braun and Clarke, 2012; Braun et al., 2015; Braun et al., 2009; Braun et al., 2013; Clarke et al., 2015a; Clarke et al., 2015b; Clarke and Smith, 2015; Hayfield, 2013; Opperman et al., 2014; Terry and Braun, 2011: 6).

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Fast-becoming one of the most widely used methods of analysing qualitative data, we do not see a future where TA disappears. However, we anticipate clearer articulation of different *versions* of TA, and clarification of how approaches differ, and what similarities they share. We have also come across TA being used to conduct literature reviews, or for qualitative synthesis and systematic reviews (e.g. Cruzes and Dybå, 2011; Thomas and Harden, 2008), and for case study research (e.g. Cedervall and Åberg, 2010), and combining

TA with other methods (such as narrative analysis (Ronkainen et al., 2016) and visual analysis (Ponnam and Dawra, 2013), and these are areas that need further reflection. We are not sure case studies and qualitative synthesis really count as TA, and the theoretical and conceptual basis for identifying patterned meaning within both academic scholarship, and single cases, is somewhat different to identifying and interpreting patterned meaning in and across data. So, despite some questions to be resolved, including around conceptual muddiness and confusion, we see the future of TA as bright.

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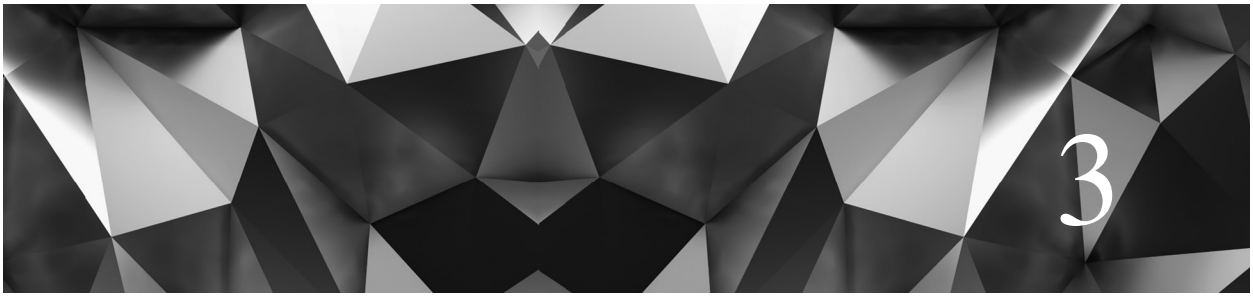

3

Ethnography

Christine Griffin and Andrew Bengry-Howell

INTRODUCTION

It is relatively unusual for textbooks on qualitative research in psychology to include a chapter on ethnography. Despite the rapid increase in the number of texts on qualitative research in psychology over the past twenty years, several key books on this subject still make no mention of ethnography (e.g. Hayes, 1997; Smith, 2003; Willig, 2001). A few texts with a focus on psychological research do cover ethnographic methods to some extent (e.g. Banister et al., 1994, 2011; Parker and the Bolton Discourse Network, 1999; Richardson, 1996). One general text covering a range of quantitative and qualitative approaches includes a chapter on 'ethnographic and action research' (Uzzell, in Breakwell, Hammond and Fife-Shaw, 2000). However, by the fourth edition the 'ethnography' chapter had disappeared, incorporated into a chapter on 'observational methods' (Dallos, 2012). A more notable recent example is *Doing Research in the Real World*, which includes a chapter on 'ethnography and participant observation' (Gray, 2014), although this text is more interdisciplinary, covering a range of quantitative and qualitative approaches to research across the social sciences.

Ethnography is more extensively covered in general social science texts on research methods (e.g. Bryman, 2004; Denscombe, 2003; Silverman, 1997, 2001), and of course ethnography is discussed in considerable depth in anthropological texts (e.g. Aull Davies, 1999; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Fetterman, 1998). This reflects the relatively greater influence of qualitative methods in general and ethnographic methods in particular within sociology, education and other social sciences compared to psychology. It is also a reflection of the 'selective forgetting' process that can assail psychologists. A number of the classic studies in psychology, and especially in social psychology, involve ethnographic and other observational methods, as discussed later in this chapter.

One important recent development has changed this state of affairs to some extent. The emergence of the net and the widespread (though by no means ubiquitous) use of social media poses a substantial challenge for all social science researchers, including psychologists (Riley et al., 2015). As Runswick-Cole points out in the second edition of the Banister text: 'as ethnography is essentially a multimethod approach, the rise in new technologies has opened up opportunities for ethnographic researchers' (Banister et al., 2011: 80). Recent work from psychologists on visual methods and the interpretation of visual images in qualitative research has contributed to these developments

(Mannay, 2015; Reavey, 2011). Research on the digital realm tends to be interdisciplinary, and qualitative approaches have played a key role in the development of online or digital ethnographies, which Robert Kozinets has referred to as 'netnography' (Bennett and Robards, 2014; Kozinets, 2010, 2015; Murthy, 2008; Snee et al., in press). As the internet has become more embedded in people's lives, the distinction between on- and offline research is less pronounced and many studies using ethnographic methods now combine offline and online elements (e.g. Morey, Bengry-Howell and Griffin, 2012).

HISTORY AND DEFINITIONS

Historical and Philosophical Context

The historical and academic context in which ethnography emerged is well documented. A good working shorthand definition of ethnography is 'participant observation', which anthropologists employed to immerse themselves in the culture of the society under investigation in order to describe life in that culture in depth (O'Connell Davidson and Layder, 1994). In many cases, anthropological studies employing ethnographic methods have involved 'First World' researchers investigating various 'Third World' communities. During the 1940s and 1950s, however, American sociologists linked to the University of Chicago used similar techniques to produce ethnographies of urban American working-class communities (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). William Whyte's *Street Corner Society* (1955) is a classic example of this approach. Whyte's study of the 'Norton Street gang' in Boston's North End focused on a group of young white working class American men. Since then, ethnography has been used widely across many areas of social science research, including psychology.

What of the philosophical underpinnings of ethnography? Contemporary ethnography belongs to a tradition of 'naturalism' which emphasizes the importance of understanding the meanings and cultural practices of people from within everyday contexts. This approach draws on the *verstehen* ('understanding') tradition of interpretative analysis (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). Naturalism can be contrasted with positivism, which treats people as objects of scientific investigation, such that the researcher aims to eliminate all traces of his or her 'subjective' bias (e.g. emotional responses, political beliefs, prejudices, expectations etc.) and aims to take an objective, detached 'scientific' stance. Although ethnographic research tends to be allied to the naturalistic tradition rather than to positivism, some ethnographers have also used this method in conjunction with a positivist approach (e.g. O'Connell Davidson and Layder, 1994).

Definitions

The first edition of *Qualitative Methods in Psychology* edited by Banister and colleagues includes a chapter describing ethnography as 'perhaps the original and quintessential qualitative research method' (Banister et al., 1994: 34). Denzin and Lincoln's *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (1994) locates ethnography very firmly at the centre of the qualitative research tradition, especially as developed in sociology and anthropology. Ethnography is variously defined (in *non-psychology* texts) as a form of observation involving qualitative methods of data collection and analysis, and usually a degree of participation by the researcher in the world that they are investigating. Hammersley and Atkinson's classic text *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* (1983), represents it as a process in which the researcher participates, overtly or covertly, in people's everyday lives for a sustained period, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions and collecting any other relevant information (see also Punch, 1998).

What are some of the defining features of ethnographic research? Ethnography focuses on cultural interpretation, and aims to understand the cultural and symbolic aspects of people's actions and the contexts in which those actions occur. Ethnographic research usually focuses on a specific group of people or a case involving culturally significant practices or actions. In addition, Punch (1998) and Denscombe (2003) identify several important features of the ethnographic approach:

a) Ethnography is founded on the assumption that the shared cultural meanings of a social group are vital for understanding the activities of any social group. The task of the ethnographic researcher is to uncover those meanings. For ethnographic researchers, routine and mundane aspects of everyday life are considered worthy of investigation as research data.
b) Ethnographic researchers are attuned to the meanings that behaviour, actions, contexts and events have from the perspective of those involved. Ethnography seeks an insider's perspective, aiming to understand a phenomenon from

the points of view of those involved – which can be diverse, complex and contradictory.

c) A specific social group or case will be studied in its 'natural' setting: i.e. not in the research laboratory or in an artificially manipulated or controlled environment. A full ethnography involving participant observation entails the researcher becoming part of this 'natural' setting for the duration of a study.
d) Ethnographic studies tend to be relatively loosely structured, evolving and developing over time in relation to the activities, events, cultural practices and priorities of the group being investigated. Research questions, hypotheses and data collection procedures may develop as the study proceeds, although most ethnographic studies begin with a set of research questions, an overall research design and a strategy for data collection and analysis.
e) Ethnography is a multi-method form of research, which can include structured or semi-structured questionnaires and/or interviews, non-participant through to full participant observation (PO), diaries, film or video records and official documents (Banister et al., 1994), and more recently a range of digital methods and technologies (Murthy, 2008). A sustained period of fieldwork is central to the ethnographic approach, in which the researcher spends substantial periods of time 'in the field', working or living alongside the research participants, or participating in online networks and communities in order to immerse themselves fully in the cultural and social milieu of those under investigation. Fetterman (1998: 35) defines PO as combining 'participation in the lives of the people under study with maintenance of a professional distance'.
f) Ethnographic research frequently involves prolonged periods of data collection. This is partly because it usually takes time for the researcher to become sufficiently familiar with the cultural world being studied. Ethnography tends to involve a holistic approach, emphasizing the interconnectedness between people and social processes. There is a commitment to avoid isolating aspects of a given culture or social process from the wider contexts in which it exists (Denscombe, 2003).
g) Ethnographers have devoted considerable attention to reflexivity: that is, they recognize that as researchers they are part of the social world they are studying and cannot avoid having an impact on the phenomena under investigation. Unlike many positivists or experimental researchers, ethnographers do not set out to deny their impact on the world they are studying, rather their aim is to understand this in a systematic and rigorous way as an inevitable part of the research process. (Aull Davies, 1999)

Increasingly, ethnographic researchers tend to draw on a social constructionist approach. That is, their accounts of the world of a specific group or culture being studied are viewed as skilled, informed and crafted constructions rather than as objective 'truths' about the world (Aull Davies, 1999; Burr, 1995; Clifford and Marcus, 1986).

Steier is an advocate of a constructionist approach in which researchers acknowledge their role in constructing the world of those they constitute as the subjects of their inquiry (Steier, 1991). Self-reflexivity, for Steier, is fundamental to the research process and challenges the researcher to create ways of relating research stories in which they, as teller of the tale, and the construction process itself, are made visible. Steier suggests that research should be viewed as a translation process in which a researcher attempts to build bridges of understanding between communities that speak a different language. Viewing research as 'translation' in this way, Steier argues, forces a de-privileging of the researcher's views and awareness that there are other perfectly legitimate accounts that fit, and indeed constitute, the world of its participants. Steier refers to 'participants' whom he engages with in his research as 'reciprocators' in an acknowledgement of the relational nature of a constructionist approach. He refers to the process of generating understanding of the world of his reciprocators as a co-constructive process in which they are actively involved.

ETHNOGRAPHIC AND OBSERVATIONAL METHODS IN PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Although ethnography is not a common approach in psychological research, some of the classic psychology studies have involved ethnographic and other observational methods. An early example of the use of observational methods in social psychology is the classic Marienthal study of the social and psychological impacts of long-term male unemployment on an Austrian community during the 1930s. The ground-breaking work of

Paul Lazarsfeld, Marie Jahoda, Hans Zeisel and their eleven colleagues involved a range of research methods, including semi-structured interviews and systematic observation (Jahoda, Lazarsfeld and Zeisel, 1972). This study emerged from a phenomenological strand in psychology and social science, operating from a realist perspective and a concern for social issues, especially the lives of subordinated and impoverished working class people.

Marienthal had been totally dependent on the textile industry, which collapsed in 1929. In late 1931 the research team began to collect all available material relating to the conditions of life among the inhabitants of the village (Lazarsfeld, 1932). This involved interviews, systematic participant observational methods as well as the collection of quantitative data. This combination of methods was chosen for ethical as well as empirical reasons. The researchers felt that asking the working class population of Marienthal to produce 'psychological self-observations' would probably prove distressing. As Marie Jahoda and colleagues (1972: 1) put it some forty years later, they aimed 'to find procedures which could combine the use of numerical data with immersion (*sich einleben*) into the situation … to gain such close contact with the population of Marienthal that we could learn the smallest details of their daily life'.

The researchers at Marienthal also made a principled decision to become involved in the daily life of the community they were studying in an attempt to 'give something back', but also to improve the quality of their empirical work. For example, free medical consultations were provided each week by a female paediatrician and an obstetrician, and research field-notes were kept on consulting room conversations, in order to combine research benefits for the team with medical benefits for the community (Fryer, 1987). The research team felt that 'no researcher should act as "a mere reporter or outside observer"' (Jahoda et al., 1972: 5), and the team spent a total of 120 working days in Marienthal.

The researchers classified participants into a number of categories intended to reflect their psychological and social responses to the long-term unemployment of adult men in the community. In Marienthal, some 70% of households were assigned to the category of 'resignation': involving an absence of plans or hopes for the future, although they also maintained their households, cared for their children and reported a feeling of relative wellbeing. In addition, some 2% of households were categorized as 'in despair' and a further 3% as 'apathetic', or involving 'complete passivity and absence of effort' (Fryer, 1987: 84). The remaining 23% of families were characterized by maintenance of the household, care of children, subjective wellbeing, plans for the future and continued attempts to find employment. The Marienthal researchers made a clear connection between the 'broken' attitude of families in despair and apathy, and the level of household income. In 1930s Austria, the unemployment relief laws meant that after a specified period, unemployment payments were replaced by emergency relief, which eventually ran out altogether. Some families in Marienthal therefore had no income whatsoever, and their experience of unemployment was particularly psychologically destructive as a consequence of this.

Some of the classic studies in the expanding arena of American social psychology following World War II involved observational methods. Festinger's participant observation study of a millenarian religious cult group, published as *When Prophecy Fails* (Festinger, Riecken and Schachter, 1956), examined cult members' responses when their cherished belief that the world would end in a catastrophic flood on a specific date was disconfirmed. Festinger and his colleagues and a number of hired observers pretended to be converts and joined the group as participant observers, gathering data covertly before and after the date on which the world was prophesied to end (Bryman, 2004).

In this study Festinger and colleagues intended to test the hypothesis that it is possible for people to hold a belief *more* strongly after that belief has been disconfirmed, provided that certain conditions are met. However, as we shall see later, Festinger's study involved covert observation, so the consent of participants was not obtained prior to the start of the project: indeed the 'genuine' cult members had no idea they were taking part in a research study. This scarcely conforms to current ethical guidelines according to which researchers are expected to obtain participants' informed consent, if possible, before conducting their investigations. This project did, however, provide important and influential evidence that counter-intuitively and under certain conditions, people can hold certain beliefs *more* strongly after they have been very obviously disconfirmed, and it might be argued that only an ethnographic approach could have provided evidence of this kind.

A later example of a classic psychology study involving a form of observational method is Rosenhan's 1973 'field stimulation' project, in which eight people attempted to gain access as patients to mental hospitals in the USA (Rosenhan, 1973). In such 'field stimulation' projects, the researcher intervenes directly in a 'natural' setting in order to observe what happens. Many of the classic US psychology studies of the 1930s, 1940s,

1950s and 1960s followed this format, frequently in an attempt to investigate socially and politically significant issues such as racial prejudice (e.g. Daniel, 1968; LaPiere, 1934).

Rosenhan's team of eight 'pseudo-patients', as they were known, approached twelve mental hospitals in total. Each said that they were hearing voices and all twelve were admitted to hospital, eleven out of the twelve with a diagnosis of schizophrenia. As soon as they had entered the hospitals, the twelve 'pseudo-patients' ceased exhibiting any 'symptoms' and the researchers then observed how long it took before these 'pseudo-patients' were discharged. The length of hospital stay varied from seven to 52 days, with a mean of 19 days, and the researchers observed a high percentage of psychiatrists (71%) and nurses (88%) ignoring the 'pseudo-patients' daily pleas regarding their sanity and requests for release.

'Field stimulation' projects differ from classic ethnographies in a number of respects. Firstly, participants in field stimulation studies are more likely to be unaware that they are being observed and studied. Secondly, field stimulation studies are usually more structured than ethnographic research projects, since the researchers are frequently expected to follow a strict series of actions and behaviours as part of a structured manipulation of events. In addition, field stimulation studies are usually associated with a positivist approach, whereas ethnographic research tends to be linked to the 'naturalistic' or interpretative tradition.

In addition to the use of ethnographic and other observational methods in some classic psychology studies, there are also many examples of ethnographic studies in related social science disciplines that nevertheless address issues of relevance for psychology. Examples cited here include Paul Willis's text *Learning to Labour* (1977), Erving Goffman's *Asylum* (1961), and more recently, anthropologist Daniel Miller's research text *Shopping, Place and Identity* (Miller et al., 1998) and Valerie Hey's feminist sociological study of girls' friendships *The Company She Keeps* (Hey, 1997). Paul Willis's *Learning to Labour* is generally viewed as a classic ethnographic study in the related fields of sociology, education and cultural studies, with an international influence that remains strong almost forty years after its publication (Dolby and Dimitriadis, 2004). We would also argue that, despite its prominence in the fields of cultural studies and the sociology of education, psychologists have something to learn from Willis's text.

Learning to Labour focused primarily on a group of young white working-class men Willis referred to as part of a 'counter-school culture': they called themselves 'the lads' (Willis, 2000). Willis followed 'the lads' through their last 18 months in the 5th form of a working-class state comprehensive school in the industrial English West Midlands during the mid 1970s. He interviewed boys in the school, as well as teachers, careers advisers and some parents, spending considerable periods of time 'hanging around' in the school's Youth Wing. Willis followed 'the lads' into employment, working alongside them for several weeks in predominantly low-paid and low-status manual factory jobs. His primary research interest was to try and understand why so many working class young men like these 'failed' in the state education system of the period.

What *Learning to Labour* focused on was the everyday lived culture of 'the lads': their opposition to the authority of teachers and their rejection of the conformist 'pro-school' route taken by those of their peers they referred to disparagingly as 'ear'oles' (Willis, 1977). The lads' assertively rough, brash masculine style, their celebration of their ability to 'have a laff' in even the most inauspicious circumstances, and their concerted opposition to academic work led them inexorably, Willis argued, into the sort of dead-end, low-paid manual jobs their fathers had done before them. What Willis later termed 'the tragic irony at the heart of their culture' led these young men to 'voluntarily' choose a life of hard manual labour (and later unemployment in most cases) that did them considerable physical, economic and psychological harm. Although Willis's analysis in *Learning to Labour* stressed the collective nature of the lads' counter-school culture, his work is equally relevant for social psychologists because he elucidates a process whereby people appear to act and think in ways that go against their own interests, in a way that appears to be irrational. The work of Willis and Festinger therefore has more in common than one might expect.

Willis's work has an additional connection with social psychology, since in 1979 the then Social Science Research Council (now the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)) funded a social psychologist (Christine Griffin, henceforth CG) to conduct a female version of 'Learning to Labour'. CG was based, like Willis, at Birmingham University's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, and the outcome of the study was published as *Typical Girls?* (Griffin, 1985). The study employed a combination of informal semi-structured interviews and systematic non-participant observation. Griffin found no direct equivalent to 'the lads'' anti-school culture leading young women into specific sections of the job market; however, she argued that young women faced parallel pressures to get a job and to 'get a man' as they negotiated the transition to adult (heterosexual) femininity (Griffin, 1986).

KEY ISSUES RELATED TO ETHNOGRAPHIC AND OBSERVATIONAL METHODS

Representation, Engagement and 'Bias'

O'Connell Davidson and Layder (1994: 185) argue that 'perhaps more than any other method, participant observation requires that we reject the notion of researcher as a detached "objective" scientist who manipulates the subjects of the research by controlling the variables that affect their behaviour'. However, this does not mean that the validity of ethnographers' interpretations of their data is not a crucial issue. The 'realist' perspective would aim to present an accurate and truthful picture of the social world under investigation. By watching people over time in different situations, by talking to them and others about what you have seen and how you interpret it, it is possible to obtain more reliable and richer data (O'Connell Davidson and Layder, 1994). This approach is typical of the early version of Grounded Theory, in which Glaser and Strauss (1967) argued that data should 'fit' the theory closely. That is, the researchers' concepts and categories of analysis should emerge from the data and not be 'imposed' upon it as a consequence of the researchers' theoretical perspective (or political views). Grounded Theory also argues that researchers' interpretations of field data should be recognizable to the people taking part in the study.

O'Connell Davidson and Layder (1994) identified a substantial problem with this latter thesis when they discussed the social and structural relations of power and domination that pervade the social context in which all research takes place. Participants' perspectives on the social worlds they inhabit will necessarily be structured by 'macro' issues such as social class, racialization, gender and sexuality. The usual focus of ethnographers on the 'micro' level of social relations between individuals in social groups can lead them to neglect the significance of these wider issues of power and control. O'Connell Davidson and Layder (1994) argue that both micro and macro aspects of any situation must be recognized and reflected in ethnographic research.

Paul Willis, a passionate advocate of the benefits of ethnographic research and Editor of the academic journal *Ethnography*, treats the researcher's 'history, subjectivity and social positioning as a vital resource for the understanding of, and respect for, those under study' (Willis, 2000: 113). In his view, the direct, sustained, face-to-face interaction with participants that is central to ethnography can never hope to produce a picture of 'reality'. For Willis, ethnographic fieldwork is 'some kind of entry into debate, an attempt to grapple with a puzzle … whose temper and pace leads you to want to encounter others who bear moving parts of the puzzle' (Willis, 2000: 113). Willis advocates a form of 'theoretical confession', in which the history, theoretical position and subjectivity of the researcher is stated as explicitly as possible in order to inform the reflexive aspect of ethnographic study. Such a 'theoretical confession' enables researchers to notice and reflect on those moments when they felt surprised by events occurring 'in the field', always informed by theory. In this way, argues Willis, ethnography can avoid the tendency to descriptive empiricism that has characterized much ethnographic research.

Another approach to ethnography is frequently contrasted with the 'realist' perspective cited above: that is, the 'relativism' that characterizes post-modern and post-structuralist versions of ethnographic research (Marcus, 1994). The relativist perspective rejects the notion of the researcher as a detached, value-free and objective observer that is central to the positivist project. It also rejects the committed stance adopted by feminist and other politically engaged researchers who view their work as 'giving voice' to marginalized and oppressed groups[1]. Relativism would eschew taking a stand of any kind in relation to groups of individuals, preferring to examine the ways in which claims to truth and knowledge are produced in the social world, including in the research process itself. The relativist perspective has fuelled a fundamental critique of the tendency in some ethnographic research to speak on behalf of participants, in which researchers present their interpretations as authoritative accounts of 'how things really are'. From a relativist perspective, all research analyses and processes are socially constructed in particular discursive contexts (Griffin, 2000).

Banister and colleagues (2011) present a useful discussion of the ways in which researchers' epistemological perspectives shape the research methods they use, their approaches to the collection and interpretation of research material (aka 'data'), and the complexity of debates about objectivity and subjectivity in multimethod approaches such as ethnography. The growing use of auto-ethnographic methods amongst qualitative psychology researchers complicates the picture further, given that such approaches blur the boundary between researcher and participant (e.g. Crossley, 2009; Newbold et al., 2015; Owen, 2014). The increasing use of social media and online communities, and the emergence of digital ethnographic methods has further problematised the relationship

between researchers and participants, and how the research process and research material are constituted. The internet has opened up the possibility for covert observation of substantial amounts of publicly available online material. In this context, researchers' agendas may be masked by the construction of the internet as a 'neutral' observation space and the researcher as a passive 'invisible' observer (Dicks et al., 2005: 128).

Interpretation and the Analysis of Observational Data

The recording, interpretation and analysis of ethnographic data are complex processes that are seldom defined with clarity. Carla Willig defined the qualitative interpretation of research material as 'what happens when we (try to) answer the question "what does it mean?"' (Willig, 2012: 5). At its most basic level, the process of interpretation involves the construction of meaning, resting on the identification (and recording) of particular material as 'research data', usually in written and/or visual form (Willig, 2012). Recording material 'in the field' (e.g. offline settings) poses particular problems for ethnographic researchers. It may be possible to record material in audio and/or video format, or to take detailed field-notes. However, all such activities are relatively intrusive, and it may also be impossible to record material in any of these ways. One alternative is to use mobile and digital technologies to record 'on the spot' notes for later elaboration at the end of each research period. Research field-notes should focus on material relevant to the primary research questions of the study, and also allow scope for apparent 'diversions' around those themes. Depending on the topic under investigation, research field-notes can focus on key 'episodes', specific individuals or small groups, particular events, or a combination of all of these. It is important to remember that all techniques for recording research information are necessarily selective: even video footage cannot ever record all the subtleties of human social encounters (Griffin, 2007).

The growth of social media, mobile and digital technologies have had a substantial impact on the opportunities for conducting ethnographic research, which we will discuss in greater depth later in this chapter (see also Chapter 22). A much wider range of visual and written material is now available for ethnographic research, across diverse online and offline contexts. The analysis and interpretation of such material demands new methods of data collection and analysis, as well as the continued refinement of existing qualitative research practices (Goodwin et al., 2014; Morison et al., 2015; Riley et al., 2015).

In most ethnographic studies, research field-notes remain one of the most commonly used techniques of data collection (alongside recorded interviews, video footage, and more recently online data capture). Such field-notes tend to consist of 'relatively concrete descriptions of social processes and their contexts', which may be the main record on which your analysis is based (Banister et al., 1994: 40). Central to the ethnographic method, and an adjunct to the issue of reflexivity mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, are the 'memos' or notes on the research process kept throughout the fieldwork period. Such notes might include points on how participants and/or gatekeepers view the researcher, analytic points to feed into the interpretation of the research material, and notes on feelings and reactions of the researcher at different points in the research process.

Such memos operate as field-notes that take the form of reflections on the position of the researcher in the 'field': a form of reflexive journal if you like. An example of the generative potential of such reflexive notes can be found in CG's experiences in a study of young working-class women moving from school to the job market during the early 1980s (Griffin, 1985). The 'Typical Girls?' project fell into two main stages, based in a range of Birmingham state secondary schools and workplaces. As the sole research worker, CG interviewed 180 5th- and 6th-form female school students individually or in small groups, including young middle- and working-class women, Asian, African Caribbean and white students (and some boys), as well as teachers and careers advisers. The second stage of the project was a longitudinal follow-up of 25 young white working-class women from the 5th form into their first two years in the job market. This involved informal interviews in coffee bars, pubs and in the young women's homes; with their families and friends; and ethnographic case studies in ten of their workplaces.

Each of the six schools participating in the study was visited at least three times, and the first visit usually involved an informal chat with the head teacher. The study was described as 'a project about girls leaving school and starting work', and CG never mentioned feminism, equal opportunities or anything that might be deemed 'political'. It soon became clear that the project was viewed as unusual and that CG was frequently assumed to be a feminist simply as a woman researcher interested in young women's lives (Griffin, 1986). On the first visit to one co-educational comprehensive school, the headmaster stated that 'this equal opportunities thing is a waste of time', and that CG was wasting her time talking to 5th-form girls at

the school, because 'they will mainly end up working on the streets like their mothers'. In contrast, the headmistress of a large girls' comprehensive school viewed the study in far more favourable terms. She recounted her experiences of the barriers to women's promotion in teaching, and stated that 'girls have such a low self-image, and so do women teachers, I'm all in favour of your project'.

Despite their very different views, both of these head teachers made similar assumptions about the 'political' nature of the study, and it became clear that this was shared by some of the young women involved in the project. When one young woman ('Jeanette') was visited in her job as an office junior in a small printing shop, she introduced CG by striding into the middle of the floor, raising a clenched fist and shouting: 'This is Chris, she's doing a project on me – women's lib'. Feminism had never been discussed in any explicit way prior to this point, and had CG ever entertained any misguided hopes of passing as an apolitical, inconspicuous observer, they dissolved with every shake of Jeanette's clenched fist. Rather than treating these incidents as problems demonstrating that CG's presence as a researcher had 'contaminated the field', we prefer to view these events as reflecting important aspects of the way in which young women such as Jeanette are constructed and treated in the education system and the job market (Griffin, 1989).

Ethics, Access, Deception and Gaining Informed Consent

Discussions about ethical issues in social research tend to revolve around a number of specific areas (Bryman, 2004; Diener and Crandall, 1978):

- Whether there is harm to participants
- Whether there is a lack of informed consent
- Whether there is an invasion of privacy
- Whether deception is involved.

Obtaining informed consent is one of the cornerstones of ethical research practice. Negotiating the involvement of research participants is one of the most important stages of the research process, and recruiting participants can pose particular challenges for researchers using ethnographic methods. Recruiting an appropriate sample of research participants can be even more exacting when those identified as potential participants are reluctant to engage with research, or resist researchers' attempts to recruit them. Elsewhere we have argued that researchers sometimes engage in forms of 'methodological grooming' to recruit participants (Bengry-Howell and Griffin, 2012). We advocate a more flexible approach to research ethics in such cases, based on 'gaining the trust of potential participants, finding common ground between researchers and participants, and negotiating conditional access and bounded consent' (2012: 403).

Informed consent, deception and invasion of privacy are all hotly-debated topics in psychological research, and these issues are especially acute in relation to ethnography. The latter can involve covert observation, which raises obvious dilemmas regarding the lack of informed consent and potential deception. Assuming a covert role in ethnographic research means that most or all participants are unaware that the researcher is conducting an investigation, as in the Festinger study cited earlier. A totally covert role would mean that the researcher was completely 'under cover', and avoids the need to negotiate access to the research site in anything other than the researcher's 'under cover' role. In a totally overt role, *all* the people the researcher comes into contact with would be aware that she/he was conducting a research study. These issues are compounded in the case of online ethnography where the need to negotiate access to a research site is negated by the public nature of many online networks and forums, and obtaining informed consent from participants can be undermined by practical difficulties concerning the identification and contacting of participants (Morey et al., 2012).

In most ethnographic studies the researcher assumes a relatively overt role with key participants, but may come into contact with many people who remain unaware of her/his activities. So the distinction between overt and covert observation regarding the question of consent even in traditional offline settings is seldom clear-cut. However, this does not mean that ethnographic researchers pay little attention to ethical issues involving consent, deception, privacy and harm – on the contrary.

The advantages of covert ethnography are that it minimizes the problems associated with negotiating access and participants are unlikely to adjust their behaviour to the presence of a researcher – although they may still adjust their behaviour to the presence of the person who is conducting the research without realizing they are involved in an investigation (the problem of reactivity). Difficulties of covert ethnography in offline settings include the challenge of taking research field-notes (repeated visits to a toilet to make concise field-notes for fuller transcription later, or the use of hidden body-microphones have been classic solutions to this problem); the inability to use other

methods; and of course, the ethical problems associated with covert observational research. With the advent of online ethnography the ethical issues surrounding covert research are more complex, and do not necessarily impact on a researcher's capacity to access participants and field settings, as is the case in offline ethnography. In online field settings, researchers can often access sites and assume the position of an invisible 'lurking observer' within the communities they are researching, without *needing* to obtain consent from participants prior to accessing data. However, not all online communities are open access, and in the case of closed-groups on social media platforms negotiating offline access to participants for research purposes can be more difficult than in offline settings (Bengry-Howell and Griffin, 2012).

'Closed' settings involve groups or organizations that may be relatively formal and/or have entrance restrictions. Negotiating access is likely to be difficult. 'Open' or public settings usually make access easier, but they are not necessarily without problems. Many ethnographers emulate the practice of Whyte in his classic study *Street Corner Society* (1955), which involved negotiating access to urban working-class male gangs in Boston's North End. Whyte developed a relationship with 'Doc', who acted as a sponsor, gatekeeper and key informant. In the process of gaining access to participants or the 'field', ethnographic researchers must be prepared to meet potential participants on the latter's terms: after all, they are on participants' territory.

These issues are even more complex in the context of digital ethnography, where the distinction between 'open'/public and 'closed'/private settings can be less clear-cut. In online contexts, the boundary between public and private space can vary depending on the particular privacy settings of different social media platforms for example; which may also vary over time. Potential participants may also differ in their use and understanding of privacy settings (Lange, 2008; Morey et al., 2012).

Official ethical guidelines of the national professional organizations overseeing psychology research and local Research Ethics Committees (RECs) have been relatively slow to respond to these challenges. The current British Psychological Society (BPS) guidelines identify a number of ethical issues related to the levels of 'identifiability' and 'observation' of research participants (BPS, 2007). The Society's concerns include the verifiability of identity: how do we know whether the participants are who they say they are? Secondly, how do researchers assess the distinction between public and private space online? The BPS stipulates that: 'unless consent has been sought, observation of public behaviour needs to take place only where people would "reasonably expect to be observed by strangers"' (BPS, 2007: 3). An additional concern relates to how researchers might go about obtaining consent from participants when observing them online or collecting data from their online activity. The BPS guidelines state that participants should not be deceived as part of any research, suggesting that in qualitative online research, deception is most likely to occur if researchers join chat rooms or discussion groups in order to 'lurk' and collect data. The final two concerns are with the preservation of participant anonymity (both on paper and online), and with the storage and ongoing use of participants' personal data. The BPS acknowledges that many decisions about ethics will depend on the research design being used, and that the constant and accelerating rate of change in computer-mediated communication makes it impossible to anticipate all of the ethical issues that might occur (BPS, 2007). Morey, Bengry-Howell and Griffin have argued that 'these guidelines fail to take into account the sea change in the practices of Internet users, and in the very nature of communication on the Internet itself' (2012: 197). This 'sea change' includes 'two significant cultural shifts: a radical erosion of the boundaries between the public and the private, and the move to active participation in, and creation of, online content [which have] give[n] rise to corresponding ethical dilemmas for researchers' (2012: 199).

There are several different perspectives on ethical research practices in online contexts. Some researchers have argued that any material which is publicly available can be treated as a potential source of research data. Others contend that individuals posting such material have not had the opportunity to give full informed consent to participate in research (see Rodham and Gavin, 2010). There is no easy solution to this dilemma, and at present the ethical implications of each research project tends to be judged on a case-by-case basis by internal RECs. Some online qualitative researchers advocate the inclusion of at least one member of all RECs with expertise in online research (Rodham and Gavin, 2010).

POTENTIALITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS

Ethnography has a number of advantages and limitations, and in some cases its advantages can also operate as limitations. The collection and interpretation of observational data are complex and specialized activities. The flexibility and

relatively open structure of ethnographic research can enable researchers to generate original insights and innovative methods. However, this very flexible approach can be difficult to handle. Ethnographic research takes time and is therefore relatively expensive compared to other research methods. The findings from ethnographic studies may not be readily encapsulated into a series of neat bullet points. However, the richness, diversity and complexity of human cultural life from the perspective of 'insiders' is likely to be reflected in good ethnographic research, and this can generate invaluable insights and contributions to knowledge that would not emerge using any other research method (see Box 3.1 for a brief practical guide to doing ethnographic research).

Ethnography is particularly valuable in situations in which the phenomenon under investigation is novel, different or unknown; when researchers are interested in a specific culture or social process; especially in complex behavioural settings including organizations or institutions. Ethnography can be an excellent first stage in a longer research process, providing a means of gaining an initial insight into a culture or social process, or it can stand as a distinctive research method in its own right (Punch, 1998).

Other advantages of ethnographic and observational methods include the capacity to include an examination of collective cultural practices and a fuller sense of the complex and diverse social context of people's lives in the analysis. An illustrative example here is Valerie Hey's ethnographic study of girls' friendship groups in schools, which highlights the important role played by passing notes in class (Griffin, 2000; Hey, 1997). Hey's feminist ethnographic study of girls' friendship groups in two urban secondary schools during the 1980s involved short visits to classes in one of the schools; participant observation in one class over three terms; informal interviews with teachers and girls from a range of social class and ethnic groups; and a period spent 'shadowing' a friendship group.

Part-way through the project, Hey began to pay attention to the notes the girls passed between themselves while at school, and she collected over 70 notes as a form of cultural artefact. Text and instant messaging on mobile phones has largely replaced these notes, although the principle remains the same. Hey discusses the dilemmas she experienced in making these notes publicly available as part of her research data, and also the social and cultural

Box 3.1 Doing ethnographic research: a brief practical guide (informed by Fetterman, 1998)

1. Find the time and the money to do an ethnographic study.
2. Are your research question(s) suited to the use of ethnographic methods? Does ethnography have the potential to generate insights that would be unobtainable by other means? You should also decide on your theoretical and epistemological perspectives and analytic approach at this stage.
3. Consider the ethical issues raised by this study, especially questions of informed consent, covert and overt observation, 'naturally occurring' online data and power relations throughout the research process. Develop your ethical strategy, including contract with participants.
4. Plan your research design based on the period of time available for fieldwork, the nature of the research topic and the phenomenon under investigation. Plan your strategies for entry to and exit from 'the field', as well as what methods you will use during the fieldwork period.
5. Select your fieldwork site, potential participants, gatekeepers (if appropriate), who and what *not* to include in the study. The most common strategy is the 'big net' approach, mixing with lots of people then beginning to narrow your focus down to specific situations and individuals. Informality, acting on hunches, and using your intuition are all common features of ethnographic research, though more formal and structured designs are also used.
6. Entering 'the field': How will you describe your study to participants? How will you present yourself? Develop a safety strategy for face-to-face encounters that might involve working in pairs or phoning a colleague when you enter and leave 'the field'. The best method is usually to gain access via an intermediary, and another alternative is to 'hang around' until you gain the trust of key members of the community you are studying. Note who might avoid you as a result of your contact with gatekeepers, and try to include them in your study.
7. Common techniques used in ethnographic research:
   (a) Participant observation (PO) or 'immersion in the field': ideally should last at least 6–12 months, otherwise you are using ethnographic techniques, and not doing a true ethnography. Decide how to record your research field-notes (always date them).

(continued)

Box 3.1 (Continued)

(b) Interviewing: the ethnographer's most important technique: sometimes described as a 'conversation with a purpose'. Interviews can be informal or more structured; conducted face-to-face or online: develop an interview schedule if appropriate. Digital recording is preferred for face-to-face interviews, but may not be possible, so you may have to rely on field-notes at times. Decide on a strategy if participants ask you questions about the study or about yourself. How transparent do you want to be, and what is appropriate for the project? Make a Research Methods file reflecting on people's reactions to you and your reactions to them throughout the research encounter. Make a Theory/Analysis file recording any ideas arising from the fieldwork that links to areas of theory or relevant research literatures.

(c) Questionnaires (hard copies/online) and diaries/blogs might also be used. Plan the formats of questionnaires and diaries in advance and decide on instructions to participants, consider how and where these might be completed.

(d) Unobtrusive observation: be aware of the lack of informed consent involved in this aspect of ethnographic research. Unobtrusive observational techniques might include noting information about (i) 'outcroppings' such as what people wear and how they present themselves, the appearance of an area or layout of a building, or construction of an online setting; collecting written or visual reports or records; (ii) 'proxemics', such as noting how close people stand to one another (and to you) when interacting; (iii) other aspects of non-verbal behaviour, such as the organization of seating in a room and how this might affect the pattern of social interaction; and (iv) collecting folk tales, or pervasive myths and stories that circulate in a given culture or social group.

(e) Online observation: consider methodological and ethical issues before gathering online data. Consider: why you are collecting online data [research design/ research question(s)]; which online settings you plan to observe; how are these online settings similar/different to offline settings you are observing; how will you access these online settings; how will you present yourself/your research; will you be a participant or non-participant observer; how long will your observation last; what is your exit strategy; how might your research disrupt these communities; what can you do to address potential disruption; what will you consider as 'data'; how will you obtain consent to use these 'data'; how will you anonymise these data.[2]

8 Exiting 'the field': develop a strategy for leaving the field, deciding how you will end relationships with research participants, and what your obligations are to them in both online and offline contexts.

9 Analysis: transcribe all field-notes and interviews as close to verbatim as possible. Organize, collate and anonymize your data. Remember that this process commences at the start of the project. Familiarize yourself with the data and look for negative cases as you develop your analysis. Be systematic and rigorous in your analysis.

10 Writing up and other forms of dissemination: decide on your audience(s) and the format for dissemination. Decide on your standpoint(s), narrative form and focus for your dissemination. What do you want to say and to whom, and why? Decide how far and whether you want to write yourself in to the dissemination of the outcomes of the study. Avoid revealing any 'secrets' you might have discovered in the course of fieldwork unless you have a good reason to do so. Ethnography is sometimes described as a process of 'making the strange familiar and the familiar strange'. Have you done this?

importance of these texts to the operation of girls' friendship groups. As she put it: 'if I had not also been attending to the flux of girls' friendships through observations and interviews I would have had little purchase upon the [notes'] actual sequence, let alone their importance [as] fragmentary moments in the making of schoolgirl selves' (Hey, 1997: 51). As Griffin (2000: 20) has argued elsewhere:

> If Hey had only conducted an analysis of the notes as written texts, she would have had a more limited appreciation of their role as material manifestations of girls' complex and intense interpersonal relationships. If she had only carried out interviews with girls, even in a longitudinal study, she would not have been able to appreciate the hidden and secretive nature of the girls' friendship groups, which were designed to keep all adults and young males on the outside.

Limitations of ethnographic and observational research include the considerable time involved in setting up and carrying out fieldwork and interpreting complex datasets; and the specialist training required for ethnographic and observational methods, which is seldom available in Psychology degree programmes at undergraduate or postgraduate levels.

EXAMPLES FROM OUR OWN RESEARCH

In this section, we discuss two examples from our research to explore the particular advantages offered by ethnographic methods in facilitating access to two groups of participants who had resisted involvement in the research process. The first example is taken from Andrew Bengry-Howell's (henceforth ABH) PhD research with young working-class men who modify their cars, which involved an extended period of ethnographic non-participant observation and interviews with approximately 30 young men engaged in car modification projects (Bengry-Howell, 2005), The second example is taken from an ESRC-funded study on music festivals and unlicensed free parties (illegal raves), which investigated how consumption is branded and managed differently at each type of event, and how young people negotiate these leisure spaces and understand their consumption practices. The project involved 98 participants and combined ethnographic observation at each event, in-situ and follow up face-to-face interviews (including email interviews), with an online ethnography of postings on a range of Web 2.0 platforms and 'naturally occurring' online group discussions (Morey et al., 2012). The example we draw on is taken from the 'free party' stage of the study and examines the online process of negotiating offline access with members of the 'Psyporeal' sound system.

The Car Modifiers Project

The fieldwork for the car modifiers project was conducted during the summer of 2002 on car parks in out-of-town retail parks and shopping centres in the West Midlands and North Wales. The research participants were young male car owners aged between 17 and 25, all of whom were employed and living with their parents.

'Car modifiers' and 'cruisers' are conspicuous in terms of their highly stylized cars, loud in-car stereo systems and the speed at which many drive (Bengry-Howell and Griffin, 2007). However, when it came to engaging them in a research project, this group proved somewhat more elusive. ABH began this project with minimal knowledge of and no personal involvement in car modification, but an interest in understanding the meaning of this car-based cultural form to young men who owned and modified their cars. He began by attempting to recruit research participants for interview from a group of young men with modified cars who congregated on the forecourt of a McDonald's drive-thru restaurant in the West Midlands. The young men ABH approached showed little interest in the research, however a limited number agreed to be interviewed and arranged to meet with ABH, but none turned up on the day of the interviews.

In the hope of improving his success in accessing this group ABH frequented the car parks where these young men gathered and employed ethnographic methods to investigate their practices. He designed and distributed a flyer promoting the project, and through a slow snowballing process, gradually established contact with a pool of potential research participants. One of the first young men ABH arranged to interview was a car modifier known as 'Jonno', who had seen the flyer and expressed an interest in the project. The meeting was arranged over the telephone at an agreed car park location, but when ABH arrived and asked for Jonno, the group of young men gatherered there were uncommunicative and aloof. ABH negotiated with one of the young men who had assumed the role of a somewhat obstructive gatekeeper and, once he convinced him that meeting Jonno had been pre-arranged, was directed to where Jonno and his friends were standing.

ABH introduced himself to Jonno, who obligingly consented for him to record the conversation, and they were soon joined by more young men who were interested to find out what was going on:

Kenny: [Turning to ABH] So what the fuck yer doin ere?

ABH: I'm doing a project on car modifiers and the cruising scene (2) I suppose I am trying to get to understand what it's all about from the point of view of people who are into it.

Kenny: The authorities don't appreciate that we've got nowhere else to fucking go apart from car parks and that, so people ought to do somet about it ant they (3) it's like we hang round in a car park and it looks bad for the stores (1) that's the only reason…So who are you doing this project for (1) are you from the council or something?

ABH: No, it's part of a course that I am doing at Birmingham University, I suppose I'm just interested in how the scene has developed and what being part of the scene and modifying your car means for people.

As the encounter with the car-modifiers progressed, ABH's status as an outsider was further

reinforced when one of the group asked if 'that old knackered Renault parked in the car park round the corner' was his, and it immediately became apparent that he did not share their interest in modified cars. At this point Jonno enquired if ABH would like to go for a ride in his car.

During their earlier telephone conversation, Jonno had extolled his car's performance and the way it handled at speed. By inviting ABH to *experience* what he had been talking about, Jonno seemed to be challenging ABH to demonstrate that he was serious about gaining an insight into the young car-modifier's world. After some deliberation, ABH accepted Jonno's offer and climbed into the passenger seat of his car. As ABH fastened his seatbelt, Jonno activated his in-car entertainment system and a heavy surge of bass reverberated through the car. The bass frequencies had an intense sensory affect on ABH's body. His muscles contracted and he felt an immense pressure within his chest cavity. The experience transcended anything he had previously associated with the cultural practice of listening to, and appreciating, amplified music.

Jonno slowly drove his lowered Honda Civic across the car park, easing it over a series of speed ramps. Once safely out of the car park, he took the main road out of the retail park and headed towards a nearby motorway, at all times keeping within the designated speed limit. Once he reached the motorway slip road, Jonno accelerated rapidly, indicated right and cutting between two cars, drove straight into the 'fast lane' and put his foot to the floor. As the car's speed increased it raced past other vehicles in the two adjacent lanes and Jonno proudly announced that they were now travelling at 120 miles an hour. Within moments the car was approaching the next motorway junction and Jonno indicated to turn off, circled the roundabout and rejoined the motorway heading in the opposite direction. Again Jonno cut straight across to the 'fast' lane and accelerated rapidly, as he headed back toward to the junction where he had originally joined the motorway.

As ABH returned to the McDonald's car park he reflected on his decision to accept Jonno's invitation to have a ride in his car, and questioned whether enthusiastically embracing an in-depth ethnographic approach had taken him further into the field than he anticipated. ABH had effectively put his life at risk in pursuance of research goals, by getting into a car driven by a young man he vaguely knew, who had admitted during their previous telephone conversation that he had a penchant for driving at high speeds. However, the opportunity to sit beside Jonno whilst he demonstrated what his car could do, had enabled ABH to directly experience high-speed driving as a performative practice within the context of the young car-modifier's world. Furthermore, if he had rejected Jonno's offer, ABH would probably have lost all credibility with that particular group of potential research participants and jeopardized future opportunities to obtain data.

The Music Festival and Free Party Project

The fieldwork for the second stage of the Music Festival and Free Party project,[3] which specifically focused on free parties, was conducted during 2009. This stage of the project employed a multi-modal ethnographic approach, which combined non-participant observation conducted at events, post-event face-to-face interviews, email interviews, and an online ethnography of free party networks' use of social media. The project employed online recruitment methods, which proved an invaluable means of accessing the free party scene.

Free parties are mostly illegal events held in fairly isolated rural areas or in unlicensed urban settings, such as empty warehouses. Party crews set up mobile sound systems to play amplified electronic dance music with repetitive beats, usually during a weekend, with an emphasis on dancing, hedonism and the use of recreational drugs. Free party sites are open, unbounded and often difficult to find. They may involve gaining access to spaces that are privately owned without the owners' permission, in stark contrast to more commercial licensed music festival events (Morey et al., 2012).

Initial contact with the Psyporeal sound system was established through a Facebook profile, which the researcher on the project (Yvette Morey: YM) developed to promote the project and establish links with online free party networks. The Psyporeal sound system was identified among the list of Facebook 'Friends' associated with another sound system, which the researchers were able to access when that sound system accepted an invitation to become a 'Friend' of the project. The Psyporeal sound system also accepted a 'Friend' invitation from the project and its members quickly engaged in online discussions about free parties that were occurring on the project's Facebook timeline. Psyporeal's Facebook posts suggested they were interested in the project, but when the researchers contacted them directly (via the Facebook message service) to invite them to be interviewed, they declined, stating that they had nothing to gain from a face-to-face encounter. Despite their resistance to being interviewed offline, members of the Psyporeal sound system

stated they had no reservations about posting on the project's Facebook timeline or answering questions by email. They were also happy to share the 'magic party number'[4] with the researchers, and for the latter to attend and experience one of their parties.

The Psyporeal sound system was of particular interest to the project because they had an overtly political perspective on the free party scene and framed their activities within the wider context of anti-commercial values and anti-capitalist social movements. YM had made a number of unsuccessful attempts to negotiate and set up an interview, so ABH contacted them instead via the Facebook message service. ABH introduced himself and the focus of the project drawing on his experiences attending British free festivals and living as a 'new age traveller' during the early 1990s. In contrast to YM, ABH was able to position himself as an 'insider' who understood and shared their concerns, and had a common investment in documenting the cultural meaning of their practices from their perspective. This cultural link proved critical in allaying the fears of the Psyporeal group regarding the project, facilitating a process of negotiation concerning their consent to be interviewed. This played a vital role in establishing trust and a reciprocal research relationship, which facilitated the level of access required in ethnographic research. Once a mutual understanding was established, members of the Psyporeal sound system participated in the project to a greater extent than anticipated. They were involved in co-organizing and performing at a dissemination event 'Bringing the party home', a multimedia celebration of music festival and free party scenes as part of the 2010 ESRC Festival of Social Science Week.

In both of these examples, access to research participants was facilitated through a gradual process where the researcher could not operate as a detached observer, but had to negotiate from a position within the field under investigation. These negotiations in both of these examples required the researchers to 'prove' their ethical and methodological credentials before gaining the trust and involvement of participants, and the level of access required in ethnographic research.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR ETHNOGRAPHIC AND OBSERVATIONAL METHODS

The Marienthal study and the work of Festinger, Rosenhan and colleagues cited earlier in this chapter are examples of social psychology researchers trying to investigate 'social problems in the field' (Fryer, 1987). Following the 'critical turn' in social research during the 1980s, a number of researchers raised questions about the wisdom or the possibility of interpreting people's social practices or psychological states from information gathered via research interviews, ethnography and other similar methods (Griffin, 2000). Severe funding cuts in the social sciences meant that qualitative social research, including ethnography, was in decline during the mid 1980s, just as the 'new' critical and discursive psychologies were emerging in Britain and elsewhere. Moreover, the arguments of postmodernism and post-structuralism combined with feminism to mobilize these 'new' critical voices in and about psychology also presented a profound critique of the key assumptions and practices of ethnographic research. These criticisms challenged the tendency towards naive realism in ethnographic research, the uncritical imposition of the researchers' authorial analyses over the voices of its respondents, and the relatively simplistic opposition between self and society on which most such research relied at that time. Combined with the growth of narrowly experimental cognitivism in psychology, this meant that the sort of applied studies 'in the field' employing ethnographic and other more 'engaged' forms of research methods as exemplified by the Marienthal project have become increasingly uncommon in psychological research.

Despite a long and illustrious tradition of ethnographic and observational research in psychology, the dominance of positivist epistemology, of experimental and quantitative methods, and the lack of specialized knowledge and experience of ethnographic and observational methods all combine to limit the development of this type of research in qualitative psychology. However, ethnographic and observational methods thrive on the borders between psychology and other disciplines, such as sociology, cultural studies, geography, education and anthropology. One interesting recent development is the growing use of visual research methods such as photo-elicitation techniques in combination with observational methods (see Croghan et al., 2008; Marshall and Woollett, 2000; Chapter 21 in this volume). An additional development, already mentioned in this chapter, is the emergence of digital ethnography (or 'netnography') as qualitative psychologists have begun to investigate the digital realm (Riley et al., 2015).

Despite the relative lack of training available in the use of ethnographic and qualitative observational methods at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in psychology, there are

signs that ethnography is becoming more common in qualitative psychology research. The increasing interdisciplinarity of many social science research projects and the tendency to use innovative combinations of methods has contributed to this tendency. One example in the British context is the ESRC's funding of a major research programme on Identities and Social Action, directed by a leading qualitative social psychologist (Margaret Wetherell), including a number of projects that involve social psychologists (e.g. Christine Griffin, Ann Phoenix, Wendy Hollway) and employ ethnographic methods alongside interviews and other qualitative methods (see http://www.researchcatalogue.esrc.ac.uk/grants/RES-065-27-0007/read).[5] We anticipate that in future the use of ethnography and other systematic observational methods will expand steadily in qualitative psychology research, especially as interest grows in linking social psychological processes to cultural practices set in economic and political context.

Notes

1 It is worth noting here that some feminist researchers have also studied groups usually defined as 'oppressors', such as Scully's investigation of convicted rapists and O'Connell Davidson's research on men involved in sex tourism in Thailand (O'Connell Davidson, 1998; Scully, 1990).

2 Directly quoted extracts from online text can often be traced back to their source by entering them into a search engine.

3 This project on 'Negotiating Managed consumption: Young people, branding and social identification processes' was funded by an ESRC First Grants Award (RES-061-25-0129). Led by Andrew Bengry-Howell, with Yvette Morey as the Research Assistant and Christine Griffin, Isabelle Szmigin and Sarah Riley as mentors, the study explored young people' (aged 18–25) negotiation of contemporary branded leisure spaces and 'managed' forms of consumption, through two case-studies of music-related leisure events: large-scale music festivals; informally organized free parties (illegal raves).

4 Telephone number where a recorded message with details of the free party location could be accessed after midnight.

5 CG was principal investigator and ABH was research assistant on a project that formed part of the ESRC's Identities and Social Action programme. This study, entitled 'Branded consumption and social identification: Young people and alcohol', involved researchers in psychology at the University of Bath and at the University of Birmingham Business School from 2005 to 2007. The project investigated the ways that alcohol advertising might shape young people's identities, the meanings of drinking in young adult's everyday lives, and the significance of key cultural practices around drinking for young adults' social identities. This involved informal group discussions with young adults aged 18 to 25, and a series of ethnographic case studies of young people's drinking practices.

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4

Action Research

Carolyn Kagan, Mark Burton and Asiya Siddiquee

INTRODUCTION

Since the first edition of the book, there has been a growing interest in the use of action research by psychologists. The fields of psychology range from health psychology (Acosta et al., 2015; Seifert, 2015) to community psychology (Berg et al., 2009; Phillips et al., 2010) as well as discussions about methodology (Haaken, 2012; Holtby et al., 2015). It is notable that participatory action research, in particular, features in the most recent work (Arcidiacono et al., 2016; Isobell et al., 2016). Action Research (AR) is an orientation to inquiry rather than a particular method. In its simplest form it attempts to combine understanding, or development of theory, with action and change through a participative process, whilst remaining grounded in experience. Reason and Bradbury (2008: 4) offer a working definition that draws on different AR practices:

> AR is a participatory process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities.

AR is at one and the same time the investigation of action, the implementation of investigation through action and the transformation of research into action. Along with feminist and postcolonial research (see Chapter 18 by McLeod et al., Bhatia and Kessi), it is a process that links psychology with social change issues (Brydon-Miller, 1997). As Parker (2005) notes, AR has the potential to devise research and methods that enable positive political outcomes for those who participate. It is, then, a value-based practice, underpinned by a commitment to positive social change. The purposes of AR are summarized by Reason and Bradbury (2008: 4) as:

- to produce practical knowledge that is useful to people in the everyday conduct of their lives;
- to contribute, through this knowledge, to increased well-being – economic, political, psychological, spiritual – of people and communities; and to a more equitable and sustainable relationship with the wider ecology of the planet; and
- to combine practical outcomes with new understanding 'since action without reflection and understanding is blind, just as theory without action is meaningless'.

AR is a deeply collaborative process of inquiry, operating simultaneously at individual, interpersonal, group, organizational, community (and indeed societal) levels. Thus, AR involves:

- a focus on practical (and political) issues;
- reflection on one's own practices and the involvement of others in the research;
- collaboration between researcher and participants;
- a dynamic process of spiralling back and forth among reflection, data collection and action;
- development of a plan of action to respond to a practical issue and/or create change;
- careful, planned sharing of findings with all relevant stakeholders; and
- attention to ethical issues at every stage, including dissemination of findings.

AR extends well beyond psychology, and whilst we will be alluding to different kinds of AR, we will focus our discussions on its use in psychological work, and in relation to psychological issues.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

There are a number of converging routes to contemporary AR in psychology, and histories identify its social psychological and clinical origins, all of which in one way or another derive from action theories (Boog, 2003).

In the USA, in the 1940s, prominent social psychologists along with other social scientists, concerned with enhancing inter-group relations and reducing prejudice, developed processes of work in which they sought to understand a social problem by changing it and studying the effect (Lewin, 1946). Through their work in the Research Center for Group Dynamics and the Commission on Community Interrelations they moved out from universities into communities: into the very places where people lived and where conflicts and tensions develop (Cherry and Burshuk, 1998). Elden and Chisholm (1993) note that two other currents emerged at the same time in the USA – the first was a concern to understand and improve American Indian affairs through action-oriented knowledge (Collier, 1945) and the second was to adopt a similar approach in education (Corey, 1953).

In the UK, psychologists, social anthropologists and psychiatrists (mostly with a psychoanalytic orientation) developed a parallel AR orientation in the then Tavistock Clinic, now the Tavistock Institute for Human Relations (Rapoport, 1970; Trist and Murray, 1990). There, work developed to address the practical, post-war problems of personnel selection, treatment and rehabilitation of wartime neurosis, and casualties and returning prisoners of war. In a related development, Revans (1982), initially at the National Coal Board, developed an approach to action learning for organizational development, focused on action learning sets made up of diverse participants.

Whilst both in the USA and UK AR developed in response to important social problems, as Elden and Chisholm note, AR soon began to be applied to intra-organizational and work life problems. Furthermore, a schism arose between applied and basic research. Whilst there had, initially, been considerable enthusiasm for community based AR, by the early 1950s,

> increasingly the social psychological mainstream was disconnecting research and graduate training from the immediacy of solving social problems [between 1950 and 1970 social psychology] practitioners would devote their energies to a practice bounded by the parameters of laboratory experimentation, based primarily on individual behaviour, and geared towards managerial concerns. Removed from the intergroup context, the study of discrimination would quickly reduce to attitude and personality measurement. (Cherry, 1998: 14)

Sanford (1981: 176) links this shift to the behaviour of funding organizations, which after WW2 gave a cool reception to AR projects which 'were, indeed, likely to win for their author the reputation of being "confused"'.

The crisis in social psychology of the 1970s (Strickland et al., 1976) and the advent of *new paradigm* research, with an anti-positivist call and non-reductionist emphasis (Reason and Rowan, 1981) opened the way for the re-emergence of AR.

A different strand of development in AR lay in the application of action science (Argyris and Schon, 1989; Chapter 30) in organizational work – especially in the application to practices of social democracy and organizational learning. A strong Scandinavian tradition emerged, linked to the Norwegian Industrial Democracy Project (see Karlsen, 1991). In Scandinavian work life, participatory AR had, as its core, 'political values concerning increased democracy, political equality and social justice' (Elden and Levin, 1991: 128). Elsewhere in Scandinavia a radical *practice research* developed from German critical psychology, with its roots in the political left. It shared with AR a concern to understand the relations of theory and practice (Nissen, 2000).

Histories of AR in psychology generally reproduce the USA–UK axis of development. Alrichter and Gstettner (1993) suggest an earlier start elsewhere in Europe, and in Latin America, AR has been in existence for as long (Montero, 2000). In 1946 a book on AR methodology was published in Brazil (Thiollent, 1947). Montero suggests that early forms of AR borrowed heavily from the socio-technical orientation of Lewin, but gradually evolved into a participatory practice, in part through other influences. She emphasizes the writings of Marx and Engels and of Gramsci; the popular mobilizations of the 1960s; liberation theology during the 1970s and philosophy of liberation in the 1980s. Particularly important to Latin American social psychological AR was the critical pedagogy of Freire (1972). Freire encouraged the viewing of research participants as active members of inquiries concerning themselves and their environment, as well as the role of the dialogic method for exploring ideas participatively, in order to arrive at new understanding. Montero also recognizes the crucial influence of cultural anthropologists and critical sociologists (Fals-Borda and Rahman, 1991; Swantz, 2008) to the participatory turn in AR. The work of Fals-Borda and colleagues has been particularly influential in the Latin American developments of community social psychology (Sánchez and Wiesenfeld, 1991).

Whilst social psychological applications of AR to real life social problems retreated, AR became and has remained an acceptable research strategy in the context of organizational behaviour and education (Kemmis, 2010). Its use in health psychology (Campbell and Murray, 2004) and cross cultural psychology (Liu et al., 2008) is increasing; it is a central strategy for community psychology (Kelly and van der Riet, 2001; Chapter 19), and critical psychology (Parker, 2005). It is probably the case that far more AR has been going on in psychology than is formally defined, particularly as both evaluation research and service development.

THE PROCESS OF AR

Different parts of the iterative AR process can be identified. Whilst different researchers describe the process differently, all involve, in one way or another, the following of a cyclical process taking place within a particular context and system infrastructure (Figure 4.1):

- idea: socially produced within a particular context and with a shared vision of the goal(s) of positive social change. May include visioning, values exploration, conception or initiation, problem identification and analysis, exploration and fact finding;
- plan: devised collaboratively and participatively;
- act: carry out actions collaboratively and involving others;
- evaluate: be collaborative and participative and make creative use of methods;
- reflect: jointly learn and understand and further plan, do, evaluate and so on.

The process may continue to move on, return to an earlier step or be diverted to a different cycle of action. Once a cycle is complete, it may lead to another full or partial cycle. In practice, action researchers may begin to be involved at any of the stages. Thus in our own work (Kagan et al., 2011a) we may begin our involvement through evaluation (as in evaluation research); at the fact-finding, exploratory stage (as in feasibility studies or needs analyses); at the conception (as in project development studies); or at the reflection stage (as in accompaniment research).

VARIETIES OF AR

Grundy (1982) distinguishes three broad types of AR: technical[1], practical and emancipatory. Practical and emancipatory AR lend themselves particularly well to qualitative methods. It is the topic, issue or question to be addressed that should lead to the initial choice of the approach, even if as the work proceeds the emphasis changes in response to changing conditions. So what are the kinds of issues to which AR is suited?

Practical Action Research

In practical AR, practitioners and researchers come together to identify potential problems, their underlying causes and possible change projects. Mutual understanding is sought, and the goal is understanding practice and solving immediate problems. It adopts a multiple perspective, flexible approach to change. It is this kind of AR that is common in the field of education and human service development arenas (Akhurst and Lawson, 2013; Somekh and Zeichner, 2009). Practical AR is designed to address concrete

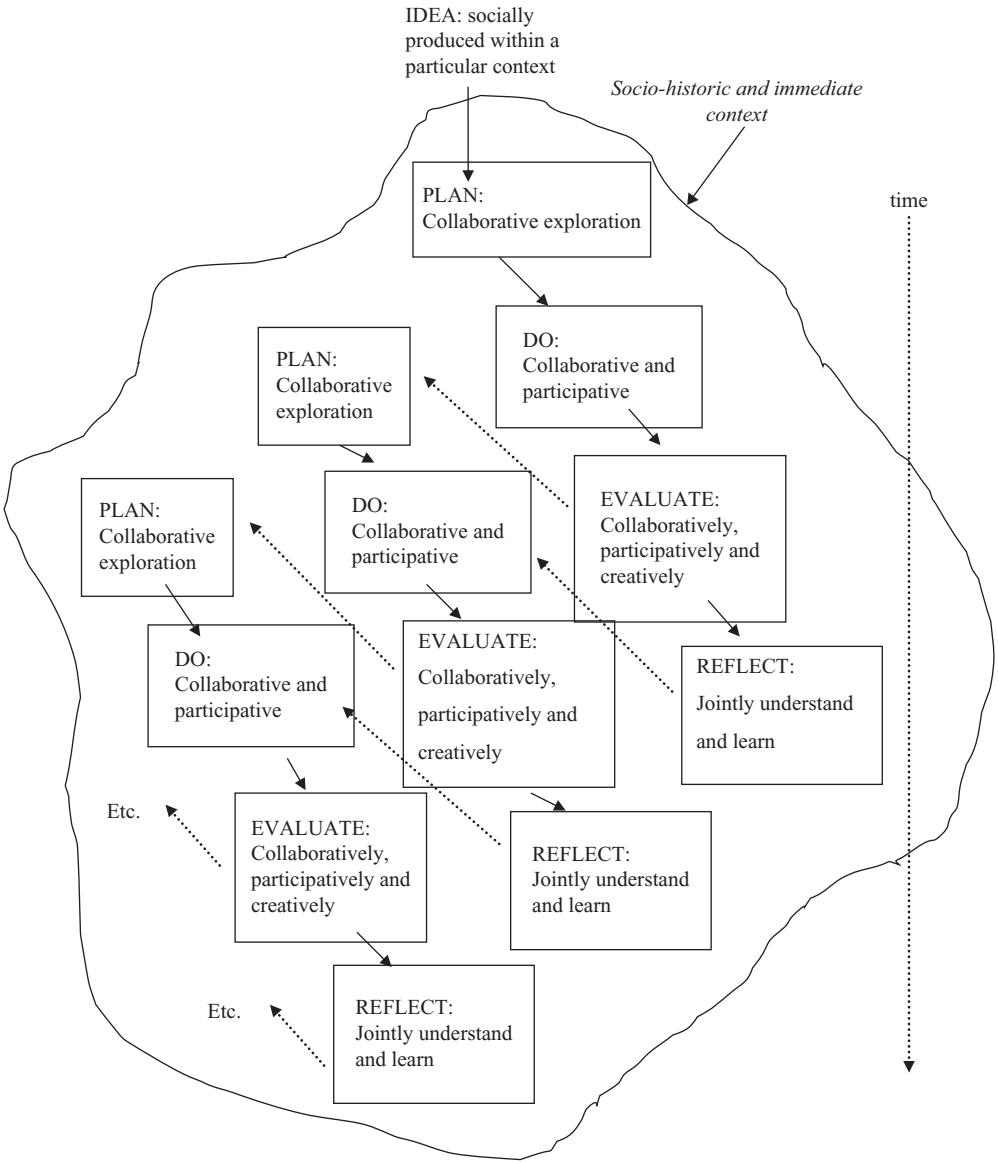

Figure 4.1 A model of AR taking place over time within a particular context

problems without divorcing them from their complex contexts.

Carr and Kemmis (1986) suggest three conditions which are individually necessary and jointly sufficient for the implementation of critical, practical AR:

1 The project takes as its subject-matter a social practice, regarding it as a form of strategic action susceptible to improvement.
2 The project proceeds through a spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting, with each of these activities being systematically and self-critically implemented and interrelated.
3 The project involves those responsible for the practice in each of the moments of the activity, widening participation in the project gradually to include others affected by the practice, and maintaining collaborative control of the process.

Example:
One of us (MB), responding with others to poor experiences and outcomes as young people who are intellectually disabled reach adulthood (existing social practice; problem identification), established a project to pilot new ways of facilitating these transitions. A number of innovations were trialled, aimed at changing existing practices (improvement). A project steering group included managers and practitioners from several organizations as well as young people and parents. It worked through a workshop model, that allowed creative and shared thinking and analysis of barriers to be overcome (planning and action). Then introduction of the new ways of working were regularly reviewed and assessed in terms of the difference made to the focal people's lives and the extent to which organizational changes had been adopted (evaluation). Progress was uneven, characterized by inspiring examples of real change in some people's lives, but difficulty making such improvements happen for all young people (reflection). Discussions between all those involved, inside and outside the organization, led to our enhanced theoretical understanding of the organizational barriers to change (theory development). Specific areas of difficulty were identified (problem identification) and a series of further changes to practices and systems in some key sectors were initiated (action through self-critical reflection) and evaluated (evaluation). This experience led to the introduction of practical person-centred planning more widely across the educational service and the expansion of an internship and supported-employment programme, creating further change for those disabled people affected, while the learning from this and parallel projects in other districts contributed to national policy reform (continual cycles of planning, action and evaluation) (Burton, 2013; Upton and Burton, 2012).

Emancipatory AR

Emancipatory AR promotes a 'critical consciousness which exhibits itself in political as well as practical action to promote change' (Grundy, 1987: 154). The goal is to assist participants in identifying and making explicit fundamental problems by raising their collective consciousness. Critical intent determines both the development of a theoretical perspective and guides action and interaction within the project. Here the challenge is not so much a collaboratively defined practical problem as the collaborative exploration of an existing social problem in order to achieve social transformation.

Example:
Through work with and involvement in radical psychiatry networks (such as those supported by *Asylum* magazine in the UK and further afield) the isolation and challenges experienced by people with paranoia had been identified and a paranoia network launched in November 2003. Isolation was identified as a major problem (problem identification). A conference was held in Manchester, UK, the following summer, involving those with experience of, and interest in paranoia and how disabling practices and institutions, as well as the 'experts' on people's lives, could be challenged (action). During the conference, participants were able to discuss and explore common experiences, share resources and identify future collective action and networks (further action; raised collective consciousness) (Harper, 2004; Zavos, 2005). New understandings about the experience of paranoia in a disabling society were reached. In addition, new ideas about methodology were produced: not about the epistemological or empirical aspects of methods, but more about methodology – how we think about the production of knowledge (Parker, 2005). For example, participants challenged the role of interviewing people who are suspicious of professionals asking them questions about themselves, and so on. Professional practice has been profoundly influenced by these service user networks (Roberts and Boardman, 2014).

Thus we can see that emancipatory AR is capable of revealing deep understanding about the process of inquiry and reporting findings, as well as about the findings themselves. It thus goes beyond action, beyond theory, to methodology, inviting us to consider how we know what we know and how has that knowledge been produced.

Emancipatory AR is clearly political. It is concerned with power and, whilst we would not want to make too grandiose a claim for the process being empowering, at the very least there should be some political gains for those participating. Whilst all AR is participative, a particular form of participatory AR was developed through work with oppressed peoples in Latin America and elsewhere. Participatory AR has been adopted by Latin American community social psychology (Montero and Varas Díaz, 2007; Sánchez and Wiesenfeld, 1991) and those working within the approach of liberation psychology (Burton, 2004). It fits within the emancipatory domain insofar as it has a concern with:

- development of critical consciousness of both researcher and participants;
- improvement of the lives and empowerment of those involved in the research process; and

- transformation of fundamental societal structures and relationships.

Montero (2000: 134) suggests participatory AR is a methodological process and strategy actively incorporating those people and groups affected by a problem, in such a way that they become co-researchers through their action in the different phases and moments of the research carried out to solve them. Their participation:

- places the locus of power and of control within their groups;
- mobilizes their resources; and
- leads them to acquire new resources

in order to:

- transform their living conditions;
- transform their immediate environment; and
- transform the power relations established with other groups or institutions in their society.

In practice, there may be many different reasons why people do not want to participate in an AR process, and, indeed, participatory processes do not always ensure the political interests of the least powerful are met (Cooke and Kothari, 2001).

The investigatory issues differ between practical AR and emancipatory or participatory AR. Practical AR is best suited to problem solving in organizations through working largely with organizational decision-makers. Emancipatory or participatory AR is best suited to understanding and changing communities and societies through a commitment to working with grassroots groups to promote fundamental social transformations (Brown, 1993; Brown and Tandon, 1983; Rahman, 1985). Practical AR aims to produce social reform and emancipatory AR to produce social transformation. Both assume the nature of reality to be multiple and socially constructed, and for human agency to be inextricably linked to social structures. Whereas practical AR is more concerned with organizational structures, emancipatory AR seeks to explore the roles played by social, economic and political structures. The research 'problem' is more often negotiated by the researcher in practical AR, but emerges from the participants in emancipatory AR. In both forms, the 'problem' arises in a particular situation, and action and research are merged. The process of practical AR leads to enhanced practitioner capability as practitioners become researchers; emancipatory AR leads to participants' emancipation through their involvement in research and to changes in social structures.

Whilst the two traditions can be separated in this way as 'ideal types', AR is fluid and dynamic. They have a number of features in common, including:

- value based, future oriented practice
- cross disciplinary
- cyclical process
- combines methods of data collection
- learning through dialogue and sharing
- combines theory and action
- context bound
- concerned with change and sustainable over time.

Each of these features of AR gives rise to a number of issues in practice.

ACTION RESEARCH IN PRACTICE

The main issues associated with the process of AR will be considered as we discuss the core features outlined above.

Purposes and Value Choice

AR is future oriented and is built on a shared understanding, between those involved, of what *could* be, not what is. This means that at the conception stage, ARers will often facilitate a process whereby the different participants or stakeholders envision the possibilities for the future. Before any action can be planned, the future orientation must be agreed. This does not necessarily mean that specific end points have to be identified, but rather the general direction for change is clarified. This may take some time and can lead to some frustrations that no additional action is being taken (although, if we adopt a position of researching action, we can describe the very process of negotiation and understanding of the future as an action to be researched). Through this process, the different perspectives and orientations of different stakeholders are brought to the surface and made explicit, along with different value positions which will have to be negotiated. Right from the outset, then, in AR, it is understood that multiple, socially constructed perspectives exist and are to be worked with.

The task here is not to expect full agreement about or capitulation to a particular perspective, but rather to explore, through dialogue, the

complexity of the relationships between participants. Right from the outset, too, power issues come to the fore and it is necessary to be aware of how the power interests of particular participants are being played out, and to work in ways that enable all participants to understand – and possibly change – this. The future orientation of a project also gives a framework to the evaluation and reflection stages of AR, as participants can use this as a guide to assessing whether or not change has taken place in the required direction.

It is in the conception and planning stages that participants can articulate their vision for change that has a positive social value (Elden and Chisholm, 1993), such as for a healthy community, a socially responsible organization, reduced energy consumption, services that put user interests at the core, and so on. Techniques that might be used at initial stages of projects could include: needs analysis; dialectical inquiry; visioning; strategic assumptions testing; appreciative inquiry (for example, Stowell, 2012).

Example:

Our research team, along with colleagues from Hull University, UK, was commissioned by a 'Health Action Zone' to undertake a project concerned with capacity building for evaluation amongst community groups. Thus some initial problem identification had taken place. However, before we could initiate further action, we had to take a step back and explore with some community groups their ideas of what would be possible as well as their current skills and experience of evaluation. So we introduced a stage of consulting with 55 community groups about their current situation and possible future (Boyd et al., 2007). Only then were we in a position to plan, collaboratively with members of a broad-based steering group, specific interventions for change. This initial process contributed to each community group's own understanding of their skills and future possibilities, so was, in itself, part of a change process, as it contributed to increasing the 'systems' purposeful adaptive capacity, ability to innovate, or self-design competence (Elden and Chisholm, 1993: 127).

Cross Disciplinary and Participative

AR has, at its foundation, problems or issues identified by participants within a system, whether this is a boundaried system like a classroom, or a work organization, or an extensive system like a region or society. This is in contrast to forms of research in which inquiry arises out of a single discipline or practice interest, or is closely linked to a previous discovery. AR draws on different kinds of knowledge and world views and is thereby multi-disciplinary. Because it is a collaborative activity, 'expert' knowledge of researchers is combined with 'tacit' or popular knowledge of other participants. In practical AR this combined knowledge leads to more effective and durable change. In emancipatory AR, this combined knowledge is the very basis of action and the two are inseparable. The integration of different world views and understandings means that attempts are made to work with and understand diversity and difference, in terms of gender, age, race, ethnicity, culture, and/or class, for example. The ways in which social position influences people's participation must be understood and all attempts made to ensure that pre-existing power relations between and within groups do not determine and distort the activity. This also applies to the power relations within research teams (Burman, 2004).

Example:

We were commissioned to explore the impact of participatory arts projects undertaken in Manchester, UK, on the health and wellbeing of participants (planning and action stages had been completed). The problem that had been identified prior to our involvement was the need to provide an evidence base for funders. It was clear from the start that artists and researchers had quite different perspectives on art, the nature of wellbeing and the process of research. Considerable tensions emerged between the different discourses, underpinned by different knowledge and value systems of the artists and the researchers. Furthermore, schisms emerged in the research team, as to the nature of participation in the research process, due to pre-existing relations and depth of experience. We employed both discussion and other team building techniques, particularly those based on appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider, 1999) to develop trust and a common understanding from which we could progress the work (Lawthom et al., 2007).

Cyclical Process

AR is cyclical. It is not always possible to know the end point from the start as each cycle is partly determined by the previous one. In terms of social change there is no end to the number of cycles that might be possible. However, any particular AR project may involve one particular stage, a part

cycle, or any number of full cycles. Research can start at any stage, and it is rare for AR to begin at conception and proceed to reflection and learning in an orderly manner. Each stage may precipitate a return to an earlier stage and 'spin off' actions might emerge in the course of implementation of some other action. Thus AR is a truly iterative process which cannot be described in advance or fully controlled. As the research proceeds, different people may become involved and different activities introduced. Furthermore, the time needed for each stage cannot be predicted in advance. Unintended impacts of the work will almost certainly arise and decisions made about whether the project moves in a different direction.

Example:

A community-based clinical psychology project, in Liverpool, UK, was charged with improving the mental health of an inner city, multicultural community. After developing and introducing a number of initiatives, in conjunction with other projects and different parts of the community, it became clear that there was a major problem between fathers and sons in one part of the community (problem identification from reflection and learning from previous stages). Thus a project specifically designed to enhance communications between fathers and sons was initiated in a participative manner. This had not been on the work schedule for the project but had emerged as a priority over time (Fatimilehin, 2007; Kagan et al., 2013).

All of this means that it can be difficult to approach AR in a conventional way. Research protocols may be able to identify who might be involved in doing what, at an initial stage, but may then be unable to outline explicitly what will then happen to and with whom, for how long and to what ends. From a university or professional base, this kind of protocol can be difficult for funders, or ethics panels, to understand and support. For these reasons, much AR takes place unfunded or by generating its own funds. Alternatively, resources and permissions to undertake AR go on under a different guise: as project or practice development; as evaluation research; or as consultancy. Yet none of these alternative practices necessarily meet the requirements for AR as defined at the start of the chapter. If they do combine development of theory with action and change through a participative and reflective process, then they may be considered to be AR: there is no intrinsic reason why project development, evaluation or consultancy cannot be done through AR, but they need not be.

It follows from this, then, that not all AR finds its way into scientific journals, although there will be a commitment to disseminate knowledge as widely as possible to those who will benefit from the insights and experiences gained – facilitated recently by the internet. For those from universities or the professions, whose career advancement is based on numbers of publications in peer-reviewed journals or successful procurement of external grants, engagement in AR can be risky. Indeed this amounts to a systematic institutional bias against AR.

Combination of Methods of Data Collection

Whilst AR will typically imply a broad social constructionist approach, it is not wedded to any particular orthodoxy of data collection (Burton and Kagan, 1998). Pragmatic concerns, linked to the problem in hand, determine the most appropriate means of gathering information. Creswell (2002) suggests data collection as one of the three 'E's': Experiencing (wherein the researchers – as participants – draw on their own involvement); Enquiring (wherein the researcher-participants collect new information in different ways); and Examining (wherein the researcher-participants use and make records). Table 4.1 identifies some

Table 4.1 Data collection: experiencing, enquiring and examining

Experiencing	*Enquiring*	*Examining*
• Participation • Performance and other creative arts including photography, writing, folk customs • Storytelling • Self-reflection • Intentional conversations • Dialogue and discussion	• Interviews: unstructured and informal; semi-structured; structured and formal; face-to-face, e-mail or internet • Focus groups • Whole system events • Questionnaires • Guided conversations	• Archives • Texts, images, maps • Photographs • Audio and videotapes (CDs and DVDs) • Artefacts • Narratives • Field notes of observations, feelings, reflections

of the data collection methods that have been used in AR projects under the three 'E's'.

The more the AR process tends towards emancipatory AR, the more involved all participants are, as co-researchers, in the collection and analysis of data as well as in the development of theory and a strategy for dissemination. Even when the AR project has proceeded through agreement as to purpose and means of gathering data, when it comes to data analysis, theory development and dissemination, participants' different standpoints will influence their interpretations, and the process involves, again, another period of negotiation to mutual understanding.

Example:

In our work evaluating participatory arts in Manchester, UK, we collected different kinds of data including: semi-structured interviews with artists, participants, managers of arts and linked projects and commissioners (face-to-face and e-mail); reflexive diaries kept by researchers and artists (structured and unstructured); participant observation by and field notes of researchers; focus group discussions; feedback questionnaires; private written accounts of participants and artists; graffiti board comments; creative techniques, including social role atoms, creative writing and poetry, photographs along with commentaries, artistic products; and attendance registers. Artists and researchers worked together in a workshop to make sense of the different types of information gathered, and to agree how it should be presented. Whilst researchers drafted the first report, artists were able to refine, change and modify its contents until all were satisfied it best captured the analysis. Theory development emerged through these workshops, too. The report that was produced paid greater attention to aesthetic detail than is usual as a research report (Sixsmith and Kagan, 2005).

Learning Through Dialogue and Sharing

The learning that takes place for all participants is central to AR and comes from a commitment to continual reflection and self-reflection. AR offers opportunities for meta-learning, that is, participants learning how to learn to develop their own, more effective practical theories. As Elden and Chisholm (1993: 138) say, 'Becoming a better practical theorist is a key to empowerment'.

Good AR makes the learning explicit, at individual, group and organizational or community levels, and looks to consolidate learning as a key component of ensuring that any change achieved is sustainable in the longer term. Just as dialogue between stakeholders was important at the early stages of the process, so it is, too, at the stage of learning. It is through dialogue and shared action and understanding that the learning takes place.

A commitment to learning is also a commitment to making findings, about both outcomes and processes of change, as widely available as possible. All participants have a role (the more so, the more emancipatory the AR) in making sense of and diffusing knowledge. Thus dissemination of information is not confined to formal academic and professional outlets. Different formats, including workshops, celebrations, videos and so on are also legitimate forms of dissemination.

Example:

We were involved in a project examining the experiences of forced labour amongst Chinese migrant workers. This was part of a programme of projects, combining together to act as a force for legislative change about modern slavery in the UK. We worked closely with colleagues from a local community project, the Wai Yin Chinese Women's Project in project planning, data collection, sense making of the data and its re-presentation. We produced a report (Kagan et al., 2011b) – 30 pages that few people would read, and even fewer Chinese migrant workers and their employers would read. So we also produced a small booklet capturing key life experiences of participants, in their own words, and written in both English and Chinese. This booklet was distributed widely, not just in academic and policy circles, but also in public places where Chinese migrants might find them. When we had our official launch of the project's findings, we gave a presentation that mixed formal presentation with performance, in Chinese, of narratives collected during the research. We have also presented at conferences and written about people's experiences (Fisher et al., 2014; Lawthom et al., 2015).

In AR, information diffusion will often extend beyond the academic and professional arenas: it is not restricted to the development of theory that is then left for others to take up in a practical sense. Careful consideration needs to be given to how findings are re-presented and to whom (Fine and Torre, 2008). Instead, opportunities for policy and strategy development become part of the planning and learning from AR, and need to be exploited, as well as the development of wider alliances for change beyond those formed through the specific AR project. The use of the internet and other networks for sharing information amongst like-minded people are perhaps more important than

academic publishing, which is in any case inaccessible to most people outside the universities. A further disadvantage of academic publishing is that few journals are interested in the types of detail about process that is central to learning from AR.

Combination of Theory and Action

One of the things that makes AR different from consultancy and audit for practice improvement is the link between action and theory (Frisby et al., 2009). Not only does theory contribute to the understanding of the problem in the first place, it also emerges and develops as the AR process continues. Theory applies not only to the focus of the AR, but also to the process of working. Thus serious theoretical development, ideally undertaken collaboratively, enhances understanding about social phenomena and change processes. AR therefore attempts both to change the world and to increase understanding of how such change can be brought about.

Example:

A project was developed in North West England, in collaboration with local agencies to identify the support needs of black and minority ethnic women escaping domestic violence in a large inner city area, including the highlighting of 'what works', service gaps and developing proposals for addressing barriers. It also piloted strategic interventions to support women to make successful transitions into productive and independent lives. Theoretical work on 'race', 'class' and gender informed the study (combining theory with action) in a way in which those intersecting axes of oppression could be re-conceptualized without reducing one to the other. New theoretical propositions emerged from the project (combining action and theory), in addition to changes to practice and service delivery and contributions to local and national policy (Burman et al., 2004; Chew-Graham et al., 2002).

Context Bound

AR is a situated practice. That is, problems emerge from, and AR takes place within particular historical and social contexts, and usually within particular institutional or organizational contexts. It is necessary to understand these multi-layered contexts in order to define the relevant stakeholders and participants in the process as well as to explore the extent to which learning from one action learning project is applicable to other problems and situations. The very problems that are at the heart of a specific AR project are grounded in the context of the participants. This can lead to dilemmas in deciding who it is that defines a project or who collaborates in the definition of a problem. These dilemmas are essentially, boundary judgements. They define not just who it is that is involved at all stages of the work (and who is not), but also what the scope of the problem under consideration is and the timescale to be applied to the change project. The process of 'boundary critique' (Midgley et al., 1998), that is, the questioning of the boundaries between the problem and its context, and between the project and the wider programme of intervention or policy context, can be applied at all stages, and indeed, forms a crucial part of reflexive practice. Decisions made about the different boundaries involved can be participatory, and nearly always will reveal the values underpinning different participants' connections with the problem in hand, and their differing positions and power in the system of social relations. Dworski-Riggs and Langhout (2010) discuss how, in their work with schools, power differences created opportunities for the refinement of methods and for challenges to be made to existing power structures.

In addition to being important for making decisions about what project is to be implemented by whom in what ways, context can be constraining and/or enabling of the AR process. Indeed, if action has not been possible, or change not achieved, or unintended change experienced, it may be to context that we need to look to understand why this is. At the same time the degree to which change is created tells us more about that context. Kagan and Burton (2000: 73) suggest prefigurative AR as a practice that puts the societal context at the heart of AR implementation and learning, making a bridge between the practicalities of one project or study and the broader aims of principled social change. They say:

> Prefigurative action research [is] a term which emphasises the relationship between action research and the creation of alternatives to the existing social order. This combined process of social reform and investigation enables learning about both the freedom of movement to create progressive social forms and about the constraints the present order imposes. (Kagan and Burton, 2000: 73)

Example:

Work done with families of disabled people in rural areas of Bengal highlighted different ways of

families supporting each other and linking with other agencies. Building on this experience a project was developed to explore how best to support families in slum areas of Kolkata. Colleagues from Manchester Metropolitan University worked alongside colleagues from Cardiff University and the Indian Institute for Cerebral Palsy to design and implement a project working in three quite different kinds of slum areas and with three different kinds of non-governmental sector community partners. Prefigurative AR was used as a framework for understanding and exploring the conditions under which it was possible or not to implement changes in how health projects worked with families with disabled children in the different context of their work. This framework enabled a historical, social and organizational context to be mapped and understood as a facilitator or barrier to change (Kagan and Scott-Roberts, 2002; Sen and Goldbart, 2005).

Context is complex and as AR proceeds over time, insight into this complexity grows whilst at the same time increased complexity has to be built into the AR process. These changes over time are difficult to anticipate, and decisions have to be made about whether or not to continue to work with the ever more complex system, or re-define a project as part of the system. What a detailed understanding of the context does imply, is that attention to, and understanding of, the process of AR is as important as the outcomes. Indeed, if outcomes are difficult to achieve within a specified timescale, it might only be learning about the process – and the context – that is possible.

Concern With Change and Sustainability Over Time

AR is always concerned with change. As we have seen this can range from changes in practice to organizational change to societal change. It differs from other types of research into change insofar as it places equal value on participants' and researchers' experiences. Researchers can be outsiders to the process of change, or insiders, and each brings different dilemmas. For insider AR, there are ethical issues and the potential for role conflict (Herr and Anderson, 2005). For outsider AR there is the need to develop rapport with insider participants and clarify the extent of researcher-participation in the process as well as commitment over time (Siddiquee and Kagan, 2006).

As the change project proceeds, changes will almost certainly take place in the type of data required (and the means of collecting them). Data need to be collected about both intended and unintended change, and researchers need to be observant about any unintended consequences that arise. Unintended consequences may take the form of additional problems to be addressed through spin-off cycles of AR; resistance to change; or emerging conflicts between researcher participants (over perspectives, interests and priorities). These then have to be negotiated and understood by all those involved.

There is a danger that any change produced will be dependent on those participants involved at the time, and strategies will be needed to ensure that organizations, groups or communities are able to sustain progressive change once it is achieved. Strategies for sustainability are closely linked to decisions about participation. In the more emancipatory AR, the community begins by defining the problem and is well placed to sustain change, with the researcher taking a more facilitatory role throughout. In more practical AR, it is likely that the change process is more dependent on the researchers' activities and sustainability is under greater threat.

Example:

A method was devised to routinely monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the Manchester (UK) Learning Disability Service, a community service supporting people with the label of learning difficulties (the term preferred by service user movements). A government grant was obtained to evaluate a system-wide implementation. While the method was found to be broadly useful in enabling staff and the organization to understand what outcomes for people were being produced, the project met considerable resistance from staff who felt uninvolved in the design and implementation and who thought that the method neglected significant aspects of their work. As a result, and despite good organizational ownership, the innovation was not sustained beyond the evaluation phase (Chapman et al., 2006).

Sustainability here was threatened through the resistance of staff. Gaining their participation early on, as collaborators in the AR process, may have led to a more acceptable implementation process; or a realization that teambuilding was needed; or a silencing of the resistance (see Cooke and Kothari, 2001).

STEPS TO UNDERTAKING RESEARCH

We have seen through the above discussion that to carry out AR requires a degree of flexibility and extensive critical reflection. Skilled AR includes a

number of steps, which are not meant to be implemented rigidly (Table 4.2). Instead, each step requires choices from amongst a number of different possibilities: what works in one setting may not in another.

Levin (2008: 669) suggests three sets of skills and capacities for action researchers: the ability to concretely and practically work with social change in order to solve participants' pertinent problems; the skills to create sustainable co-generative learning processes involving both problem owners and researchers in the same learning cycle; and the capacity, alone or collaboratively, to communicate in order to contribute to scientific and social discourses. Thus AR involves bridging practical problem solving, reflection and analytic thinking, and deploys a range of personal, interpersonal and political abilities (Levin, 2008).

MAIN ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH 'THE METHOD'

Firstly, we reiterate, AR is a process and not a method as such. A variety of methods can feed this process. The core of AR is a process of change and reflection with collaborative self-reflection at the core. This means that selection of AR as an

Table 4.2 Steps involved in AR

The different stages of AR are, in part, the steps for implementing AR. However, it is useful to identify other steps to implementation, bearing in mind that AR is a process not a method as such.

1. Work alongside and get to know people for whom positive change would make a difference to their lives in the direction of greater social justice (this could be researcher initiated or through a response to an advance to a researcher).
2. Gain a shared understanding of what a desired future might look like through undertaking some kind of visioning exercise whilst being clear about what is missed through some people not taking part.
3. Together identify a change issue that might make progress towards a desired future along with a mutual understanding of the context in which this change is taking place.
4. Identify positive and negative stakeholders (those who stand to gain and to lose) in the change issue.
5. Decide which stakeholders are to be involved in what ways and consider the consequences of excluding those not to be involved.
6. Collect background information so that a full understanding of the change issue is gained from the outset, refining the change issue as necessary.
7. Agree what action is to be undertaken and what information is to be collected from whom, how, when and by whom, negotiating and agreeing the forms in which the data are to be collected and stored. Invent new methods as appropriate.
8. Throughout, work together to make sense of and analyse data with reference to explicit theoretical frameworks.
9. In advance, anticipate how the chances of sustainability of any change will be maximized and build some strategies for sustainability into the plan.
10. Negotiate and agree what indicators of change will be important in terms of evaluation and ensure that records are kept and information collected that will enable the change to be evaluated.
11. Implement action and the collection of data, reviewing on a regular basis and revise plan accordingly.
12. Collect, share and collectively make sense of information about the process of change and its impact as well as the relevant context in which the change is implemented.
13. Reflect upon the extent to which change was achieved and the processes by which it was achieved and plan subsequent action.
14. Develop or modify an existing theory of change and its impact, as well as new understanding of processes of change.
15. If the anticipated progress had not been achieved, undergo deep reflection about why this is with reference to the context and what has been learned about the constraints that exist on the change issue.
16. Devise strategies for organizational or community learning from the AR process and review the operation of power, structured relations and context of the change process.
17. Agree division of labour and contents for report writing or other form of summary of the project as well as plans for dissemination that maximize the influence of the project and the learning that comes from it.
18. Produce project summary and disseminate information from the project.
19. Plan next project taking account of the learning from this one (this may involve, following reflection and analysis, abandoning this process of change in this context at this point in time).

approach is the beginning of methodological dilemmas and not the end of them! For this reason ARers need to have a broad competence in research methods from both traditional and non-traditional paradigms, recognizing where they can be useful and where limited, but at all times in relation to the overall goals of principled social change within and beyond the action project. Methodological competence is perhaps more important here than anywhere – we have to offer our participant colleagues the best information and knowledge that can be obtained to illuminate their struggles and actions. Furthermore we have to be open to new ideas – to the creative invention of method.

Models of AR vary with their purpose, for transformation or for reform, and these goals broadly map onto emancipatory or participatory, and practical AR. Nevertheless, all AR projects are compromised: there is no such thing as a purely participative project – there are always limits to the participation possible, there are always power relations that silence some voices, at least relatively. The challenge is to use the tools of AR to make such situations less compromised, maximizing shared enlightenment as the process proceeds.

Different models of AR involve, to greater or lesser degrees, the steps of planning, implementing, reflecting, evaluating and more planning. These steps do not necessarily follow a linear pattern and the ARer may often be simultaneously planning, implementing, reflecting, evaluating and more besides. End points will not always be identifiable from the outset, although general direction probably should be. Indeed, in many cases the definition of the 'project' within a broader social process will be somewhat arbitrary.

Reflection and learning is an integral part of the process. As Argyris (1976) noted, such learning takes place through iterations on several levels. It will cover learning from within the change project as well as learning about the nature of change, about the broader aims themselves, and about the context (Kagan and Burton, 2000). It is not possible to predict what will be learned, by whom, and what the effect will be, and indeed there are likely to be a variety of spin-offs from any AR project, as well as unintended consequences, good and bad, that should be looked out for.

Dilemmas

Funding may be difficult to secure: most funders want a boundaried project and AR cannot always deliver this. Sustainability of change needs to be considered. Commissioners of research will rarely support open-ended projects, so an important consideration is the decision that is made over the start and end of a change process. Indeed the reputation problem identified by Sanford (1981) is still with us: AR grant proposals can risk appearing 'too vague to fund'. Conference organizers and academic publishers will often not consider projects without complete data collection and analysis. There are tensions here in terms of building a body of knowledge although there are some specialist publishers (such as the journals: *Action Research*; *Community, Work & Family*; *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*; *Qualitative Method in Psychology*; *Journal of Community Psychology*; and *Qualitative Health Research*) that are interested in process issues.

Time taken for meaningful change to be achieved is critical and often only becomes clear as the process proceeds. Time taken building relationships is closely linked to the ethics of AR and responsibilities to collaborators, participants or to improving the issues under investigation. This contrasts with the positivist ideal of impartiality based on independence and distance of the researcher. There is also at times a conflict between 'moving onto the next project' and career advancement for the psychologist, and the discharge of ongoing responsibility to those with whom the AR relationship has been established. It is important to have realistic goals, especially in relation to time (Rapoport, 1970). Latin American participative AR has a specific concept, *inserción* (insertion), to describe the organic, committed way the researcher joins the host community. This is not the same thing as abandoning expertise and over-privileging the 'people's knowledge'. The more participative the AR, the more that stakeholder interests, involvement, resistance and boundary decisions all have to be clarified, at entry, during the work, and at exit (Kagan et al., 2005).

Critical Appraisal of AR

So what can be said about the usefulness of AR for a socially relevant, qualitative psychology? There is no one form of AR, but rather a family of approaches, and AR is not a method but rather an ontological and epistemological orientation (with a standpoint on both the nature of the social world, and on how it can be apprehended). It follows then, that a critical appraisal would have to capture both the diversity of AR and its status as a meta-methodology.

The above overview would suggest that at least the practical and emancipatory approaches to AR are most appropriate when:

1 the problem definition is relatively open;
2 participation is pluralistic, and in particular, includes those with most to lose or gain;
3 the aim is to create and understand social reform or transformation;
4 the project is understood and can be conceptualized in relation to a broader programme of social transformation;
5 methods can be selected from the broad range available to social scientists, capable of adaptation and modification, but that these will be transparent and understandable to participants and capable of revealing the unexpected;
6 there is ownership of the change project by those affected and those involved;
7 the researcher(s) are not overly compromised by their institutional base, the funding and the intentions of any sponsors, although these will always play a part.

AR is of less use in elucidating individual psychological processes or in describing characteristics of groups or populations, although AR projects might reasonably include emancipatory versions of such aims (for example, in the self-definition and reappropriation of difference by groups such as mental health system survivors, or through the self-advocacy movements – incorporating processes of conscientization).

AR may also be of limited utility in studies conceived within tight timescales and with predetermined aims, such as evaluations of standardized treatments or some needs analyses. However, again, AR could suggest an alternative way of approaching such questions, as when therapy participants reflect on the process from their own perspectives and experience, or when a community group carries out its own community audit.

AR is no more immune from ethical scrutiny than other research strategies (Khanlou and Peter, 2004). Its emphasis on change means that the question of (potentially unreasonably raised) expectations is at the forefront in project initiation, while the dilemmas of project and participant and/or non-participant boundaries have already been highlighted. The authentic nature of the research relationships may be a better guide to the ethical standards of the research, when, as is often the case, precise methods and definitions of participants cannot be identified at the start (Grant et al., 2008). Real participation can mean that the dissemination and use of the project findings may not be in the gift of the researcher, nor in the perceived interest of the other participants, who may understandably object to the exploitation of collective knowledge products for academic purposes. Similarly, authorship may reasonably include many of those who were involved in the work and not just those who have formal researcher roles.

Furthermore, the ending of episodes of AR raises the question of sustainability of the innovation that is the focus of the action side of the process, as well as for the continued process of discovery. This is a sharper issue for AR than for more traditionally bounded work where the researcher can seem like a tourist, visiting people's lives.

It should be clear that there is no one best way of conducting AR, and that there is plenty of scope for the creative use of different methods. Furthermore, each AR situation is different and there are dangers in following a concrete model when the particularities are different (Burton and Kagan, 2005; Freire and Faundez, 1989). Nevertheless, in general, good AR is where:

- A clearly identified change issue is identified with clarity about its relevance and origins thus suggesting practical or emancipatory AR.
- Phases of the project are clearly outlined.
- Clear processes exist for resolving and clarifying different stakeholder interests.
- Stakeholders are identified and there is clarity about processes of participation (or not) of stakeholders.
- Those who are affected by the change are involved.
- The relationship between researcher and participants is described to give a sense of authenticity and clarity in relation to power within the process.
- The processes of planning are clear and comprehensive.
- Decision making on choice of data collection tools is transparent and includes awareness of their strengths and limitations.
- The mechanisms of collaborative data analysis are clearly stated along with information about how differences are resolved.
- Analysis of data extends beyond commonsense interpretations and is theoretically grounded.
- Consideration is given to local context while implementing change.
- There is explicit reference to new understanding about the impact of change or the processes of trying to achieve it.
- Report writing and dissemination processes are clear, and include how the resolution of different interests are achieved (if necessary, opportunities are made for several alternative reports to be written).
- The extent to which the findings about outcomes and processes are transferable is discussed.

THE FUTURE OF ACTION RESEARCH WITHIN PSYCHOLOGY

Interest in AR continues to grow in psychology, particularly as the two traditions discussed here, of practical and emancipatory AR, have become consolidated within a critical qualitative paradigm (Parker and Goodley, 2000; Torre et al., 2012). Traditions of AR within organizational and education research are still strong and AR is recognized as a key tool in critical health psychology (Brydon-Miller, 2014).

Community psychology is expanding, worldwide, with a focus on social change and an orientation of AR (Kagan et al., 2011; Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2010). Participatory AR with young people is an area of particular growth (Berg et al., 2009; Bostock and Freeman, 2003; Jacquez et al., 2013; Langhout and Thomas, 2010).

The trends to increase 'user' involvement in research as well as co-production of research challenge traditional psychological research paradigms. Furthermore, in the professional arena, there are moves to create more permeable disciplines, and good partnership, multi-agency and interdisciplinary ways of working, exploiting the synergies of overlapping concerns and expertise. This opens the way for professional psychological practice and concomitant research to merge with traditions that have more experience of AR, particularly, for example, social and community development, health promotion and the management of change.

One challenge will be to work in ways that encourage the more emancipatory and participatory forms of AR to resist a pull back into practical and technical AR. The hierarchies of evidence required to inform practice (and linked funding) (such as Nesta, 2013, which alongside other approaches place randomized control trials in pole position) support just such a pull-back, bolstered by the influence of neoliberal policies which place a value on 'short term' fixes to complex psychological and human problems.

The challenges presented to human flourishing by the economic and climate crises paradoxically offer opportunities for complex, in-agency and collaborative research approaches, such as AR (Kagan, 2013). The determinants of wellbeing are increasingly understood to extend beyond the individual and the complex role that multi-layered contexts play in this most basic of human conditions has not been fully understood. AR is well placed to contribute to both understanding and improvement in wellbeing, from a position that 'includes developing an understanding that we are embodied beings part of a social and ecological order, and radically interconnected with all other beings. We are not bounded individuals experiencing the world in isolation' (Reason and Bradbury, 2008: 8).

Note

1 Technical AR involves the researcher identifying a problem and an intervention, which is then tested. The goal of this kind of AR is the promotion of efficient and effective practice. The collaboration between researcher and practitioner is largely technical and facilitatory. Whilst this type of AR continues in psychology, it tends not to lend itself to a qualitative paradigm, and will not be discussed further here.

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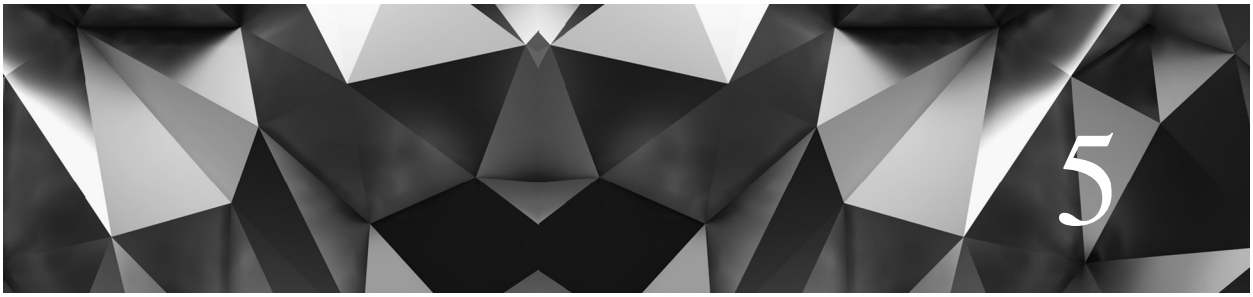

Conversation Analysis

Sue Wilkinson and Celia Kitzinger

Conversation analysis – the study of talk-in-interaction – is a theoretically and methodologically distinctive approach to understanding social life. It is an interdisciplinary approach spanning, in particular, the disciplines of psychology, sociology, linguistics and communication studies. The methodology of conversation analysis – involving detailed empirical studies of specific, observable, interactional phenomena – rests on three fundamental theoretical assumptions: (i) that talk is a form of action; (ii) that action is structurally organized; and (iii) that talk creates and maintains intersubjectivity (Heritage, 1984a; Peräkylä, 2004).

The first assumption of conversation analysis (henceforth CA) is that talk is understood, first and foremost, as a form of *action*: the focus is on what people *do* with talk, rather than just on what they say. Conversation analysts study ordinary, everyday conversational actions, such as complaining (Drew and Holt, 1988), complimenting (Pomerantz, 1978), or telling news (Maynard, 1997); and also actions that constitute particular institutional contexts, such as advice-giving in healthcare interactions (Heritage and Sefi, 1992) or cross-examination in court (Drew, 1992). Conversation analysts also study the fundamental structures of talk-in-interaction upon which all actions depend, such as turn-taking (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974), and the organization of actions into sequences (Schegloff, 2007).

CA's second assumption – that action is structurally organized – underpins this latter kind of work, which establishes technical specifications of the rules and practices that structure talk-in-interaction, and considers how these constrain and enable particular actions. These technical specifications constitute a cumulative, empirically-derived body of knowledge, which describes the basic characteristics of talk-in-interaction.

CA's final assumption – that talk creates and maintains intersubjectivity – locates it firmly within the domain of psychology. For conversation analysts, however, intersubjectivity is not an intra-psychic phenomenon: rather, it depends upon displayed understandings of prior talk. Through producing a turn hearable as an answer, for example, a speaker shows that she has heard the prior turn as a question; or through producing (appropriately-timed) laughter, a speaker shows she has recognized – and appreciated – the punchline of a joke. Similarly, institutional contexts – classrooms, consulting rooms, courts – are (in part) 'talked into being' (Heritage, 1984a) by the details of participants' actions: the way in which they give and receive information, ask and answer questions, present arguments, and so on (see Drew, 2003, for a comparison of four different institutional contexts).

Conversation analysis was first developed in the USA in the late 1960s and early 1970s by

Harvey Sacks, in collaboration with Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson. Tragically, Sacks was killed in a car crash in 1975, leaving much of the subsequent development of the approach to his collaborators, colleagues and students. His foundational legacy, however, remains – largely in the form of lectures to his undergraduate students at the University of California, transcribed from the original tapes by Jefferson, and published with an extensive introduction by Schegloff (Sacks, 1995).

The intellectual roots of CA lie in the sociological tradition of ethnomethodology, an approach primarily concerned with social members' ways of making sense of the everyday social world (Garfinkel, 1967). Like other broadly constructionist and interpretive theoretical frameworks, ethnomethodology offers a model of people as agents, and of a social order grounded in contingent, ongoing interpretive work – an interest in how people *do* social order, rather than in how they are animated by it. For Sacks, talk-in-interaction was simply one site of human interaction that could be studied for what it revealed about the production of social order: talk (as such) was not given any *principled* primacy (Heritage, 1984a). What was crucial, however, was the availability of tape-recorded conversations, allowing for repeated inspection, and subsequent transcription, of the data. Schegloff and Jefferson (until her untimely death in 2008) remained key figures within CA, where their work centrally defines the field. For more on the early history of CA, see Psathas (1979), Turner (1974); for classic papers by the 'first generation' of conversation analysts, see Lerner (2004a) and Jefferson (2015) – the latter is a collection of Jefferson's work on 'talking about troubles', published posthumously. One of the best introductory texts on CA is Liddicoat (2007); and the most comprehensive overview of the field to date is Sidnell and Stivers (2014).

The sections which follow: (i) outline the scope of CA research, looking, in particular, at how it has been used to address psychological research questions; (ii) contextualize CA, identifying some key issues and debates within it, and examining the relationship between CA and other qualitative approaches; (iii) illustrate what is involved in doing a CA project, drawing specifically on our own research; and, finally, (iv) offer a critical appraisal of the potential of CA, together with the challenges facing it in the future, particularly in relation to psychology.

THE SCOPE OF CONVERSATION ANALYTIC RESEARCH

One distinctive feature of CA research is the kind of data used. Whether studying ordinary, everyday conversation, institutional talk, or the fundamental structures underpinning both, CA uses naturalistic data[1]: that is, talk which is not researcher-generated, and which is (generally) collected without the researcher present, usually by the participants themselves. This talk is audio- or video-recorded. Although early studies of face-to-face interactions are often based on audio alone, in contemporary CA video-recording of such interactions is regarded as essential in order to examine the integration of body-behaviours (such as gaze, gesture and posture) and talk: sometimes called the 'multimodal analysis' (e.g. Mondada, 2007) of 'embodied action' (e.g. Goodwin, M.H., 2007).

In any CA project, analysis begins with transcription of the recorded data, preserving fine-grained details such as in-breaths, sound stretches and timed pauses (see the data extracts in this chapter; and the transcription key in the Appendix to the chapter). This is necessary because CA research has shown that such apparently tiny and insignificant details of the talk systematically affect what participants do next, and how they do it. If, as analysts, we want to understand how people do things in and through talk, we need to attend to their talk at the same level of detail as they do. A comprehensive transcription notation representing various characteristics of the timing and delivery of talk has been developed, initially by Gail Jefferson, and continually refined – by Jefferson herself (e.g. Jefferson, 2004) and subsequently by others: e.g. Bolden (2015); Hepburn (2004); Hepburn and Bolden (2014). However, it is the recordings themselves (and not the transcripts of them) that constitute the primary data of CA, and these are regularly revisited during the analytic process. CA is unusual in that data sets are often shared – indeed, many of the 'classic' data sets are available as a resource for the CA research community. Increasingly, recordings are made available on the World Wide Web so that transcribed data extracts can be listened to – or watched – in conjunction with reading an article (see, for example, http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/schegloff/sound-clips.html).

For the collection of new data, CA researchers need to use informed-consent forms which comprehensively address data sharing. Typically, participants will be asked for 'step wise' consent: e.g. for the researcher(s) to share data in talks and conference presentation; to put extracts on the Web; to archive complete data sets. Anonymization of data – particularly video data – will also need to

be addressed. If required, this can be achieved in various ways, ranging from pixellation of faces to turning video images into line drawings, using specialized software (see Mondada, 2014 for a discussion of some techniques and key issues).

Broadly speaking, the naturalistic data sets analysed by conversation analysts divide into two main types: ordinary conversation and institutional talk (see Drew, 2003, for a discussion of the relationship between them). We discuss these, and exemplify the kinds of findings derived from them, in the following two sub-sections; finally, in the third sub-section below, we show how fundamental features of talk-in-interaction are discovered through analysis of data sets like these.

Studies of Ordinary Conversation

Schegloff (1996c: 4) refers to ordinary conversation as the 'fundamental or primordial' site of social life: it is the medium through which we are socialized, through which we conduct our daily social interactions, and (as we will see below) through which social institutions are managed. CA research has drawn upon ordinary, everyday conversations ranging from parents interacting with children (e.g. Wootton, 1997) to friends sharing a backyard picnic (e.g. Goodwin, 2003); from students chatting in a dorm room (e.g. Schegloff, 2007) to telephone calls to and from lesbian households (Land and Kitzinger, 2005)[2]. What such apparently diverse data sets have in common is that they provide 'snapshots' of people actually going about the business of their everyday lives, instead of (as in most qualitative research in psychology) reporting on it retrospectively.

For example, instead of reporting *opinions* about how children should be brought up, or providing *retrospective accounts* of child-rearing practices, we can observe parents *doing child-rearing* – as in the following episode in which Mother (Mo) and four-year-old child (Ch) are actually, there and then, engaged in an etiquette lesson (see also transcription key at the end of the chapter):

```
[(2)  Jo/age 4 (Wootton, n.d.)]
01   Ch: Put on the li::ght.
02       (0.9)
03   Mo: Pa:rdo:n?
04   Ch: (.)
05   Ch: Put on the light please
06       (.)
07   Mo: (  ) better ((then Mo puts
         on the light))
```

Mother responds to the child's request (eventually – after nearly one second of silence, giving the child the opportunity to add the missing etiquette term) with the kind of item ('pardon') normally used to claim a problem of hearing or understanding (Sacks, Jefferson and Schegloff et al., 1997). Here, the child's repeat adds the etiquette term 'please', displaying her understanding that this may be an etiquette lesson – and this is confirmed by Mother's response, which approves the revised request before complying with it[3].

The focus in CA research is on identifying actions in talk-in-interaction, and on developing a technical specification of how these are accomplished. Many of these actions appear entirely familiar and rather mundane: opening and closing conversations (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973), agreeing and disagreeing with assessments (Pomerantz, 1984); telling news (Maynard, 1997); referring to persons (Sacks and Schegloff, 1979); or dealing with problems of understanding (Schegloff et al., 1977). Others – such as 'confirming an allusion' (Schegloff, 1996b) – do not have readily-available vernacular labels. In CA research, the challenge is to make the familiar strange – to recognize that the everyday actions we take for granted, particularly when conversation runs off smoothly, are *accomplishments*, collaboratively achieved by all parties to the conversation.

These are actions that everyone in the world – across culture, language and the specifics of sex, or 'race', or class – must be able to accomplish in interaction. Without the capacity to open and close conversations, or to refer to persons, for example, an individual would not be a competent member of her culture. Although some features of the ways in which these actions are carried out may be culture- or context-specific, the actions themselves are universal or near-universal features of human communication[4]. We know this from comparative studies of different sociocultural and linguistic communities (e.g. Sidnell, 2009), including the early results of a large-scale programme of work currently underway at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics (e.g. Dingemanse et al., 2015; Holler et al., 2016).

Let us now look at an example of the kind of technical specification that conversation analysts develop. The action here is 'breaking bad news'. In the next three data extracts, someone has bad news to tell (a death, a cancelled trip, a medical diagnosis). In our discussion of them, we draw on the work of a number of conversation analysts – as noted above, data sets are often shared, and the same extracts repeatedly (re)analysed by different researchers (for the first extract below, see Schegloff, 1988; Terasaki, 2004; for the second, see Drew, 1984; Schegloff, 1988; and for the third, see Maynard, 1992). These researchers – and others – have observed a recurrent pattern in ordinary conversational tellings of bad

news: the talk is organized such that the *recipient* of the news turns out to be the one who actually says it.

The first data fragment to exemplify this pattern is taken from an ordinary conversation on the telephone between two friends, Belle and Fanny:

```
[DA:2:10, from Schegloff (1988: 443)]
01  Bel:  ... I, I-I had something (.) terrible t'tell you.=
02        =So [uh:  ]
03  Fan:      [How t]errible [is it.]
04  Bel:                     [.hhhhh]
05        (.)
06  Bel:  Uh: ez worse it could be:.
07        (0.7)
08  Fan:  W'y'mean Ida?
09        (.)
10  Bel:  Uh yah.hh=
11  Fan:  Wud she do die:?=
12  Bel:  =Mm:hm,
```

Notice that Belle, the bearer of the bad news, does not actually tell it herself: it is Fanny who eventually announces the news (in question format): 'Wud she do die?' (line 11). Belle produces a pre-announcement (Schegloff, 2007) – 'I had something terrible t'tell you' (line 1) – which indicates to Fanny that she has bad news, but she doesn't actually produce the news: most obviously at line 7 (a silence of seven-tenths of a second is a very long time in conversation). Belle's protracted delay in producing the 'terrible' news she has projected leads Fanny to derive – and articulate – the components of the news herself: first, who it is about (line 8), and then what has happened to her (line 11), leaving Belle simply to confirm that she (Fanny) has understood correctly (lines 10 and 12).

We can see a similar pattern in the second data fragment. Charlie has phoned Ilene to tell her that (because a change of plan on the part of the woman, Karen, with whom he had intended to stay) he is no longer able to offer her, as promised, a lift to Syracuse at the weekend. At line 1, he produces an announcement about Karen's change of plan ('she decided to go away …'), but delays conveying the negative consequences of this decision for Ilene:

```
[Trip to Syracuse, 1-2, from Schegloff (1988: 443)]
01  Cha:  She decidih tih go away this weekend.
02  Ile:  Yeah:,
03  Cha:  .hhhh=
04  Ile:  =.kh[h
05  Cha:      [So tha:[:t
06  Ile:              [k-khhh
07  Cha:  Yihknow I really don't have a place tuh sta:y.
08  Ile:  .hh Oh:::::.hh
09        (0.2)
10  Ile:  .hhh So yih not g'nna go up this weeken'?
11        (0.2)
12  Cha:  Nuh:: I don't think so.
```

Charlie's protracted delay in producing the bad news leads Ilene to derive – and articulate – it herself. Even when Ilene claims to 'get it' – with her prosodically-emphasized 'change-of-state token' (Heritage, 1984b), 'Oh:::::' (line 8) – Charlie still delays announcing the bad news himself. His silence at line 9 is as interactionally consequential as Belle's at line 7 in the previous extract. It leads Ilene herself to articulate the bad news – that the consequence of Charlie's having lost his place to stay (because of Karen's change of plan) is that the trip to Syracuse is off (line 10). Ilene announces the news, leaving Charlie simply to confirm it (line 12).

These are just two instances of a recurrent pattern in ordinary conversation: of course, many more are required to develop a technical specification of the practices through which an action, like breaking bad news, is accomplished (see the final section of this chapter for more detail of the process of doing CA research). In the following sub-section, we illustrate how this same conversational action (breaking bad news) is achieved in an institutional context.

Studies of Institutional Talk

Ordinary conversational competencies – such as those involved in breaking bad news – also underpin the (generally more specialized) talk found in

institutional contexts like, for example, healthcare interactions:

> practices such as describing a problem or trouble, or for telling good or bad news, are carried across the threshold of the doctor's office and affect how doctors and patients go about addressing particular interactional tasks. (Maynard and Heritage, 2005: 428)

The following data fragment is taken from an interaction in a clinic for developmental disabilities (see Maynard, 1992), between a doctor and the mother of a child who has been referred to the clinic. The interaction follows a clinical assessment of the child's problems, and the task facing the doctor is to deliver a (bad news) diagnosis. Here's how he does it:

```
[8.013, from Maynard (1992: 337-8)]
01  Dr:  What do you see? as- as his (0.5) difficulty.
02        (1.2)
03  Mo:  Mainly his uhm: (1.2) the fact that he
04       doesn't understand everything. (0.6) and
05       also the fact that his speech  (0.7) is very
06       hard to understand what he's saying (0.3)
07       lot[s of ti]me
08  Dr:     [ right ]
09       (0.2)
10  Dr:  Do you have any ideas wh:y it is: are you:
11       d[o yo]u?h
12  Mo:   [ No ]
13       (2.1)
14  Dr:  .h okay I (0.2) you know I think we basically
15       (.) in some ways agree with you: (0.6) .hh
16       insofar as we think that (0.3) Dan's main
17       problem (0.4) .h you know does: involve you
18       know language.
19       (0.4)
20  Mo:  Mm hmm
21       (0.3)
22  Dr:  you know both (0.2) you know his- (0.4) being
23       able to understand you know what is said to
24       him (0.4) .h and also certainly also to be
25       able to express:: (1.3) you know his uh his
26       thoughts
27       (1.1)
28  Dr:  .hh uh:m (0.6) .hhh in general his
29       development ...
```

There are striking similarities between bad news tellings in ordinary conversation and what we see here in institutional talk. Although it is the *doctor* who has information about the diagnosis, he delays telling it – just as we saw Belle and Charlie do – thereby creating an opportunity for the recipient to tell the bad news herself. He explicitly asks the mother for her understanding of the child's problem (line 1) and its underlying cause (lines 10–11). And although, in this case, the mother does not actually produce the bad news herself, the doctor acts *as if she had*. In saying (at lines 14–15) 'we basically … agree with you' (where 'we' is understood as a collective reference to himself and other medical experts), he treats her as if she had produced the bad news he is now simply confirming. The doctor's diagnostic telling is built off the mother's report of the child's difficulties and claims to be an agreement with her. This is an institutional adaptation of the ordinary conversational action of breaking bad news – and it illustrates how studies of ordinary conversation typically underpin studies of institutional talk.

Communication in medicine and healthcare is perhaps the largest area of institutional CA (see Heritage and Maynard, 2006, for a comprehensive overview). Studies of conversational phenomena – such as giving a 'bad news' diagnosis (see above) – clearly have huge practical implications for the training of healthcare practitioners and the delivery of healthcare services. Work in this area includes studies of acute, as well as specialist, medicine (Heritage and Stivers, 1999; Stivers, 2007); primary healthcare (Robinson and Stivers, 2001); counselling and therapy sessions (Peräkylä, 1995; Peräkylä et al., 2008); and calls to telephone helplines (Baker et al., 2005; Hepburn et al., 2014; Shaw and Kitzinger, 2007; Wilkinson, 2011).

Other key areas of institutional CA include interactions in classrooms (Koshik, 2001), courts (Atkinson and Drew, 1979) and other workplace settings; news interviews (Clayman and Heritage,

2002a, 2002b); and calls to the emergency services (Zimmerman, 1992); many of these are discussed further in Heritage and Clayman (2010). Empirical work has shown that each of these institutional contexts has specialized conversational practices – sometimes deriving from structural constraints, such as the protocols that govern emergency call-handling (see Berger, Kitzinger and Ellis, 2016); however these specialized practices are generally derived from the practices of ordinary conversation. We turn now to research on the fundamental features of talk-in-interaction that underpin *all* kinds of talk.

Fundamental Features of Talk-in-Interaction

Drawing both on ordinary conversation and on institutional talk, conversation analysts have identified fundamental structures, rules and practices of talk-in-interaction. These include: turn-taking; sequence organization; repair; storytelling; word selection, person reference and membership categorization; and the overall structural organization of interaction. Within each of these areas there is an established set of core findings foundational to the discipline of CA and essential to any adequate CA study.

Turn-taking

The classic paper by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) presents a model for ensuring that, by and large, people speak one at a time in conversation. Summarized very simply, the model proposes the existence of turn-constructional units (TCUs) – whole sentences, phrases, sometimes just single words, or even non-lexical items (grunts, whistles, sharp intakes of breath) – which, in context, are recognizable as possibly constituting a complete turn. Each speaker is initially entitled to just *one* of these – after which, another speaker has the right (and sometimes the obligation) to speak next. Turn-taking organization is designed to *minimize* turn size, such that a turn of one (and only one) TCU is the default. Extended turns, with lengthy and/or multiple TCUs, are *accomplishments* and this has important implications for the analysis of longer turns at talk, including – but not limited to – storytelling (Schegloff, 1982, 1987). The turn-taking model also encompasses speaker selection techniques: see Lerner (1996, 2002, 2003, 2004b) for extensions and exceptions to the model as first presented.

Sequence organization

This second technical domain deals with the *structure* of talk-in-interaction. The most basic type of sequence involves two (adjacent) turns at talk by different speakers, the first constituting an *initiating* action, and the second an action *responsive* to it (Schegloff, 2007). Most initiating actions can be followed by a range of *sequentially-relevant* (i.e. appropriately 'fitted') next actions, but these alternative responsive actions are not equivalent (Sacks, 1987). In CA terminology, an acceptance of an invitation or a granting of a request is a *preferred* next action, while refusal of an invitation or denial of a request is *dispreferred*. 'Preference' is a structural concept, rather than a psychological one: i.e. the fact that an invitation 'prefers' acceptance is independent of the personal preference of the recipient of that invitation. (Most of us will have had the experience of accepting an invitation that we would – personally – have preferred to have refused.) The basic two-turn sequence can be *expanded* (and a great many are), at the beginning (pre-expansion), and/or in the middle (insert expansion), and/or at the end (post-expansion) of the sequence (Schegloff, 2007). As a result, very long stretches of talk can be built around the core structure of a single two-turn sequence. Most conversations, of course, will consist of many such sequences, some expanded, some not. For more recent work which develops our understanding of preference in particular conversational contexts, see – for example – Freed and Erlich (2010), Raymond (2003), Stivers and Robinson (2006) on questions and responses; and Curl and Drew (2008), Kendrick and Drew (2014), Drew and Couper-Kuhlen (2014) on offers and requests.

Repair

The domain of repair – first specified by Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977) – considers how people deal with (possible) troubles in speaking, hearing or understanding the ongoing talk. Conversation analysts distinguish between *self*-initiated repair (when a speaker interrupts her/his own talk to attend to some trouble) and *other*-initiated repair (when someone other than the speaker does this) – see Schegloff (2000). They also consider the *position* of repair (e.g. whether it occurs within the same TCU as the 'trouble source', or later) and the *technology* of repair (e.g. how it is initiated and how it is performed). They have shown, for example, that self-initiated repair is performed through a variety of different 'repair operations': for example, inserting (Wilkinson and Weatherall, 2011), deleting, reformatting or replacing material (see Schegloff, 2013 for a review). Work on other-initiated repair has focused on types of repair initiation, ranging from 'open class' forms, such as 'pardon?', 'what?' or 'huh?' (Drew, 1997) to repeats of the trouble source turn (Curl, 2005; Robinson and Kevoe-Feldman, 2010). Other recent work has begun systematically to identify non-repair components of turns containing repairs, such as 'repair prefaces' (Lerner and Kitzinger, 2015) and further

to specify the *interactional* uses of repair (e.g. Hepburn, Wilkinson and Shaw, 2012).

Other fundamental features

Space does not permit discussion here of the other fundamental structures, rules and practices of talk-in-interaction foundational to CA. For story-telling see, in particular, Sacks (1972); for word selection, person reference and membership categorization, Sacks and Schegloff (1979); and for the overall structural organization of interaction, Jefferson (1980). An understanding of all of these is crucial for conducting competent CA, whether working with ordinary conversational data, or with institutional talk (where the core findings of CA provide a benchmark for understanding more specialized forms of communication).

CONTEXTUALIZING CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

In this section, we contextualize CA in relation to broader discussions of social science theory and methodology, particularly as these pertain to qualitative research. We first identify some of the main issues and debates associated with CA; and then look (briefly) at the relationship between CA and related qualitative methods and methodologies.

Issues and Debates

The issues underpinning a number of the key debates around CA are, in many respects, pertinent to discussions of other qualitative approaches to research, particularly approaches based on the analysis of talk. These issues are: whether the approach can be used politically; the role of quantification; and the relationship between cognition and conversation. We will briefly outline each of these debates as it relates to CA in particular.

Using CA politically

Some critics of CA – feminists and others (e.g. Billig, 1999; Lakoff, 2003; Wetherell, 1998) – have proposed that CA is not well suited to the feminist agenda of understanding power and oppression, or to the pursuit of political agendas more generally. Their critiques incorporate three main arguments: (i) that CA's underlying (and often unarticulated) social theory is incompatible with feminism and other critical perspectives; (ii) that CA's emphasis on participants' orientations cannot be reconciled with the analyst's focus on gender, class, sexuality (and other such variables associated with the operation of power relations), especially when these are not apparently oriented to by participants themselves; and (iii) that CA's apparent obsession with the minute details of talk-in-interaction excludes – even obscures – broader social and political realities.

These critiques incorporate various 'misunderstandings or misreadings' of CA (Schegloff, 1999: 559); and we have laid out these in more detail elsewhere (Kitzinger, 2000, 2008) our own argument that it is precisely those features of CA that are critiqued as anti-feminist or apolitical which offer the most exciting potential for feminist-informed and politically-engaged CA work. We have also demonstrated through our own research how some of the technical tools which define CA as a discipline (sequence organization, person reference, repair) can be deployed within a feminist framework (Kitzinger, 2005a, 2005b; Kitzinger and Frith, 1999; Land and Kitzinger, 2005; Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2007, 2008); and how CA can be used to understand/improve interactions on telephone helplines designed to support women – e.g. in dealing with crisis after childbirth (Kitzinger, 2011; Kitzinger, C. and Kitzinger, S. 2007) or achieving a home birth (Shaw and Kitzinger, 2012, 2013).

Quantification

The classic CA studies (particularly studies of ordinary conversation) have been purely qualitative. However, Heritage (1999) predicted that the discipline would become more quantitative during the next period of its development, as conversation analysts connect particular features of talk to the outcomes of that talk. This seems to have happened. For example, in their analysis of video-recordings of paediatric medical visits, Stivers et al. (2003) showed that, in, inappropriate antibiotics prescribing (for viral conditions where antibiotics are ineffective) was statistically more likely when parents offered a candidate diagnosis (47% got antibiotics) than when they did not (29% got antibiotics). Robinson (2007) discusses the role of distributional evidence in documenting practices of action, and encourages conversation analysts to consider using statistical analysis, where appropriate, as a component of proof.

Other conversation analysts have quantified changes in talk over time. For example, in a study of US presidential press conferences between the 1950s and 2000, Clayman and Heritage (2002b) coded and statistically analysed more than 4,000 questions from journalists to the president, documenting how these questions became less deferential and more adversarial over time.

Quantification is a key aspect of several of the large-scale projects currently underway at the Max Planck Institute: e.g. a detailed coding and quantitative comparison of repair and recruitments across nine languages (Dingemanse, Kendrick and Enfield, 2016).

As Schegloff (1993: 102) notes, these large data sets are 'multiples or aggregates of single instances', such that quantitative analysis is 'not an *alternative* to single case analysis, but rather is built on its back' (our emphasis). Schegloff (1993) warns against premature quantification of superficially-identifiable interactional phenomena, as potentially diverting attention from detailed analysis of individual instances, noting that '[q]uantification is no substitute for analysis' (p. 114). Further, many of the fundamental features of talk-in-interaction identified by conversation analysts are too complex to submit to meaningful coding and statistical analysis (note that both studies described above focus on turn design, which is relatively easy to code and link to measurable outcomes). Stivers (2015) addresses some of the limits of CA-grounded coding.

Conversation and cognition

There has been a lively debate – less within CA than between CA and discursive psychology – concerning the relationship between cognition and conversation (see te Molder and Potter, 2005; and the Special Issue of *Discourse Studies* [2006, 8(1)]). In general, CA has disengaged from the cognitive realm, in favour of a focus on the observable features of talk-in-interaction. While not *denying* the existence of a cognitive realm, it has treated the interaction order as largely autonomous from it, since conversation can be shown to be systematically organized independent of the purported psychological states of conversationalists.

While CA treats the mind essentially as a Skinnerian 'black box', it does engage with cognition as made manifest in talk-in-interaction. This is perhaps most clearly seen in work on the communication competencies of people with (for example) speech disorders, autism, or aphasia, from which underlying cognitive deficits can be inferred (see note 2). Conversation analytic studies of 'atypical populations' of this kind are usefully reviewed by Antaki and Wilkinson (2013). There is also a (small) body of work on phenomena such as conversational poetics (Jefferson, 1996), puns (Schegloff, 2003b) and 'the surfacing of the surpressed' (Schegloff, 2003a) – all instances of 'errors' in talk, such that an action is not achieved.

There is an important distinction to be made between the understanding of cognitive phenomena as oriented-to interactional devices (as is typically the case in discursive psychology) and the understanding of cognitive phenomena as 'manifest' in talk (as is generally the case in conversation analysis: see Drew, 2005; Shaw and Kitzinger, 2007).

The cognition issue has surfaced again recently in the context of a debate about the role of epistemics in analysing interaction – specifically focused around 30 years' of John Heritage's so-called 'Epistemic Project' (e.g. Heritage, 2012, 2013). Some of Heritage's critics (e.g. Lynch and Wong, 2016) claim that his work 'regresses to cognitivism' in emphasizing 'an underlying, extra-situational "driver" in social interaction'" (although see Steensig and Heinemann, 2016, for a more nuanced commentary on this debate).

Some of the current projects at the Max Planck Institute also explicitly seek to identify 'the cognitive underpinnings' of key conversational practices, such as turn-taking (Holler et al., 2015: 1).

Related Methods and Methodologies

Like other methods of qualitative data collection such as interviews and focus groups, CA is based on talk data; but it is distinctive in two key ways: CA uses naturalistic data; and it involves direct observation of the thing itself, not retrospective reports of it. Researchers who use interviews and focus groups usually want to analyse the topic or the content of talk (that is, *what* people say), and typically do so using techniques such as thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2012), or one of the other qualitative methods included in this volume. There is a common perception that CA is not useful in this endeavour – because it is (erroneously) seen as focusing on *how* people say things, rather than on *what* they say. However, CA brings together topic and action, treating what people say and how they say it as inseparable.

Like other qualitative methodologies such as ethnographic observation and discourse analysis (the discursive psychology kind, as in Chapter 6, rather than the Foucauldian variant of Chapter 7), CA prioritizes naturalistic data; but it is distinctive in depending upon (and contributing to) a cumulative body of knowledge about the fundamental features of talk in interaction (turn-taking, sequence organization, repair, etc.). This is the key distinction between conversation analysis and discursive psychology (Kitzinger, 2006). The CA/discursive psychology boundary has become somewhat blurred as discursive psychology has come to appreciate the value of CA and shown an increasing reliance upon it (see, for example, Hepburn and Potter, 2011; Potter and Hepburn, 2010).

DOING CONVERSATION ANALYTIC RESEARCH

In this section, we use our own recent study of surprise-displays (Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2006) to illustrate what is involved in doing CA research. This study is part of a larger project on the social construction of emotions, focusing on the use of what we call

'reaction tokens' (e.g. Wow! My goodness! Ooh!) in emotion displays. It builds on Goffman's (1978) analysis of response cries: 'exclamatory imprecations' (p. 798) which produce the effect of being visceral eruptions of emotion, in part because they appear to be spontaneously 'blurted out' (p. 799) in response to some object or event.

As with most CA projects, ours began with a *noticing* of some phenomenon of interest – these kinds of interjections – which raised for us the puzzle, 'what are these doing?'. The second step in CA research is to put together a preliminary *collection* of instances of the phenomenon of interest – in our case, reaction tokens. Unlike most other research, CA research is not *topic*-based – although it *may* be limited to a particular *data set*, such as a corpus of conversations between parents and young children (Wootton, 1997), or a series of after-hours calls to a doctor's surgery (Kitzinger, 2005b). Rather, phenomena investigated by conversation analysts include *lexical items* (e.g. 'oh', Heritage, 1984; actually, Clift, 2001); *conversational practices* (e.g. repeats, Schegloff, 1996b; collaborative completions, Lerner, 1991); and *actions* (e.g. compliments, Pomerantz, 1986; responses to teases, Drew, 1987). The collection will continue to grow over the course of the research project as additional instances of the phenomenon are encountered.

We initially collected 600+ possible instances of reaction tokens. When first assembling a collection, the phenomenon is (generally) only loosely specified, and possible instances of it, and of related phenomena, are collected inclusively. For example, in our collection of reaction tokens we included both lexical items ('Goodness gracious me', 'Jesus Christ') and noises that seemed to be doing the same kind of interactional work (a sharp intake of breath, a whistle). We also collected items that we later differentiated from reaction tokens (e.g. 'oh' as a news receipt; 'That's amazing' as an assessment). One objective of making a collection is to develop a precise specification of what constitutes an instance of the phenomenon: in contrast to most research in psychology, such a specification is an *outcome* or *finding* of CA research, and not an a priori operational definition. In order to answer the question 'what is it doing?', the CA researcher needs to develop a precise specification of the 'it' under consideration. It is likely that what are eventually identified as clear cases, as boundary cases, and as clear non-cases, will be included in the collection at this stage, together with a range of ancillary items (like our news receipts and assessments).

Given the likely range and diversity of instances in a collection, the third step in CA research is to identify *subsets* within the whole, and to begin analytic work with one or more of these – typically the largest subset. Among our 600+ candidate instances of reaction tokens, the largest subset was reaction tokens analysably used to perform surprise – that is, they registered the unexpectedness of information conveyed in a prior turn at talk[5] – and so our initial analysis focused on this subset. The fourth step is to begin analysis with the clearest cases of the phenomenon of interest; the fifth step is to extend analysis to less transparent cases; and the sixth, and final, step is to include analysis of *deviant cases* – that is, ones which do not fit the emerging pattern. Deviant cases are likely to include occasions where one might *expect* the phenomenon to occur, but, in fact, it does *not* (see Schegloff, 1996a, 1996b, for two varieties of this); ones where one might *not* expect the phenomenon to occur, but in fact it *does*; and highly atypical occurrences. We illustrate the fourth, fifth and sixth steps of the analytic process below with examples of two clear cases; two less transparent cases; and a deviant case.

Let us begin, then, with two of the clear cases (see step 4) from our large collection of surprise tokens: the 'Oo::h!' in fragment 1 below; and the 'Wow!', in fragment 2 below. Both instances are taken from helpline calls: the surprise token 'Oo::h' in fragment 1 (line 3) is responsive to the caller's description of her pain free labour (lines 1–2); and the surprise token 'Wow!' in fragment 2 (line 2) is responsive to the call-taker's description of her young family (line 1).

```
Fragment 1
[RT114N: Kitzinger BCC 103:11]
01  Eve:  I w- got to six centimetres and I hadn't had no
02        pain at a::ll.
03  Clt:  Oo::[h! ]
04  Eve:      [U:m] [a:nd ]
05  Clt:            [That']s amazin[g.]
06  Eve:                           [ I] know.
```

```
Fragment 2
[RT376: Kitzinger HB30]
01  Clt:  I had three under two at one point.
02  Lau:  Wow!
03  Clt:  Because the second- the second turned
04        out to be twins.
05  Lau:  Ah!
```

Box 5.1 Key steps involved in doing CA research

Step 1: 'Noticing' of a conversational phenomenon of interest
Step 2: Assembling a preliminary collection of candidate instances of the phenomenon
Step 3: Identifying the largest, or most important, subset within the collection
Step 4: Analysing the clearest cases of the phenomenon within this subset
Step 5: Analysing less transparent cases
Step 6: Analysing deviant cases

These are clear examples of how surprise displays typically run off (see Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2006, for many more). In each instance, a first turn containing something presented as a surprise source is followed by a second turn containing a surprise token (Oo::h!, Wow!). As outlined earlier, CA work on sequence organization has shown how the basic action unit of conversation is the adjacency pair (consisting of an initiating action followed by a responsive action); and how the turns in an adjacency pair can stand in a preferred or a dispreferred relation to one another. In each instance above, the two turns stand in a preferred, or aligning, relationship. Across our data set, we find that when a turn is designed to present something as surprising, the surprise token is produced right after the surprise source, without delay, qualification or mitigation. This is typical of preferred responses.

The CA literature on turn-design enables us to identify the key features of turns designed to elicit surprise. In part, the information conveyed is surprisingly independent of the turn design, insofar as co-cultural members share the knowledge that labour is generally painful and that three children under two is unusual in their culture. But these turns are also specifically *designed* to present these as surprising. In fragment 1, Eve uses a negative observation (Schegloff, 1988) – 'no pain' (lines 1–2) – and an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986), produced with exaggerated prosodic emphasis – 'at a::ll' (line 2) – to suggest a noticeable departure from what might be expected, and to underscore the absence of (even mild) pain. In fragment 2, the call-taker gives exaggerated prosodic emphasis to a numerical value ('three under two'), producing the number of infants in her family as higher than might be expected. In each of these instances, then, recipients produce immediate, unqualified surprise tokens, displaying their understanding that the prior turn was designed precisely to elicit the surprise they have so promptly produced. This observed pattern accounts for the clearest instances in our collection of surprise tokens.

Our collection also includes less transparent instances (see step 5). In a substantial minority of cases, surprise tokens are produced, but they do *not* immediately follow the surprise source. Here are two examples. In each, there is a delay between the turn presenting the surprise source (at line 1 in each case) and the surprise token responsive to it ('Goodness!', fragment 3, line 4; 'My goodness!', fragment 4, line 5).

```
Fragment 3
[RT319: Kitzinger HB]
01 Clt: I've had five at home
02 Ros: Fi::ve,hh
03 Clt: mm
04 Ros: Goodness!

Fragment 4
[RT471: Kitzinger BCC 483] (They are talking about breastfeeding)
01  Clt:  Even adoptive mothers can do it you kno:w.
02         (.)
03  Saf:  °↑Can they°.
04  Clt:  Yup.
05  Saf:  °My goodness!°
06  Clt:  .hhh I:f the:y've (.) I mean it's much easier
07        if they've already had a ba:by ((continues))
```

In each of these cases, the surprise token *could* have been produced right away, immediately following the surprising first turn – but, instead, in each case, its production is delayed by intervening talk (and, in fragment 4, also by a short silence, at line 2). In each, a caller ostensibly seeks – and receives – confirmation of (some aspect of) the surprising prior turn before producing a surprise

token. In fragment 3, Ros checks the number of home births the call-taker has had (through a prosodically marked partial repeat of the prior talk, '<u>Fi</u>::ve', line 2); and, following confirmation, produces a surprise token, '<u>Go</u>odness!'. In fragment 4, after a brief gap (perhaps 'stunned silence', see Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2006), Saffron asks for confirmation of the call-taker's assertion that adoptive mothers can breastfeed (through an elliptical partial repeat of the prior talk, '↑<u>C</u>an they', line 3); and following confirmation, produces a surprise token 'My goodness!'.

The talk that intervenes between the surprise source turn and the surprise token works as a display of 'ritualized disbelief' (Heritage, 1984b), constituting a little performance of surprise in its own right. However, turns such as 'Five' and 'Can they' are different from the surprise tokens in our collection (and were not included as part of it) because, unlike surprise tokens, they are initiating actions. They are seeking confirmation of some surprising information, and they make relevant, in response, a confirmation (or, of course, a denial or retraction) of it. 'Five' and 'Can they' are treated by their recipients as questions (and they answer them), whereas reactions like 'gracious' and 'golly' are never so treated. Although it is true that these displays of ritualized disbelief do not so much ask questions as convey a stance (that information in the prior turn is unexpected and as in need of confirmation before it can be otherwise receipted and reacted to), nonetheless they are normatively *treated* as questions by co-interactants. And when they occur, they come right after a turn containing a surprise source – that is, in the position which may otherwise be occupied by a surprise token. Across our data set, we find that this pattern of response – a surprise token delayed by intervening talk – is more common when the surprise source turn is not analysably designed as such (that is, when it does not include design features such as negative observations, extreme case formulations, or exaggerated prosodic emphasis of numerical values).

Thus far, we have shown (in fragments 1 and 2) how recipients of a surprise source produce the effect of a visceral eruption by 'blurting out' a surprise token immediately after the surprise source. As fragments 3 and 4 show, however, recipients of surprising information can also delay production of a surprise token long enough to check out – and receive confirmation of – that information. A key finding of this project, then, is that surprise tokens may be prepared for well in advance, and/or produced after a considerable delay. Our analysis provides evidence that, as Goffman (1978) claimed (but did not show), emotion displays are not visceral eruptions, but interactionally-achieved performances. This conclusion relies not only on analysis of the clearest cases (in which viscerality is most vividly performed) but also on analysis of less transparent cases (in which an as-if-visceral performance is produced after a delay; see Wilkinson and Kitzinger [2006] for delays much more extensive than those displayed here).

Finally, we turn to an example of a deviant case (see step 6): an instance when a surprise reaction is <u>not</u> produced in response to a surprise source (see Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2006, for an instance when a surprise reaction occurs unexpectedly). In fragment 5, from a call to the Birth Crisis helpline, the caller (Gill) reports *as* surprise sources her babies' birth weights. Here, surprise reactions (from the call-taker) are relevantly missing. As fragment 5 opens, Gill, who is pregnant for the third time, is explaining her concern about her forthcoming labour with reference to the length of her previous one.

Fragment 5

```
[Kitzinger BCC7: 5:17-7:13]
01  Gil:   um (.) VEry long: (.) well co(h)mpa(h)ra(h)tively
02         >anyway< (.) It was about thirteen hours first
03         stage..hhh Two hours second stage. .hh Um:
04         an[d-]
05  Clt:     [Th]at is long isn't it for a second
06         bab[y. mm.]
07  Gil:      [Yeah. ] Well my first-
08         Marilyn was nine pounds.
09  Clt:   mm hm
10  Gil:   ((swallows)) Christian was nine pounds twe:lve.
11         (.)
12  Gil:   So he was quite big. <But the second stage I felt
13         was the bit that DIDn't go brilliantly well but
14         .hhhh I felt quite compromised on what position
15         I was in.
//         ((about 1 minute later))
```

```
90  Gil:   And he was born.
91         (.)
92  Gil:   And um (0.2) he was nine pounds twelve so(h) he
93         was quite big.
94  Clt:   $ We:ll you have very healthy big [bab]ies.
95  Gil:                                     [yes]
96         U:m (0.5) I had a physiological third stage
97         which I think (.) didn't go brilliantly well
98         as well ((continues))
```

At line 8, Gill provides the information that her first baby weighed 'nine pounds'. The average full-term birth weight (in the UK) is around eight pounds. This cultural knowledge, here presumed to be shared, in part constitutes the weights in lines 8 and 10 as surprise sources. The call-taker, however, merely offers a continuer ('mm hm', line 9). Gill then 'ups the ante', pointing out that her second baby was even larger ('nine pounds twelve', line 10). In the absence of any reaction from the call-taker at line 11, Gill offers her own assessment of the baby's weight ('he was quite big', line 12), before continuing with her story. About a minute later, Gill's narrative reaches the birth itself (line 90), and she reiterates both the baby's birth weight (line 92) and her assessment of it ('he was quite big', lines 92–93). This time the repeated information does elicit a turn from the call-taker, but she does not align with Gill on the issue of size. The call-taker (again) refuses the opportunity to marvel at the babies' birth weights, substituting an emphasis on their health (line 94). A surprise reaction is therefore still hearable as relevantly missing and, after a short delay (line 96), Gill continues with her narrative. It is likely that the reason for the call-taker's refusal to align is that Gill is offering size of baby as an account for length of labor. Displaying surprise at Gill's unusually heavy babies might be heard here as endorsing this claim of causality, a claim explicitly challenged by the call-taker later in the call.

Fragments 1–4 all exemplify surprise sources and surprise tokens standing in a preferred, or aligning, relationship: that is, where surprise tokens are produced in response to surprise source turns designed to elicit them (albeit after some delay in 3 and 4). Fragment 5, by contrast, is a deviant case in which surprise sources and surprise tokens stand in a dispreferred, or non-aligning, relationship (in this case, no surprise tokens are produced, despite – as we have shown – Gill's vigorous pursuit of such a response). The deviant case analysis shows us how, in withholding surprise as a reaction to a turn (or turns) designed to elicit it, a recipient can display some alternative stance towards what can be expected in the normal case of things. In aligning (or not aligning) about what is and what is not surprising, co-interactants invoke – or challenge – understandings of what is normative for their culture.

This research contributes to a variety of domains, including social psychological research on the social construction of emotion; basic CA on how surprise is organized interactionally; and – in relation to the particular data extracts included here – institutional/applied CA on understanding helpline interaction. The research example we have given is typical of CA work using a collection of instances to examine some phenomenon of interest. There is another kind of CA research: single case analysis, in which 'the resources of past work on a range of phenomena and organizational domains in talk-in-interaction are brought to bear on the analytic explication of a single fragment of talk' (Schegloff, 1987: 101): for examples see Goodwin (1979); Schegloff (1988); and – in the institutional context of emergency calls – Whalen, Zimmerman and Whalen (1988); Berger, Kitzinger and Ellis (2016).

CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF CONVERSATION ANALYTIC WORK

CA enables us to understand the basic, 'generic' practices of human social interaction, many of which are central to psychological research. It also offers a way to increase our understanding of central social institutions – medicine, law, education – as these are 'talked into being' by participants themselves.

More specifically, CA offers a theory and a methodology for investigating the social organization of talk-in-interaction, its structures, rules, and practices. CA's theory includes a model appealing to many qualitative researchers of a social order grounded in ongoing, interpretive work; and it provides a clearly-specified, yet nuanced definition of intersubjectivity, as depending on displayed understandings of prior talk. Its methodology is clearly-specified, and researchers can draw upon an already-established database of fundamental facts about the organization of interaction. CA methodology can be used flexibly across many different contexts, with studies of ordinary conversation providing a benchmark against which more specialized forms of communication in a wide variety of institutional contexts can be compared.

CA work is extremely demanding of the researcher. It is very time-consuming and labour-intensive – from initial transcription (which is a prerequisite for analysis), through the various phases of analysis itself. It is also extremely complex, and requires extensive training in concepts, techniques and existing empirical findings before it can be used effectively. Unfortunately, because CA is recognized as a powerful tool, it is picked up and used – often incorrectly – sometimes as an adjunct to, or component of, other methods/approaches.

Some key challenges for the future development of CA are:

1 Retaining a focus on 'fundamental' or 'basic' CA. Despite the accumulated findings of some forty years' research, there's a lot we still don't know about basic features of interaction. In the enthusiasm for applying CA in institutional contexts, researchers have not always realized the full potential of analyses of institutional talk – as well as of ordinary conversation – for developing 'basic' CA. The need to conduct more 'fundamental' CA work in languages other than English is also a challenge for the future.
2 Within institutional talk, relating conversational structures and practices to outcomes, in order to speak to policymakers. For a recent example, see Drew et al. (2014). Some of this work is likely to include greater use of quantification – and this needs to be achieved in ways that do not do violence to basic conversational phenomena. A much-cited paper by Heritage et al. (2007) – which showed that asking primary care patients whether they had 'some other concerns' was statistically more likely to elicit additional concerns than asking patients whether they had 'any other concerns' – has become something of a model for the way in which this kind of work may be done.
3 Undertaking more extensive 'multimodal' analyses of embodied action. Although conversation analysts increasingly consider the integration of talk with gesture and other body behaviours, the challenge of multimodal analysis has yet to be fully taken up (for some exceptions see Raymond and Lerner, 2014; Toerien and Kitzinger, 2007; and contributions to the collection edited by Streeck et al., 2011).
4 Developing work on emotion displays, particularly those involving prosodic features of talk (pitch, tone, loudness), and non-lexical forms of communication (laughter, crying, grunts, squeals, sighs). CA has, historically, focused primarily on lexical material, and work in this – particularly difficult – area has only relatively recently begun, led by linguists and phoneticians: e.g. Couper-Kuhlen (2009) on tone of voice and 'disappointment'; Local and Walker (2008) on the interplay of sequential and phonetic resources in displays of stance and affect. Others have taken up the challenge of examining displays of emotion as an interplay of different modalities: e.g. the contribution of facial expression in conveying emotional stance (Peräkylä and Ruusuvuori, 2012).
5 Analysing electronic communication (so-called 'digital CA'). There is a small – but growing – body of work that seeks to apply CA to the analysis of online data, including email, blog/forum posts and chat/messaging (e.g. Paulus, Warren and Lester, 2016). Those working in this area argue that in order to analyse online communication effectively, traditional conversation analytic techniques need to be modified, and new and 'bespoke' modes of analysis developed for use with specific forms of online data (Giles et al., 2015).

In sum, then, the methodological demands and challenges of CA will prove daunting to some, nor is CA necessarily the most appropriate approach for those interested primarily in topic-based research (as opposed to research integrating topic with action). However, for those prepared to undertake the necessary training, and who are intrigued, above all, by what people can do with talk, and how they go about doing it, CA offers the qualitative researcher in psychology an extremely rigorous, yet exquisitely sensitive, means of understanding social life. The field has developed in some exciting ways over the last decade, and looks set to continue to do so.

Notes

1 Conversation analysts sometimes also study interaction in non-naturalistic settings, such as interviews or focus groups. In this case, the interactions taking place there and then, in the interview or focus group itself, constitute the data – rather than (as in the case of most interviews of focus group research) participants *reports* of interactions that have taken place in other contexts (see Wilkinson, 2004, 2006, for a more extended discussion and examples of this).
2 CA also studies people with restricted or impaired communication – such as non-native language speakers (Wong, 2005); people with speech disorders (Bloch, 2005), autism (Dickerson et al., 2005), or aphasia (Goodwin, 1995; Wilkinson, R., 2011) – in their everyday conversational contexts, as well as in institutional contexts. Such research relies

on, and is built off, an understanding of how competent communication normatively runs off.

3 This is also a very nice demonstration of intersubjectivity in action: the child's turn at line 5 displays her understanding of Mother's prior turn; and Mother's turn at line 7 confirms that the child's displayed understanding was correct. The conversational practices of (other-initiated) *repair* – which deal with (ostensible) problems of hearing or understanding – provide an essential mechanism for monitoring and maintaining intersubjectivity (see Schegloff, 1992).

4 The fundamental structures of talk-in-interaction identified by CA have been shown to apply across dozens of languages with only very minor differences in the practices through which particular actions are implemented (attributable, for example, to the formal structure of a given language).

5 We also limited our initial analysis to reaction tokens in *second position* – that is, where they are responsive actions (they also occur in other positions); and to those responsive to *prior talk* (rather than to events in the world). These constituted the majority of instances in our collection. We also excluded reaction tokens produced in reported speech from the initial analysis.

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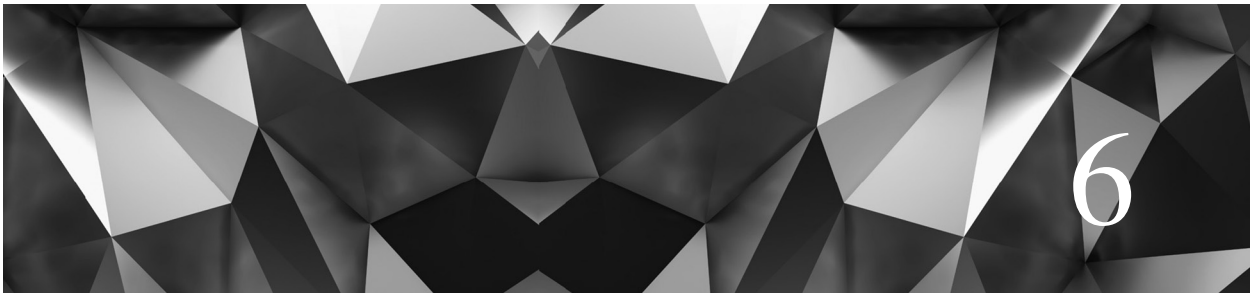
APPENDIX: TRANSCRIPTION KEY

Aspects of the relative timing of utterances:		
[ ]	square brackets	overlapping talk
=	equals sign	no discernible interval between turns (also used to show that the same person continues speaking across an intervening line displaying overlapping talk)
<	'greater than' sign	'jump started' talk with loud onset
(0.5)	time in parentheses	intervals within or between talk (measured in tenths of a second)
(.)	period in parentheses	discernable pause or gap, too short to measure
Characteristics of speech delivery:		
.	period	closing intonation
,	comma	slightly upward 'continuing' intonation
?	question mark	rising intonation question
¿	inverted question mark	rising intonation weaker than that indicated by a question mark
!	exclamation mark	animated tone
-	hyphen/dash	abrupt cut off of sound
:	colon	extension of preceding sound - the more colons the greater the extension
↑↓	up or down arrow	marked rise or fall in intonation immediately following the arrow
here	underlining	emphasized relative to surrounding talk
HERE	upper case	louder relative to surrounding talk
°here°	degree signs	softer relative to surrounding talk
>this<		Speeding up or compressed relative to surrounding talk
<this>		slower or elongated relative to surrounding talk
hhh		audible outbreath (no. of 'h's indicates length)
.hhh		audible inbreath (no. of 'h's indicates length)
(h)		audible aspirations in speech (e.g. laughter particles)
hah/heh/hih/hoh/huh		all variants of laughter
( )	empty single parentheses	transcriber unable to hear words
(bring)	word(s) in single parentheses	transcriber uncertain of hearing
((coughs))	word(s) in double parentheses	transcriber's comments on or description of sound; other audible sounds are represented as closely as possible in standard orthography, e.g. 'tcht' for tongue click; 'mcht' for a lip parting sound



6

Discursive Psychology

Sally Wiggins and Jonathan Potter

INTRODUCTION

Discursive psychology begins with psychology in everyday life. It examines how psychology is constructed, understood and displayed as people interact in everyday and more institutional situations. It enables us to examine how psychological notions (such as attitudes, identities and accountabilities) are made relevant and become consequential in social interaction. Psychology, then, becomes the object, rather than the tool, of analysis. For example, how does a speaker show that they are not prejudiced, while developing a damning version of an entire ethnic group? How are actions coordinated in a counselling session to manage the blame of the different parties for the relationship breakdown? How is upset displayed, understood and receipted in a call to a child protection helpline? Questions of this kind require us to understand the kinds of things that are 'psychological' for people as they act and interact in particular settings, such as in families, workplaces and schools. And this in turn encourages us to respecify the very object 'psychology'. Discursive psychology does not start with assumptions about what mental processes, behavioural regularities or neural events are happening somewhere below and behind the business of interaction. Rather it starts with the categories, constructions and orientations through which a sense of agency, say, or severe distress, or a moment of understanding are displayed in a piece of interaction in a particular setting.

The focus on discourse in discursive psychology does not come from an interest in the psychology of language to be set amongst other topics (prejudice, social influence, etc.) as it has been traditionally understood. It is focused on discourse because it is the primary arena for action, understanding and intersubjectivity. It starts with a view of people as social and relational, and with psychology as a domain of practice rather than abstract contemplation. Its methodological principles follow from its meta-theoretical, theoretical and conceptual arguments, although these are further supported through their empirical fruitfulness. This is a quite different approach to language to that common in social and individual psychology.

This chapter will introduce the approach of discursive psychology. We outline theoretical and methodological features, using examples from current research to elucidate our arguments. In doing so, we demonstrate the potential influence and future development of discursive research methods within psychology. We start by outlining the theoretical and intellectual roots of discursive

psychology (occasionally, DP) and its emergence within psychology. We then focus on contemporary issues and debates. For example, what is the importance of everyday practices? What is the status of cognitive notions in DP? And how does it deal with seemingly intractable topics such as embodiment? We will overview key studies to highlight what is distinctive about DP. The chapter will also detail how DP research works in practice, from the initial stages of gaining ethical approval and collecting data, through to transcription and analysis. Examples from our own research on eating practices will be used to illustrate some of these stages in more detail. Finally, we consider limitations of the approach, and speculate as to the future of discursive psychology.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISCURSIVE PSYCHOLOGY OUT OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Discursive psychology was developed out of a particular form of discourse analysis that was outlined most fully in Potter and Wetherell's (1987) foundational book *Discourse and Social Psychology*. This pioneered qualitative discourse research in psychology, providing the basis for some of the first qualitative papers in empirical journals such as the *British Journal of Social Psychology* and *European Journal of Social Psychology*. Potter and Wetherell's book reconceptualized the topic of social psychology and outlined an alternative methodological approach that could be used in place of the experiments and questionnaires that had been the mainstay of published psychological work at that point. It drew on conversation analytic work on both everyday and institutional settings (Atkinson and Drew, 1979; Levinson, 1983). It also built on post-structuralist ideas. Some of these were from the Foucauldian tradition of Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn and Walkerdine (1984); others drew on thinking from Barthes, Derrida and other Continental figures, as seen in the earlier work by Potter, Stringer and Wetherell (1984). There is also an important debt to the work of Wittgenstein and linguistic philosophy (see Potter, 2001). This is partly a direct influence and partly comes through the important philosophical re-specification of psychology developed by Harré (Harré and Gillett, 1994). Finally, it owed a major debt to the sociology of scientific knowledge and in particular Gilbert and Mulkay (1984). The combination of these different elements provided both a theoretical focus on discourse, mind and reality, and a practical focus on the ways in which discourse produces versions of the world and are bound up with actions in specific settings.

Although Potter and Wetherell (1987) outlined many of the features later refined in discursive psychology it is worth highlighting two areas of difference between this early work and contemporary discursive psychological work as they have major methodological implications. First, a major focus of Potter and Wetherell (1987) was on the identification of the structured discursive resources that underlie and sustain interaction. There are different possibilities for the analysis of these resources. While ethnomethodologists have focused on the role of membership categories (e.g. Hester and Eglin, 1997), rhetoricians, and particularly Billig (1996), have focused on rhetorical commonplaces. Potter and Wetherell, however, developed the notion of interpretative repertoires from Gilbert and Mulkay's (1984) earlier work. Interpretative repertoires are clusters of terms organized around a central metaphor, often used with grammatical regularity. They are flexibly drawn on to perform different actions (see Edley, 2001; Edley and Wetherell, 2008).

We can illustrate this notion with the example of Wetherell and Potter's (1992) major study of racist discourse in New Zealand and, in particular, its distinct way of addressing the notion of culture. They did not treat culture as a feature of the lifestyle, rituals and world view of Maori as anthropologists would; nor did they treat it as a mental stereotype organizing the information processing of the Päkehä (White, European New Zealanders) as social cognition psychologists would. Instead, they identified two interpretative repertoires through which culture was flexibly and locally constructed to perform different activities. On the one hand, the 'culture-as-heritage' repertoire was used to build culture as an antiquated inheritance that should be treasured but requires protection from the rigours of the 'modern world'. On the other, the 'culture-as-therapy' repertoire constructed culture as a psychological requirement that would stop Maori becoming rootless and mentally unstable. It is not that there is one notion of culture that these repertoires express differently; it is that culture is *constituted* in importantly different ways by these repertoires. Wetherell and Potter (1992) note that these repertoires show a sensitivity to difference organized around social relations rather than genetics, and are thus free of many of the connotations of racism. This is one of those reasons that they can be used (in newspapers, parliamentary debates and everyday talk) to make powerful and hard to rebut attacks on Maori political movements and undercut the legitimacy of Maori claims.

The notion of interpretative repertoires has been drawn on by many studies from across the social sciences, and notably by the area of discursive research where it has been referred to as Critical Discursive Psychology (e.g. Edley, 2001; Wetherell, 1998, 2015). It offers a picture of complex, historically developed organizations of ideas that might be identified through research, and yet remain flexible enough to be reworked within the contingencies of different concrete settings. This theorizing of the flexible requirements of practice offers some advantages over some neo-Foucauldian notions of discourse that are more brittle and tectonic (Parker, 1992); and this flexibility was developed in the important reworking of ideology in the domain of practice by Billig and colleagues (1988). Nevertheless, Wooffitt (2005) has suggested that the notion of interpretative repertoires still fails to fully accommodate the complexity of human conduct; and there are major questions as to whether the structuring of repertoires is a consequence of preformed conceptual organizations or a by-product of the pragmatic organization of practices (see Potter, 1996; Chapter 6). Furthermore, the original repertoire notion required a series of procedures and criteria for the reliable identification of something as a repertoire. Yet, many current studies offer only the vaguest idea of how the repertoires are identified and how they relate to a corpus of data (Kent and Potter, 2014). There are important points of principle here, illustrated in the influential exchange between Schegloff (1997) and Wetherell (1998).

The second area of difference between Potter and Wetherell's (1987) conception of discourse analysis and the later discursive psychology concerns the place of open-ended interviews in the generation of analytic materials. Potter and Wetherell draw on some work using naturalistic materials, but much of their discussion, and the majority of subsequent studies using interpretative repertoires have used semi-structured interviews. Discursive psychology is distinct from this earlier form of discourse analysis in social psychology in almost completely abandoning interviews as a data collection method. This was partly due to profound problems with the production and analysis of open-ended interviews (Potter and Hepburn, 2005a; Potter and Hepburn, 2012; see also the section on 'naturalistic materials' later in this chapter). While it is still feasible to use interviews, focus groups and other forms of researcher-led data collection for a discursive psychology study, if we are to examine how psychology becomes relevant in people's everyday lives, then there are more exciting places to explore.

Despite these major differences there are some important continuities between Potter and Wetherell (1987) and discursive psychology. Both draw heavily on the constructionist sociology of scientific knowledge and the revitalized rhetoric of Billig (1996). Both focus on categories and descriptions and the way they are involved in actions. Both offer a re-specification of basic psychological notions. Let us illustrate this with the notion of attitudes. Potter and Wetherell (1987) started a wholesale re-specification of the notion of attitudes by highlighting two troubling features for traditional work (see also Wiggins, 2016).

First, when materials from outside the very constrained settings of forced-choice attitude scales are examined, we see considerable variability. The same speaker seemingly offers different evaluations of the same thing in different contexts. Such variability is an empirical embarrassment for attitude research. Indeed, variability as an empirical discovery from the careful study of discourse was a key motor to the first wave of discourse research, because variability not only shows up problems with traditional pictures of attitudes as inner dispositions, it also provides a way of identifying the different activities that evaluations are involved with.

Second, although attitude research typically treats attitudes as hypothetical mental entities, they enter into the research process in terms of evaluative descriptions: words such as 'good', 'bad' and more extended descriptions that construct some element of the world in a negative or positive way. In traditional work there is a clear-cut separation between the object of the attitude and the attitudinal stance of the person – evaluative language is treated mainly as a medium for accessing the supposedly underlying mental entities. Potter and Wetherell (1987) highlight the role of descriptions as constituting the attitudinal object in particular ways. For instance, a speaker can produce a highly negative description of a minority group while claiming not to have negative attitudes toward that group (Potter and Wetherell, 1988; see also van Dijk, 1989; Wetherell and Potter, 1992).

This early discourse analytic work on attitudes drew on important work from rhetorical psychology. For example, in a series of studies Billig (1988, 1989, 1992) showed that people offer views in specific contexts, typically where there is at least the possibility of argument. Indeed, Billig treats evaluation as inseparable from argument, thus highlighting its socially embedded and practical nature. Most people do not sit over dinner arguing the merits of the force of gravity. Moreover, where people construct arguments for something and provide the justification of their own position they are simultaneously criticizing the counter-position (sometimes explicitly, sometimes not).

One of the central concerns developed in *Discursive Psychology* (Edwards and Potter, 1992) was the close inferential relationship between versions of 'reality' (things in 'the world', actions, events, history and so on) and 'mind' (things 'in the head', attitudes, dispositions, feelings, expectations and so on). Versions of these things are put together in talk in the service of action. This focus on the action-oriented assembly out of linguistic resources is at the centre of DP's form of constructionism. For example, take the act of reporting abuse to a child protection helpline. Studies have shown that callers build their 'attitude' to the abuse in ways that manage a number of potentially relevant issues (Potter and Hepburn, 2003, 2007; Hepburn and Potter, 2007). They show through their displayed attitude that the abuse is serious, potentially damaging and therefore upsetting and, conversely (and relevantly for the context) as not something the caller gets pleasure from or feels good about. However, the negative stance on the abuse will seem remiss if it is too severe, as that would suggest the police should be first point of contact. More subtly still, the callers show that the abuse is experienced as personally negative, and yet this is not the prime reason for the call – they are not, for example, trying to cause problems for noisy neighbours (Stokoe and Hepburn, 2005). Note, then, the close calibration of description of the abuse, the display of attitude and the actions that are being performed. The focus on this articulation between language and action distinguishes DP from traditional social psychology of language and similar approaches.

As DP has developed it has been found necessary to have further precision in its analysis, and a richer understanding of the normative organizations within which psychological matters play out. Psychological practices, as the above example indicates, are very finely developed. Lexical items, prosody, delay and sequential position all contribute to this. As DP studies have progressed they have found that the order of interaction that is consequential for forming and responding to actions is highly intricate. This has meant that DP has increasingly drawn on the findings and analytic approach of conversation analysis (CA). After all, both are fundamentally focused on the analysis of action. In the case of DP there is a particular interest in the involvement of discourse in psychological issues. At times, therefore, DP studies can be hard to distinguish from CA studies; some classic CA studies can be seen as part of the canon of DP (Potter, 2007; Potter and Edwards, 2012).

Take the example of attitudes. CA has approached what psychologists treat as attitudes in terms of situated practices of evaluation or assessment. They have started, as discursive psychologists would have done, by focusing on the action rather than trying to get directly to a putative underworld of cognition. Here, evaluations are structured events in talk; they are sequentially organized within turn-taking and are the products of, rather than the precursors to, an interaction. The work of Pomerantz (1978, 1984, 1986) has been particularly insightful in this area. For instance, assessments and subsequent (or second) assessments are structured so as to minimize stated disagreement and maximize stated agreement between speakers (Pomerantz, 1984). When expressing an assessment, one is therefore performing an action, such as praising, insulting, complaining and so on. This action is itself structured through the sequential organization of the talk. Research on evaluations in DP reflects this emphasis, bringing to the fore the action orientation and sequential organization of evaluative expressions, such as the use of first impressions to manage a speaker's assessment and authenticity (Huma, 2015), the use of 'high-grade' assessments to mark completion of potentially troubling elements of interviews (Antaki et al., 2000), assessments during gift-giving occasions (Robles, 2012), the action of disgust markers as assessments (Wiggins, 2013) and the different uses of subjective food assessments by parents and children (Wiggins, 2014).

THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES OF DISCURSIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Discursive psychology rests on three core theoretical principles (see Potter, 2003b; Potter and Edwards, 2001): that discourse is constructed and constructive, it is situated, and it is action-oriented. We can illustrate these using a short data example from a family mealtime. In extract 1 below, a mother is eating lunch with her ten-year-old daughter, Poppy; Mum is eating chicken soup and Poppy is eating a sandwich. For most of this extract, Poppy is gazing down at her own meal and only briefly glances up at her Mum just after she (her Mum) offers her a taste of her soup (around line 2):

Extract 1: chicken soup

Mum:	want to try a wee taste o' chicken ↑soup
	(2.0)
Poppy:	no thank you
Mum:	it's rea:lly ni:ce,
	(0.6)
Poppy:	↑no thank you

The first principle of discursive psychology is that discourse is both constructed and constructive. It is constructed in that it is made up of linguistic building blocks: words, categories, idioms, repertoires and so on. These are used in a wide range of ways to present particular versions of the world. In extract 1, these words include references to soup, trying or tasting something, and making offers and assessments. They create a landscape of eating where individuals taste, eat and share foods, and where foods might also have universal qualities that can be appreciated by other people (that is, being 'really nice', line 4). Discourse is also constructive of reality in that these versions of the world are treated as a product of the talk itself, not something that may putatively exist prior to the talk. In other words, whether or not the soup is 'really nice' is not assumed to be a factual statement about the food, but as a specific construction at just this point in time.

The second main principle is that discourse is action-oriented. That is, in talking and writing we are primarily carrying out actions. This may seem rather obvious, since to 'talk' or 'write' are actions in themselves. But it is more than this. Discourse is the primary medium for social action; in speaking we blame, justify, invite, compliment and so on. Hence to separate talk and action as psychologists commonly do (for example in distinctions such as attitudes vs. behaviour) is to set up a false dichotomy, and to overlook the ways in which talk achieves things in itself. In our example above, Mum makes two offers of soup (lines 1 and 4) and yet both of these offers are not stated in the form, 'would you like?'. We can identify them as offers, however, through the way in which Poppy orients to them (in both cases, with 'no thank you', with slightly more emphasis on the second utterance, line 6). So not only is discourse action-oriented, but these actions can also be accomplished through subtle and indirect ways.

Third and finally, discourse is situated in three ways. It is situated within a specific sequential, turn-by-turn environment; words are understood according to what precedes and follows them. Mum's 'it's really nice' (line 4) works as an (additional) offer through the way in which Poppy treats it as such, and refuses the offer, on line 6. This is similar to the conversation analytic notion that talk is *occasioned* (see Wooffitt, 2005) or indexical. Discourse is also situated within a particular institutional setting, such as a telephone helpline, school classroom or family mealtime. Finally, discourse is also situated rhetorically, within a particular argumentative framework. One way of describing something will always be countering – either explicitly or indirectly – alternative ways of describing the same thing (see the earlier discussion of Billig's work). In extract 1, for example, the rhetorical framework is to orient to food in terms of (nice) taste, but it might also have been situated in terms of health or nutritional value. Thus, to understand discourse fully, we must examine it in situ, as it happens, bound up with its situational context.

These principles of discursive psychology have most clearly been developed in *Representing Reality* (Potter, 1996) and *Discourse and Cognition* (Edwards, 1997). In the former text, Potter develops a systematic account of the way versions are built as objective, as mere descriptions of actions or events. This addresses the question of how speakers manufacture the credibility of versions, and how this building can be challenged and undermined. Taking the example of attitudes again, this work considers the way in which versions can be produced to generate evaluations as features of the objects and events rather than positions or dispositions of speakers. This is clearly a key task when talk is about delicate or controversial topics, where motives and dispositions may be closely inspected. Thus constructing a version of a minority group that simultaneously produces negative characteristics (e.g. involvement with sexual violence) combined with a display of 'sympathetic' motivation toward that group (perhaps drawing on one of the culture repertoires discussed above) can work to avoid being seen as having racist attitudes (Potter and Wetherell, 1988). Note the way that the relationship between 'mind' and 'the world' is reworked here in the talk.

One of the achievements of DP has been to highlight how crucial this relationship is as a practical feature of interaction. People construct versions of the world that have implications for their own dispositions and thoughts; and they construct versions of these psychological concepts to have implications for actions and events in the world. This practical distinction between subjective and objective notions is further developed in Edwards (1997; see also Edwards, 2005). Here, the focus is on the ways in which accounts, blamings, justifications and so on are worked up in talk to perform particular activities. For example, how categories of 'mind' or 'body' are constituted through description to reduce one's accountability for an event. Emotions like 'anger', for example, can be worked up as physical, uncontrollable events ('boiling over', 'burning up with rage') to characterize an event as a brief 'lapse' in one's usual demeanour. DP here is developing and refining the constructionist work to emotion by considering it in terms of situated displays and orientations. This can be illustrated in series of studies of crying and extreme upset in helplines and more mundane settings (Hepburn, 2004; Hepburn and Potter, 2007, 2012).

MAIN ISSUES AND DEBATES

We now turn to some of the recurring issues within discursive psychology and between discursive psychologists and critics. We will take three examples: the preference for working with naturalistic materials; the alternative to cognitivism; and the re-specification of embodied practices.

Naturalistic Materials

The earlier tradition of discourse analysis developed by Potter and Wetherell (1987) and exemplified, for example, in work by Billig (1992) and others was often dependent on some form of open-ended interview as its principal data generation technique. More recently, critical and synthesized discourse analytic work that has addressed issues of subjectivity and neo-liberalism has also been based almost exclusively on open-ended interviews or focus groups (e.g. Riley et al., 2010).

Potter and Hepburn (2005a, 2005b; see also Potter and Hepburn, 2012) summarize some of the problems with the use of open-ended interviews. They note that they are often used in ways that wipe out many of their interactional features (by focusing on extracts from participants' answers only and using forms of transcript which remove many of the elements of talk that conversation analysts have shown to be live for participants). Even when more care is paid to these features, interviews present challenging difficulties. It is very hard to disentangle the social science agendas that are imported with the question construction, terminology and the whole set-up of the interview. Both interviewer and interviewee move between complex and sometimes indistinct footing positions. For example, participants are often recruited as members of social categories (a schoolteacher, say), but they may position their talk in various complex ways with respect to that category membership. Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995) highlight a range of difficulties of this kind. There are also complex and hard to analyse issues with respect to the stake or interest that each party may show in what they are saying. There are major challenges here for qualitative researchers in a range of different traditions. Some researchers have directly tackled the issue of interviews as data, and use these to highlight the categorical work done through discursive constructions (Widdicombe, 2015). For the most part, however, these issues have been downplayed and open-ended interviews remain the default data-generation techniques for different traditions of qualitative research (for discussion see Potter and Hepburn, 2005a, 2005b; and responses by Hollway, 2005; Mischler, 2005; Smith, 2005; see also Rapley, 2016).

Instead of working on open-ended interviews DP has focused on naturalistic materials. By 'naturalistic' we mean records of what people actually do, such as in therapy, counselling, helpline interaction, mealtime conversation, everyday phone calls, neighbour mediation and so on (see, for example, the different contributions to Hepburn and Wiggins, 2005, 2007). These materials are naturalistic rather than natural to highlight the epistemic troubles that go along with the status of the 'natural' and to show an appreciation of issues of 'reactivity' that arise when recording what people do.

There are a number of virtues of working with naturalistic materials:

1. It reduces the distorting imposition of the researchers' own categories or assumptions onto the data.
2. It situates research within the seemingly 'messy' settings of everyday life; people are not separated from the sorts of agentic and accountability issues that arise in social interaction.
3. It provides a directly practical way of doing research. Rather than trying to 'apply' findings from one setting (e.g. interviews) to another (e.g. workplaces), it studies peoples' practices in situ.
4. It allows the research to be guided by issues that may not have been anticipated by the researcher; this is often how novel and unexpected topics arise.
5. It captures life as it happens, in sufficient detail to be able to analyse the complexity of seemingly 'mundane' situations.

Digitized forms of audio and video allow for a more fluid working with these sorts of materials, and are complemented by Jeffersonian transcription, which captures features of talk relevant to action and interaction. The use of advanced digital technology further aids this analytic shift from looking at the broad resources for action (categories, rhetorical commonplaces, interpretative repertoires) and how they are used in interview talk to focusing on the organization of practices in settings. It allows the researcher to appreciate information about stress and intonation, overlap and other conversational features with, if appropriate, information about gesture, gaze and so on.

Cognition and Cognitivism

DP has developed an alternative to the cognitivism that, to date, is the staple of the modern discipline

of psychology. Cognitivism is a general approach that treats human action as a product of cognition. As Edwards (1997: 19) puts it:

> Whereas *cognition* is a possible topic for investigation, *cognitivism* is a perspective that reduces all of psychological life, including discourse and social interaction, to the workings of cognitive, or even computational, mental processes … [C]ognitivism inherited its aim, of specifying mechanical input-output processes, from the stimulus-response behaviourism that it sought to replace with the 'information processing' metaphor of mind. The basic cognitivist position [is] that we start with a given, external world, which is then perceived and processed, and *then put into words*. (emphasis in original)

In cognitivist approaches, discourse is treated as the *expression* of thoughts, intentions or some other entity from the cognitive thesaurus. At its strongest, action and interaction are treated as *only* explicable in terms of cognitive precursors (for a general overview of cognitive psychology and interaction research see Potter and te Molder, 2005). Different qualitative approaches take different positions on the status of cognitive processes and entities; most hope to reform cognitivism rather than re-specify it in its entirety.

By contrast, DP conceptualizes psychological issues in a non-cognitivist way. Instead of treating discourse as dependent upon, and explicable by way of, cognitive objects and processes, it studies cognition's involvement as a participant's concern. That is, it treats mind, experience, emotion, intention and so on in terms of how they are *constructed* and *oriented to* in interaction. DP includes a range of areas of work that explore this general problematic. Some studies focus on the practices through which psychological implications of talk are managed. They ask how motives are established or memories are discounted as flawed (e.g. Edwards and Potter, 1992; Locke and Edwards, 2003; see also Brown and Reavey, 2015). Other studies consider the practical uses of cognitive language (e.g. Edwards, 1999). Another strand of work is focused on the re-specification of central topics in social cognition, cognitive psychology and cognitive science (including scripts and schemata, categories, attitudes and beliefs, emotions; see Childs, 2014; Edwards and Potter, 2005). Finally, other work has concentrated on studying psychological methods in practice and the way they constitute their objects and produce them as the property of individuals (see Antaki, 2006; Auburn, 2005; Gibson, 2014; Puchta and Potter, 2002).

Embodied Practices

Psychological research sometimes claims to study 'embodiment' or embodied practices – so called physical, gestural and bodily objects – as if these were straightforward categories and events. These are often presented (like a hand hitting the table) as a counter to discourse work, as if the existence of embodiment was, de facto, proof that discourse has its limits. Discursive psychology starts from a different place. It focuses on the practical, oriented to, interactional displays of embodied practices. Just as cognition is treated as a participants' concern, so is embodiment. Starting in this way allows discursive researchers to ground their claims in a sound theoretical and analytical position; that which is based on the constitutive nature of discourse. We cannot separate off other objects as being somehow beyond or behind discourse, without providing a solid account of how these are 'non-discursive'.

DP work picks up embodiment in different ways. Increasingly it is working with video records that allow issues involving gesture, gaze, physical orientation and so on to be incorporated into the analysis. Note that it is not a matter of simply observing such things as a technical analyst. For DP researchers such things enter into analysis in terms of the formulations and orientations of the participants (that is, such things need to be *shown* to be relevant in the analysis rather than assumed to be relevant by the analyst; see Heath, 2005). This is particularly important given the complex role that 'seeing' has in social practices (e.g. Goodwin, 1994). For an analytic example, see MacMartin and LeBaron's (2006) study of gaze and body orientation as a display of ambivalent participation in a therapy group for sex offenders.

Another way that DP research addresses embodiment is to study the way 'embodied practices' are constituted and reified in discourse; our own work on eating has developed some of these ideas. Work on gustatory 'mmms' or disgust markers, for example, demonstrate how notions that are typically treated as individual and physiological affairs are socially organized and co-ordinated in mealtime interaction (Wiggins, 2002, 2013). Rather than being treated as simply expressions of putative gustatory experiences, this research examines the sequential and rhetorical positioning of these utterances in the unfolding interaction; they are thus shown to be highly collaborative and attend to other activities in the talk, resisting any simple dualism between body and talk. This tradition of work is in its early stages. Nevertheless, it offers a coherent program that considers embodiment as a direct and central part of human practices.

PRACTICALITIES OF RESEARCH

In this section, we clarify the various steps involved in DP research (see also Wiggins, 2017). These are: devising a research question, gaining access and consent, data collection and building a corpus, transcription, coding, analysis, and application. Note that there are no hard and fast rules for discourse research; it is defined by its interest in, and appreciation of, action and interaction as situated, practical and orderly (see Box 6.1). Here, we use examples from our own research to provide concrete illustrations of the research process.

Step 1: Devising a Research Question

DP research begins with a research question or set of questions around a topic area. Often this is guided by an interest in a particular form of interaction, such as telephone helpline interaction or marriage guidance counselling, and the processes and practices involved in this setting. For instance, one may be interested in how helpline staff members make sense of the variety of calls received and how they manage the sensitive nature of reports of child abuse. These research questions then become increasingly focused as the research progresses. Questions and possible interpretations about the interaction are tested

BOX 6.1 Methodological features of discursive psychology

There are no hard and fast rules for discourse research – it is defined by its interest in, and appreciation of, action and interaction as situated, practical and orderly.

- The central topic is discourse – talk and texts as parts of practices – as this is central to psychology. It recognizes the primacy of the social and relational nature of human life, and therefore starts with that analytically.
- It is interested in the most intimate and personal of psychological phenomena, in feeling and thinking, in a wide range of features of embodiment, and in the way social life is organized institutionally.
- Research questions typically focus on what people do in the settings that they live their lives. They may build on prior work or be stimulated by a collection of materials.
- The materials for study are usually digital audio or video recordings of people in particular locations – family meals, counselling sessions, helplines, or political interviews. Just about anything that is a feature of people's lives can be an object of study.
- Occasionally analysis will work with open-ended interviews – but discursive psychology is generally distinctive amongst qualitative approaches in being a nuanced observational science avoiding the apparatus of open-ended or ethnographic interviews, experiments and questionnaires common elsewhere in psychology.
- The materials for study are transcribed using a system that captures features of interaction such as intonation and overlap that are significant for what is going on.
- Analysis will work with both recording and transcript.
- A typical study will build a collection of some phenomenon that will be the topic of more intensive analysis.
- Analysis will work with this collection. It will focus on both standard patterns and exceptional cases. These will be used to develop and test ideas about what is going on in the material.
- Analysis will work with, and be validated by, the understandings of participants which are displayed in the unfolding interaction.
- The research write-up is designed as far as practical to allow the reader to assess the validity of the analytic claims made about the materials.
- Discursive psychological studies may contribute to a cumulative new picture of persons in relation; they may contribute to a range of applied questions and they may address broader critical issues related to ideology and asymmetry.

For more detail see: 1) Edwards, D. (2004). Discursive psychology. In K. Fitch and R. Sanders (eds), *Handbook of Language and Social Interaction* (pp. 257–273). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum; 2) Hepburn, A. and Potter, J. (2003). Discourse analytic practice. In C. Seale, D. Silverman, J. Gubrium and G. Gobo (eds), *Qualitative Research Practice* (pp. 180–196). London: Sage; 3) Wiggins, S. (2017). *Discursive Psychology: Theory, Method and Applications*. London: Sage.

and refined through repeated examination of the data.

Our interest in mealtimes was with the 'nature' of food – lovely, well made, fattening, for example – and how this is constituted and bound up with activities such as offers, compliments and acceptances. We were also interested in the ways in which the processes (appetite, food preferences) and practices (quantities consumed, choices made) of eating were constituted as psychological facts in mealtime interaction. We decided to focus on family mealtimes, where children under the age of 15 years are present, as these are more likely to be settings where regular mealtimes occur, and where the management of children's eating is overseen by the parents. A brief pilot study confirmed this, after also considering groups of students and young professionals sharing mealtimes. So our research question began as a broad interest in these issues, and was later refined as the extensive use of evaluations during mealtimes became apparent. We were then guided by questions such as, 'How are food evaluations produced and oriented to by participants in mealtime interaction?', 'What are the different forms of food evaluations and what actions are they involved with?' Different ideas as to what was going on in the data could then be checked out through further analyses. So our research question became refined as we gathered data and began to examine this in detail.

Step 2: Gaining Access and Consent

Once the initial set of research questions have been devised, access to the data source and gaining ethical permission to record the data are the next steps in the research process. This is often achieved through the use of a contact person (such as a medical practitioner, counsellor or schoolteacher) who can then provide links or access to a particular data source. Sometimes advertising may be necessary, though direct contact – by telephone, letter or in person – is often the most fruitful way of beginning the process of gaining access. This also requires some sensitivity and patience, in order to build up a certain degree of trust between the researcher and the participant(s), particularly where a sensitive data source is being used. For example, Hepburn and Potter (2003) detail their experiences of gaining access to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) child protection helpline, from the initial introductory letter to writing out an ethics script for the helpline staff to use. This research involved recording a number of calls to the NSPCC on what are highly sensitive and delicate issues: actual or potential cases of child abuse.

In many countries, ethical permission must also be obtained from appropriate bodies, such as when working within the National Health Service in the UK, in schools, prisons, or with organizations such as the NSPCC. This can also take some time, though the process provides an opportunity for the researcher to be clear about each step of the research before they begin. Specifically, consent must be gained for using audio and/or video recordings of all participants involved in the interaction and for using verbatim quotes (anonymized, and digitally disguised when using the audio/video data directly) in any written reports or presentations. A useful basic consent form that can be reworked for specific research topics is provided by ten Have (1999), and Heath et al. (2010) provide an example consent form that is particularly useful when working with video data.

In our own research, recording family mealtimes required us to gain consent from all family members about the use of recording equipment during their mealtimes. We initially used audio cassette-recorders (around 1998–1999; this was typical equipment at the time), given to families for a period of 3–4 months, and since then we have used small digital video cameras for shorter periods (2–3 weeks) to avoid participant fatigue. Personal contacts were used to gain access to different families, so each family was recruited separately. This was done either by phone, letter, email, in person or via the contact person who knew the family. Given that at this stage in the research the particular type of family recruited was less important to us, we did not have to directly see them in person; this also protected their anonymity further. Consent forms were provided for the adults to sign, for themselves and on behalf of children under the age of 16 years. An information sheet accompanying the consent form provided further details about the research, and our own contact details. For instance, this explained briefly that we were interested in 'family interaction during mealtimes', rather than any particular characteristics of the individuals themselves, and that the aim was to collect a corpus of naturally occurring family mealtime interaction.

Step 3: Data Collection and Building a Corpus

The benefits of having clear and reliable recording of the interaction being studied cannot be

emphasized enough; without this, we have nothing to analyse. Compact, high quality video cameras are now available on smartphones or in mobile tablet devices, and this has improved the accessibility and user-friendliness of video recording interaction. Simple video cameras with digital memory sticks or memory cards are ideal, as they are usually small, portable and collect large quantities of high-quality data on a single memory card. This is particularly important in research where the participants themselves may have control over the recording process. They usually also have an in-built microphone or can be used with a quality external microphone. Furthermore, files of the digital recordings can be transferred to PC almost instantly. The transportation and management of the data is thus much simpler; files can be saved in various formats and edited using audio programs such as Adobe Audition (or freely available packages such as Audacity; see the discussion of transcription below). Data collection thus begins with selecting the highest quality equipment available, and the accompanying software and hardware needed to manage this data. Short cuts at this stage can lead to poor quality recordings which can cause major problems (and be deeply frustrating) later in the research.

This process also involves building up a corpus of data, upon which interpretations and analyses can be tested and validated. While the principles of DP can be practiced on any small piece of talk or text, DP research requires a thorough examination of a collection of similar instances. A corpus may be built by recording data repeatedly in a particular setting – such as a number of mealtimes with the same family, and across different families – or through collecting together data from similar settings, such as different kinds of telephone helplines. This process will of course be dependent upon the research question and whether or not this is specific to a particular location or setting.

Our research enabled us to collect mealtime interaction from different families, to ensure we captured as wide a range of discursive practices as possible. Therefore, our only criteria for inclusion in the research were that families had at least one child under the age of 15 years and that they typically ate together regularly. As far as possible, we did not want recording their mealtimes to change their usual routine. The recording equipment was supplied to the families themselves so that they could record their mealtimes without any researcher being present; again, the emphasis was on naturalistic interaction. The recording was then usually instigated by one family member who handled the recording equipment at each mealtime. In our early studies, we left the equipment with the families for up to 4 months, depending on their routine, and asked that they record whenever possible, when they had a meal together. This provided a greater range of material, such as family breakfasts, weekday meals and Christmas dinners, over a longer period of time.

Step 4: Transcription

In discursive research, the primary data source is always the original recording of face-to-face interaction, whether this is audio or video, in digital or analogue form, or the original text (such as in online interaction). For analytical and dissemination purposes, however, it is necessary to have a paper or word document copy of the recorded interaction. The transcription process itself is built up using a word processing package alongside the sound files (typically in digital format, or played back on a separate device); ideally with both windows open on the computer screen for easy management. DP uses the transcription system developed by Gail Jefferson for conversation analysis, which makes use of standard keyboard symbols and common conventions.

Crucially, the Jefferson transcription system represents those features of talk that have been shown by studies of interaction to be treated as relevant by the participants (emphasis, overlap, pause length, intonation and so on). No one should be misled into thinking these are trivial things that can be ignored in research. A large body of research in conversation analysis has shown that these things are fundamental to the sense of talk for the participants. Transcription can be a demanding and time-consuming process; each hour of interaction can take up to twenty hours of transcription time, more if the sound is of poor quality or there are a number of speakers talking. For detailed discussion of issues in transcription and overview of the basic system see Hepburn and Bolden, 2013, 2017 and Jefferson, 2004.

With digital data, the transcription process is much easier to manage. Audio programs such as Adobe Audition can be used to copy, search and edit files. It is straightforward to build a collection of sound files that include sequences of the phenomenon of interest (say gustatory 'mmms' or references to 'I like …'). Background noise or extremely quiet sounds can be reduced or enhanced to enable a fuller transcription of the data. It is also easy to anonymize proper names or identifying details (e.g. by reversing them, which leaves the intonation and word length intact)

or to change the voice quality to disguise the speaker. Video software such as Adobe Premier provides the parallel facility to blur faces to disguise individuals if required for dissemination purposes.

Transcribing features of talk that do not correspond to individual lexical items, such as laughter, sighing, crying or expressions of gustatory pleasure, has received significant DP attention. This requires the transcriber to pay particularly close attention to intonation, stress and so on – the reward, however, can be unexpected insight about issues at the core of psychology and interaction. For example, Hepburn's work on the sequential and intonational features of crying within calls to the NSPCC child protection helpline has demonstrated the significance of subtle variations of crying sounds (Hepburn, 2004; see also Hepburn and Potter, 2007). Thus, the presence of a 'tremulous voice' can mark the onset of a crying episode and helpline staff are tuned to such cues and can be shown to act on them and to provide appropriate receipts and keep the caller on line.

In the future, more journal articles may be linked to web-based materials so readers can have access to both transcript and sound and video (e.g. Schegloff, 2002). This is a challenge for journals that have been print-based in the past but the internet provides a number of ways of meeting that challenge. There is more development to be done in this area.

Step 5: Coding

Analysis in discursive psychology is an iterative process that involves repeated listenings to recordings combined with repeated readings of transcript. The coding stage is the precursor to the analysis and involves sifting through the larger data corpus for instances of a phenomenon. At this stage, the process should be as inclusive as possible. As the analysis continues, the coding may need to be repeated, with further searches and shifting boundaries as to what is included in the phenomenon of interest. Possible instances will drop out of the corpus and new analysis will bring in further examples. As Hepburn and Potter (2004) have noted, the coding and sifting process itself can result in analytical issues developing or vanishing. For example, what may seem to be a rather peripheral instance of a phenomenon may prove to be a deviant case that will later confirm the analysis.

Returning to our example of gustatory 'mmms', we first coded the material for instances where explicit food or eating talk was included. From this, we then focused on evaluations of food, such as 'nice' or 'like'. As analysis began on these evaluations, we also noticed the frequent use of the gustatory 'mmm' expression as an alternative means of assessing the food. This led us to search for all instances of 'mmms' within the full data corpus. Many of these were used as continuers (Schegloff, 1982), though a subset were produced by people eating, or in response to descriptions of different types of food. We classified these as gustatory 'mmms' – where they were associated with food and were explicitly evaluative in a positive direction – and found approximately 210 in around 80 hours' worth of mealtime interaction.

Step 6: Analysis

As with the initial searching and coding of the data (which, as noted above, is an iterative process), the subsequent procedures of DP analysis are not formulaic. Instead, there are a range of activities to be worked through, in no specific order. These are to focus on how the discourse is constructed, and constructive of different versions of events, how it is situated in interaction, and how it is bound up with actions. There are ways to know when you are going along the right lines, and when the analysis is merely description (see Antaki, Billig, Edwards and Potter (2003) for a full discussion on this matter). This allows analytical insights to be developed gradually, rather than being pre-empted by using a more passive step-by-step process.

Let us work through an example from Wiggins (2002) here. The analysis of the gustatory 'mmm' highlighted three features of food talk. First, expressing pleasure is organized sequentially within interaction. That is, speakers orient to other turns in talk when performing the 'mmm'. This may seem an obvious point, but it has important implications with respect to how such utterances are understood as documents of underlying states or as communicative objects in their own right. Second, gustatory 'mmms' are often used as stand-alone expressions rather than combined with other words or expressions. When the 'mmm' is accompanied by another term, it is typically an evaluation as in the following extract:

Extract 1 (taken from Wiggins, 2002)
1. (0.8)
2. Simon: mm↑mm: (0.2) that's ↑lovely
3. (0.6)

These *mmm*-plus-evaluation sequences were common within the data corpus.

The organizational pattern of this sequence highlights three features of the construction of 'pleasure':

- that it is an immediate reaction (one can express the 'mmm' with food in the mouth, as if capturing the sensation as it is experienced; a 'sensation receipt');
- that it is spontaneous (it can be expressed at various points throughout a mealtime without needing to preface or announce a topic shift; it is omni-relevant in situations where food or drink is being consumed); and
- that it is vague (there is an ambiguity in the 'mmm' that is never fully elaborated upon; speakers rarely go into detail as to what is eliciting this expression).

The third feature of food talk that the gustatory 'mmm' highlighted was the way embodiment is constructed in the ongoing interaction in a way that is very hard to separate from that interaction. This can be seen in a number of ways. First, a gustatory 'mmm' can be used to provide agreement with another speaker's account, and to offer the basis on which this agreement is made by invoking a physical pleasure. Second, it can be used to add credibility to one's account of food, as well as evidencing the account. Third, its sequential location as prior to more elaborate verbal descriptions works to construct a body–discourse dichotomy, despite the collaboratively produced nature of such constructions. The extract below provides an example of this.

Extract 2

1. Simon: its actually got ↓quite a bit of: uhm (0.6) >is it<
2. (0.2) ↑brandy or-
3. Anna: mmm
4. Simon: rum >or something<
5. (2.0)
6. Jenny: ↑mm[mm
7. Simon: [mmmm
8. Jenny: >see what you mean<
9. Simon: °by jove [that-°
10. Anna: [was on the box↑there's- (0.4) there's a
11. few: different ingredients: in ↓it (0.6) alchoholic

Validation of DP research is already built into the process of data collection and analysis. By working closely with naturalistic materials the research stays faithful (as far as possible) to the phenomena being examined. By presenting lengthy analyses alongside the transcribed data, readers can make their own judgements as to the plausibility and coherence of the analysis. This also enables researchers to check the coherence of their analyses against previously published work, providing an extended corpus of material that is publicly available. Validation of analytic claims can also be checked through deviant case analysis, whereby claims about any patterns or specific interpretations can be compared with instances where these patterns seem to be absent. For example, in the analysis there were only a small number of cases where the mmm was preceded, rather than followed, by the evaluation – close inspection of these helped us understand the role of 'mmms' in displaying a spontaneous embodied response.

Step 7: Application

The practical element of DP is already built into its methodology, in that it typically works with naturalistic interaction and people's practices. This provides a powerful way to connect with professionals and practitioners. In other traditions of psychological research there is often a strong asymmetry between the knowledge of the researcher and the people involved in the practices being studied. In DP the aim is often to explicate the operation of participants' skilled practices. For example, Puchta and Potter (2004) show through close analysis the ways in which market research focus group moderators guide the interaction of their group members in particular ways. The moderators are already highly skilled; analysis can systemize and make explicit that skill in ways that can allow the moderators to have more control and to act in a more strategic manner. The general approach can be summarized, then, as turning practices into strategies (Hepburn, Wilkinson and Butler, 2014).

More recently, discursive psychologists and other interaction researchers have developed ways of exploiting this potential with practitioners such as helpline call-takers and relationship mediators. Elizabeth Stokoe has pushed development forward with the notion of CARM, the Conversation Analytic Role-play Method (Stokoe, 2014). This uses digitized audio or video with rolling transcript in workshop settings with skilled practitioners. The material is played until a key choice point arrives and then stops. The practitioners then workshop what the appropriate next contribution should be, what the moderator should say, how they should say it, and why. This generates high-level and engaged discussions

from people who are expert in these practices, therefore allowing them to explicate their practical reasoning. They can then hear what was actually done next and evaluate it in comparison to their own proposals. This works iteratively, supporting a highly focused and skilled discussion which is a platform for the moderators to transform their practical skills into something with more strategic control.

In the case of our eating research we can help families to understand and change the way they talk about food in front of their children, to encourage them to eat healthier foods or to persuade reluctant adolescents to eat sufficient amounts of food. We can also focus on how obesity treatment is managed; how patients are encouraged to take responsibility for their eating habits; and how to foster effective long-term strategies for maintaining a healthy weight. Most generally, it is striking to note that despite the importance of food and eating to two major areas of current societal health concern (eating disorders and obesity) there has been virtually no research that has studied eating naturalistically and directly, that has looked at it initially as an activity, that is done socially, and that involves a range of normative expectations and organizations. The full practical implications of such research are not yet clear – but challenges it raises for more traditional models of research are already crystallizing.

CRITICAL APPRAISAL

Discursive psychology focuses on psychology as something embedded in interaction, and as something that gives interaction sense and coherence. It is almost unique in modern psychology in offering a naturalistic study of what people do in the settings that are relevant to those actions. Ultimately the topic of DP is psychology from the perspectives of participants. This approach is not without its constraints; DP cannot be sensibly used as a 'toolbox' method, for example. Indeed, when it is used as such a method to approach questions formulated in the traditional psychological style – what is the effect of X on Y?, how does X vary with Y? – it is most likely to result in incoherence. Effective work from this perspective requires a consistent approach to the questions, data management and so on. This means that those researchers who hope for more powerful research coming from supplementing qualitative and quantitative research need to be cautious of generating epistemic confusion.

DP research has also shifted to working more extensively with video data as technologies in this field develop. Work within CA and ethnomethodology, such as that by Goodwin (2000) and Heath (2005), on gaze and gesture has been particularly influential in this move. The inclusion of visual practices in DP analysis, however, is not straightforward; one can treat these in a similar way to the treatment of embodied practices (discussed earlier). So there is no simple add-on way in which video data can be incorporated into DP analysis. Rather, it should be used as a means of explicating practices in more detail, providing clarification on what happens during pauses, for example. Nevertheless, digital video (and audio) technology has enabled researchers to develop different ways of working with naturalistic materials.

THE FUTURE OF DISCURSIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Discursive psychological research continues to thrive and evolve. New developments within theoretical and empirical issues are pushing forward the boundaries of our understanding of psychology as both a discipline and a topic of analysis in its own right. The power and sophistication of this research has increased in leaps and bounds in the last few years. Much has already been done to both inform and challenge psychological research, in topics such as identity, racism and attitudes. The following are just some areas of new development in DP work:

1 *Psychological methods as topic*. Inspired by path-breaking conversation analytic work, DP has been developing studies of social research methods in practice. This work can consider the practical ways in which research is accomplished, and providing new insights into the machinery of research methods. For example, Stephen Gibson (2013, 2014) has conducted a series of studies that analyse the archived audio data from Stanley Milgram's obedience experiments, demonstrating how the widely-believed 'obedience' of the participants was less common than what might be better understood as defiance, resistance and rational argument on the part of many of the participants. The experimental set-up, and its subsequent reports in the Milgram literature, may then have obscured this alternative interpretation. Work in this area

often throws up challenging issues for psychologists; for example, when Schegloff (1999) studied the administration of a test for pragmatic deficit in a stroke patient he was able to highlight the sophisticated pragmatic skills that the patient displayed in the course of failing the test. One of the themes in this work is the way that the interactional procedures are implicated in the production and individuation of particular psychological entities. For example, Antaki and Rapley (1996) show the way particular question organizations and responses contribute to the production of a particular version of life satisfaction for individuals with learning difficulties and Puchta and Potter (2002) show how various procedures are used in market research focus groups to produce attitudes as individual possessions. This strand of work has important potential – it will be particularly interesting to consider social cognition and social cognitive neuroscience research in this way.

2 *Psychology and technology*. DP has embraced new technologies, both as a means to collect high-quality data (digital video cameras) as well as an area of social action in itself. The growth of the Internet and its various tools and functions (discussion forums, social media, video-sharing, blogs) has provided a rich arena for addressing the way particular psychological (or 'psychological') terms and orientations can be used in the business of interaction in different outlets. Some of this work has addressed the management of identities of text-based interaction in online discussion forums (e.g. Flinkfeldt, 2014; Goodman and Rowe, 2014; Horne and Wiggins, 2009) while other work has demonstrated how psychological notions such as learning are managed in online spaces (Paulus and Lester, 2013). DP work focused on online interaction engages with the medium as a unique and complex tool, used in and for interaction. For example, DP can examine how participants manage the interactional conventions of online interaction in subtle and observable ways (Stommel and Koole, 2010). As technology emerges and integrates with everyday social interaction, we can also examine ways in which psychological notions and social actions are not only managed in online spaces, but also how technology (such as smartphones and tablets) is physically managed in a multimodal analysis of everyday life.

3 *Revising cognitions, emotions and experience*. As noted earlier in this chapter, work is already well underway in terms of re-specifying cognitive categories and concepts, and this is now embracing critical debates on emotions or 'affect' and experience. This has implications for both cognitivist and phenomenological approaches as well as for newer 'critical' and synthesized approaches to subjectivity and the 'turn to affect'. Some discourse work has engaged with, and reworked psychodynamic notions (Billig, 1999; Wetherell, 2003, 2015). Other work has focused on the management of subject–object or mind–world relations, a central theme since the start of DP (e.g. Childs, 2014; Iversen, 2014). For example, Edwards (2007) considers the delicate and subtle procedures through which versions of subjectivity are produced to manage accountability. There is increasing overlap here with conversation analysis and its sophisticated take on how issues of shared knowledge, epistemic asymmetry, understanding and so on figure in specifics of interaction (e.g. Heritage and Raymond, 2005). In the medium term there are important and consequential debates to be had at a theoretical and analytic level with critical work that nevertheless theorizes subjectivity with a more classical interiority (e.g. Hollway and Jefferson, 2005) and work focused on the notion of identity from either a critical or social cognition perspective (see Benwell and Stokoe, 2006). The end point of such debates is not yet clear, but the journey is exciting and important.

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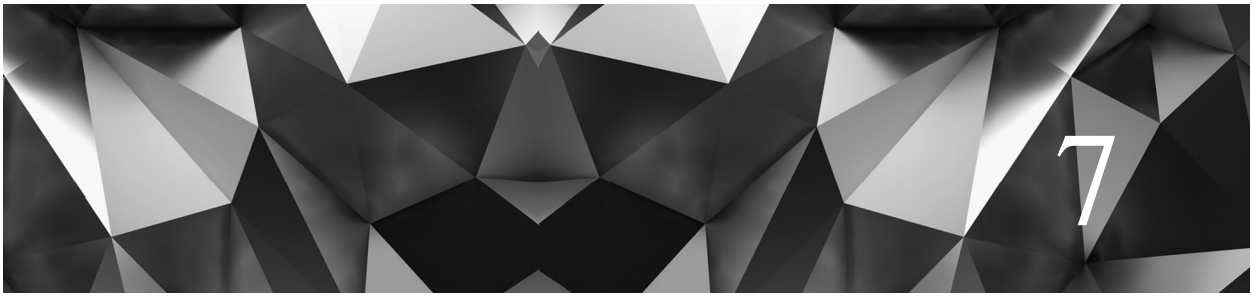

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

Michael Arribas-Ayllon and Valerie Walkerdine

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1970s, the term 'discourse' has referred to an extraordinarily diverse field of research concerned with the analysis of language, signs and text. Some have described the 'linguistic turn' as a major development in Western thought (Rorty, 1967), a 'growth industry' among Anglo-American academics (Hook, 2001a, 2001b), and the product of 'marketing' aimed at undergraduate pedagogy (McHoul, 1997). What has become known as 'discourse analysis' reflects a distinct interest in the social, political and psychological characteristics of language use. Given the variety of approaches that now exist, discourse analysis means different things to different tribes within the social sciences. For us, discourse refers to institutionalized patterns of knowledge that govern the formation of subjectivity. This is quite different to other approaches that apply Foucault's ideas as a method of applied linguistic analysis. In this chapter, we show how a Foucauldian approach to discourse analysis might be usefully applied in critical psychological research.

It is customary to warn that there are no set rules or procedures for conducting Foucauldian-inspired analysis. To avoid formalizing an approach that clearly refuses formalization, we are also cautious about prescribing a specific way of using Foucault. Over the course of his writings, Foucault's ideas and methods had changed in relation to the problems he worked on: the exclusion of madness, the birth of clinical medicine, the disciplinary practices of the prison, the regulation of sexuality, the governmentality of society, and the ethics of subjectivity. As such, there is no consistent programme of work from which to extract a methodology. Furthermore, Foucault's ideas are challenging to understand and apply, partly because his elliptical style of writing often avoids explicit formulation, and because his view of discourse is more diffuse than linguistic approaches. Indeed, it would be wrong to assume that Foucault equates 'discourse' with a system of language. Given the difficulties of explaining a body of work that is both diffuse and variable, in this chapter we aim to give a broad sketch of the relevance of discourse to psychology.

The relationship between discourse and psychology assumes a commitment to being critical of psychology as a body of knowledge, and it involves doing psychological research in a different way. In the first instance, discourse analysis is a method of exposing the historical conditions through which psychological knowledge has played a part in shaping the conduct of

individuals in Western societies. But it is also a method of understanding the contemporary practices through which individuals constitute themselves as subjects of knowledge. Foucault (2010: 3) once described his framework as a history of 'focal points of experience' which he studied along three axes: the *axis of knowledge*, the rules that govern discursive practices that determine what is true or false; the *axis of power*, or the rationalities by which one governs the conduct of others; and the *axis of ethics*, or the practices through which an individual constitutes itself as a subject. We believe this framework provides an important basis for the analysis of *subjectivity*. In the next section, we briefly discuss how a Foucauldian version of discourse has been taken up in Anglo-American psychology to re-theorize subjectivity.

CHANGING THE SUBJECT

A Foucauldian conception of discourse was introduced to Anglo-American psychology in the late 1970s. The new left critique in France was taken up in Britain under the name of 'poststructuralism', which offered new ways of dissolving the political impasse between humanism and anti-humanism within the social sciences. Humanist psychology was intent on discovering the personal, motivational and rational properties of a foundational subject, while anti-humanist psychology saw in the former the development of instruments for the regulation of social life. For the radical humanist, the only means of rejecting 'bourgeois' psychology was through the positive removal of state power. However, the events of May 1968 were decisive in outlining the limitations of 'emancipatory politics'.

Poststructuralism introduced new theoretical tools for dismantling a monolithic view of power proposed under Marxism and structuralism. Rather than directing a radical critique at 'society', one could side-step the individual-society dichotomy by showing that individuals are the product of historically specific 'discourses' that seek to know and govern the social as a domain of thought and action. The birth of psychology played a significant role in making the 'social' a reality that could be governed more efficiently. A poststructuralist critique of psychology therefore assumes a different starting point from critiques that seek to resocialize the subject of psychology. Instead, it applies Foucault's methods of *genealogical* investigation to show how psychological knowledge emerged not as a unified programme of ideas and theories, but from specific sites and problems concerned with the administration of social life. The birth of psychology as a distinct discipline is no less than an account of the reorganization of political power in Western societies.

In the late 1970s, the view of knowledge as both productive and regulatory was put to work in the journal *Ideology & Consciousness* (Adlam et al., 1977). Within psychology, a rigorous and systematic attempt to introduce the writings of Lacan and Foucault appeared in the work *Changing the Subject: Psychology, Social Regulation and Subjectivity* (Henriques et al., 1984). This pioneering work formed an inspirational response to the general dissatisfaction of individualism, Cartesianism and positivism within mainstream psychology, claiming that the individual–society dualism was an obstacle to theorizing subjectivity. Outside psychology, Nikolas Rose adapted the work he developed in *Ideology & Consciousness* (Rose, 1979) to give a sociological account of the 'psy-complex' (Rose, 1985).

In these works, the turn to discourse provided new and productive ways of dissolving the unitary subject of psychology. The subject whose coherence and rationality was the discovery of repeated measurement, classification and calculation was now opened up to the very apparatuses and techniques through which it was constituted. Psychology's subject emerged from multiple domains in which psychological instruments could be applied and later refined: the asylum, the hospital, the family, the school, the court. It took shape among the diversity of concerns – racial degeneration, intellectual decline, juvenile delinquency, industrial inefficiency, childhood sexuality and development – made visible and calculable by political authorities. Far from guaranteeing its discovery, positivism formed the very regime through which a psychological subject appeared. In short, 'changing the subject' began with linking its production to various technologies of power.

However, the turn to discourse does not really offer a theory of subjectivity. Instead, it provides a set of explanations of the local and heterogeneous *subject positions* within discourse and power. That subjects occupy 'positions' within discourse means we can only write, speak or think about a social object or practice in specific ways within a given historical period (see 'Ways of Doing Foucauldian Discourse Analysis' later in this chapter for a detailed explanation). Positions are therefore historical delimitations of what is sayable, thinkable and practicable. But Foucault's account of power also denies a theory of the subject. If power is constitutive

of individuals (operating through individuals by acting upon their actions) then the subject is merely the effect (an epiphenomenon) of power/knowledge relations. The subject is neither a 'role' nor an 'individual' but a multiplicity of positions which are contradictory and discontinuous. Poststructuralism therefore creates a new theoretical problem: by exposing the multiplicity of relations through which subjectivity is constituted there is no clear path for explaining 'the continuity of the subject, and the subjective experience of identity' (Henriques et al., 1984: 204).

In the absence of a theory of subjectivity, discourse provides a clearing for reconstructing the subject. Foucault was reluctant to ascribe interiority, though at times he alluded to the 'soul' as the inner life of the subject of power (Foucault, 1977; Butler, 1997). Many would turn to psychoanalysis, especially Lacan, to show how the unconscious is constituted by one's positioning within discourse through fantasies, dreams, and flows of desire (Walkerdine, 1988; Hollway, 1989; Zizek, 1992, 1997; Parker, 1997). More recently, Blackman et al. (2008) have argued that there is still need for a 'distinctive ontology' of the subject. Some have turned to neuroscience to reveal a materiality out of which subjectivity is fashioned (Connolly, 2002; Massumi, 2002; Cromby, 2004), while others have turned to the concept of 'affect' to articulate a domain of non-conscious bodily forces (Massumi, 2002; Thrift, 2008; Wetherell, 2012). Some of these theoretical moves are antagonistic towards discourse, seeking to 'liberate' subjectivity by splitting the discursive and the non-discursive. But discourse need not be an obstacle to theorizing subjectivity. As Wetherell (2012) argues, discourse studies are entirely compatible with affect insofar as the discursive can enhance its power and allow it to travel to new domains.

In what follows, we retrace some of the early applications of Foucault's ideas of discourse and power to reconstruct the birth of psychology and deconstruct contemporary psychological problems.

'DOING HISTORY'

In this section, we give two early examples of analysis that are faithfully 'Foucauldian' in their application. What is common to these analyses is the genealogical approach they take in analysing psychological knowledge as discursive practices. Both case studies give a demonstration of how histories of the formation of psychological discourse are put to work.

The psy-complex

For Nikolas Rose, genealogy is a critique of psychological knowledge by reconstructing an 'event' in its history. The purpose is not to uncover a truer version of psychology's history, but to radically alter our present relationship with psychology. For Rose, genealogy is an exercise in the 'gathering of clues' to understand how various methods and techniques of psychological measurement were involved in constituting the 'social'. What he calls the *psychological complex* – 'a heterogeneous but regulated domain of agents, of practices, of discourses and apparatuses which has definite conditions and specifiable effects' (Rose, 1979: 6) – is not a genealogy of psychological measurement but a genealogy of the social.

Rose begins with an event that breaks with the assumption that psychology emerged as a coherent discipline, animated by a general rational principle or by an underlying cause that could reconstruct a global history of psychology. He begins with the discourse on intelligence to trace out the relationship between the problem of the 'mentally defective', the development of mental measurement, and the practice of social administration. The mental defective appeared in the nineteenth century as a new object of eugenic discourse in America, which formed part of a strategic political project of social and biological reform. It was systematically linked to a whole cluster of concerns regarding the good-order and well-being of the population. Criminality, pauperism, mental deficiency and inefficiency appeared as aberrations which eluded methods of detection and classification. The ambiguity with which these objects evaded the inspection of the state would give rise to a double strategy of control: moralization and medicalization. The instruments of mental measurement would emerge from a discourse centred on questions of *degeneracy*.

The focus of Rose's inquiry is to understand how psychology participated in this project of administration by acting as a relay (*savoir*) between other forms of knowledge – political economy, the law, medicine, education. But before it could occupy this role, psychology required a Darwinian conception of 'population' and 'normal' variation, both of which formed a powerful combination for regulating *individual differences*. The discovery of the 'normal curve' would bear out a systematic relationship between four terms – population, norm, individual and deviation – providing the vital conditions for a science of mental measurement. Combined with the much older discourse of ancestry, it was now possible to calculate distributions and variations of intellectual ability via the law of ancestral heredity. According

to Francis Galton, the father of eugenic theory, the lower classes were deemed unfit to compete in the stakes of life; their social position was a testimony of their inferior fitness. The new eugenic discourse exposed what was thought to be an alarming deterioration of the national stock. Statistical calculations of census material estimated that the lowest twenty-five per cent of the adult stock was producing fifty per cent of the next generation.

Rose's analysis shows that the problem of degeneracy opened a space for the formation of a psychological complex. First, psychology would deploy around the *behaviours* of children various instruments for the detection of feeble-mindedness, and second, devise techniques of measurement that would distinguish the 'normal' from the 'idiot', the 'intelligent' from the 'deficient'. So had begun the great campaign of socialization in which the individual of psychology emerged as a specific, rational ideal of civilized society. Rose's Foucauldian reconstruction of psychological knowledge shows how its conditions of formation emerged from 'a complex series of struggles and alliances between distinct discourses organized into various strategic ensembles' (Rose, 1979: 58). This strategic dimension of power/knowledge reveals the complex linkages and operations in which psychology served as a technology in the administration of the social.

Developmental Psychology/Pedagogy

Valerie Walkerdine's (Venn and Walkerdine, 1978; Walkerdine, 1984) work on developmental psychology and child-centred pedagogy applies Foucauldian genealogy to give a sharper focus to a contemporary problem. Taking the apparent failure of the 'pedagogy of liberation' in the late 1970s as her starting point, she traces a history of the discursive practice of child-centred pedagogy. The purpose of genealogy is to demonstrate that the claims of developmental psychology are historically specific, and that the psychological basis of 'the problem of pedagogy' forecloses the possibility of posing radical solutions. The genealogical approach adopted here is an explicitly deconstructive enterprise for investigating the conditions of possibility of modern primary school education in Britain, and the circumstances in which 'the child' emerged as a specific object of science (for more on this, see also Chapter 27 in this Volume).

Walkerdine begins by asking a series of questions which frame a specific problem in the present. How did pedagogic practices acquire the notion of a normalized sequence of child development? And how did psychology transform classrooms from the disciplinary apparatus of speaking, hearing and replicating to child-centred practices of fostering autonomy, exploration and play? The first step is to disentangle the scientific discourses from practices of child-centred pedagogy. Notions of development are separated from the self-evident continuity of 'ontogenesis' and traced back to nineteenth-century technologies of classification and individual regulation.

Compulsory education in nineteenth-century Britain emerged from specific concerns about the moral degeneration of the population. Schooling would stimulate the intellect, give instruction in an orderly and virtuous course of life, and foster a spirit of independent labour. These were the principles of Bentham-like 'monitorialism' – a disciplinary mechanism for the moral regulation of souls through constant monitoring and ceaseless activity. Against the backdrop of these normalizing interventions some intellectuals began to demand the promotion of 'understanding' over the discipline of habits. Philanthropists and progressive educators like Kay-Shuttleworth and Owen believed that monitorialism did nothing to foster 'affection, imagination and the realization of potential'. Pedagogy should not be a mechanical reproduction of moral life but the extension of natural and normal behaviour. It was these counter-arguments that transformed the 'schoolroom' into the 'classroom' as sites for the normalization of affection and understanding.

By the twentieth century, Walkerdine traces two parallel developments that related to the scientific classification of children: child study and mental measurement. First, a Darwinian discourse conducted systematic observations on the natural development of the young child as a 'species'. Second, a discourse of mental measurement builds on a Darwinian view of biological selection and variation. At the intersection of these two movements 'the child' emerges as a specific moral concern dressed in scientific respectability. The naturalization of mind as the object of psychological development was later investigated by Piaget. Though Piaget was not taken up in any systematic way, he occupied a position within 'an ensemble of discursive practices … in helping to legitimate and redirect forms of classification of stages of development as regulatory and normalizing pedagogic devices' (Walkerdine, 1984: 176–177).

The idea of 'individual freedom' is a new theme that appears among many experiments of pedagogy in the first decades of the twentieth century. Freedom in a 'state of nature' would come to symbolize romantic opposition to coercion and exemplify the liberal turn to natural self-government. As the links between scientific experimentation and

pedagogy were tightened, the concept of 'play' no longer specified a natural context of learning but a specific mode of learning. Play became a crucial site for the observation and normalization of children, and a central pedagogic device for the production of self-governing citizens.

A child-centred approach became fully enmeshed in contemporary practices of pedagogy through the political apparatus. By the 1930s, concerns over child poverty and juvenile delinquency gave rise to 'adolescence' as an object of scientific thought and action in the UK. Under a Conservative government, the Hadow Consultative Committee (1928–1933) formed the tripartite system of education still in place today. Among its justifications were psychological arguments that specified a normalized sequence of development. The age of 11 or 12 years emerged as the crucial break at which point psychology would provide ready-made techniques for distinguishing those fit for further education and those more suited to work. By 1933, the second and third Hadow reports integrated both discourses – mental measurement and development – to produce modern child-centred pedagogy. At the centre of this scientific production of the child were three interlocking themes: (1) the imperative of individual freedom; (2) the biological foundation of natural development; and (3) the pedagogical technique of observing and recording naturalized development. Together, the physical, emotional and mental comprised the total facts of child development.

By today's standards good pedagogy is the ability to observe, monitor and intervene in the development of the child by accurately reading their actions. Using naturalistic data of a learning context, Walkerdine shows how one child's (Michael's) failure to learn mathematical principles of place value is experienced by the teacher as a personal failure rather than a by-product of the pedagogy itself. Is it possible that Michael's actions are intelligible according to a different regime of sense-making? Rather than learning place value through the internalization of action (i.e. play), Michael possibly recognized a relationship 'between the written signifiers and their combination on the paper', in which case his actions are not an aberration to the child-centred approach but a sophisticated method of grasping mathematical principles (Walkerdine, 1984: 193). The point of Walkerdine's genealogy is not to dismiss psychology or dispense with current methods of pedagogy, but to show that one can deconstruct the tendency of reducing problems of learning to psychological explanations of normative, rational development.

In both case studies, we have tried to show how genealogy is a meticulous study of the formation and transformation of objects and practices by studying the complex linkages between discourses. Both analyses show genealogy can be conducted in a variety of ways and according to different objectives. Rose's reconstruction of psychology is almost exclusively an engagement in primary and secondary historical material. His focus is not so much on a contemporary problem but retracing the birth of psychology to its political conditions of emergence. Walkerdine's genealogy is a counterpoint for understanding practices of child-centred pedagogy. She combines historical material with video and interview data to give clarity and sharpness to a contemporary problem. Neither of these analyses prescribe solutions but each seeks to establish an alternative relationship to our contemporary regimes of psychological knowledge.

WAYS OF DOING FOUCAULDIAN DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

In this section, we explain that Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA) differs from other language-based approaches because it conceives discourse at a different level of organization. We offer a light sketch of what a Foucauldian approach might look like and provide some methodological signposts that analysts might apply to their work.

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault (1972) provides a rather obscure but important account of the archaeological method he used in his previous works. His premise is that systems of knowledge are governed by rules that determine the limits of thought and language within a given historical period. When referring to 'discourse', Foucault does not mean a particular instance of language use – a piece of text, an utterance or linguistic performance – but rules, divisions and systems of a particular body of knowledge. Discourse approximates the concept of 'discipline' in two ways: it specifies the kind of institutional partitioning of knowledge we find in medicine, science, psychiatry, biology, economics, etc. But it also refers to techniques and practices through which objects, concepts, and strategies are formed. Let us examine this claim more closely. At the beginning of 'The Order of Discourse', Foucault asserts the hypothesis:

> I am supposing that in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed according to a certain number of *procedures*, whose role is to avert its powers and its dangers, to cope with chance event, to evade its ponderous, awesome materiality. (Foucault, 1972: 216, emphasis added)

The emphasis upon 'procedures' suggests that disciplines maintain their own system of producing statements that count as true or false. Foucault is interested in the rules that govern the *possibility* of true and false statements rather than speculating on the collective meaning of such statements. This is quite different to Anglo-American traditions where discourse is construed as an instance of linguistic usage. Foucault's (1972) explanation of the 'statements of discourse' eludes precise definition, however, he seems to be emphasizing an important difference between formal structures of meaning and historically contingent rules that render an expression (a phrase, a proposition or a speech act) discursively meaningful. In this sense, 'meaning' is not tied to the internal structure of language (signification) but the external conditions of its expression (the rules that govern a way of speaking). Kendall and Wickham (1999: 42–46) adopt a similar understanding of discourse when emphasizing the relationship between 'rules' and 'statements' in their five-step approach of FDA. In the next section, we explore other ways of doing FDA by offering a set of flexible guidelines for the analysis of relevant materials.

Selecting a Corpus of Statements

A 'corpus of statements' is a selection of discourse samples about an *object* relevant to one's inquiry. Discourse samples can be intellectual theories or discussions, governmental reports, policy statements, news articles, and interview transcripts. A criteria for selecting discourse samples depends on whether they *constitute* or *problematize* an object (see Fairclough, 1992; Parker, 1992; Kendall and Wickham, 1999; Carabine, 2001; Kendall and Wickham, 1999; Parker, 1992 for useful guidelines). Given the historical dimension of Foucault's analyses, a corpus of statements should also include examples of how the construction of objects varies over time. This temporal variability is important to show how power/knowledge relations operate within different historical periods and within different disciplinary regimes. For instance, how are the different ways in which madness, criminality or delinquency spoken about justify different forms of intervention? How do different ways of describing a problem demand different solutions? Statements are not only historical and institutional in character, but they reveal the epistemological antecedents for our present inquiry. In other words, the historical variability of statements should set out the *conditions of possibility* for the studied phenomenon. Finally, statements should also highlight evidence of *discontinuity* where objects undergo abrupt historical transformation.

The types of texts we choose to include in our corpus, again, relates to the kinds of questions we are asking. FDA can be applied to any kind of text, though Foucault was more interested in historical documents, legal cases, rules, and descriptions of institutional practice, and even autobiographical accounts and personal diaries (see Foucault, 1978a for an unusually lucid explanation of how he conducted his inquiry). Parker (1992: 1) suggests that FDA can be carried out 'wherever there is meaning', although Foucault actually resisted reducing discourse to meaning (cf. Rose, 1996; Foucault, 1972; Hook, 2001a). Rather than how meaning is constructed in an interactional setting, he was concerned with how 'games of truth' are played out in political domains. But to say this is the only way to conduct FDA is unnecessarily limiting. From our perspective, any context or setting is suitable for analysis as long as it contains a historical sensitivity towards the objects and problems investigated.

There are many kinds of 'text' that are suitable for FDA, which may include:

- spatial arrangement
- social practice
- political discourse
- expert discourse
- social interaction
- autobiographical accounts

Texts can refer to personal observation and description of spatial/architectural surroundings, and the kinds of social practices they engender. These ethnographic texts are derived by the researcher's field notes of a given setting, e.g. parks, hospitals, urban architecture, and sites of cultural production. FDA is commonly performed on political discourse such as policy documents, parliamentary debates, press releases, and official reports on matters relating to governmental processes. Discourse analysis usually attends to expert discourses found among intellectual texts including official publications and empirical findings. FDA is also widely conducted on a variety of speech activities and settings such as in situ interaction (e.g. naturally occurring talk), institutional talk (e.g. doctor–patient relations), research interviews (e.g. participant's accounts and narratives), telephone conversations (e.g. therapeutic counselling), focus group discussions, and audio-visual documentation of interactions (e.g. classroom activities). Conversation analysis is a more technical approach to understanding the structured nature of talk and the forms of social organization

they produce. Lastly, autobiographical aspects of conversations and interviews provide ways of accessing experience, descriptions of moral and ethical practices and ways of constructing the self through various kinds of knowledge (e.g. medical, biological, economic, psychological, etc.). Forms of narrative analysis are particularly useful for evidencing practices and techniques of self-management and behaviour modification (see 'subjectification' below).

Problematizations

There are many ways of beginning one's analysis. Selecting an object of discourse will usually relate to a research question or topic (Fairclough, 1992; Willig, 2001), but it might also relate to giving analytic attention to *problems* that render a certain kind of thought possible. In drawing attention to problems, the analyst is concerned with how the construction of a discursive object allows us to establish a critical relation to the present, to decompose the certainties of our being human (cf. Rose, 1996), or to engage in a 'progressive politics' of the present (Foucault, 1978b). Discourse analysis throws into relief practices and objects by attending to how certain *problematizations* are formed (Foucault, 1985). The discourse analyst might ask: under what circumstances and by whom are aspects of human being rendered problematic? In other words, problematizations draw our attention to the material practices that render aspects of our being human thinkable, manageable, and governable.

In the previous section, Walkerdine (1984) shows how three different problems emerge in relation to her work on child-centred pedagogy. The first serves as a point of departure for genealogical analysis by problematizing the liberatory politics of education in which developmental psychology plays a part. The second problem emerges in relation to the present: the young boy, Michael, whose grasp of mathematics is thought to be a 'conceptual failure' because he strays from concrete practices of learning. And third, the teacher's reaction to Michael's failure as one of guilt and insecurity because she felt she had 'pushed' the child and not let him learn 'at his own pace' (1984: 193). By foregrounding these problems, it becomes possible to show how developmental psychology reduces all problems of learning to the acquisition of the child and forecloses the possibility that learning is achieved via other creative and conceptual means. Focusing on problems allows two things: (1) it constitutes the point of departure for grounding one's inquiry within the wider politics of the present; and (2) it focuses on the ways in which objects are constructed in local and specific settings. Thus, problematizations foreground the material relations through which constructions are produced or contested, and it invites us to think differently about the present by taking up a position outside our current regimes of truth.

Technologies

In 'Technologies of the Self', Foucault (1988) describes his own work as a critical inquiry of how humans develop knowledge about themselves. Rather than taking knowledge at face-value, he suggests we accept it as 'very specific *truth games*' of understanding ourselves. He goes on to elaborate four types of technologies, each of which are 'a matrix of practical reason': (1) technologies of production, (2) technologies of sign systems, (3) technologies of power and (4) technologies of the self (Foucault, 1988: 18). FDA usually focuses on the technologies of power and self. We can think of the relationship between these technologies in two ways. The first is more sociological and indicative of the kind of work conducted by Rose (1996). Technologies are not specifically located within an interactional context, but refer to 'any assembly of practical rationality governed by a more or less conscious goal' (Rose, 1996: 26). They refer to an assemblage of knowledge, instruments, persons, buildings and spaces which act on human conduct from a distance. In this sense, Rose is more interested in understanding the constitution of human subjects through technologies of power. But there is another way of thinking about technologies which is suited to psychological inquiry. Technologies can also make sense of the interaction between oneself and others and how power is exercised over oneself as technologies of the self.

Because technologies are forms of 'practical reason' they are realized simultaneously as material and discursive practices. A conversation, for instance, is not merely the construction of an object in language and thought but also the act of accomplishing or performing an activity. In this sense, it is feasible to draw on the rhetorical and presentational aspects of interaction. For example, Michael Billig's (1991) work on rhetorical psychology explores the argumentative and persuasive nature of talk as resources for everyday reasoning. Here, we might think of technologies as particular kinds of 'truth games' in which participants engage in conflict, competition, and power. Technologies may also take the form of technical and subtle

forms of interactional activity, like account-building, turn-taking, and case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986). By attending to the technical organization of talk, conversation analysis tends to shift the focus away from issues of materiality and power by assuming the equal participation of speakers (see Wooffitt, 2005 for an excellent discussion on the differences between rhetorical psychology and conversation analysis). But in another sense technologies also apply to how individuals problematize and regulate their own conduct in relation to a moral order. We examine these ethical relations of the self later in the section.

Subject Positions

Discourses also offer positions from which a person may speak the truth. A subject position identifies 'a location for persons within a structure of rights and duties for those who use that repertoire' (Davies and Harrè, 1999: 35). But 'positioning' also involves the construction and performance of a particular vantage point (Bamberg, 1994), offering a version of reality as well as a moral location within spoken interaction. This is similar to how the 'moral adequacy' (Cuff, 1994) of people's accounts are linked to the 'moral order' in which they seek to locate themselves (Sacks, 1992). A key point is that moral location and moral order are intimately linked in spoken interaction and serve as practical technologies for speaking the truth (Hodge, 2002). Margaret Wetherell (1998) also shows how a poststructuralist conception of subject positions finds compatibility with conversation analysis. In her ethnography of middle class masculine identities, she shows how conversation analysis provides greater analytic potential for understanding subject positions within conversational processes. Wetherell (1998: 401) shows how subject positions are 'local, highly situated and occasioned', and that claims of 'sexual prowess' by one young male is managed by occupying a variety of subject positions: diminished responsibility ('drunk'), external attributions of success ('lucky'), internal attributions of success ('out on the pull'), an agent engaged in consensual sexual play ('she fancied a bit a rough'), moral management of self ('moral low ground'), etc. The variability of these speaking positions are given order by referring to broader discourses of male sexuality as 'performance and achievement' and an ethics of sexuality justified in terms of 'relationships and reciprocity' (Hollway, 1984; Wetherell, 1998: 400–401).

Subjectification

The term 'subjectification' arises out of Foucault's later work on ancient Greek ethics and subjectivity (Foucault, 1985, 1997a). It refers to the making of subjects through technologies of power and self. In the first instance, subjects are constituted through technologies of domination by acts of 'subjection', but they are also constituted by working on the self through acts of 'subjectification'. Foucault understands 'ethics' as the self-forming activity by which subjects establish a relation of self to itself, to 'transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality' (Foucault, 1988: 18). Ethical conduct is the practical and intentional work of an individual on itself within the limits of morally approved conduct. Ian Hodge's (2002) work on therapeutic discourse provides a nice illustration of how techniques of conversation analysis are applied to interactions between callers and psychotherapists about sexual relationships. Rather than a 'moralizing' technology, these interventions work at the level of *ethical problematizations*, providing 'the means through which callers might regulate their own behaviour and normalize their future possible conduct' (Hodge, 2002: 455). By reframing callers' problems in an ethical form, Hodge shows how counsellors recruit the self-regulating capacities of the caller by establishing that both caller and counsellor share a moral universe (see Box 7.1 for a summary of methodological guidelines for conducting FDA).

EXAMPLE OF FDA

In what follows, we provide a brief illustration of how FDA might be applied to contemporary research. An example is taken from Arribas-Ayllon's PhD work on Australian welfare reform. Here, FDA investigates practices of subjectification at the interface of political technologies that seek to regulate welfare recipients and ethical technologies through which recipients constitute themselves as morally defensible subjects.

Subjects of Welfare

The problem of 'welfare dependency' forms the basis of conducting FDA to reconstruct a genealogy of contemporary welfare rationalities and to investigate the effects of welfare reform on

Box 7.1 Some methodological guidelines for conducting Foucauldian discourse analysis

Selecting a corpus of statements

A corpus of statements refers to samples of text that express rules for how an object is constituted. Criteria for selecting statements might include:

1 samples of text that construct a social problem, i.e. how are objects problematized?
2 samples of text that show how an object is described or explained, i.e. how are objects constructed?
3 descriptions of practices that illustrate how an object is acted upon, i.e. how are objects regulated?
4 samples of text that show historical variability in the construction of objects
   - i.e. how are objects and their problems discussed across different historical periods?
   - i.e. how and why do statements change over time?
5 collection of primary and secondary materials:
   - i.e. policy documents, intellectual texts, print and new media, interview data, autobiographical accounts, ethnographic observations and thick descriptions, etc.

Problematizations

Problematizations refer to historical events in which objects and practices are made 'problematic' and therefore visible and knowable. They often form at the intersection of different discourses and expose power/knowledge relations. Problematizations serve an epistemological and methodological purpose of allowing the analyst to take up a critical position in relation to how problems are formed and to show how they constitute objects and practices.

Technologies

Technologies are practical forms of rationality for the government of self and others. There are two kinds of technologies appropriate for psychological inquiry: technologies of power and technologies of self. Technologies of power seek to govern human conduct at a distance while technologies of the self are techniques by which human beings seek to regulate and improve their conduct. Technologies are also 'truth games' realized either on a larger political scale or among local and specific instances of local interaction.

Subject Positions

Subject positions define the historical limits of what can be written, said or practiced. Identifying subject positions allows the analyst to investigate the cultural repertoire of discourses available to speakers. They are not only positions on which to ground one's claims of truth or responsibility, but they allow individuals to manage, in quite complex and subtle ways, their moral location within social interaction.

Subjectification

Subjectification refers to the ethics of self-formation. Foucault understands 'ethics' in a practical sense of human beings constituting themselves as subjects of a moral code. Ethics is the practical work of submitting oneself to a set of moral recommendations or obligations. Practices of self-constitution may adhere to standards or techniques imposed upon the self in order to attain wisdom, beauty, happiness, perfection, etc.

practices of self-formation. The study begins with problematizations of welfare recipients in Australia. The discovery of 'welfare dependency' in 1999 signalled the government's commitment to reforming the Australian social security system through policies of 'mutual obligation'. These policies effectively contractualized welfare services for the chronically ill, lone parents and the long-term unemployed, and imposed work-for-the-dole schemes on young people. They seek to continuously monitor the behaviour of the poor and counteract the demoralizing effects of welfare dependency through psychological readjustment.

The discourse of dependency has a long history, extending as far back as feudal bondage, which undergoes significant transformation in the early nineteenth and late twentieth centuries[1]. Today, dependency assumes the characteristics of a behavioural syndrome, singling out the passive,

indolent and work-shy from 'at risk' sectors of the welfare population. A genealogy of dependency therefore interrogates the historical conditions out of which it became possible to pathologize the poor as morally and psychologically deficient. The following analysis examines the effects of current welfare rationalities, like discourses of dependency, among those receiving welfare assistance. The task is to examine the interface between work and welfare and investigate the conditions for producing subjects of neoliberal welfare reform.

Consider the experience of Angela, a 19-year-old welfare recipient, who lives in a rural community with high unemployment. Angela narrates a story of humble working-class beginnings, living a comfortable rural life where financial disadvantage is counterbalanced by feelings of freedom and security. At the age of 16, Angela leaves school and moves to Sydney to live with friends and find work. The transition to a large city is narrated as a growing sense of maturity and personal autonomy. Fantasies of urban life are short-lived after friends begin to migrate to other cities, and the precarious circuits of shared accommodation raise feelings of isolation despite regular casual work in a call centre. The return home is narrated as a painful loss of autonomy, coupled with the isolation of receiving benefits and working sporadically in the local service economy. Despite struggling to narrate a coherent sense of self, Angela still manages to articulate an acute sense of psychological agency:

> I think that there is a lot more choices elsewhere, like when I moved back from Sydney and I said to mum 'I am never going to work in a supermarket, I am not going to do this and I am not going to do that', and then after about a year I asked mum 'I wonder if they have got any jobs at the checkout' … I don't know if it is just the situation I am in and I am not happy and I am starting to realize that you can't be too choosy and money is money and work is work and you have to do the shitty jobs sometimes to move on and do something better, that's how it goes, you can't just jump into the right job straight away and expect that that is going to be it, then um the fact that I am open minded about it all rather than 'I am only going to do this', especially in town where there are not that many opportunities, or that many different kind of jobs … everyone has so many options, it is only limited by what they think is, the limits around them, but I mean like if I really wanted to I could get up and leave, I mean I have done it before on less than what I've got now and did it, so it is just myself that is making it a problem … so in that sense that is where my freedom if you like is a little bit limited … it is a lot harder to do it, but like really I have got nothing holding me back, I can go and do whatever I want.

There are two problematizations of interest here. The first precedes the narrative in terms of the possibility of reading Angela's story as one of dependency – a subject who lacks the personal resources to find regular work in the community. The second relates to the personal and affective aspects of the narrative – the growing loss of autonomy and the awkward moral management of stigma. The position of the 'welfare dependent' threatens to subsume the more virtuous position of the 'jobseeker', in which case Angela presents herself as having undergone some kind of personal and moral transformation. Also interesting is the particular 'technology' from which the affirmative voice draws. In the absence of any real change in her material circumstances, insecure work is justified by a psychological relation to self: the 'shitty' checkout job is a means to an end, not because her circumstances demand *any* form of paid work, but because 'self-realization' is a more praiseworthy way of articulating self-reliance. To neutralize the stigma of dependency, Angela draws on a psychological technology of self-improvement to align herself with a moral order.

Despite the limited opportunities of community, the welfare recipient is morally obliged to evaluate her circumstances in terms of 'choice'. This account constitutes the kind of resilience and fantasy of flexibility that has become a condition of modern wage-labour. For the young worker there is no sense of work offering long-term security other than forming a transient relay in the maximization of experience and the on-going construction of biography. Angela's narrative exemplifies the kind of psychological autonomy that younger generations of workers are now enjoined to think as real possibilities for the active construction of identity and lifestyle. The fantasy of unlimited choice becomes the goal of self-formation only when the structural constraints of work and community recede into the background. The moral management of the self ensures that material contradictions of political economy, community and employability are transposed into personal difficulties.

The new technologies of self-actualization coincide with political authorities seeking more active solutions to the problems of freedom and security. The new post-welfare regime insists that society is to be 'active' as welfare recipients undergo continuous monitoring for the ethical reconstruction of the self. In the Australian case,

a range of techniques are used on recipients that mix coercion and exhortation with constant surveillance to incite active forms of citizenship. But income support also presupposes a position where ethical activity is already precarious or impossible to achieve, in which case the narratives of welfare recipients reveal an intensification of moral management, self-blame, ambivalence, and psychological reconstruction. FDA shows how Angela's account of subjectification poses a particular problem of experience which is more clearly understood in a genealogical context.

SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter, we have set out what a Foucauldian approach might look like and how it applies to critical psychological work. We have offered some methodological signposts and cautioned that perhaps there is no such thing as 'Foucauldian discourse analysis'. If such a method does exist then it would bear little resemblance to linguistic versions of discourse. Others have warned (Pennycook, 1994; Threadgold, 1997; Parker, 2004) that as discourse analysis crystallizes into its own discipline, radical approaches (i.e. poststructuralism) will be subsumed by more marketable forms of applied linguistics. This is partly because non-linguistic versions of discourse are susceptible to misunderstanding; their high level of abstraction may imply that 'everything is discourse'. Since the early 1980s, discourse has been criticized for its object-status (reification) and its alleged agency (anthropomorphism). These related accusations of 'discourse babble' are the symptoms of a persistent ambiguity about French continental theory. In this chapter, we hope to have provided some clarity on these issues. After all, discourses are not objects but *rules* and *procedures* that make objects thinkable and governable, and they do not 'determine' things but *intervene* in the relations of what can be known, said, or practiced.

Other criticisms of discourse invoke an either/or relation between relativism and realism. Foucault's position on discourse is unique in the way that he eschews foundationalism without necessarily sliding into nihilism, relativism or realism (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982). This raises a curious ambivalence in relation to discourse and 'the real'. If discourse eschews the possibility of apprehending a reality independent of discourse it is because there is no foundation for guaranteeing knowledge. But at the same time we must avoid the kind of universal suspicion that maintains that truth is consciously concealed (Gordon, 1980). 'The real' is a historical question rather than a general epistemological question about the status of truth. It requires a meticulous reconstruction of events that breach what is obvious, natural or inevitable in order to rediscover 'the connections, supports, blockages, plays of forces, strategies, and so on, that at a given moment establish what subsequently counts as being self-evident, universal, and necessary' (Foucault, 2000: 226–227).

Another serious criticism is the claim that poststructuralism eliminates a social actor. But perhaps this criticism is unwarranted. When Foucault (1970) provocatively declared 'the death of man' at the end of *The Order of Things*, he was suggesting that humanist philosophy had finally run its course. Where anti-humanism dispenses with a theory of agency it does not mean that poststructuralism can no longer speak sensibly about acting subjects. Anti-humanism reminds us that what we call human being is now 'under erasure' – no longer stable, reliable or serviceable (Hall, 1996). Following Derrida (1981), we are not forbidden to think of human subjects as capable of action but what can be thought about subjectivity, identity, personhood, etc., is now placed at the limits of thought. Poststructuralism requires only a minimal conception of the human material on which history writes (Patton, 1994).

Since the introduction of poststructuralism in the 1980s, subjectivity still remains a theoretical problem. Foucault's ideas about discourse and power have created the means of radically dispersing 'the subject' among the multiplicity of discourses, speaking positions, and power relations that establish the limits of 'who we are' and 'who we can be'. But there is also a persistent ambivalence that subjectivity is more than the sum of these things. Indeed, there is a tendency to dissolve subjectivity only to seek out its conditions of substance and continuity. It seems that contemporary social theory, while gratefully acknowledging Foucault's legacy, seeks to reconstruct subjectivity to reconcile multiplicity with a distinctive ontology. The question of 'ontology' has become a key term for grounding the theoretical limits of subjectivity. Foucault's ontology was unapologetically historical, while others ground their claims in 'vital' (Rose, 2007), 'embodied' (Thrift, 2008), and 'immanent' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) processes. These process ontologies of time and space, surface and depth, singularity and relationality, are just some of the limits of our current regimes of thinking. For discourse analysis to have a future beyond 'conditions of possibility', it will need to assemble the diverse threads and entanglements of discursive and non-discursive processes.

Rather than separating these processes, the study of discourse will need to seek out the limits and possibilities of their integration among the creative assemblies and materials of life.

Note

1 Space prohibits a full discussion of the genealogical context of Australia welfare reform. Suffice to say, the regulation of the poor through the moral reconstruction of conduct is not a new technique, but emerged from classical liberal thought, particularly among policies that were instrumental in the birth of state welfare. The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 can be read as an attempt to distinguish the undeserving poor from the deserving poor, leaving the undeserving to fend for themselves in the new national labour market, while placing the deserving poor under the cruel and deterrent conditions of the workhouse. The intellectual contribution of Bentham, Malthus and Ricardo were influential in naturalizing a domain of poverty, while at the same time distinguishing 'pauperism' as the proper object of regulation. This resonates with present arguments about 'welfare dependency' which arguably reactivate a discourse of pauperism. But nineteenth-century virtues of independence, self-responsibility and self-discipline are given a new ethical gloss: independent labour is said to foster self-respect and self-esteem, to restore confidence and identity. Arguably, the present conditions of assistance are designed to elicit the self-managing capacities for whom psychological training ensures the moral reformation of self, the ethical reconstruction of will, so that the poor might be quickly recycled into flexible labour markets.

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8

Psychoanalytic Approaches to Qualitative Psychology

Stephen Frosh and Lisa Saville Young

WHAT HAS PSYCHOANALYSIS TO DO WITH QUALITATIVE METHODS?

Psychologists working within academic traditions both in Britain and in the United States have often found themselves both attracted to, and repelled by, psychoanalytic ideas. It is as if the two disciplines have contested the same ground – how to understand human behaviour, especially apparently disturbing behaviour – and have been caught up in a dispute that is at the same time epistemological, practical and political. How one can know the reality of psychological phenomena has been a key element in this contestation, with this debate being coded (perhaps speciously) as between an 'objective' (psychological) and a more 'subjective' (psychoanalytic) approach to understanding. This has, historically, been paralleled by differences in the focus of investigation, which for psychologists has been mainly directly observable or at least measurable phenomena (behaviours or reports on subjective states, taken at face value) whilst for psychoanalysts it has been what Freud (1917) calls the 'dream work' – the tricky, hard-to-observe ways in which unconscious material finds its way into consciousness. This divergence between a 'ground up' model of psychological explanation, in which observable facts are given priority, and a theoretically driven, 'top down' model continues to exercise qualitative psychologists who find themselves drawn to psychoanalytic ideas as one possible route to moving beyond 'mere' re-description of what their research participants tell them.

There is now an established body of qualitative research, often falling under the auspices of 'psychosocial studies' and arising mostly from Britain, drawing on psychoanalysis to map subjectivity (e.g. Hollway, 2015; Hook, 2013; Saville Young and Frosh, 2010; Seu, 2013). At the outset, however, it is worth noting how the move produced by the growth of qualitative social psychology towards a new openness to investigations of 'meaning' (for example, through discourse and narrative analysis – Emerson and Frosh, 2004) and to the potential of psychoanalysis as a conceptual and methodological tool (Frosh et al., 2003; Frosh and Saville Young, 2010; Kvale, 2003), have made it easier to envisage collaboratively 'binocular' accounts in which the concepts and procedures of both traditions might be brought to bear on psychological material. The 'new' social psychology, with its roots in social constructionism, Foucauldian critique and methodologically scrupulous qualitative research (Henriques et al., 1998; Potter and Wetherell, 1987), offers a grounded way in which

to articulate the psychosocial bases around which personal and social accounts of experiences and beliefs are constructed. The possible contribution from psychoanalysis derives from the sophistication of its ideas about emotional investment and fantasy, which can offer a 'thickening' or enrichment of interpretive understanding brought to bear on personal narratives, especially those arising out of interview situations.

In particular, because of its concern with the 'split' subject (Frosh, 1999), psychoanalysis might supply a framework and methodology through which subject positions can be explored without necessarily having recourse to assumptions concerning the stability of selfhood or the separate sphere of the 'personal'. Instead, the *investment* subjects in certain discursive positions can be seen to intertwine with the constructive power of discourses to produce the kinds of fluid and complex texts characteristic of in-depth narrative research. Put crudely, psychoanalytic interpretive strategies may be able to throw light on the psychological processes, or perhaps the conscious and unconscious 'reasons', behind a specific individual's investment in any rhetorical or discursive position. This may offer a more complete (because more individualised as well as emotion-inflected) interpretive re-description of interview material with helpful links to clinical perceptions and practices.

The possible syncretism of discursive social psychology and psychoanalysis has a number of facets, but in essence these relate to shared perceptions of the constructive role of language, a concern with language or communication as the medium through which people compose themselves. Thus, both schools of thought assume constructionist theories of meaning, in which reality is always to some extent 'made up' discursively. Nevertheless, there are important differences in how psychoanalysis and discursive psychology understand personal experience and in each school's approach to language. For the former, talk is primarily mediated by relational dynamics and unconscious processes; while for the latter, talk is mediated by the availability of discourses in the social and political realm. Consequently, social psychologists have been critical of psychoanalytic attempts to go 'beyond' language to inner experience. Billig (1997, pp. 139–140) describes the difference thus:

> Discursive psychology … argues that phenomena which traditional psychological theories have treated as 'inner processes' are, in fact, constituted through social, discursive activity. Accordingly, discursive psychologists argue that psychology should be based on the study of this outward activity rather than upon hypothetical, and essentially unobservable, inner states. In this respect, discursive psychology is inimical with psychoanalytic theory, which presumes that hidden unconscious motive-forces lie behind the surface of social life. Psychoanalytic theorists often treat outward social activity as a cipher for unobservable, inner motivational processes.

While discursive psychology explores the cultural resources that people draw on in accounts, psychoanalysis is more interested in talk as suggestive of psychic structures that organise individuals' internal worlds in particular ways. This *psychic* realm is seen as being informed by actual events and therefore social structures but also 'added to' from the unconscious. By contrast, from a discursive perspective, individuals express themselves in ways that are familiar or readily available to them within their interpersonal and social context (Wetherell, 2003). Discursive psychology reads the text for the identity positions that are constructed for the person talking and the audience listening, and for the broader cultural discourses and subject positions it draws on in these constructions. The emphasis is on the 'organisation and normative logics of the unfolding situated episode, context, interaction, relation and practice' as opposed to 'a hidden, determining, individual, psychic logic' (Wetherell, 2012, pp. 133–134).

Whilst discursive psychology and psychoanalysis have been in this rather tense dialogue, the more recent 'affective turn' has increased the impetus for the social sciences to engage with psychoanalysis. This affective turn has questioned the privileging of text and discourse arguing that 'there is more to emotion than talk about emotion and more to emotion than can be captured in conscious experience' (Greco and Stenner, 2008, p. 12). On the face of it, this is congruent with a psychoanalytic understanding of how discourse itself might be 'fuelled' by mental states and affects that are not immediately visible in texts. Certainly, the affective turn has seen discursive psychologists paying attention to micro-social processes in the interpersonal context (see Taylor, 2015 for a brief review of these) but the emphasis continues to be on situated affective practices (Wetherell, 2012) that can be found in observable data. While some discursive psychologists are increasingly comfortable with analyses that pay attention to unformulated or non-conscious experiences (see special issue of *Qualitative Research in Psychology,* 2015, *Researching the Psychosocial*), responding to critiques ushered in by the affective turn that bemoan a privileging of text and discourse, these unconscious experiences are not conceptualised

as *dynamic* as within the psychoanalytic tradition. Psychoanalysis conceptualises discourse as a site where the internal world of psychic reality is expressed and revealed, while at the same time always resisting expression and never being fully known; the dynamic unconscious of psychoanalysis 'has a life of its own, with its own build-ups and releases of tension' (Frosh, 2002, p. 14). Thus individuals are 'unconsciously impelled' to express themselves in particular ways, resulting in discernable patterns that will differ from individual to individual. There are some important differences between different 'schools' of psychoanalysis in exactly how they might see this (Frosh and Baraitser, 2008), but in general a psychoanalytic reading goes 'behind' the text as the positions that individuals construct through their talk are taken to be indicative of anxieties, defences and/or particular ways of relating that develop in infancy and recur throughout their lives. This will always require some 'reading out' from the text of what else might be going on to have produced it; or, critics might say, some 'reading into' the text of the assumptions and theoretical expectations of the analyst.

In this regard, discourse psychologists are increasingly irritated by what Wetherell (2012) refers to as a celebration of the mysterious uncanny within psychoanalysis which she argues remains predicated on a problematic psychological-social dualism. While recognising that relational psychoanalysis – with its conceptualisation of the dynamic unconscious as not built on universal prohibitions but rather from social relations that are historically contingent – has led to a less individualistic unconscious, she nevertheless disagrees with what she sees as the over-psychologisation of affect. Throughout her book on affect, Wetherell (2012) is at pains to return to practical, concrete ways of mapping patterns of unacknowledged affective practice, rejecting what she refers to as 'formulating affect as a kind of extra-discursive and uncanny excess' (2012, p. 84). In doing so, Wetherell claims that she is guarding against individualistic and universalistic conceptualisations of the unconscious while developing increasingly nuanced ways of researching affective practices as multiply determined within relational contexts. She argues that the deep psychological properties or structures that psychoanalysis is interested in are separated from social relations and seen as irreducibly different kinds of processes. Similarly, Sondergaard (2002) argues that using psychoanalysis reproduces the individual/social dualism because of its strong focus on 'inner-psychological and individually demarcated reality' (p. 448). This is at the core of the distinction between the psychoanalytic notion of the unconscious, with its insistence on the materiality of an underlying domain of expressive meaning, and the kind of 'discursive unconscious' postulated by Billig (1997), which understands the unconscious as a domain of prohibited speech. Billig points out that conversational devices have defensive functions: the centrality of politeness and the accomplishment of morality in and through conversations necessarily implies that the temptation of rudeness or immorality is repressed. For Billig, this repressive aspect of conversation is a point of fruitful contact between psychoanalysis and discursive psychology, although he admits that theoretical adjustments need to be made on both sides. He argues that discursive psychology needs to pay attention to the absences as well as the presences in dialogue. Over the past few years, this has translated into a willingness within discursive work to interpret 'past' what can be easily transcribed as text (e.g. McAvoy, 2015; Scully, 2015). On the other hand, psychoanalysis, rather than viewing repression as individual in operation, has been increasingly employed in ways that perceive it as socially produced in overt interpersonal activity (e.g. Saville Young and Jearey-Graham, 2015). Developing a psychosocial account of relationships and subjectivity that can draw on psychoanalysis without dumping the significant advances produced by discursive social psychology thus requires openness to interpretation grounded in an understanding of the social as something that permeates apparently 'individual' phenomena; whether this project can be advanced through a psychoanalytic approach to qualitative methods is the concern of this chapter.

REFLEXIVITY

With the querying of positivism characteristic of the discursive turn has come agreement that the 'human sciences' are characterised by the impossibility of any search for absolute knowledge, precisely because of the meaning-making or 'reflexive' nature of human psychology itself. Instead, what has come to be privileged is the form that experience takes when it is put into narrative (Bruner, 1993). One important implication of this claim about the essential 'narrative-generating' character of human psychology is that influential ideas about such things as 'human nature' have an impact on the construction of their own subject; that is, people consume these explanations as part of the process of constructing stories about their lives. This can be seen particularly clearly in the history of psychological theories on

'race'; the use of psychological 'expertise' to generate social policies is also relevant. More generally, the ways in which people construe themselves owes a lot to influential psychological theories, perhaps particularly psychoanalytic and biomedical ones. People's routine use of psychoanalytically-derived notions such as 'sexual repression' or 'trauma' or 'acting out' as explanations of their own or others' behaviour are examples here. Conversely, psychological theories draw strength from the 'common sense' (that is, ideologically inscribed) assumptions and ways of understanding experience prevalent in the culture. This is linked to a debate in social science on the virtues or otherwise of 'constructivism', understood in regard to human psychology as implying the impossibility of absolute truth: people's understanding of their psychology shifts with the ideas to which they are exposed. Social constructionism, as a variant of constructivism, makes this anti-positivist claim even stronger through arguing that knowledge is negotiated and invented – 'constructed' – out of ideas and assumptions made available by the social and interpersonal context.

The reflexivity argument has a number of implications in relation to the employment of psychoanalysis in qualitative research. For Parker (2005) it focuses and limits the possibilities of psychoanalysis itself, understood as a compelling narrative that is culturally specific and even functional. Research, therefore, is not a process of uncovering (even relative) 'truths' about people, but rather exposes the ways in which people are positioned by the theoretical structures used (by them as well as by researchers) to understand them.

> What psychoanalytic research can do, then, is to turn psychoanalytic knowledge around against itself so we understand better the way that psychoanalytic ideas have themselves encouraged us to look for things deep inside us as the causes of social problems. Psychoanalytic subjectivity – our sense of ourselves as having hidden childhood desires and destructive wishes – is the perfect complement to economic exploitation in capitalist society, for both succeed in making the victims blame themselves. (Parker, 2005, p.105)

This takes to its logical extreme the constructivist/constructionist argument that subjects are produced discursively, and some examples of how psychoanalysis might reveal the conditions of its own operation as an exploitative system have been developed (e.g. Saville Young, 2014; Vanheule and Geldhof, 2012). In relation to reflexivity, Parker (2005) draws attention to the impact of psychoanalysis' emphasis on how knowledge (specifically of the patient) is mediated through the person – the subjectivity – of the knower (the analyst): that is, knowing the other requires knowing the impact of the other on (or 'in') the self, and being able to reflect on this in a way that openly recognises both the pre-existing investment of the knower/ researcher in the material, and what is added to this by the specific concerns of the other. Parker (p. 117) comments on how this produces a reassessment of conventional research ideas on subjectivity as a problem: 'Subjectivity is viewed by psychoanalysis, as with much qualitative research, not as a problem but as a resource (and topic). To draw upon one's own subjectivity in the research process does not mean that one is not being 'objective', but that one actually comes closer to a truer account. In psychoanalytic terms, the 'investment' the researcher has in the material they are studying plays a major role in the interest that will eventually accrue from the research. This is a conventional point in relation to psychoanalytic infant observation, where it is held that knowledge of the child can *only* be obtained through registering the observer's emotional response to what s/he sees (Waddell, 1988). Coded more broadly as 'countertransference' it is also a feature of all contemporary psychoanalytic practice, especially that influenced by Kleinian and British School thinking. Hence Hollway's (2010) assertion that in her psychoanalytically-inflected qualitative work she can ground her interpretive claims through what she refers to as an analysis of the 'transference' and 'countertransference'. Referring to her case study of 'Justine', she claims that information is generated through comparing her own responses to the participant to those of the interviewer (Ann). This is worth following closely:

> Ann notes in her second interview field note, 'As before I really liked Justine and liked what I saw of her relationship with her baby and partner'. On listening and then reading the transcripts, I (Wendy [Hollway]) did, too. I thought I detected how proud Ann was that the baby was so clever and advanced. I felt this, too, on my own behalf, as I listened to the audio recording. I also found myself feeling quite strongly Justine's wish to get her career sorted out and 'make [herself] better'; I felt that she had the capacity to do that, and I did not want her to be thwarted by her situation. Without being there, and without sharing Justine's and Ann's ethnicity (but sharing Ann's generational and gender status and having a daughter Justine's age), I, too, seem to be involved in these affective dynamics … These pieces of evidence taken together point to the strong affective ties between Justine and Ann, ties that became more significant when understood through the idea of

> mother–daughter transferences … Elements belonging to Justine's relationship with her mother are unconsciously transferred to the interview, which therefore holds meanings in excess of what the relationship with the interviewer would otherwise produce. There is another side to transference dynamics, since they are always potentially two-way. Although Justine did not know explicitly that Ann had a daughter approximately her age, we could expect that Ann's unconscious communications would be exercising influence in such a way that Ann's transferences could dovetail with Justine's and probably make Ann appropriately sensitive, thus affecting the countertransference. (pp. 144–145)

It has to be said that this looks only schematically like the intense exploration of unconscious material characteristic of psychoanalytic reflection on the transference in the clinical situation, and it raises questions about how much is actually learnt about the participant rather than the researcher(s) (we know they have daughters Justine's age, but what do we know with any degree of confidence about Justine?). However, at least it provides a space for checking out the researchers' responses to the research participant and thinking through what these responses might signify. It also draws attention to the position of the researcher in qualitative work, where the end point of research might be various constructed versions of experience rather than full knowledge of an objective and fixed external reality. The task of the interviewer, therefore, shifts from one of eliciting the interviewee's 'real' views to creating the conditions under which a thoughtful conversation can take place – a 'shared understanding' model (Franklin, 1997). Clearly, in doing work of this kind, the person of the researcher is deeply implicated: if it is the case that psychological knowledge is constructed in the context of an interchange between 'researcher' and 'researched', then understanding the determining characteristics of that interaction – including what the researcher brings to it – is crucial for evaluating the significance of any research 'findings'.

A major difficulty concerns what account can in fact be given of the investments of the researcher in the knowledge-making process. Here, psychoanalysis has considerably more sophisticated concepts available to it than can be found in much social science, but this very sophistication makes the issues more problematic. For example, some social psychologists seem to imply that describing researchers' investments in their work might be a relatively simple, technical matter, perhaps an issue of confession or self-revelation. But what is to be revealed? The researcher's gender, class and 'race' positions may well be relevant and it may be important to declare them as a way to increase the transparency and richness of the data produced. This is, indeed, the strategy employed by some of the best practitioners of the new social science; for instance, Margaret Wetherell acknowledges that her work on racism in New Zealand is influenced by her own history as a white New Zealander (Wetherell and Potter, 1992). However, even where researchers have been scrupulous in laying out the ways in which they might have promoted certain 'responses' or narratives from their research participants, the most they are able to do is declare their conscious intentions and include material such as full transcripts to enable a reader to form an impression of the researcher's own active contribution. Psychoanalysis suggests that this declaration of relatively explicit aspects of the researcher's persona will never be complete enough to understand what her or his contribution to the research might be – let alone, to comprehend the nuances of the interpretive strategy employed in data analysis. There are likely, for example, to be complex unconscious processes interacting with the research work, encouraging some ways of going about things, inhibiting others. Psychoanalysis might even suggest that the only way to fully explore a researcher's investment in a particular piece of research would be through a dialogic encounter involving the possibility of interpretation of the *researcher's* activity and checking out the impact of this interpretation on her or his understanding and future conduct. This seems rather a tall order, although perhaps not an impossible one. For example, some very innovative German studies have used a process whereby researchers meet with members of their team in order to explore the thoughts, feelings and associations that have been brought up by the work as an indicator of important issues that may have been communicated indirectly or even unconsciously from the research participant (Marks, 2001). This 'intervision' procedure is combined with one in which small groups of researchers track their responses to the recording of interviews, identifying moments of heightened emotion reflected in contradictions, interruptions or fragmentations of the material, and then discussing the impact and possible meaning of these. Particularly provocative or difficult interviews might be assessed by the whole research team with a view to identifying their underlying dynamics. Sometimes the results from this procedure can be striking, as in the work reported by Marks and Mönich-Marks (2003) into the tolerance of Nazism, in which feelings of shame were identified in the research group and used to probe the manner in which research participants defended themselves against such feelings

by projecting them onto others, including the victims of Nazi actions. Other examples of where this group supervision model have been used include Hollway's (2011) work on identity change. The point here is not that there is some magical route to identifying the unconscious material (supposedly) present in any discourse, but rather that the process of 'locating' and utilising the investments of *researchers* is a complex and difficult one, but nevertheless one that has to be engaged with at a more profound level than is conventional in qualitative psychology, if psychoanalytic thinking in this area is to be taken seriously.

As Kvale (1999) argues, the standard psychoanalytic interview is an interesting model for a narrative style conversation in which the research participant is encouraged to talk freely and thoughtfully about her or his experience. For example, qualitative researchers interested in generating 'rich' texts might do well to adopt the analytic stance in which a safe temporal and physical space is offered by a professional whose behaviour is characterised by 'free-floating attention' – a serious, non-intrusive yet ruminative type of activity – and in which the relational characteristics of the interview are acknowledged and considered for their effects. It is unusual, except in some ethnographic work, for researchers to spend enough time with research participants for the kind of deeply emotional relationship found in psychoanalysis to develop, and this places strong constraints on the extent to which, for example, transference material can be fostered and examined as part of the research. Nevertheless, holding attentively to what emerges without irritably seeking to order and understand it, and simply encouraging participants to speak on or around the topic under study, is itself quite a radical move for researchers and can pay dividends in terms of the quality of narrative data that is produced. Hollway and Jefferson's (2013) adaptation of the biographical-narrative method into the 'Free Association Narrative Interview' is a particularly well known implementation of this idea, but it can be found enacted in several 'life history' type research projects (e.g. Plummer, 1995). Hollway and Jefferson (2013, p. 140) comment,

> The free association narrative interview method is based on the premise that the meanings underlying interviewees' elicited narratives are best accessed via links based on spontaneous association, rather than whatever consistency can be found in the told narrative. This is a radically different conception of meaning because free associations follow an emotional rather than a cognitively derived logic. Once we follow that logic, the result is a fuller picture than would otherwise have emerged, offering richer and deeper insights into a person's unique meanings.

The link here is explicitly psychoanalytic and in a way antagonistic to conventional notions of narrative as storytelling: what matters is the emotional sense of the story, not its cognitive logic, because this emotional sense is what points to a person's subjective meaning-making.

One problem this produces, however, is of what to do with the richly subjective, suggestive texts that derive from such free and evocative interviewing procedures. Given all these interlacing subjectivities, how can one interpret their meaning in a reasonably convincing way? Different qualitative interpretive approaches have grown up with their own set of answers to this question, largely relating to varying strategies for 'grounding' interpretation in close analysis of the textual material, and presenting this for scrutiny by readers (Emerson and Frosh, 2004). What is especially problematic, but also interesting, about the use of psychoanalysis in qualitative research is that its interpretive strategies and grounding procedures have arisen most convincingly in one context – that of the clinical situation of the 'consulting room' – but are here being deployed in another context with strikingly different characteristics. Moreover, psychoanalysis is by no means unitary in its understanding of what constitutes a good interpretation; indeed, in recent years it has become very hesitant about the idea that it can be used to uncover anything 'real' or 'truthful' about a person.

There has been a move in some circles towards employing Lacanian theory in psychosocial readings in an attempt to shift the goal of interpretation from understanding participants (sometimes better than they understand themselves) to disrupting subjectivity including the subjectivity of the researcher (Parker, 2010; Saville Young, 2011; Saville Young and Frosh, 2010). The effect of a reading that draws on Lacan is therefore necessarily suspicious about the extent to which psychoanalysis itself structures what is found in the text. From this perspective, narrative interpretation of research material leading to a fantasy of integration and wholeness (a 'true' or 'meaningful' story) is illusory; rather 'interruption' should replace 'interpretation' where what is offered is not a sense of holistic closure, but rather a set of provoking questions. Therefore, a psychosocial reading that draws on Lacan employs reflexivity in a way that is quite different to one that, for example, draws on Kleinian principles. Whereas the latter engages with the affective texture of the research encounter as evidenced through reflexive notes in order to understand participants and bring narrative coherence to the text, the former

argues that using psychoanalysis to understand the encounter is an elusive and illusory goal for we are always subjected to language and therefore can never occupy a position that offers a final pronouncement on it. Lapping (2011) describes these different stances as differences in conceptualisations of the epistemological status of language and affect; for Kleinians, feelings are useful sources of information about the encounter, for Lacanians, our experiences of affect are not to be trusted. A Lacanian analysis of text employs reflexivity not to convey hidden meaning but to emphasise the multiplicity and polyvocality of text so that the subject can never be fully known or fixed, but remains resistive (Frosh, 2007).

Increasingly, there is recognition of the danger of dividing psychoanalytic approaches to qualitative research into two opposing camps, each claiming to be the more legitimate version. Lapping (2011) refers to the risk of closing down the meanings of psychoanalysis and reifying the clinic as 'the originary point of reference' (p. 2). There is a visible move to a 'critical eclecticism' (Frosh, 2014, p. 169) along with an advancing recognition of the way psychoanalytic formulations are worked out in the context of particular individuals struggling to relate to one another. This also means that as this context shifts, as the relationship changes, so psychoanalytic understanding of what is happening might also have to shift dramatically. Spence (1987, p. 91) comments:

> No interpretation is sacred. If context is boundless and ever-expanding, the grounds for reaching a conclusion about this or that meaning are forever shifting. An archive can be constructed, but its contents will always be open to interpretation and elaboration.

Psychoanalytic understanding depends on the subjective exploration of one person by another; by implication, this means that something different will occur wherever different analysts work, or when different theoretical perspectives dominate, or when social contexts shift. Hence, any psychoanalytic finding can only be provisional, constrained by the conditions under which it has been produced.

VALIDATION

The relativity of the notion of truth here raises the obvious question of validation – of what criteria might be available for distinguishing between all the possible 'provisional truths' which might arise, including all the provisional or perhaps absolute falsehoods. This is part of a general question arising out of all qualitative analysis of textual material: what are the limits on interpretation? Given, as most qualitative researchers and many (though not all) psychoanalysts would allow, that meaning is not fixed but is constructed in specific situations and usually through particular intersubjective encounters, then alternative interpretations of any text are likely to be viable and may even be equally persuasive. Under such conditions, what are the constraints operating on interpretation, what is allowable and what is not? For Hollway and Jefferson (2005), the warrant for psychoanalytic interpretation in the clinical situation is reasonably clear: it 'emerges in the therapeutic relationship' (p. 150). The qualitative researcher is in a different position. Whereas the psychoanalyst interprets 'into' the session and can observe the patient's response, the researcher saves her or his interpretation for later (Hollway and Jefferson, 2013, p. 72), and so is faced with what might be called 'dead' text. Outside the psychoanalytic situation, therefore, the warrant for interpretation is more flimsy than within it. Hollway and Jefferson (2005) propose that this warrant includes 'the researcher's multiply informed (hermeneutic) interpretations of interview claims in the context of everything that is known about the person' (p. 151) and in particular that it is legitimate to read through the surface of the text to the life that is 'assumed' to be beyond it. In the context of their case study of 'Vince', this is articulated as follows:

> Vince's account is a form of evidence about that life, and our interpretative approach is based on the principle that the ways that Vince constructs his account in the context of the interview relationship can, when interpreted, provide further information about its conflicts … Thus, in addition to typical thematic and narrative analytic procedures, we paid particular attention to the links (free associations) between textual elements and to behaviours that signalled conflicting feelings about the material; for example, changes in emotional tone, long pauses or avoidances. These are some of the symptoms that make visible otherwise invisible internal states. (p. 151)

The obvious difficulty with this is that it still leaves the move from the surface to the proposed depth unanchored. How confident can the researchers be in the accuracy of their particular speculations about the significance of the free associations and emotional markers that they observe? Hollway and Jefferson (2013, p. 74) fall back on some idea of the recognisability of their

interpretations: 'Their reliability can be checked (though never guaranteed) if, when our interpretations and analyses are studied by others, they are "recognised": that is, the sense that we made out of them can be shared through the subjectivity of others (including you, the reader).' The problem here is that an interpretation may be agreed upon by various people all looking at something from the same perspective (as, for example, psychoanalysts tend to do), but this does not mean that it is right. This is part of Wetherell's (2005) objection to Hollway and Jefferson's procedure, which focuses on the ways in which they 'ignore the discursive context in which they have put Vince; the pressure the interviews place on him to offer a satisfactory account of who he is and the kind of attributional work Vince's circumstances would demand of anyone placed in them' (p. 171). The consequence is that a certain kind of story almost *has to* emerge, as the psychoanalytic frame used by Hollway and Jefferson funnels the research participant's talk, leading rather ineluctably to a reading that revolves around the pre-ordained notion of the defended subject. 'Vince's words become acontextual and psychologized; he becomes a one trick pony, everything he says is leading towards his one true story, and that story is seen as definitive and automatically revealing of his real character' (p. 171). This critique is taken further by Parker (2005, p. 108), who warns against the Free Association Narrative Interview procedure on the grounds that it is individualising, essentialising, pathologising and disempowering; the key complaint is that it is organised around a pre-set discourse that imposes an expert account on the research participant in a typical (of psychoanalysis as well as psychology) 'researcher knows best' set of moves.

In response to the problem of validation of truth claims, both psychoanalysis and qualitative psychology have at least partially embraced a hermeneutic position arguing that whilst causal, explanatory truths about people may not be available, meaning-imbued 'narrative truths' are. The model for this in the first instance is the reading of literary texts: the richer the text, the more alternative and even contradictory meanings might be pulled out of it. Narrative truths convince because of their capacity to evoke and structure experiences, to offer coherence where there is fragmentation, to articulate half-understood meanings, to throw light on obscurity. This is not an arbitrary process as it is quite possible to make interpretations of a text which have no coherence at all, and which fail to communicate anything; these would be failed, 'false' interpretations. But while the search for narrative truth is not arbitrary, it is difficult: not only is there a strong element of relativity brought into the situation by the variety of different narratives which might be available at any one time, but also as the context for interpretation shifts – as culture changes, for example – so do the narratives which take hold and which hold conviction. This has led some hermeneuticists, most notably Jürgen Habermas, to suggest that the final arbiter of analytic correctness, at least in the clinical setting, should be the patient. Analytic insights, he argues,

> possess validity for the analyst only after they have been accepted as knowledge by the analysand himself. For the empirical accuracy of general interpretations depends not on controlled observation and the subsequent communication among investigators but rather on the accomplishment of self-reflection and subsequent communication between the investigator and his 'object'. (Habermas, 1968, p. 261)

Habermas accepts as psychoanalytic the idea that symbolic structures of intention and meaning are causal in human relations, and from there proposes that psychoanalytic knowledge is validated by its capacity to demonstrate, in practice, the impact of its interventions in these structures. From the point of view of the patient, an interpretation is 'emancipatory' in linking the subject with her or his split-off meanings: 'The interpretation of a case is corroborated only by the successful *continuation of a self-formative process*, that is, by the completion of self-reflection, and not in any unmistakeable way by what the patient says or how he *behaves*' (p. 266). Emancipation is expressed in a kind of becoming-real in the session, as the patient recognises the meanings generated dialogically and takes them in so that they have causal impact, promoting an enrichment of felt experience and a process of enhanced self-reflection.

The hermeneutic account of the psychoanalytic process, and Habermas' version of it in particular, is more compelling than can be developed properly here (see Frosh, 2006), but it also shows up starkly the difficulties for the application of psychoanalytic ideas in the non-clinical research setting. It can be argued that the dependence of psychoanalysis on biographical and interpersonal information in order to ground interpretations means that it is not very appropriate for the analysis of interview material which, whilst it may be rich in details concerning attitudes and thoughts, is relatively sparse in relation to background features and fantasies. This suggests that for psychoanalytic procedures to be appropriate, more focused ways of gathering personal biographical material will need to be incorporated into qualitative

psychological studies, and that these should not be merely 'factual' but should privilege respondents' in-depth accounts of their own perceptions of their experience. More broadly, the usual methods of 'testing' psychoanalytic interpretations rely on close observation (at various levels) of the analysand's response to the interpretation, evidence unavailable to the researcher after the event. There is, simply, no response that a text can make to an interpretation in the way that a person might respond; and unless one is going to incorporate trial interpretations into the research interview itself (but see Lapping, 2011), it is hard to see a way around this. Hollway and Jefferson (2013) acknowledge this difficulty, referring to their approach as 'psychoanalytically informed' rather than psychoanalytic.

Many hermeneuticists have drawn out the parallel between psychoanalysis and textual analysis by focusing on the idea that meaning is the production of effects rather than the naming of truths, and hence that the interpretive process is a matter of 'local' readings of a spoken or authored 'text' (Friedman, 2000). Psychoanalysis, however, is not satisfied with generating particular meanings; it also has an interpretive task that is irreducibly bound up with the unravelling of unconscious conflicts. Here, a distinction worked on by Ricoeur (1970), between a 'hermeneutics of understanding' and a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' is useful, the latter being the mode characteristic of psychoanalysis, with its reluctance to accept what the patient has to say at face value. Friedman (2000, pp. 234–235) revives the textual analogy here when he comments that, 'analysis… is primarily intent on reading what the patient does not want read, and also, to some extent, the analyst's profession requires that he or she read against the analyst's own inclination.' Asserting the validity of a psychoanalytic concept thus requires *both* recognition of the way psychological 'reality' is impossible to pin down, because it fluctuates and is reconstructed continually as it is enacted and produced in different contexts; *and* an appreciation that some 'readings' of the unconscious are more forceful than others, and can be observed to be so because of their resonance in the participants, their capacity to communicate experience more richly, and their productivity in relation to further associations and deepening of emotional states. Outside the context of the consulting room, this can be applied in the same way as arguments about literary interpretations are applied: what way of understanding generates most material, what pushes thinking on, what 'thickens' the story that can be told about how psychological phenomena might work? None of this is completely satisfactory: psychoanalytic interpretation is always wavering and uncertain even when it can be tested against the patient's response, and even more so when it cannot; but this can be turned into a strength if one can maintain the stance of uncertainty and tentativeness within a context of cautious checking against the emotional tone of the research participant's talk and of the researcher's reactions.

We have been arguing both for the productivity of the application of psychoanalysis to qualitative material and for its problems, and have asserted that the use of psychoanalytic understanding must be tentative, rooted both in biographical information and in a dynamic contact with research participants that allows space for emotional connectedness and the observation and thoughtful reflection on the relationship that arises. As with other forms of qualitative research, analysis of textual material must be rigorous and cautious, employing psychoanalytic concepts (that is part of the point) but grounding them in clearly observable textual moves – however open these might be to alternative readings as well. No interpretation is sacred, there is no full and absolute truth; but some are more reasonable and persuasive than others on theoretical grounds but also in terms of their logic and productivity, the implications and conclusions to which they lead.

NARRATIVES OF BROTHERHOOD

In what follows, we try to demonstrate some of these tentative possibilities through reference to one specific piece of research into the 'brother' relationships of some adult men. This research involved interviews with eight men in middle adulthood, using an open, 'clinical' style in which the interviewer (LSY) combined paraphrasing and clarification of participants' comments with probes into their motives and interpretations of their experiences. Immediately after each interview, extensive field notes were made detailing observations of the participants' interactions with the interviewer as well as the interviewer's personal feelings about the interview and the participant. Each interview was transcribed as soon after conducting the interview as possible, with the interviewer's words and responses included in the transcription, along with false starts, hesitations, pauses, laughing, crying, whispering and overlapping of responses.

The analytic process involved a discursive reading of the entire interview text exploring how the men's language through its structure and meaning shores up or tears down certain ways of doing (social activities) and being (social identities) (Gee, 2014). Situated meanings, cultural models

and discourses were explored along with how they reinforced or subjugated particular ways of being (identity positions). Much of the literature on men's same sex relationships (sibling relationships and friendships) points to a male deficit model of intimacy (e.g. Adams and Ueno, 2006; Bank and Hansford, 2000; Wood, 1999), so we were interested in whether the cultural ideal or dominant discourse of men as tough, aggressive and unemotional meant that particular men might find it difficult to construct an intimate relationship with their brothers. However, we also explored how men might resist or negate this cultural ideal constructing a fraternal relationship that undermines hegemonic masculinity.

While paying attention to this 'social' dimension of brothering, we also wanted to focus on the deeply personal nature of 'doing brother'. This involved identifying core narratives in the interview, selected for their emotionality or 'breaches' (Emerson and Frosh, 2004), and applying psychoanalytic interpretive strategies to 'thicken' the discursive reading of the text. These strategies included analysing the men's personal biographies, elicited in the course of the interview, and using psychoanalytic concepts to explore ways in which 'sibling trauma' (Mitchell, 2000, 2003, 2009) might mediate their investments in certain discourses. A second strategy involved using the field notes to understand how the interview context influenced the participants' investments as well as exploring how the texture of the research relationship might increase the resonance of the analytic interpretations.

Throughout, we recognised that employing this psychoanalytic reading in the research required grounding interpretations not only in the research relationship, but also in textual moves. Therefore, the core narratives were retranscribed using Gee's (1991) poetic approach in pursuit of a fine-grained analysis of *how* the narrative is told. Gee argues that analysing the structure of a text is an important part of interpretation in that it points to a set of what he calls 'interpretive questions' while at the same time also constraining the answers that are given. He offers an analysis of the way a text is put together, the use of intonations, stresses and the rhythmic patterning of words, in an attempt to focus on the subjective and personal meaning-making of the narrator and to resist ascriptivism, the tendency for interpreters to appropriate the narrator's meaning, making it into their own. Gee's poetic approach 'helps to privilege the teller's experience and assumptions "from the inside" of their own language-use' (Emerson and Frosh, 2004, p. 46).

Table 8.1 below offers a brief outline of the methodological procedures involved in the research on brothers reported in this chapter, as one example of a psychoanalytic approach to qualitative research. The left hand column outlines the steps that were taken to implement the method and the right hand column lists publications which provide either more detail about the procedure or apply the procedure to research data. It is important to note, however, that research of this kind is a dynamic process and so while the procedures are listed in chronological order, they nevertheless took place in a cyclical rather than linear manner. In particular, steps 7 and 8 below overlapped considerably during the research process as we sought to root the psychoanalytic interpretation of narratives in the previous levels of analysis (particularly in the field notes and the 'poetic' reading or linguistic analysis of the text).

In the next section we present discursive and psychoanalytic readings of one particular case, 'Tom', based on a 'core narrative' from his interview. Because of the focus of the chapter, we emphasise here the interpretive account rather than the linguistic analysis, even though this leaves exposed the difficulties involved in substantiating analytic claims.

CASE STUDY: TOM[1]

Tom is a forty-year old married man who is employed as a teacher. He is white, British and has one younger half-brother, Gareth, from whom he is estranged. Tom described their relationship as close when they were children, sharing common interests and fantasising about living together when they grew up. However, throughout the interview Tom was keen to emphasise the differences between him and his brother. According to Tom, Gareth was rebellious as a child and was therefore sent away to boarding school during which time the brothers grew apart. As teenagers sharing a bedroom they would frequently fight, sometimes physically. The brothers currently have no contact and only hear about each other's lives through their mother. This has been the case for a number of years although, recently, the enmity between them increased due to a family conflict when Tom and Gareth took different sides and Gareth threatened to never speak to Tom again. Tom describes his brother as a '*big man*' with a '*big appetite*'. In comparison Tom describes himself as '*woolly*' and '*intellectual*' contrasting his occupation as a teacher with his brother's work in the defence force.

The following extract was selected as a core narrative for two main reasons. First, Tom's narrative is particularly hesitant with frequent

Table 8.1 Brief outline of methodological procedures

Procedure	*References*
1. Conduct biographical-narrative interviews.	See Hollway and Jefferson's (2013) Free Association Narrative Method and Kvale's (1999, 2003) psychoanalytic interview.
2. Write up field notes detailing observations of the participants' interactions with the interviewer as well as the interviewer's personal feelings about the interview and the participant.	See Riessman's (2003) performative approach to analysis. In addition, Hollway and Jefferson (2013), Stopford (2002) and Emerson and Frosh (2004) all use approaches that emphasise the centrality of the interviewer's/researcher's subjectivity and the co-construction of narrative.
3. Transcribe the interviews.	See Lapadat (2000) for a discussion of the complexities of transcribing interview text.
4. Discursive reading of the entire interview text.	There are many examples of discourse analysis; for this study we drew mainly on Gee's (1999) approach which has since been further developed (Gee, 2014). Increasingly, researchers have engaged with ways of reading emotions discursively which is an important resource for psychoanalytic approaches to text (see special issue of *Qualitative Research in Psychology* for examples of these approaches by Taylor, 2015; McAvoy, 2015 and Scully, 2015).
5. Identify core narratives in the interview selected for their emotionality or 'breaches'.	This is a sampling strategy used by Emerson and Frosh (2004).
6. Retranscribe the core narratives and conduct a fine grained 'poetic' reading of the text.	Gee (1991) describes his 'poetic' approach in detail. Emerson and Frosh (2004) applied Gee's linguistic method to narrative data in a study of young sexual offenders. See also Saville Young and Jackson (2011).
7. Apply psychoanalytic interpretive strategies to core narratives to 'thicken' the discursive reading of the text. These include analysing participants' personal biographies, applying psychoanalytic concepts to narrative material and analysing the research relationship drawing on the field notes.	See examples of the application of such interpretive strategies by Frosh and Emerson (2005), Frosh and Saville Young (2011), and Hollway and Jefferson (2013).

narrative cues (such as laughter and false starts) that point to both meaning-making within the interview and emotionality. Secondly, the interviewer's subjectivity and the interview context are both explicitly referred to and therefore serve as rich indicators for psychoanalytic interpretation. The narrative begins with the interviewer questioning Tom's thoughts about the possibility of his estranged relationship with his brother changing.

Core Narrative

1. *LSY: Do you think, um, anything will change as far as you and your brother's*
2. *relationship and what, what would bring about that change? Do you want it*
3. *to change?*
4. *Tom: Yeah. I think, you know, I always thought, okay, it would be nice if we*
5. *could be friendly. I need to, I need to be communicating more but, um, you*
6. *know, there's a little bit of embarrassment involved now.*
7. *LSY: Mm (Pause). What, what's the embarrassment from?*
8. *Tom: You know, like it's from things that have happened that, you know, that,*
9. *you know, that (Pause) I suppose, embarrassment about the way the family,*
10. *you know, dealt with things. And the way (Pause) how I, I dealt with things,*
11. *you know. And so the fact that, that, um, probably you know, you know, I'm a*
12. *man, he's a man and we don't, you know. You're not meant to sort of be*

13. *really, um, open emotionally because, you know, I think he'd find that*
14. *quite, uh, different to cope with, you know. He's quite sporting, you know, so*
15. *plays rugby and, you know, sort of thing. Well you're from South Africa, so*
16. *you understand [LSY: Yes,Yes] how that sort of, macho sort of thing,*
17. *happens. Isn't that? You would, you know, sort of shrug it off and get on with*
18. *it sort of thing.*
19. *LSY: Does he find it difficult to talk about emotional things?*
20. *Tom: Yeah and I, and I would with him.*
21. *LSY: Mm. Do you find it difficult talking about emotional things with other*
22. *men? Or is it more him than other men?*
23. *Tom: No, no. I don't. No, not really. I'm always conscious that, always feel*
24. *that maybe I'm over analysing things too much and a bit more emotional than*
25. *other people. But um (Pause)*
26. *LSY: And does that make you feel self conscious or (Pause)?*
27. *Tom: Sometimes. I suppose now I could, yeah, I'm gonna feel self-conscious*
28. *now talking to you. So maybe it's not just men. Maybe it's everybody.*
29. *LSY: [laugh] So what do you mean? That you are going to feel self-conscious*
30. *after the interview looking back or sometimes you feel self-conscious now*
31. *talking to me?*
32. *Tom: Oh yeah, obviously there's a little bit… I don't know if it shows, that,*
33. *you know, obviously sort of the contorted family life that I've had. And, you*
34. *know, maybe there's a sort of self-recrimination about, in terms of, you know,*
35. *maybe I, I'm the one that, you know, accusing people of being things. Maybe*
36. *it's it really isn't, you know. What I, by the way that I act. And also, you know,*
37. *yes I'm also thinking how would I feel afterwards (laugh).*
38. *LSY: Yeah. So what you are sort of saying is a change in your relationship*
39. *with your brother will involve having to talk about things that have happened*
40. *and that that would be quite difficult for both of you, being sort of, the fact*
41. *that you are men that also makes that somehow more difficult.*
42. *Tom: Mm. Well I imagine if it was just a friend that I'd fallen out with then I*
43. *would find that a lot easier than talking to my brother [LSY: Okay] about it*
44. *so maybe it's just 'cos (Pause) just my brother. This is, you know, I think he is*
45. *suspicious of like those that, you know, uh sort of emotional men and*
46. *sensitivity to things.*

Discursive Reading of Tom's Core Narrative

In the above extract, Tom constructs his brother as a 'macho male', drawing on notions of hegemonic masculinity such as physical prowess ('sporting' l.14) and a lack of emotionality ('shrug it off and get on with it sort of thing' ll.17–18). In contrast, Tom aligns himself with the intellectual and emotional world. First, Tom describes wanting a better relationship with his brother and clearly identifies talking as a means to repair this relationship. Prioritising relationships and striving for better communication within relationships are activities associated with the 'new man'. Secondly, Tom claims that he is able to 'do' emotional talk with other men, such as his friends, reinforcing his 'new man' identity.

Nevertheless, throughout the core narrative Tom's identity position shifts and inconsistencies arise around whether or not he is comfortable doing emotional talk as a 'new man'. Initially, Tom acknowledges his lack of communicativeness and his feeling of embarrassment linked to expectations around 'real men' not being emotional (ll.8–12), but then he disowns this macho way of 'doing man' suggesting that it is his brother who would find an emotional conversation difficult to cope with (ll.13–14). Further on in the narrative Tom states that he too would find it hard doing emotional talk with his brother (l.20), although later this difficulty is again associated with his brother rather than himself as Tom suggests that talking to a friend would be easier (ll.42–43). Thus, on the one hand, as a 'new man' he constructs himself as comfortable with 'emotional talk' but on the other hand in his fraternal relationship there are indicators that holding onto this 'new man' position is difficult. How does Tom manage these contradictions in his narrative?

We argue that Tom constructs a coherent sense of self as a 'new man' by suggesting that it is not because he is 'macho' that he feels uncomfortable doing emotional talk with his brother but rather because he is '*over analysing*' and '*more emotional*' than other people and so feels self-conscious. From this perspective, it is precisely because Tom is so identified with a 'new man' way of being that doing emotional talk is awkward.

Constructing the narrative in this way enables Tom to hold onto a coherent self-construction as a 'new man' while at the same time acknowledging his role in a fraternal relationship between 'real men' in which emotional talk is avoided. Tom's narrative is thus an account of the jostling of masculinities: he asserts his 'new man' identity as a way of positioning himself as 'liberated' in the interview context but at the same time acknowledges the vulnerability and ultimately the subjugation of this 'new man' identity in favour of being a 'real man' in the fraternal relationship. In Tom's case, the power of the masculine ideal, as unemotional and 'macho', polices his identity within his fraternal relationship, seemingly diminishing the possibility of renewing the brother bond.

Psychoanalytic Reading of Tom's Core Narrative

As noted earlier, one weakness of much narrative data in the context of psychoanalysis is the relative thinness of biographical information. In Tom's case, however, the interview generated a considerable amount of biographical material that can be brought to bear on developing a plausible psychoanalytic formulation of his investment in the presentation of his difference from his brother. We claim that applying psychoanalytic interpretation to these biographical details 'thickens' our understanding of Tom's narrative and that it is possible to root this sufficiently strongly in the text to offset the danger of a completely top-down, theoretically-driven account in which what is found is already known from the theory itself. Psychoanalytic thinking is being used here as a provocation to explore the possible sources of investment in the discursive positions described.

The psychoanalytic formulation runs as follows. Tom's mother suffered two major losses immediately before and after he was born. Her first child (a daughter) died before Tom was born and her husband (Tom's father) died when Tom was eight months old. These losses in quick succession are likely to have left Tom's mother emotionally fragile. She remarried shortly after her first husband's death; hence the fact that Gareth is Tom's half-brother. However, Gareth's father left their mother when they were young and she remarried another three times. Her inability to have a lasting relationship as well as her inability to be alone point to possible issues of attachment and loss not uncommon in complicated bereavement. It is possible that these relationship difficulties also played themselves out in Tom's early relationship with his mother. In these circumstances of loss, how might the parent-child and sibling relationships have interacted to construct a particular fraternal bond for Tom and Gareth?

For Mitchell (2000), the sibling uniquely represents what is both the same as and different from ourselves. The sameness allows for identification with siblings: the sibling is loved as oneself, as one has been loved and wants to be loved. However, the difference between ourselves and an other means an inevitable abandonment of this identification: the sibling is also 'another baby (that) replaces the baby one was until this moment' (Mitchell, 2000, p. 20). It is precisely the sameness (another baby) that emphasises the displacement, a loss of position or place. The plaintive cry is, 'where do I stand now that my place has gone?' This displacement is experienced as annihilating, as a danger of non-existence. What Mitchell terms 'the law of the mother' is what emphasises difference over sameness. The law of the mother refers to the mother's injunction that as children siblings are the same, they cannot have babies like adults can; but as siblings they are also different and there is space for one, two, three or more. One way of negotiating the resultant hatred of sameness is through emphasising difference – 'I hate you, you are not me' (Mitchell, 2003, p. 27).

Applying Mitchell's theory, one could posit that Tom's experience of displacement at the arrival of his brother meant that as a way of protecting his place, he constructed himself as different from his brother. This may have been a particularly emotive investment for Tom given the emotional climate of loss, which may have made his fear of losing his mother especially pressing. As the brothers grew older, the need to be different from one another may have been further exacerbated by their mother's romantic relationships and the way the brothers had to compete with each other for their mother's attention (something Tom refers to). Tom's investment in a 'new man' discourse and his construction of his brother as quite the opposite may be interpreted as a means to protect them both from competitiveness as well as to maintain a place of his own in the family. But why then is Tom so ambivalent about this position? Following Mitchell (2003), one could posit that Gareth's birth prompted Tom to regress and return to his mother to seek the symbiotic relationship he always yearned for in infancy. In so doing he confronted an oedipal scenario in which he found not his father, but *another man* in his place, who was continually replaced by one man after another. In the interview, Tom expresses resentment of his mother's multiple marriages, claiming that as a child he never felt that he got much attention from her as she was always preoccupied

with her marital relationships. Tom's jealousy of the other men in his mother's life and his wish to have her attention as they did suggests that he may have envied the traditionally masculine positions they represented. However, despite its allure he could also never completely identify with the hegemonic subject position represented by these father-figures. To do so would mean that like his father he is another man and like his brother he is another baby, both likely to be replaced. Hence Tom's investment in difference – he is a different man and another baby – thereby securing his position.

Earlier, we warned against too cavalier uses of psychoanalytic theory offered as a pre-existing grid to force a certain kind of sense into recalcitrant or fragmentary material. This is clearly a risk in the reading we have just given, dependent as it is on a particular theoretical framing of the sibling relationship. For this reason, we seek also a stronger textual grounding for our claims; for the purposes of this account, this is focused particularly on the working out of the research relationship. Our suggestion here is that Tom constructs a special place for himself within the research relationship by populating the narrative space with men against whom he can assert his difference. First, Tom correctly identifies the interviewer as South African and assumes from this that she is familiar with the 'macho male', the sort of man that his brother is. Evoking the interviewer's background means that Tom is positioned as different from not only his brother but from other men with whom the interviewer has interacted in her past. Tom also frequently asserted his difference from the other participants in the study, displaying great interest in how his story compared to those of other men that had been interviewed and asking twice whether he was 'normal' in the way he had spoken about his brother. Tom's narrative also asserts his difference as a participant in that he imagines other brothers to be '*more matey*'.

One of the interviewer's field notes offers an interesting sidelight on how Tom's sense of being different was felt in the research interchange. LSY wrote, '*Many of the questions were constructed with a positive sibling relationship in mind and were not appropriate for this interview where a negative relationship was being described.*' With hindsight, this observation is strange as there are other interviews that upon analysis we considered to be more difficult and unusual case studies than Tom's. Yet the notes suggest that Tom's interview required special handling, perhaps revealing that his supposed difference and uniqueness, so important to his narrative, were played out in, or projected into, the research relationship. Tom as a participant creates a unique place for himself in the research mirroring his employment of difference in his fraternal relationships as a means of avoiding or denying displacement.

There are other ways in which the interview interaction mirrors the dilemma that Tom may have faced in his childhood. In the beginning of the core narrative Tom is the 'new man' who desires a closer relationship with his brother through a cathartic conversation. Significantly, this narrative echoes the reasons Tom gave for volunteering to be interviewed for this study: he wanted to have the opportunity to express his feelings and thoughts to somebody neutral in the hope that associations and epiphanies might follow. However, as the conversation continues so Tom's 'new man' performance seems to crumble. His narrative becomes more fragmentary, punctuated with long pauses, false starts and with more frequent interruptions by the interviewer. Tom begins to describe difficulties with doing emotional talk as a man, and as he does so he also performs his difficulties with talk in the interview.

Perhaps what happens here is that having identified the interviewer as South African, and therefore familiar with the 'macho male', Tom's expectations of the interview context shift from being one in which 'new men' are valued. Instead, the context is an interview with a female whose national discourse is one of hegemonic masculinity and yet who is requesting him to open up the conversation in an emotional way. It is almost as if Tom begins to experience the interview and interviewer as emasculating. The field notes draw attention to the interviewer's impressions of a certain irritation or hostility from Tom: '*As an interviewer I felt criticised for the type of questions I asked.*' This research interaction could be interpreted as a mirroring of Tom's relational experiences. The interview felt populated not just by Tom's brother Gareth, but also by South African men and previous research participants, all of whom Tom seemed to compete with by asserting himself as different. However, he also positioned the interviewer as aligned with these other men, by assuming that she was familiar with 'macho males'. Significantly, Tom expressed disappointment at the end of the interview, claiming that it had not met up to his expectations of catharsis. Like his mother in the oedipal relationship, the interviewer fails Tom by emasculating him and associating herself with hegemonic masculinity. Importantly though, she also treats Tom as unique and different enabling him to hold onto his place by asserting his difference from other men, by becoming a special case.

CONCLUSION

In the beginning of this chapter we discussed the possibility of 'binocular' accounts in research, which are both grounded in data and theoretically driven, accounts which are cognisant of systemic processes as well as individual perspectives. The above case study demonstrates both the rewards and challenges of such 'binocularity'. Applying psychoanalytic ideas to Tom's narrative 'thickens' the discursive reading by taking account of his life context and biography and exploring how his unique life trajectory 'hooks into' particular social discourses. Doing so points to the interweaving of the social and psychological in 'doing brother', conceptualising men as taking up socially available discourses in ways that resonate with the deeply personal. Taking account of biographical material moves the interpretive work forward by making sense, however tentatively, of the ambiguities and contradictions highlighted in the discursive reading. However, this piece of research is not analogous with 'psychoanalysing' Tom. Rather, it is the research relationship and the narrative produced within this research relationship that is under scrutiny. Therefore, throughout our analysis we attempt to anchor psychoanalytic ideas in the texture of the research relationship and a close reading of the text, processes that require commitment to reflexivity and systematic narrative analysis respectively.

There are limits to accessing relational dynamics and unconscious processes in a research context, however fine-grained the analysis. While the interview can elicit actual events in a participant's past, the research context does not afford the luxury of evoking their unconscious correlates over an extended period of time (as in therapeutic situations). Instead, we have to look for patterns in participants' linguistic repertoires and in their way of relating that resonate with our hypotheses. The use of field notes in analysing the above case study enabled 'countertransference' feelings to enrich the analytic interpretation by demanding coherence between the analytic account and the experience of the interview that produced the text. Particular aspects of the researcher's experience of the interview moved the analysis forward while others closed it down. Nevertheless, these field notes are prone to all the linguistic manoeuvres of a self-analysis, and thinking about ways in which this material could be more systematically recorded and sensitively utilised is an important task for psychoanalytic approaches to qualitative research.

A recent development in the use of reflexivity has been to move beyond the researcher's affective responses to the interview participant and interview material during and after the interview, to include documenting the relationship of the researcher to the text (the knowledge producing relationship) in order to ask what the analysis leads to and by what it is constrained. Incorporating this 'Lacanian' reflexive move acknowledges that 'we speak not from within a metalanguage but from a position … in relation to the text' (Parker, 2010, p. 166). It exposes the psychoanalytic reading offered here as prioritising an emotional reading that privileges the interviewer's perspective, limiting Tom to a particular relational pattern (Saville Young, 2014). Such a position is critical of attempts to *make sense* of participants and prefers to disrupt coherent readings holding onto an ethical imperative to allow the participant to remain opaque while generating multiple levels of interpretation, always aiming to account for the investments of the researcher in the knowledge making process (Frosh and Baraitser, 2008). This deconstructionist approach has its power in claiming to reflexively critique even its own interpretations, but what ground does this leave us on? Perhaps it allows us to say something about subjectivity and/or the process of conducting research; highlighting that the subjectivities, both of the researcher and the researched, arise in the moments *between* reading the data and interpreting the data, doing a discursive reading and doing a psychoanalytic reading, and never really last. However, it is productive in its ability to locate subjectivity in social, cultural and historical contexts allowing what is deeply personal to resonate in and through the social, so that Tom is conceptualised as multiply written by his intra-psychic, inter-psychic and sociohistorical contexts, the latter increasingly understood as having their own disavowals (Saville Young and Jearey-Graham, 2015).

In summary, using psychoanalysis in qualitative studies involves conceptualising individuals as embedded in social and cultural contexts with socially acceptable and powerful ways of being, but also as individually orientated to these contexts, uniquely invested in discourses in different ways influenced by conscious and unconscious wishes. Such an approach requires thinking about narratives as dynamic processes mediated by, but not reducible to, personal biographies, relational events, linguistic repertoires and subjective experiences, and always holding onto some opacity in its resistance to be known.

Note

1 Pseudonyms are used throughout to protect the anonymity of the participant.

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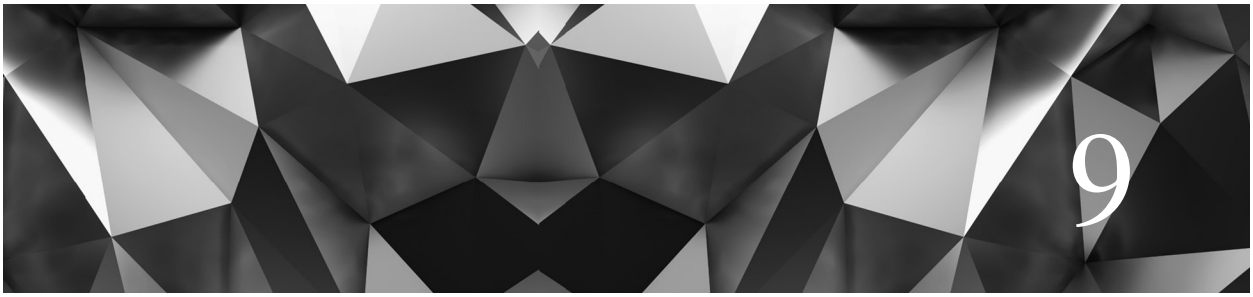

Memory Work

Niamh Stephenson and Susan Kippax

> Memory itself should be conceived of as contested; it contains hope and giving up; above all, memory is constantly written anew and always runs the risk of reflecting dominant perspectives. (Haug, 2008a: 538)
>
> We are not a 'thing' that moves through time, but rather an ongoing pattern or series of knots made of diverse materials that repeats and reiterates as our life unfolds. What we are is the endless activity of scaffolding, rather than some structure buried underneath. The challenge is to produce a psychology of memory that can engage with this proposition. (Brown and Reavey, 2015: 146)

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is about memory work, a research method that involves the collective analysis of experience. Firstly, we introduce the method by tracing its emergence as part of a distinct Marxist feminist political project, and we indicate the synergies between memory work and social psychological interest in the politics of memory. We distinguish between approaches which cast biography as linear and causal of present day experiences and subjectivities and the ways in which memory workers treat past experiences as contingent and malleable. Secondly, drawing on examples from previous research, we give an account of what the method might actually entail. This account is not intended to be prescriptive, but is offered as a point of departure for researchers who are considering undertaking collective analysis of experience. Thirdly, we consider some of the ways in which memory work has been put to use to address psychological questions. Here, we draw on research in the fields of sexuality and gender, and embodiment and subjectivity. In the fourth section of the chapter, we examine points of tension and connection between the approaches to experience entailed in memory work, narrative analysis and psychoanalysis. We then consider some of the distinct ethical challenges entailed in memory work. Finally, we situate memory work in relation to debates over the politics of researching experience – debates in psychology, the social sciences, cultural studies and the humanities. Memory work, we suggest, is of particular interest to psychologists because it offers a way to research experience without positing experience as foundational to subjectivity or identity. Moreover, this approach invites psychologists to step outside of the discipline's tendency towards 'methodolatry' (Chamberlain, 1999).

In opposition to notions of experience as fundamentally unique, individual and arising from people's individual interiority, memory workers understand experience as collectively produced (Haug, 1987). Working as a collective facilitates researching both the shared aspects of experience and the social processes through which experiences are produced. Memory work typically entails a group of people with a shared interest in interrogating a particular topic – such as female sexualization (Haug, 1987, 1992), the gendered construction of emotions (Crawford et al., 1992), or embodiment (Brown et al., 2011) – meeting regularly over a period of months or years. The group members take on the roles of both research participants and researchers: they put forward their own experiences as data (in the form of written memories) and they undertake a collective analysis of these experiences. They interrogate the social production of their experiences trying to identify points where experience is amenable to being reinterpreted, reworked and lived differently. In undertaking memory work, Haug and others found that what they had previously thought to be the natural sequences of their lives, started to appear as historically constituted avenues for interpreting and managing the material and social realities in which they were immersed. They began to see themselves as 'living historically', as women of their time and women able to act on and intervene in their time.

This emphasis on altering the present through the research process is an important feature of memory work. Psychologists commonly turn to qualitative methods in order to describe experience. Phenomenology, for instance, hinges on rich accounts of experience (e.g. Watson and Welch-Ross, 2000). But increasingly, this turn is politically inspired: the aim is to represent the experiences of people who have been neglected or misrepresented in psychological research (e.g. Lather and Smithies, 1997). Alternately (or additionally, these trajectories may not be distinct), researchers adopt qualitative methods to better understand the *processes* through which experience is produced (e.g. Harré and Secord, 1973).

This interest – not in experience itself but in its production – is illustrated by the turn to discourse on the part of psychologists such as Potter and Wetherell (1987) and Harré and Gillett (1994) and by the open project of critical psychology (Teo, 2015). Researchers also adopt qualitative methods as tools to facilitate intervening in the production of psychological phenomena as part of the research process (consider participatory action research, for example; e.g. Prilleltensky and Nelson, 2002). Memory work is among the qualitative methods specifically devised, not only to describe and explain, but to intervene in the social production of experience as it is being employed.

This transformative aspect of memory work is illustrated by Pease's (2000, 2012) formation of a men's memory-work group with the aim of exploring the practices and politics of the profeminist men's movement. Pease describes the collective analysis of the despair, violence and fear which emerged in men's memories of 'discontent with fathers'. It was possible to understand these memories as produced through a dominant men's movement narrative about the damage done to sons by fathers ('the father wound'), e.g. as explored by Biddulph (1994) and Bly (1990). Analysis of the memories revealed moments when men actively engaged with this hegemonic 'father wound' narrative. Importantly however, the analysis did not stop there, it opened up the possibility of intervening in the reproduction of patriarchal power relations through a beneficial *dis*-identification with fathers. That is, the group did not simply identify a dominant discourse at work in their experiences but, drawing on the memories, they went on to identify points of intervention in this questionable version of masculinity.

Before giving an account of what the method actually entails, we want to introduce the particular approach to experience which was developed by feminist researchers in their efforts to contribute to the development of German Kritische Psychologie.

LOCATING MEMORY WORK

Kritische Psychologie and Marxist Feminism

The German Marxist feminists who originally developed memory work – Andresen, Bünz-Elfferding, Haug, Hauser, Lang, Laudan, Lüdemann, Meir, Neur, Nemitz, Neihoff, Prinz, Räthzel, Scheu and Thomas – came together in the 1980s to research female sexualization (Haug, 1987). They were well versed in contemporary theories of sexualization. However, they were aware of the risk of using theory to explain experience: aspects of experience that do not fit with particular theories, as well as the complexity and contradictions within the experience, are easily overlooked. So they took experience itself as a point of departure: as with grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), they started to theorize from experience (as opposed to subjecting experience to theory). Moreover, they decided to conduct research by theorizing their *own* subjective

experience. Making themselves the objects of research – the known as well as the knowers – was seen as a good way to destabilize entrenched power relations between researchers and researched and to work with the productive tension which arises from being positioned as both subjects and objects of research (Willig, 2000). The particular approach to experience entailed in memory work developed out of Haug and others' experience of feminist-consciousness raising groups, and from their engagement with Kritische Psychologie (Holzkamp, 1992; Schraube and Osterkamp, 2013) – an approach to psychological questions which works with, critiques and extends Marxist thought (Tolman, 1994; Osterkamp, 1999; Costall and Dreier, 2006).

Although subjectivity and objectivity are commonly understood as polar opposites, this dualism is questionable (Deutscher, 1983; Tolman, 1994). From a Marxist perspective, subjective experience is always produced through the social conditions of existence and arises out of social relations. Objective social structures and relations do not transcend subjectivity but are reproduced and reworked *in* subjective existence. The relationship between objective social structures and subjective experience is not a simple deterministic one because the objective conditions of our existence are actively *appropriated* (Haug, 1987, 2008b; Crawford et al., 1992). That is, experience is produced 'not only within … the pre-given forms into which individuals work themselves, but also in the *process* whereby they perceive any given situation, approve or validate it, assess its goals as proper or worthy, repugnant or reprehensible' (Haug, 1987: 41). Appropriation occurs in 'a field of conflict between dominant cultural values and oppositional attempts to wrest cultural meaning and pleasure from life' (Haug, 1987: 41). For example, the experiences Pease discusses do not simply reproduce patriarchal gender relations: as the memory workers actively appropriate their experiences of 'discontent with fathers', they also challenge and refigure patriarchy by recognizing the importance of dis-identification.

Haug and others decided that they needed to devise a method which could allow them to both study and rework the mechanisms through which experience is appropriated. And they found their inspiration, not in debates about research methodology, but in feminist politics. Memory work is part of a much broader move to recognize the personal as political. The women involved in the original group had participated in the feminist consciousness-raising movement. They understood collectively sharing experience to be an effective means of gaining a better understanding of the oppressive social conditions which produce common experiences. Moreover, consciousness-raising is not simply an exercise in 'blaming the oppressors'. To the extent that it contributes to understanding women's complicity in appropriating and reproducing the mechanisms of patriarchal oppression, it can result in devising strategies to challenge the existing social order. Memory work builds on these aspects of consciousness-raising.

Because the method is inclusive of all those involved in the research, memory work is an apt tool for researchers interested in challenging the boundaries between people typically cast as sources of data and those officially in the business of knowledge production. Hence, it offers possibilities for forging productive research partnerships and for democratizing debates about the place of subjectivity in processes of socio-political change.

The Politics of Collective Memory

Clearly, memory work can be understood as one element of the rise of social and social constructionist approaches to memory in psychology (e.g. Edwards and Middleton, 1988) and these connections have been interrogated elsewhere (Kippax et al., 1988; Crawford et al., 1992). In this chapter, one of our concerns is to examine memory work's approach to *experience* and its relevance for contemporary debates about the politics of experience (Bradley, 2005; Middleton and Brown, 2005; Brown and Stenner, 2009; Brown et al., 2011; Brown and Reavey, 2015). We also wish to draw attention to signal the political importance of psychological work on collective remembering. Halbwachs (1925/1992, 1950/1980) argued that people need personal experiences and private recollections to be couched within a collective, public chronicle: collective memory is literally the source of individual memories. What is chronicled, or memorialized, shapes subjective experience. Drawing on Halbwachs, Apfelbaum (2000, 2001) explores how the collective memory of the Holocaust has shaped the (im)possibilities of communicating with others. Historical and other public accounts provide the legitimizing foundation for individuals to make sense of their personal experiences and therefore to construct their identities. If memories of events cannot be shared because they are meaningless to others (and to self) they risk being cast as hallucinations, or dismissed as irrelevant to the present socio-political context. However, to the extent that memory work insists on the possibility that 'meaningless' elements of experience play a role in producing socio-political change (or stasis), it can be a useful tool for contributing to efforts to intervene in the present.

Beyond Biography

As Haug and others began to work together, they realized that many of the everyday ideas and practices they used to make sense of experience were getting in the way of their collective analysis. Foremost amongst these is the idea that our lives are lived as linear biographies:

> To view childhood and adolescence simply as causal phases of today's person is to assume that actions follow one another logically, that adult human beings are more or less contained within children … Diversity is compressed and presented as unified evidence that we have 'always' been hindered in our development by this or that person, this or that circumstance. (Haug, 1987: 46–7)

The commonsense notion that events in a person's past *cause* her to be the person she is today was rejected by Haug and others. In particular they were aware of the risk of nailing people down to their current interpretations of past experience, fixing identities and the meaning of experience in the process. They wanted to leave space for re-membering and re-interpreting their experiences. When biographical and autobiographical accounts offer linear, causal explanations of individuals as products of our past experiences, they tend to shore up a notion of the subject as coherent and unitary (Phillips, 1999). Such accounts need to be treated with suspicion as their very coherence is afforded by the fact that they 'fit' with normative understandings of life and occlude the social production of experience. For Haug and others, this meant developing ways of theorizing experience which open possibilities for *rethinking* who we are now, for asking how people appropriate the social realm and what is excluded in the process, and for initiating change by devising different modes of appropriation. To this end, they developed a set of techniques which are described and illustrated in the following section.

ILLUSTRATING THE METHOD

Memory work was never intended to be a fixed unchanging set of practices. In their original exploration of female sexualization, Haug and others did more than write and analyse memories – for example, they undertook visual analyses of a range of images of women's bodies, and they rewrote mythical stories, translating them into the present as a means of foregrounding and questioning the social and historical constraints on women's lives. However, to give a sense of what might be involved in memory work, a base from which adaptations continue to develop, we will use a set of guidelines drawn up by Crawford and others (Crawford et al., 1992) in their development of memory work to research gender and emotion (see Box 9.1). Groups form out of a common interest in researching a topic, and meet regularly over a period of weeks, months or years, analysing a series of written memories.

Writing Memories

Before writing memories, groups pick a 'cue' for remembering (for example, Pease's 'discontent with fathers' discussed above). They then write about a specific event (not a general account), trying to avoid autobiographical explanations (see Box 9.1, section A). Choosing a specific cue allows the group to identify the particular ways in which appropriation works, the points at which alternate meanings and practices are generated or overlooked. It is important not to go for the jugular in picking cues, to try to avoid really obvious cues which will evoke stories that people are likely to have over-rehearsed (Haug, 1987) suggests that 'losing one's virginity' is an example of this) or already coded as somehow foundational to one's identity.

Writing in the third person is a curious technique. It is an invitation to co-researchers to observe aspects of themselves. It can release people from their tendencies towards self-justification performing coherent selves, facilitating the emergence of details which appear incoherent or meaningless from normative perspectives. So writing as 'she' or 'he' instead of 'I' enables co-researchers to entertain the possibility that their experiences could be understood and/or lived differently. This technique is of interest for researchers who, following structuralist and poststructuralist critiques of self-identity and foundationalist approaches to subjectivity, are interested in researching experience without assuming unitary coherence on the part of individuals (Althusser, 1971; Scott, 1993). By writing in the third person, memory workers occupy at least two distinct positions – the 'she' of the written memory and the 'I' which re-emerges in the group discussion (Stephenson et al., 1996; Koutroulis, 2001). This separation works to create a space to interrogate what otherwise might be treated as the sacred domain of the

Box 9.1 A point of departure: guidelines for groups considering memory

A. Writing Memories

1 Write a memory
2 of a particular episode, action or event
3 in the third person
4 in as much detail as is possible, including even 'inconsequential' or trivial detail (it may be helpful to think of a key image, sound, taste, smell, touch)
5 but without importing interpretation, explanation or biography.

B. Analysing Memories in Group Discussion

6 Each person expresses opinions and ideas about each memory in turn, and
7 looks for similarities and differences between the memories, and looks for links between the memories whose relation to each other is not immediately apparent. Each person should question particularly those aspects of the events which are not readily understandable, but she or he should (try) not to resort to autobiography or biography.
8 Each person identifies clichés, generalizations, contradictions, cultural imperatives, metaphors … and
9 dicusses theories, popular conceptions, sayings and images about the topic.
10 Finally, each person examines what is not written in the memories (but what might be expected to be), and
11 rewrites the memories.

C. Analysis of Memories and Transcripts of Group Discussion Together

12 The group identifies processes of subjectification (or social construction, or discursive production – depending on the theoretical approach being developed) in the accounts and group discussion and the mechanisms through which subjects actively appropriate these processes.
13 The group identifies points for intervening in their experiences of subjectification.

These guidelines have been adapted from Crawford et al. (1992). We would recommend consulting the work of the Haug collective (1987; Haug, 2008b) for a richer account of the work from which these guidelines were generated, particularly for those interested in experimenting with the plasticity of memory work. Many researchers have done this, but Gillies et al.'s (2005) research and that of Gannon, Walsh, Byers and Rajiva (2014) and Brown and Stenner (2009) offer provocative starting points. (Also, some of the techniques of memory work have been taken up and adapted in interesting ways with individuals rather than collectives; e.g. Thomson and Holland, 2005.)

unitary individual. The rationale for avoiding self-explanation and for concentrating on giving the fullest description possible, including apparently inconsequential details, is similar. The idea is to try to avoid producing a fully justified account which resists interpretation and reinterpretation, and to include as many details as possible so that the processes of appropriation are amenable to analysis. Typically, groups decide on a cue, then take time to think and write about them, returning with the written memories.

Following these guidelines, memory workers produce very rich data, quite different from the kinds of accounts people give in interviews or focus groups. This difference is illustrated by a study of the discursive construction of young adults' experiences of contraception, a study which employed both memory work and focus

groups methodologies (Harden and Willig, 1998). In the focus group discussions people drew on a discourse of health promotion, whereas the memory workers' written accounts were framed by discourses of sex and sexuality. Importantly, whilst analysis of the focus group discussions alone might suggest that notions of health promotion are very present in people's everyday ideas about sexuality, seen from the perspective of people's early concrete experiences of sex – the memory work data – the reach of this discourse is questionable. This divergence signals the importance for research of understanding potential gaps between normative meanings and lived experience. To give a sense of the kind of data which memory workers write, here we include two memories written in response to the cue 'happiness', as part of a feminist exploration of the social construction of emotion (Crawford et al., 1992).

'Happiness'

Julie

Julie was about seven. Her dad was a factory manager of a concrete block factory. They lived in a house on the premises. There were stacks of concrete blocks near the house. Julie climbed among them and, by moving some blocks (just possible), was able to fashion a rather grand fort. No one could see her if she so chose.

Liz

Liz looked forward to the evenings after dinner when she was allowed to stay up for a while. There were often visitors and there would be lots of talk and laughter in the living room in front of the big log fire. They used to play cards at night – usually rummy or five hundred. Liz's uncle used to gamble madly at five hundred and he was always 'going out backwards'. She loved these evenings when everyone was relaxed and happy.

Analysing Memories

The memories are presented in the group, and the discussion and analysis is recorded and transcribed to facilitate further analysis. Rather than treat the written memories as accurate descriptions of past events, they are cast as traces of the social processes entailed in the production of subjectivity. The accounts are treated as moments of experience which can be questioned (see Box 9.1, section B). Frequently, the group discussion proceeds through close textual analyses of individual memories, followed by comparative analyses considering similarities and differences between the accounts (Gillies et al., 2004). The discussion involves questioning what might be taken for granted about the accounts, and identifying and interrupting everyday tendencies to give individualistic psychological explanations which draw on an understanding (or assumption) about the actor's interior intentions, their personality characteristics or unconscious motives and desires. Instead, memory workers ask about the social relations and processes which might contribute to the particular experiences being discussed. Haug (2008a: 540) emphasizes that the aim of the analysis is not to reveal 'the truth' of past events but to try to better understand 'how and with what means and constructions of self and others is a certain meaning and sense of the world produced? What contradictions were taken along, what was ignored in silence, and what kind of ability to act was achieved? Which paths were not taken, and which ones would the author try out today?'.

Discussing personal experience in the group is a way of identifying and resisting the orthodoxies and self-censure in which co-researchers engage. But it is not always easy to do. Haug argues that memory-work groups need to avoid both moralizing reactions to the accounts offered in the group and empathizing with each other. Both responses inhibit the ability to *question* the experiences being analysed. In practice, group dynamics can cut across this interrogation of experience. Boucher (1997: 157) describes the strategies one memory-work group devised to 'keep itself honest', for example, consistently questioning whether the ebb and flow of the group discussion could be a way of avoiding difficult discussions. Yet hearing one's memory being discussed in the group can prompt authors to realize their 'communicative incompetences', i.e. the gaps and absences that lead to confusion and misreading, the turns of phrase that seem to invite particular evaluations. Focusing on the value-laden language, the details of and the gaps in the memories, facilitates analysis of the processes of appropriation.

Focusing on the details of the memories can be a way into engaging with the singularity of experience. By singularity, we do not mean individuality but irreducible differences that *emerge from* collectivity (Virno, 2004; Stephenson and Papadopoulos, 2006). Brown et al. (2011), suggest that there is a risk that, in seeking to understand the collective production of experience, memory workers can end up subsuming all the memories under some sort of general explanatory framework that ends up reproducing commonsense without really excavating the details of the memories, or – their particular interest – the embodied sensations being evoked. They argue that to counter such an

impulse it is vital to keep the analysis grounded in the details of the memories and, that before looking for points of connection or divergence between singular experiences, memory workers are well served in 'first describing the conditions of [the] actual, concrete experiences' (p. 510) being evoked in the written accounts.

The group discussion can lead co-researchers to rewrite the memories as a way of incorporating new insights and rewriting means that misreadings can be clarified. However, re-writing memories can present difficulties and many of the researchers discussed in this chapter struggle with it (e.g. Davies et al., 1997), experiment with it (e.g. Gannon et al., 2014) describe collectively re-enacting memories, or do not use it (Crawford et al., 1992). These difficulties do not stem from problems of remembering, but from the challenges of working as a collective (Stephenson, 2003). Some groups have found that working with the original accounts can be a way – not to affirm individuals' experience (see below) – but to try to keep differences in play as experiences are analysed. Others who have pursued rewriting, seeing it as part of their struggle to enact their desire to work collectively, suggest that rewriting can allow better identification of 'the central role of the subjective agent in negotiating and appropriating [social] structures … [that is] the very sort of empowerment Haug and her colleagues imagined and hoped for when they developed this method'. (Frost et al., 2012: 244).

The group analysis moves between the details of the written accounts and the interrogation of broader social norms, institutions, structures or discourses – depending on the theoretical frameworks being used and interrogated in the research – that may elucidate the memories, or may constrain understanding of them (see Box 9.1, sections B and C). For example, in the discussion of Julie and Liz's memories of happiness, the group discussed how in their play – in building a 'grand fort', for instance – the memory workers seek mastery over their environment, and their successes, recognized by parents and teachers, are marked by happiness. The group's analysis went on to identify an active struggle in the construction of happiness – a pleasant happy struggle rather than an unpleasant one. The analysis identified how happiness is constructed at the intersection of freedom and autonomy, on the one hand, and recognition, which is grounded in security and love, on the other.

Memory-work groups can differ significantly from that formed by Haug and others particularly if they are not initiated by a collective, but by researchers who recruit people to participate (as one might for focus groups), and who take the responsibility for writing up the research. Writing about qualitative research is not simply a process of 'writing up' but a means of developing the analysis (Richardson, 1994). This use of memory work is definitely stretching the method as those writing are more involved in the analysis. Haug and others anticipated that memory work would be adapted in response, not to the problem of pursuing collective analyses, but to different socio-political contexts and to different research questions (Johnston, 2001). The continuous adaptation and development of the method is evident when we consider the body of memory-work research which has emerged.

RESEARCH TRAJECTORIES

Memory work has been taken up and used to address a wide range of psychological questions. Here, we present some of the research undertaken on the psychology of gender and sexuality and on epistemological debates concerning embodiment, subjectivity and the subject of psychology, rather than attempting to provide a comprehensive account of memory-work research to date. This means that much is excluded, including a considerable body of work on learning and development (e.g. Widerberg, 1998; Schratz, 2000; Davies et al., 2001; Gannon, 2001; Purohit and Walsh, 2003; Connor et al., 2004; Gannon et al., 2014; Fraser and Michell, 2015). Our purpose here is to give readers a sense of how memory-work can reframe psychological questions about subjectivity and identity, so that (rather than being "bracketed off") socio-political contexts become central to the analysis of experience.

The Psychology of Sexuality and Gender

Since the publication of *Female Sexualization* (Haug, 1987), memory work has become an important tool for interrogating questions of gender and sexuality. Much of this work has concentrated on social relations as the site where gender inequalities are constructed and reworked. This research contributes to feminism by laying bare the concrete challenges of socio-political change. Patriarchy is not simply something which is imposed on people through external structures or institutions – it is a set of practices and meanings through which people are constructed even as they try to resist. This means that participating in

socio-political change creates tensions within the self (for men and women), tensions which are both troublesome and productive (e.g. Laitinen and Tiihonen, 1990; Crawford et al., 1992; Pease, 2000; Delgado-Infante and Ofreneo, 2014).

In Australia, memory work was taken up by a group of researchers who used it to explore the social construction of emotion (Crawford et al., 1992) – as illustrated with the happiness memories above. Their analyses identify how the construction of emotions shores up a notion of men as rational, autonomous beings, and women as simultaneously irrational, unpredictable and responsible for the care of others. For example, the analysis of memories of anger foregrounded how women's anger is frequently misrecognized. Anger was often a response to injustice. However, because it was manifest in tears of frustration or rage, others often responded with patronizing pity, avoiding the injustice. Crawford et al.'s research challenges any notion that women are passive victims of patriarchy, and examines how women's emotions are constructed in active struggles both to make sense of their experiences within the constraints of gender inequalities and to test those constraints.

Members of this same collective used memory work to explore women's lived experiences of heterosexuality in order to better understand possibilities for HIV/AIDS prevention (Kippax et al., 1990; Crawford et al., 1994). This work foregrounded the literal unintelligibility of women's efforts to negotiate sexual encounters framed by dominant discourses of heterosexuality (such as the male sexual drive discourse, Hollway, 1989) and femininity (Irigaray, 1985) and called for the elaboration of woman-centred discourses of sexuality. Similarly, the memories discussed in Harden and Willig's (1998) memory-work groups, which were meeting around the time the 'post-feminist' debates raged in the UK (McRobbie, 2004) evoked the passive positioning of women in sexual and sexualized encounters. Yet, they also discussed accounts of women's pleasure and active involvement in sexuality, identifying 'discursive spaces … that resist the positionings of the male sexual drive discourse' (Harden and Willig, 1998: 436). The fraught and contested dimensions of appropriation are also foregrounded in Koutroulis's (1996, 2001) research on menstruation. She used memory work to identify both the contradictory meanings of menstruation and the work women must do to navigate these contradictions and maintain any semblance of coherent selfhood.

Memory work has also been used to understand how women negotiate the constraints of their positioning in public life (e.g. Boucher, 1997; Livholts, 2001). For example, Boucher (1997) and others examined organizational leadership: analysing women's early experiences revealed the limited notions of female leadership afforded to young girls. Their analysis suggests that whilst women can and do practice different modes of leadership, 'it is much more difficult to come to some kind of internal reconciliation between what they are and what they are meant to be' (Boucher, 1997: 157). Participating in socio-political change is deeply challenging to notions of selfhood, as memory-work research on gender and sexuality illustrates. We would argue that memory work has the potential to do more than identify the tensions women experience: it fundamentally questions any idea that 'internal reconciliation' could or should ever be a useful marker of political efficacy. Following Améry (1980: 69) socio-political change can be understood as occurring, not 'in the process of internalisation … but on the contrary, [only] through actualisation, or, more strongly stated, by actively settling the unresolved conflict in the field of historical practice'.

The importance and difficulty of moving beyond attempts to ground socio-political change in identity is foregrounded in Hamerton's research (see Mulvey et al., 2000) on Päkehä women's experiences of privilege and oppression (Päkehä is an indigenous Maori word for New Zealanders of European descent). After several productive meetings where they analysed the construction of femininities, the group's discussions ground to a halt on the question of whiteness. They had grown up in an era when cultural difference was relatively silenced, and Päkehä culture was not seen as an identifiable culture. Hamerton understood her failure to engage the other memory workers in interrogating the meaning of whiteness as an outcome of the irresolvable tension between her commitment to honour the experiences of others (including those in the memory-work group) and to conduct research by continuously questioning experience (below we offer a different reading of this tension). Memory work has continued to be used for explorations of migrant subjectivities (Wright et al., 2011).

Embodiment and Subjectivity

Memory work has been put to innovative use by those who set out to research questions of embodiment and subjectivity, as well as those who – through analysis of their accounts – are faced with the necessity of theorizing these questions. For example, Kaufman, Ewing, Hyle, Montgomery and Self (2001) found that their written memories of their relationships to the natural world evoked a

sense of connectedness with nature. These accounts countered the hegemonic notion of nature as something separate from individuals, something to be dominated and controlled. They argued that – by using memory work – they were able to approach *pre*reflective modes of embodiment (or Merleau Ponty's 'immersion-in-the-world') and, in so doing, their work challenged dominant discourses of embodiment. In our own use of memory work to explore people's experiences of HIV, we have found that analysis of the data challenges the primacy of reflexivity in accounts of social and subjective change (Stephenson and Kippax, 2006). Self-reflexivity, a turn to interiority, is often valued as a means to engage in change by harnessing agency. In contrast, we analysed accounts that suggested that change can involve moving *beyond* oneself and transforming relations with *others* and with the world. From this perspective, starting with a commitment to 'honouring' the integrity of experience (as discussed by Hamerton above) can act to *block* transformation.

The question of embodiment has been the explicit focus of Gillies et al. (2004). They considered how the meanings given to bodily experiences draw on and reproduce a Cartesian mind–body split. In analysing their memories of sweating and pain, they identified the particular constraints women encountered as they actively participated in the control and objectification of their bodies; for example, as manifest in the expectation that pain *should* be controllable. But they went beyond simply using experience as evidence of the problematic aspects of Cartesianism. Their analysis revealed both its presence and its inner workings. Cartesianism worked in diverse ways. Notably, at times the mind–body split was valued as highly functional, for example it enabled people to: stand outside of their bodies so as to observe and enjoy the physicality of experiences; control pain; or absolve themselves of responsibility for the lack of control over their own bodies. That is, Cartesianism was appropriated in contradictory ways, and sometimes these contradictions pervaded singular instances of pain or sweating.

Memory workers whose focus has been on theorizing questions of embodiment (e.g. Gillies et al., 2004, 2005; Brown et al., 2011) have made important contributions to an ongoing debate about how psychologists might best work with experience. Many who take discourse to be a linguistic phenomenon are faced with the problem of how 'discourse' and 'materiality' intersect (e.g. Yardley, 1996). Notably, Gillies and others draw on a Foucauldian notion of discourse which refuses any separation of discourse and materiality. Following Csordas (1999), they argue that the task of elucidating embodiment demands new methodological approaches and techniques. The memories they wrote were replete with details of sensations and physicality (as Kaufman et al. (2001) found). Yet they also started to question their reliance on language in using memory work. Whilst they realized that, ultimately, language is the necessary medium of disseminating research, they began to explore alternative means for working with experience: through collective analysis of their visual representations of ageing (Gillies et al., 2005). Notably, they found that painting could provide both the means to circumvent hegemonic discourses and act as site for the reproduction of familiar, and constraining, ideas about ageing. This step into visual analysis is of interest for an additional reason: memory work assumes a degree of literacy that may exclude people who can otherwise contribute valuable insights. Working with images may be one means of forging more avenues for people's participation in the processes of research (see also Chapter 21 in this Volume).

Many of the researchers who are using memory work are interested in understanding how power relations function to constrain experience. Notably, memory workers understand this process as something that occurs in everyday social relations and interactions, sometimes unknowingly or unintentionally. Recent research on subjectivity and embodiment represents an important attempt to develop the conceptual tools necessary for intervening in preconscious, habitual modes of appropriating power relations.

SITUATING MEMORY WORK

Memory work is by no means the only method available for researchers interested in examining the social or discursive construction of experience. Here, we discuss points of overlap and difference between memory work and two broad approaches commonly adopted in psychological research – narrative analysis and psychodynamic approaches.

Narrative Analysis

Not surprisingly, memory work is typically compared to narrative analyses of experience (e.g. Kaufman et al., 2001), but in this chapter we want to emphasize the differences, highlighting the particular ways in which memory workers are invited

to refuse and rework familiar psychological concepts. Narrative analysis has, in part, developed out of earlier work on life history (e.g. Denzin, 1970), research which played an important role in reworking the notion that research participants are passive objects of research (Liamputtong, 2012). Although there are many different forms of narrative analysis (e.g. Gee, 1986; Gergen and Gergen, 1988; Frank, 1995; De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2015) they largely share a common analytic focus on the stories through which people make meaning of their lives (Riessman, 1993). As with memory work, the objective is to elucidate the social production of the meanings which emerge in people's stories – meanings which reveal the moral and normative construction of experience (e.g. Bruner, 1990). Informed by a hermeneutic epistemology (e.g. Ricoeur, 1996), narrative analysis disputes any notion of a truth of the subject. Rather, the meanings which people give to their experience are assumed to arise in processes of interpretation and reinterpretation.

We want to suggest that memory work is not only interested in the production of meaning in processes of interpretation, but in aspects of experience which elude articulation or may even appear meaningless. Narrative analysis can certainly be a useful tool for identifying the normative meanings in the stories people tell about themselves. But, memory workers are specifically asked to try to go *beyond* identification of the constraints on their lives, to imagine other ways of being, and to start to participate in their production. This aim is reflected in the methodological techniques used by memory workers: for example, identifying the gaps and silences in the memories sparks discussion about, not only self-censure, but the possibility of other ways of being; writing as 'he' or 'she' facilitates questioning and critique of the stories; or avoiding linear biography and writing about singular moments in all their incoherence opens trajectories other than those followed to date. Of course, not all memory-work research harnesses the full possibilities of the method. However, many of the analyses we have discussed in this chapter elucidate the active struggles entailed in constructing narratives as well as aspects of experience which are excluded in the process. Because narrative methodologies commonly explicitly engage interviewees in telling stories about their lives, interviewees are more likely to focus on aspects of experience which are readily narrativized – i.e. those which 'fit' with normative modes of life. The risk of narrative analysis is that researchers fall into the trap of reproducing a convenient fiction: the idea that experience is predominantly lived as a narrative, or that elements of experience that are represented in people's narratives are necessarily the most important ones for researchers to understand. In contrast, memory workers are faced with questions, not only about the difficulties of representing experience, but about whether it can always be represented (Gillies et al., 2004; Stephenson and Papadopoulos, 2006; Brown et al., 2011; Brown and Reavey, 2015).

Psychodynamic Approaches

Contemporary psychological research is marked by a debate between the relative merits of psychoanalytic accounts of experience on the one hand, and discursive or narrative accounts on the other (e.g. Henriques et al., 1998). But seen historically, the opposition between these two camps starts to dissolve. Freud was deeply interested in the role interpretation plays in the construction of experience. Any genealogy of qualitative research methods, which either interrogate or interpret experience, would have to include the historical moment in which psychoanalysis emerged (Steele, 1985). Moreover – although Freud did not do this – it is possible to consider the mechanisms of repression as socially and historically constituted, and constantly shifting (Billig, 1997, 1999, 2005). Billig demystifies repression by rereading it as a dialogic, discursive process and opening new possibilities for interrogating its form and function.

From this perspective, memory work can be understood as a means of interrogating the socially constituted pathways of remembering, forgetting and repression. It affords a space to examine the gaps in language and discourse which constrain people's efforts to make sense of and reinterpret experience. Addressing these gaps and enabling new interpretations plays an important role in opening up new possibilities for action. It also points towards the common ground between memory work and psychodynamic approaches to data analysis. According to Freud (1915/1964a, 1915/1964b) suppression and repression are particular forms of forgetting in which painful or threatening material, although 'forgotten', remain either in the preconscious or the unconscious. Retrieving such painful memories is difficult and psychoanalysis offers a powerful set of tools for 'looking awry' at experience (Frosh, 1997). If repression occurs in discourse, it is possible to see memory work as offering its own tools for questioning how clichéd articulations of experience can serve to exclude alternate interpretations.

In their discussion of remembering and forgetting, Crawford et al. (1992) concluded that some forms of forgetting, akin to suppression or repression, occur because there is no meaning available to make sense of the event at the time; there is no discourse,

no language to articulate what had occurred or to enable the 'filing away' of the experience in memory. Hence, as with memory (as discussed above), repression can be understood as a collective process.

BEFORE EMBARKING ON MEMORY WORK

Memory work entails distinct ethical challenges for researchers and research groups. Firstly, the requirement to write accounts of the past can serve to exclude potential participants. The prospect of writing can be daunting for people who lack confidence in their literacy skills. A group may decide to use other means to spark discussion of their experience, such as artwork (as mentioned above; Gillies et al., 2005) or by speaking about specific experiences as opposed to writing them down.

Secondly, working as a group can pose real difficulties for memory workers. Theorizing and planning to undertake a collective analysis and actually practising it may be two very different things (Frost et al., 2012), and, arguably, neither the theoretical nor practical challenges of working with group dynamics have been adequately explored by memory workers to date (Stephenson, 2003). It is worth repeating that memory workers do not understand 'collective' to mean homogeneous, and difference within the group is valued as fuelling the collective analysis. However, as long as the importance of 'collectivity' is understood as a means of countering the individualistic tendencies of much psychological explanation, incommensurable differences that emerge in the group always risk being cast as evidence of individualism (i.e. a political and theoretical problem for memory workers) or worse, individual inadequacies. We argue that memory workers have much to benefit from engaging with attempts to rethink the social–individual binary which pervades psychological thinking (e.g. Henriques et al., 1998; Stephenson, in press). Rather than value collectivity for its role in enabling unity of action and response, we suggest that the potency of collectivity stems from its role in the production of *singularity*. Undertaking collective analysis, then, involves working with irreducible differences which 'can be extended close to another, so as to obtain a connection' (Deleuze, 1991: 94). Here, collectivity is an occasion in which individuation occurs and the play of singularity gives rise to new *modes* of being (Virno, 2004).

A third, and related, challenge involved in memory work stems from the tensions arising from working with experience whilst being continually invited to break with a familiar and commonsense way of discussing, exchanging and responding to others' experiences. In everyday life we often use subjective experience as a means of *representing* selves. Yet, memory workers are enjoined in the effort to work with experience as *nonpersonal* traces of social or discursive processes of subjectification. Now, familiar modes of relating, like empathizing, can re-introduce questions about the interiority which is being represented, blocking attempts to move beyond the self. The theoretical rationale for this continuous attempt to move beyond selves rests on the importance of straining and disrupting the empty 'tyranny of the subjective' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988) in order to open possibilities for developing new modes of being. In practice, this is not a move which everyone wants or needs to take at all times. This point is starkly evident if we consider the concerns of a group of HIV-positive men who started doing memory work soon after the introduction of antiretroviral therapy in 1996. At this time, many of these memory workers were subjected, not only to severe personal difficulties stemming from managing treatment regimens, but also to a marked shift in public discourses pertaining to living with HIV: suddenly HIV was being discussed as chronic illness and HIV-positive individuals were being positioned as 'lucky'. But this discourse did not fit with their experiences. Moreover, many felt that HIV-positive people were being newly excluded from public discussion. In response, their political concern was to reinsert their experiences into public consciousness by representing themselves.

Clearly, self-or group-representation can be an effective strategy for intervention in many situations (Stephenson and Papadopoulos, 2006). And, although memory work has been developed as a tool for a different mode of intervention (i.e. through transformation as opposed to representation) we would argue that memory-work groups are likely to continually encounter moments where individuals (or the entire group) are personally or politically invested in representing themselves. At a practical level, we suggest that memory workers allow this tension between representation and transformation to play out in the group discussions. For instance, whilst some groups try to avoid lapsing into representation by writing *and* speaking about themselves as 'he' or 'she', in the research we have done memory workers embody both strategies as they shift between the 'he' or 'she' subject positions in the written accounts and the 'I' of the group discussion (Stephenson et al., 1996). Keeping both strategies in play enables memory workers, based on their situated understanding of the personal or political relevance of representation as and when it arises, to decide whether the

analysis can or should move beyond it. Clearly, we have no easy recipe for working with this tension. However, we would suggest that prior to embarking on any collective analysis, memory workers need to understand the method's particular emphasis on intervention through transformation, and to discuss the potential value of this approach in the context of their own field of inquiry. Such discussions can be informed by situating this tension between representation and transformation in long-standing debates over the role of experience in socio-political change – debates to which we now turn.

CONCLUSIONS

Memory work is a method for interrogating experience. But there is much debate over what experience is and how it can best be used in research on subjectivity. There has been a broad turn to experience on the part of social and cultural researchers over the past half-century. Recognition of the importance of experience can be traced to early cultural studies work (e.g. Hoggart's (1957) *The Uses of Literacy*). The political project of cultural studies involved contesting cultural elitism by working on social histories of the lived experience of ordinary people. Culturalists argued that experience can only be researched as it is lived in the everyday (that is, it cannot be approached from a transcendent or outside perspective). Importantly, experience was understood as more than a product of modes of domination, it also contained the seeds of resistance (e.g. Williams, 1980). Clearly, memory work draws on this tradition: the Haug collective (1987: 42) were interested in 'experience as [the] lived practice … of a self constructed identity … [as something] structured by expectations, norms and values … [which] still contains an element of resistance, a germ of oppositional cultural activity'. But, they devised a method which is open to being adapted and used by researchers who follow the critique of culturalism.

Structuralists and poststructuralists critiqued culturalism on several counts. Most importantly, they rejected its foundational approach to experience; that is, they disputed the idea that knowledge grounded in lived experience somehow offers a more authentic way of knowing the world. For example, Althusser (1971) argued that the real conditions of our lives are not necessarily represented in the conscious meanings we ascribe to experience; hence any attempt to represent experience is bound to overlook important elements of socio-political change. Scott (1993) has contended that approaching experience as inherently meaningful inevitably forecloses attempts to understand difference as socially and historically produced. This critique poses a serious challenge to researchers who are interested in elucidating the processes through which subjectivity is constructed: experience may not be the best point of departure at all (e.g. Rose, 1996).

Despite their insights, because they overlook the importance of experience in people's struggles to engage in political action, structuralist and poststructuralist accounts offer a limited view of how socio-political change actually occurs (Hall, 1981). Instead of grappling with the contradictory and complex role of experience in socio-political change, experience is often jettisoned altogether. This unresolved tension over the meaning and relevance of experience continues to be a highly productive force in the field of cultural studies (e.g. Clifford, 2000; Sandywell, 2004; Seigworth and Gardiner, 2004). This is an important debate to which psychologists can contribute and are contributing (e.g. Brown and Reavey, 2015), and secondly that memory work could provide a way of doing this.

The account we have given of memory work suggests that Haug and others did not ignore the tension between culturalists and structuralist/poststructuralist approaches to experience, between representing and transforming experience. In contrast to the broader, humanist turn evident in much qualitative psychological research, they did not take the foundationalist approach to experience, i.e. the approach to which Hamerton (see Mulvey et al., 2000) alludes as she tackles the problem of 'honouring' each group member's experience. As discussed above, in memory-work, experience is not put forward to be affirmed. Haug (1992) argued that empathy gets in the way of understanding. Whilst this may seem cold-hearted, the risk of empathy is that it frequently produces sentimentality in place of the effort to explore experiences which *challenge* the world as we know it (Bennett, 2003). Contrary to structuralist/poststructuralist repudiations of experience, memory workers take experience as a point of departure, but in so doing they also counter culturalist approaches to experience. Experience is not a foundation (for example, of identity or subjectivity) but the problem to be explained, the matter to be questioned (Scott, 1993). Importantly, the answers to this problem do not lie in the experience itself, nor in the accounts memory workers write about their experiences. This is why memory work does not promise that the application of the right analytical techniques will deliver good analyses of the memories. Crucially, memory-work analysis hinges on

what the collective can *bring* to the accounts: their readings of experience, their engagement with relevant theories and bodies of research, their ideas about political strategies and tactics, their capacity to imagine other ways of being, and their commitment to try to communicate and work on the production of new modes of appropriation. That is, instead of pursuing purity of method, the analytic work involves developing a set of tools with which people can *intervene* in the socio-political problems on which they are working (Smith, 1987). Hence, the process of analysis is open and always in need of further developments.

In this chapter we have located the kind of collective analysis entailed in doing memory work in relation to social psychological approaches to memory and to researching experience. We have been particularly concerned to emphasize the political rationale for the Haug collective's (1987) original development of this method. Together, our description of the method and examination of the ways in which it has been taken up and used to address a wide array of psychological questions, reveal memory work's ongoing potency as a means of interrogating and intervening in the inner workings of power relations. Memory work is one of many methods available to psychologists interested in exploring experience, and – with its emphasis on written language, on working as a collective and on moving beyond representing experience – it entails distinct ethical challenges. These challenges are worth exploring, we argue, for researchers who are interested in engaging in broader debates in the humanities and social sciences over the problem of researching experience with the aim of developing new tactics for political intervention by refusing and transforming existing subject positions or modes of being.

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10

Narrative Inquiry

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INTRODUCTION

In the previous edition of this handbook (Hiles and Čermák, 2008) we characterized narrative psychology as the '*new kid on the block*', and for the present chapter we will portray it as a maturing (possibly post-adolescent) approach to inquiry that can provide the foundations for an emerging psycho-narratology. Moreover, we propose that *story* has the potential of being the great discovery for psychology.

Stories are ubiquitous, fundamental to the social and cultural processes that organize and structure human behaviour and experience. Narrative is a primary mode of human knowing, offering a seemingly effortless way for the mind to intrinsically code human actions, concerns, and values. Narrative inquiry needs to be regarded as the 'portal' to human thinking and experience, implicated in practically every aspect of human communication, social interaction and cultural practice.

The focus of the current chapter is to briefly outline how the field of narrative psychology has been developing over these past ten years or so, before turning the focus upon a qualitative methodology that we call Narrative Oriented Inquiry (NOI), which has been developed as a dynamic framework for good practice (Hiles et al., 2009). We trace the influences underpinning the emergence of this psychological approach to narrative inquiry. We then set out a model of NOI within an expanded view of different approaches to narrative data analysis and demonstrate NOI in action by working through an example. We conclude by considering some of the challenging issues that NOI poses in moving towards a mature qualitative methodology, which has the potential to extend the boundaries of our discipline by offering a radical human science perspective to psychology.

ESTABLISHING A NARRATIVE PSYCHOLOGY

> [E]xperience is meaningful and human behaviour is generated from and informed by this meaningfulness … the study of human behaviour needs to include an exploration of the meaning systems that form human experience … Narrative is the primary form by which human experience is made meaningful. Narrative meaning is a cognitive process that organizes human experiences into temporally meaningful episodes. (Polkinghorne, 1988: 1)

Polkinghorne is stressing how narrative effortlessly offers ways for the mind to intrinsically 'code' human actions, human values and human concerns. In this sense, narrative is a primary source of meaning-making, and narrative inquiry offers a methodology for the study of human experience. Frank (2010) suggests: '*the capacity of stories is to allow us humans to be'*. People use stories to explain their own and others past actions, to provide a commentary on current activities, to anticipate the possibilities of future events. Stories are imaginative and world-making, bringing order and meaning to everyday experience, as well as sometimes unsettling and disrupting. Stories need to be told. People tell their stories to reveal their feelings, to make a point, to entertain, to fulfil social demands, to fit in with what is expected, to challenge the status quo. Crucially, people become engaged in creating a sense of identity both in the stories that they choose to tell, and especially in the way they tell their stories.

An interest in narrative has a relatively long history within psychology, but the emergence of the field of narrative psychology has been more recent. This was pioneered by Sarbin (1986), Bruner (1986, 1990), and Polkinghorne (1988), heralding what has been called a *narrative turn* for psychology, leading to important contributions in such fields as personality, social positioning, human cognition, autobiographic memory, health psychology, organizational psychology, illness narratives in medical psychology, and counselling and psychotherapy (see Hiles and Čermák, 2008). Recently there has been a growing focus upon clinical narrative life trajectory (O'Connor et al., 2015) which is evidence of more systematic narrative thinking in clinical research. Another visible and striking development has been in the emergence of the field of narrative gerontology (see Phoenix et al., 2010; Kenyon et al., 2011; Randall, 2013; De Medeiros, 2013; Randall et al., 2015; Synnes, 2015).

However, three major areas of recent narrative research particularly stand out. The first of these is the cognitive/literary, 'science of mind' work of David Herman (2003, 2007, 2010, 2013). Another area is reflected in the work of Catherine Riessman (2008) who has stressed the importance of examining the detail of a narrator's expression within its complex dialogical environment. This is reinforced in the work of Arthur Frank (2010, 2012) who has developed a socio-narratological approach to the analysis of narrative. He regards narrative analysis as by necessity dialogical, stressing how in the interpretation of stories there is a need to respect the underlying layers of imagination and realism that are reflected in the storyteller's struggle in the search for meaning. Lastly, the work of Michael Bamberg (2007, 2008, 2012a, 2012b) has pioneered the study of narrative in its relation to human identity formation. He also has drawn attention to the differences between big stories and small stories, where the small story approach emphasizes stories that occur in ordinary everyday situations.

In the search to establish a methodology, it needs to be noted that the study of narrative is a broad multidisciplinary field, ranging across philosophy, literary theory, poetics, cinema, cognitive narratology, anthropology, sociology, organizational studies, education, and medicine, as well as psychology. Across these fields, narrative inquiry has inevitably adopted a wide range of study methods. Recent texts in narrative methodology include: Clandinin (2007); Riessman, (2008); Bold (2011); Holstein and Gubrium (2012); Kim (2016). One innovative text (Wertz et al., 2011) compares narrative analysis with four other qualitative approaches to data analysis, all analysing the same interview data. The present chapter limits its focus to narrative research that is psychologically focussed, and will be concerned largely with the collection and analysis of personal narratives that offer opportunities to reflect on the subtle workings of the human mind.

TOWARDS A PSYCHO-NARRATOLOGY

Arthur Frank introduces his ground-breaking text with this idea:

> Stories animate life; that is their work. Stories work with people, for people, and always stories work on people, affecting what people are able to see as real, as possible, and as worth doing or best avoided. (*Letting Stories Breathe*, 2010: 3)

However, one thing missing from Frank's quote is that stories are made not only *for* people, but are *made by people*. But Frank is a sociologist and his explicit focus is on developing a socio-narratology. By way of contrast, our interest has been focused upon developing a *psycho-narratology* which parallels Frank's approach. The possible implication of this is that exploring the notion of a human narrative mind is implicitly calling for a re-invention of psychology. Indeed, this narrative project might offer the possibility of embracing behavioural, psychodynamic/phenomenologic, humanistic/existential, transpersonal approaches within a truly unified discipline. This proposal fits well with Harré and Moghaddam's (2012) notion of a

'psychology for a third millennium' – a psychology that has a place for both *event-causality* (i.e. stimulus-driven) and *agent-causality* (i.e. mind-driven). Psychology needs to expand beyond the previous century's focus on explaining human action and experience by the prevailing stimulus conditions, and must include a consideration of what humans bring to any situation. We see qualitative methodology as the major contributor in exploring this, and narrative inquiry as at the leading edge of this vision.

A striking feature of personal narratives is the *identity positioning* that takes place in any particular re-telling of a story (Hiles, 2007; Hiles et al., 2010). Using a slightly different terminology, Bamberg (2011) has discussed the issues this raises at some length. The idea here is that the narrators of a story, depending upon their motivation and the prevailing discursive context, can actively construct how they experience their personal sense of self, by telling their story in a particular way. These identity positions are the narrative realizations of a person's active engagement with their personal meaning-making. In this sense, our position overlaps with approaches outlined by Bamberg, as well as by Stephens and Breheny (2013), although we are taking this to a completely new level of analysis.

This notion of identity positioning overlaps with Harré and van Langenhove's (1999) discussion of positioning theory (see Chapter 6 this Volume), but extends it in one important respect. Positioning theory, which has been developed largely around conversational situations, is concerned with how a person is not only constrained by their social role but also by the subject-positioning imposed by the immediate surrounding discursive context. In response, a person might adopt a 'self-positioning' with respect to how they place themselves in a particular social/discursive context. However, we propose that in the analysis of narrative discourse, *identity positioning,* which is concerned primarily with how the person is perceiving, relating to, and revealing their experience of self, needs to complement positioning theory. This sense of self is internally driven, dynamic, complex, and fluctuating within certain boundaries, reflecting a remarkable narrative competence. This has become a major focus for our development of a psycho-narratology, which is also reflected in the work of Michael Bamberg (Bamberg, 2007; 2012a, 2012b, 2012c; Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008).

Another crucial feature of the human narrative mind is in its extensive use of *abductive thinking*, a relatively quick and intuitive form of reasoning that can help in making sense of contingent events (Oatley, 1996; Bartel and Garud, 2003; Hiles, 2005, 2010). Abduction is a term which was first introduced by the American pragmatist and philosopher Charles Peirce (1903), more recently characterized as '*inference to the best explanation*' (Harman, 1965; Lipton, 1991). While the distinction between deductive and inductive reasoning is universally accepted, what is given much less attention is abductive reasoning. For example, Hiles (2010) has shown that a key feature of narrative thinking is the ease with which people use circumspection to search for ways to make sense of their everyday experience. People draw upon their tacit knowing (Polanyi, 1966) to construct narratives to explain their experience. This tacit knowledge is available quickly without conscious effort, easily adapting to new contexts, and particularly good at handling the unexpected. While there is a widely held belief that tacit knowledge is difficult to capture and make explicit in a formal sense, it seems that background abductive inferences are easy to share when expressed as a story.

One important illustration of abductive thinking is that, when re-telling a story, there is a continuing opportunity for reframing – i.e. telling the same story but in a different way. Each re-telling can be regarded as an opportunity to incorporate further authentic threads into that story, to alter emphasis, to meet the particular demands of the discursive constraints in operation, to explore new opportunities for interpretation and making sense of the events being related. This point is especially well explained by Polkinghorne (1988: 181):

> Facts only partly determine the particular scheme to be used in their organization, and more than one scheme can fit the same facts: several narratives can organize the same facts into stories and thereby give the facts different significance and meaning.

As explored in the worked example below, narrative reframing is invariably the result of subtle, and sometimes major, shifts in identity positioning, i.e. in the re-telling the teller (re)negotiates their sense of self. Indeed, it has been found that in personal narratives this sense of self is continuously fluctuating and shifting (Hiles et al., 2010). This idea of reframing offers the possibility for a psychology of empowerment – with wide implications for counselling psychology and psychotherapy practice, for conflict negotiation, as well as for psychological science in general.

Our position is that identity positioning, abductive thinking, and narrative reframing all point towards the need to develop a psycho-narratology with a focus upon understanding the fundamental competence that lies at the heart of the human narrative mind. This competence, which lies at

the core of human everyday making-sense-of-things, we characterize as a *narrative intelligence* (Hiles et al., 2010). The French philosopher, Paul Ricoeur, a major theorist of the temporal structure of narrative, was one of the first to recognize the importance of a narrative intelligence, or 'phronetic' (practical) intelligence, at play in the construction of our life stories and identity (Ricoeur, 1987/1991). Randall (1999) expresses a similar position when he argues that without narrative intelligence human existence would be impossible, even inconceivable. As psychologists, we find this idea of narrative intelligence crucial, but we argue that this needs to be taken to another level by trying to understand precisely how a person is able to harness this intelligence in telling their stories. Also, our position is that narrative intelligence needs to be seen as somewhat different from the psychometric and more traditional notions of human intelligence. Indeed, we have no interest whatsoever in the idea of 'measuring' narrative intelligence.

The basic approach involves exploring and understanding the full scope of narrative intelligence from an empirical standpoint. We see this as covering both the production of narratives (e.g. personal narratives) as well as the reception of narratives (e.g. listening to everyday stories, reading a novel, watching a film, etc.). From our research, and following intensive discussions attempting to define the scope of a human narrative intelligence, what slowly emerged was an integral vision for a constitutive narrative intelligence, which we called the *DreamCatcher* (Hiles et al., 2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2012b). The model is visualized in Figure 10.1.

The DreamCatcher model is our provisional attempt to realize that a key cognitive feature of narrative intelligence is the need to focus, less on the information input, and more on human meaning-making process. What emerges is the idea of a distributed narrative cognition that stretches beyond the traditional processing models, to include cultural, social, linguistic, discursive,

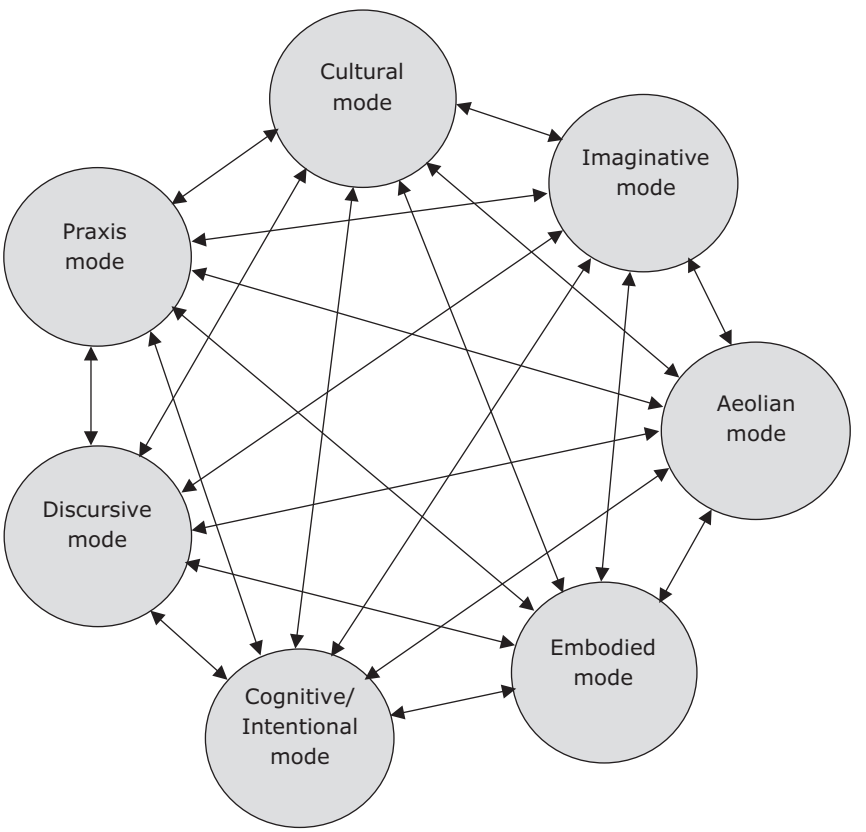

Figure 10.1 The 'DreamCatcher' model

Source: Adapted from Hiles et al., 2011a, 2011b, 2012b

imaginative and visionary aspects of human cognition, all implicated in human narrative thinking. We have simplified this to seven active *modes* of a distributed cognition. In the model, each mode is connected to every other mode. This is not a linear information-processing model, it is dynamic and chaotic. Narrative deals effectively with the inherent unpredictability of our human world (i.e. a primary human ability to construct order out of chaos), and we take the view that narrative intelligence is fundamentally non-linear. We have argued that such a model might be productive for a human science approach to psychology in general (Hiles et al., 2011a, 2011b), and that such a dynamic, non-linear perspective can be seen as a critical challenge for psychological science in general. However, the importance of the DreamCatcher is not simply as a model of narrative intelligence, but also makes a key contribution to narrative data coding in NOI.

The central issue that is raised by the DreamCatcher model is that most recent narrative inquiry with a psychological/sociological/literary focus draws mostly upon just three of these modes: Cognitive, Discursive and Praxis. With the exception of Jerome Bruner's work, the Cultural mode has hardly been developed, and the Imaginative is invariably sidelined, the Aeolian is too obscure, and the Embodied is simply ignored. To this end, it is worth spelling out the rationale for these seven modes for a cutting-edge cognition. We could start anywhere, taking each mode in any order we choose, but it is easiest to start with the Embodied mode, proceeding clockwise.

Embodied: The spoken/written/performed text is the embodied narrative. Stories are told, given existence in the practices of telling, whether spoken, written, mime, photographic, etc.

Cognitive/Intentional: Stories are *about* something. Story-telling is a complex cognitive performance, involving memory, language, perspective, abductive inference, etc.

Discursive: Story-telling takes notice of the social context, subject positioning and discursive factors at play in the particular opportunity to tell a story (the work of Harré and van Langenhove, 1999; Gergen, 2009; Bamberg, 2012a; and Herman, 2013; are all specifically relevant here).

Praxis: Story arises out of a range of narrative practices that are continually being drawn upon, adapted, played with, and extended.

Cultural: Human culture works as a distributed cognition steeped in story forms, picked over and borrowed, forever being cross-referenced, re-told, and reused again and again (the work of Bruner, 1986, 1990 is especially relevant here).

Imaginative: Stories activate and capture human imagination. Frank (2010) stresses how stories can arouse people to imagine how their lives might have been different, as well as imagining possibilities still open to them.

Aeolian: Stories inspire, promote realization, foster profound insight (we have taken the term 'Aeolian mode' from the work of the forensic psychotherapist Murray Cox). The distinction between *Imaginative* and *Aeolian* is important because it stresses the difference between the personal psychological and the visionary. Cox describes the Aeolian mode as involving the process of 'poiesis' in which '*something is called into existence which was not there before*' (cf. Cox and Theilgaard, 1987). In this sense, story is everyday poeisis.

There is one remaining strand to this vision of a psycho-narratology. At the heart of the approach outlined here is the need to develop a methodology that is both broad and eclectic. To this end we developed the approach we call Narrative Oriented Inquiry (NOI), for both designing narrative research, as well as collecting and analysing narrative data. At the heart of this approach lies the relationship between the story that is being *told*, the *re-telling* of that story, and inevitably an obscured person who is the *teller*. This is represented in Figure 10.2. In narrative inquiry, what is being told is foregrounded. But the told is always inter-related with its particular telling, which is only just one of several possible ways to structure a particular story. Always, in the background is the teller, who positions themselves towards the told, in the nuances and choices made through the telling, obscuring how they are actively engaged in their construction of a personal narrative identity. To this end, we will focus here upon how the first steps in NOI data analysis can throw light on

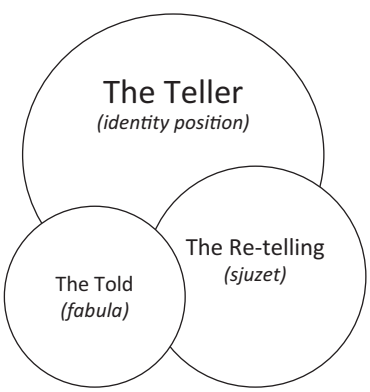

Figure 10.2 The told, the re-telling and the teller

Source: Adapted from Hiles et al., 2009

the expression of this intelligence, not so much in what is told, but in the telling of the stories, and what this can uncover about the teller.

THE NOI MODEL

Narrative inquiry is concerned with much more than simply collecting stories. To appreciate the possibilities of narrative inquiry, it is necessary to realize that people are not merely telling stories, but are actively engaged in narrative thinking in order to make sense of their being-in-the-world, together with opportunities for sharing this with others. Indeed, Ricoeur (1987/1991) has remarked that, in societies where narrative has died, people would no longer be able to exchange personal experiences. Such narrative thinking organizes material events and human actions into sequential structures coded spatially and temporally, while adding colour and emphasis that further codes human concerns and perspectives.

Unstructured and semi-structured interviews particularly encourage a narrative mode of expression. Research participants, when asked to talk about themselves or explore some aspect of their life, will invariably employ a *narrative* mode of organization, i.e. participants will provide accounts that usually take on a story structure. Narrative is a field of research in its own right, consequently narrative warrants a methodology in its own right, and to this end we have refined NOI.

The emergence of a psychological approach to narrative inquiry has been gradual. NOI has been developed out of and built upon the work of a number of pioneers in this general field, which in particular would include: the socio-linguistic approach of Labov and Waletzky (1967); the notion of narrative as a cognitive instrument proposed by Mink (1978); the development of the idea of the narrative interview by Mishler (1986, 1999); the use of four models for interpreting life stories by Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998); the introduction of a narrative based experiential logic by Ochs and Capps (2001); the key notion of 'bounded' and 'unbounded' motifs that make up narrative structure pointed out by Herman and Vervaeck (2001); the wide variety of narrative methods available to the human sciences proposed by Riessman (1993, 2008); the bridge between narrative theory and the cognitive sciences developed by Herman (2003, 2007, 2013); the critical narrative approach developed by Emerson and Frosh (2004); the distinction between big and small stories by Bamberg (2007; Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008); and the plea made by Frank (2010) concerning 'letting stories breathe'. NOI acknowledges how it has attempted to harness all of these insights and influences into a psychological approach.

The model of NOI (Figure 10.3) reflects Mishler's (1995: 117) concern that there is no 'singular or best way to define and study narrative', and that we need to 'open up the exploration of what we may learn from other approaches as we pursue our own particular one'. There are a wide range of approaches to narrative inquiry available. Mishler, in his attempt to bring some order to this field, offers a provisional typology consisting of: (1) representation, particularly the tension between the actual temporal order of events/episodes and their order of presentation as re-told; (2) the linguistic and narrative strategies used by different genres to achieve structure and coherence; and (3) the cultural, social and psychological contexts and functions of stories. It is in the third of these that NOI currently fits best.

From the outset the focus has been upon collecting and analysing narrative interview data, because as psychologists this is where our interest lies. Our underlying philosophy is in full agreement with Riessman (1993: 25) when she says: '*there is no single method of narrative analysis but a spectrum of approaches to texts that take narrative form*'. The purpose is to see how respondents in interviews impose order on the flow of experience to make sense of events and actions in their lives. The methodological approach examines a participant's story and analyses how it is put together, the linguistic and cultural resources it draws on, and how it persuades a listener of its authenticity. Analysis in narrative studies opens up forms of telling about experience, not simply the content to which language refers. We continually ask, why was the story told that way?

Narrative inquiry does not entail simply following a basic set of rules. It is better approached as a series of steps involving: carefully designing a specific narrative project, formulating a suitable research question, considering appropriate ways of collecting the data by drawing up an interview guide. This will generate a raw transcript which is first submitted to basic NOI coding, followed by making choices for further analysis of the data.

NOI stresses that narrative is not merely a distinct form of qualitative data or a particular approach to data analysis, but it is a methodological approach in its own right, which requires appreciation of the subtle paradigm assumptions involved, together with a method of data collection called the *narrative interview* (Mishler, 1986, 1999). The position being adopted is that interviews do not have to be seen as 'interrogations', but can be seen as a mutual exchange of

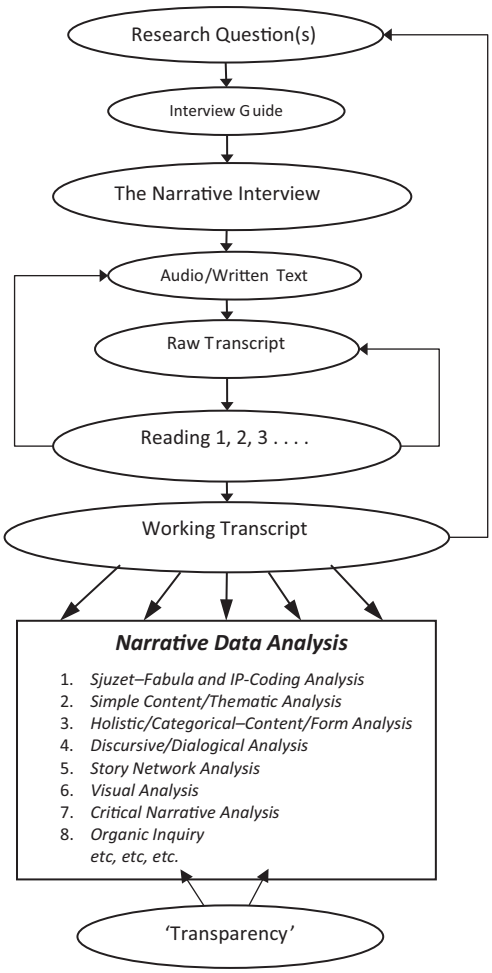

Figure 10.3 The NOI model

Source: Adapted from Hiles and Čermák, 2008, 2014

views (Kvale, 1996), as well as a site for the co-production of narratives (Silverman, 2001). Indeed, Mishler (1986) argues that interviews can be structured as conversations, a joint construction of meaning, and that narratives reflect one of the crucial means of knowledge production that goes on in our everyday lives. For example, the narrative interview can take the form of a very open invitation – '*Tell me about your life … your up-bringing …*'. Or it can involve a more topic-oriented style of open questioning – '*How did you get into this type of work? Tell me about your recovery from illness. How did you come to be diagnosed?*'. The first of these could be called the biographical interview, the second a topic-focused interview, and the third an interview with a specific focus, but there are very many variations that can be employed.

An interview normally requires digital audio recording to generate an *audio text*, which is closely transcribed. Identifiers are removed, and normal punctuation is used to reflect how the transcription should be read. We choose not to represent short pauses, hesitations, and inflections, etc., although these can easily be included where the nature of the research question requires this. Of course, as an alternative to the audio text, written responses, or other documents, may be used. In whatever way the data is collected, the aim is to produce a *raw transcript* for the data analysis

to begin. The basic rule followed here is that the transcript should not be tidied up. The approach to analysis usually involves reading through the raw transcript several times, returning to the tape-recording (if available) on occasions. Some preliminary coding can then be employed. Narratives are basically a sequence of episodes, or events, and it is useful to produce a working transcript that uses a numbered sequence of self-contained episodes, or *moves*, in the telling of the story. Indeed, any transparent separation into specific units of analysis determined by the data analytic strategy being planned might be used. A raw transcript is then produced, much like in Table 10.1.

There are many considerations involved in developing a systematic approach to narrative inquiry for psychology, and the following are two pressing issues.

One issue involves ensuring that the entire inquiry process is open to critical and systematic reflexivity. Reflexivity is much more than an inspection of the potential sources of bias in a study, and must begin with the conscious examination of the paradigm assumptions, the unwitting selection of research strategies and participants, and the decisions made in collecting the data, conducting the interviews, analysing the data, and interpreting the findings. Reflexivity highlights the fact that the researcher has a participatory role in the inquiry, is part of the situation, the context, and the phenomenon under study. The NOI model is designed to offer a framework for just this. Reflexivity understood in this way, demands transparency (Hiles and Čermák, 2007).

A second issue for NOI is that narrative inquiry is far from being confined to only psychology, and one of the pressing challenges is for psychology to integrate narrative research with methods, insights and expertise in the sociological, educational, clinical, and biographical fields, generating a multidisciplinary perspective. A further related matter is how narrative can provide a common theme that cuts across psychodynamic, cognitive, social, humanistic, transpersonal and integral psychologies, in terms of both research and practice. Indeed, in this respect, we see narrative inquiry

Table 10.1 The Hobo's Story: three short selections from the *original draft* of Alcoholic Anonymous' *Big Book,* published as *The Book That Started It All* (2010)

'Riding the Rods' *(lines 1–4)*

Fourteen years old and strong, I was ready – an American Whittington who knew a better way to get places than by walking. The 'clear the way' whistle of a fast freight thundering over the crossing on the tracks a mile away was a siren call.

'Riding the Rods' *(lines 53–69)*

It was summer and the park benches, hard and uncomfortable as they were, appealed to me more than the squalid 'flops' of the city's slums. So I slept out a few nights. Young and full of energy, I hunted for work. The war was on and work was easy to get. I became a machine-shop hand, progressing rapidly from drill-press to milling machine to lathe. I could quit a job one day and have a new one the next with more money. Soon I again had a good boarding-house, clothes and money. But I never started another bank account. 'Plenty of time for that', I thought. My weekends were spent in my conception of 'a good time', finally becoming regular carousals and debauches over Saturday and Sunday. I had the usual experiences of being slipped a 'Mickey Finn' and getting slugged and rolled for my money. These had no deterrent effect. I could always get jobs and live comfortably again in a few weeks. Soon, however, I tired of the weary routine of working and drinking. I began to dislike the city. Somehow my boyhood days on the farm didn't seem to be so bad at a distance. No, I didn't go home, but found work not too far away. I still drank. I soon got restless and took a freight for a Michigan city, arriving there broke late at night. I set out to look for friends. They helped me find work.

'Riding the Rods' *(lines 264–282)*

For the first time I saw a fellowship I had never known in actual operation. I could actually feel it. I learned that this could be mine, that I could win my way to sobriety and sanity if I could follow a few percepts, simple in statement, but profound and far-reaching in their effect if followed. It penetrated to my inner consciousness that the mere offering of lip-service wasn't enough. Still ignorant, still a little doubting, but in deadly earnest, I made up my mind to make an honest effort to try. That was two years ago. The way has not been easy. The new way of life was strange at first, but all my thoughts were on it. The going was sometimes slow; halting were my steps among the difficulties of the path. But always when troubles came, when doubts assailed and temptation was strong and the old desire returned, I knew where to go to for aid. Helping others also strengthened me and helped me to grow. Today I have achieved, through all these things, a measure of happiness and contentment I had never known before. Material success has mattered little. But I know that my wants will be taken care of. I expect to have difficulties every day of my life; I expect to encounter stops and hindrances, but now there is a difference. I have a new tried foundation for every new day.

as transcending both inter- and intra- disciplinary boundaries.

With the growing interest in the narrative field, a wide variety of approaches to the interpretation and examination of narrative data have emerged, leading to a proliferation of methods of analysis, which Mishler (1995: 88) described as '*a current state of near-anarchy*'. We deal with this problem by being as inclusive as possible. For example, our approach engages the seminal approach of Labov and Waletzky (1967), but replaces their socio-linguistic approach with a quicker and more efficient approach that employs segmentation rather than clause analysis, saving the need to engage in a detailed linguistic analysis in the first instance. However, we do see ourselves as differing from several other approaches to narrative research by insisting on foregrounding the *telling* of a story, in order to understand precisely what the *teller* is caught up in. We regard stories as not concerned with merely reporting temporal sequences of events, but with constructing personal meanings and exploring self-identity, reflecting a crucial human narrative intelligence.

What we have continually found is that it is the subtleties of the *sjuzet* that are especially important in understanding the way in which an individual creates personal meaning. While the *fabula* consists of an outline of the events as they had occurred, or might have occurred, it is the *sjuzet* that encodes the 'way' in which the person relating the story positions themselves in relation to the events being retold. Stephens and Breheny (2013) distinguish four levels of approach to narrative analysis: the *personal, interpersonal, positional* and *ideological*. From this perspective, NOI is focused largely, but not entirely at the personal level, or at least it requires beginning any narrative data analysis with the personal level. Nevertheless, the NOI approach to narrative data analysis is best illustrated by a worked example.

NOI DATA ANALYSIS: A WORKED EXAMPLE

The basic approach taken by NOI data analysis is initially to focus upon both the *what* and the *how* of the telling, i.e. upon both the story that is being told (*fabula*) as well as the way in which it is being told (*sjuzet*). For the example used here, the data has been taken from the original draft of Alcoholic Anonymous' *Big Book,* re-published as *The Book That Started It All* (AA, 2010). For the original study (Hiles et al., 2012a, 2012b), we selected 18 narratives as suitable for narrative analysis. These are personal written narratives of a genre that we might call *reflective-confessional-autobiographical.* In order to demonstrate the first steps in the NOI approach to data analysis we will use just one story – 'Riding the Rods' – told by a man who as a 14 year-old youth ran away from his farm home in mid-state America, to live many years as a railroad 'hobo'. For the purposes of this example, we have chosen three short sections (see Table 10.1), corresponding to the line numbers of the original manuscript of a relatively long narrative. These roughly correspond to the opening two sentences, then the first experience of the youth 'going it alone', and the final concluding 'coda' of the whole text.

The research question proposed for this study was: 'What is the nature of the experience of becoming an alcoholic, and the experience of recovery?' Obviously, the need for a *narrative interview* and *audio text* in this example have been circumvented, but we must emphasize that if the data had been originally audio-recorded, then the rule to follow is that the raw transcript must be as verbatim as possible, and must not be 'tidied up'.

It is worth stressing that using NOI to analyse narrative data is something that can be really insightful and enjoyable. Whether confronted with a lengthy written text, or the output of the hard slog of a tedious transcription, you might find yourself staring at the text overwhelmed, wondering how sense can be made of it (see Table 10.1 as an example – where do you begin in making sense of this material*?*). However, using the basic NOI 'tools', everything quickly falls into place. Insight into the core themes of the narrative will emerge – the subtleties of the storytelling become clearer – deeper critical issues inevitably emerge. The 'voice' and skills of the storyteller are revealed by careful analysis.

The first step in analysis then involves reading through the raw transcript several times, (often returning to the audio-recording, if this is available) to get an overall grasp of the text. It is strongly recommended that the entire text is analysed in the first strategic steps of analysis, but in later stages particular sections of the text can be selected for a more focussed analysis.

The working transcript is produced by breaking the raw transcript down into a sequence of segments, i.e. episodes/events/moves, or, discursive gestures/asides/emphasis. These segments are then numbered consecutively. Of course, the segmentation of the transcript is itself an interpretive process, and this should not be forgotten in later analytical work. Nevertheless, the process is fairly straightforward and transparent, and greatly facilitates the subsequent steps of data analysis. The original AA text was broken down into 282 segments. Because of constraints on space for this

chapter, focus is only upon *Segs*. 1–2, 22–31, and 126–140 of the story told by 'Rail Rodder'.

The next step is to arrange the text down the left-hand side of each page with an extra-wide margin to the right for coding and comments. It is this that we call the working transcript. NOI requires a first crucial basic coding stage of data analysis, followed by a wide selection of further data-analysis perspectives, seven of which are incorporated into the NOI model (Figure 10.3).

The final point to make about NOI coding and data analysis is that it is *explicitly abductive* in its approach (see Hiles, 2014). What this means is that in coding narrative data a wide range of existing psychological, linguistic, discursive and narrative constructs are drawn into the analysis, rather than theory emerging from out of the data. Coding is an abductive, *inference to the best explanation* process. We argue that it is important that this is explicitly acknowledged. The implications of this for the wider field of qualitative inquiry are discussed at the end of this chapter.

BASIC NOI CODING

Sjuzet–Fabula and IP Coding Analysis

The basic process of coding draws upon several theoretical perspectives deriving from the sociolinguistic approach of Labov and Waletzky (1967), from the DreamCatcher model of narrative intelligence that has been outlined above, as well as from the notion of identity positioning (Hiles, 2007). However, the first key step involves breaking down the text into its two basic, underlying and interrelated components: into *sjuzet* (i.e. how the story is being told), and *fabula* (i.e. the sequence of events being related). This first stage of NOI analysis is inspired by Herman and Vervaeck (2001) who pointed out that the sjuzet corresponds to the 'unbounded' motifs of the text (that which can be altered without affecting the core narrative), and the fabula corresponds to the 'bounded' motifs (that which if altered would significantly alter the core narrative). In practice it involves dividing the working transcript into either *sjuzet* or *fabula* (or sjuzet/fabula overlap, see below). We are concerned here with an issue that is fairly well known, but not that well faced-up to in other approaches to narrative inquiry. While the fabula is the defining quality of narrative, it is the sjuzet that is particularly relevant to understanding the psychological processes involved in personal narratives. At the present stage of the development of the NOI model our focus has largely been upon perfecting the coding analysis of the sjuzet, because narrative inquiry until now has somewhat overstressed its focus on the fabula, to the neglect of the sjuzet.

Stories are not simply a resumé of events, but are a re-telling in a particular way, in a particular sequence, on a particular occasion, and from a particular point of view. Moreover, the narrator 'positions' themself with respect to these events, and this positioning is coded not simply in the selection of the story (i.e. content), but in the particular way of its re-telling. In practice, interpretive analysis involves first identifying the sjuzet, e.g. single words, phrases and sometimes entire segments that are concerned with emphasis, reflection, asides, interruptions, remarks, and discursive locutions corresponding to the situated-occasioned actions relating to the social/cultural context(s) of the telling of the story.

We have described these initial steps in NOI analysis in several previous papers (Hiles and Čermák, 2008; Hiles et al., 2009, 2010), and will just summarize them here. Working from the raw transcript we begin by segmenting the text into a sequence of episodes, or 'moves'. These are then numbered for ease of cross-referencing later. The text in this segmented form is then arranged over several pages, with the right-hand margins used for notes, comments and annotations. The next step is to 'separate' the sjuzet and fabula, and by convention we simply underline the sjuzet. The basic rule here is that the fabula is bounded, and the sjuzet is unbounded. Separating sjuzet and fabula is regarded as a 'working step' in the analysis. Indeed, they cannot always be fully separated, and where this happens we 'highlight' that overlap using square brackets. The result is what we call the 'working transcript', which is illustrated on the left-hand side of Tables 10.2a and 10.2b, presented as three groups of segments (1–2; 22–31; 126–140). The summary of the coding notation can be found in Table 10.3. However, at this stage, it is especially interesting to read out loud the fabula (i.e. the part of the transcript that is not underlined). The fabula simply relates the basic storyline, but reads strikingly dull, or 'flat', in its presentation of the events concerned, lacking emphasis and drama in re-telling the story. Even the justification for re-telling the story falls away. It becomes obvious that it is the sjuzet that 'brings the story to life', animating and highlighting the significance that the Hobo attaches to re-telling the story in the particular way chosen on this occasion.

It needs to be noted that the key features of a narrative text is the continuing tension that arises between sjuzet and fabula. Therefore, we do not recommend simply analysing these separately, but recommend using this basic division to help create the appropriate focus of this tension in further

Table 10.2a 'Rail Rodder' analysed: lines 1–4, 53–69

Working Transcript – Lines 1–4, 53–69 organized into segments with sjuzet underlined and sjuzet-fabula overlap in square brackets	• *Coding notes/Comments*
1. Fourteen years old and strong, I was ready – an American Whittington who knew a better way to get places than by walking.	***ABSTRACT / IP-1: Ready for adventure** (Pr. mode) *Whittington* (Cu. mode)
2. The ['clear the way'] whistle of a fast freight [thundering] over the crossing on the tracks a mile away was [a siren call].	**•*fab*: *meeting up with the hoboes*** **IP-2: Seduction (Siren call)** *siren call* (Cu./Im. mode)
{. .}	{. .}
22. [It was] summer and the park benches, hard and uncomfortable as they were, appealed to me more than the squalid 'flops' of the city's slums. So I slept out a few nights.	**•*fab*: finding work** **Setting** – *It was . .* (Di./Pr. mode) *So* – plot, argument (Di. mode)
23. Young and full of energy, I [hunted] for work. The war was on and work was easy to get. I became a machine-shop hand, progressing rapidly from drill-press to milling machine to lathe. I could quit a job one day and have a new one the next with more money.	**IP-3: Young/full of energy** *The war was on . .*– context *I could quit . .* – summary, reflection, optimism
24. Soon I again had a good boarding-house, clothes and money. But I never started another bank account. 'Plenty of time for that,' I thought.	*Soon, again* – plot (Di. mode) *But I never . .* – commentary
25. My weekends were spent in my conception of 'a good time,' finally becoming regular [carousals and debauches] over Saturday and Sunday.	*my conception* – reflection *carousals, debauches* – vivid metaphors/images
26. I had the usual experiences of being slipped a 'Mickey Finn' and getting [slugged] and [rolled] for my money. These had no deterrent effect. I could always get jobs and live comfortably again in a few weeks.	**IP-4: Good time boy/man** **Complication 1** – tricked/but this is dismissed (Cu. mode)
27. Soon, however, I tired of the weary routine of working and drinking. I began to dislike the city. Somehow my boyhood days on the farm didn't seem to be so bad at a distance.	**IP-5: A tired self** **Complication 2** – dislike of routine, and the city –
28. No, I didn't go home, but found work not too far away.	**Evaluation** (Pr./Im. mode)
29. I still [drank].	**Result** – *I didn't give* (up) – comment/reflection/emphasis *still* – emphasis
30. I soon got restless and took a freight for a Michigan city, arriving there [broke] late at night.	[drank] – euphemism *soon* – plot/timing *broke* – result/complication
31. I set out to look for friends. They helped me find work.	*look for friends/ find work* – result/resolution
{. .}	

analysis. Nevertheless, this type of analysis is not without its difficulties. As noted earlier, some words and phrases seem to bridge sjuzet and fabula, and are coded using square brackets, simply identifying the word/phrase as needing to be coded as *both* sjuzet and fabula. This aspect of coding is important and is both convincing and transparent. This feature of narrative often involves the use of metaphor. In a story, more often than not, a metaphor is used to simultaneously move the plot along (fabula), and also to dramatize and 'colour' the actual re-telling of the story (sjuzet).

Autobiographical narrations, such as the Rail Rodder's, usually have a complex structure that is made up of a series of embedded shorter stories, or 'life episodes', that are more or less fashioned into a coherent life-story (see Hiles et al., 2010). The Rail Rodder's narrative is no exception. *Segs*. 1 and 2 introduce the narrative. *Segs*. 3–21 (n.b. omitted here) outline the meeting up with other hoboes and being shown the ropes by one of them. *Segs*. 22–31 outline the Rail Rodder going it alone, discovering how to have a good time, then the first descent into the over-use of alcohol, followed by

Table 10.2b 'Rail Rodder' analysed: lines 264–282

Working Transcript – Lines 264–282 organized into segments with sjuzet underlined and sjuzet-fabula overlap in square brackets	• *Coding notes/Comments*
{. .}	**CODA** – extended reframing (Continuing: Im. mode)
126. For the first time I saw a [fellowship] I had never known in actual operation.	{. . .}
127. I could actually feel it.	*first time, fellowship* (Im. mode)
128. I learned that this could be mine, that I could [win] my way to sobriety and sanity if I could follow a few percepts, simple in statement, but profound and far-reaching in their effect if followed.	**IP-C1: New Self *in operation***
	I could feel it – (Em. mode)
	• ***fab***: *learning to [win] my way could be mine* (Im./Ae. mode)
	simple/profound (reflection)
	far-reaching (Im. mode)
129. It penetrated to my inner consciousness that the mere offering of lip-service wasn't enough.	*penetrated* – the depth of the experience
130. Still ignorant, still a little doubting, but in deadly earnest, I made up my mind to make an honest effort to try.	*ignorant/doubting* – reflection *deadly earnest* (Ae. mode)
131. That was two years ago.	*That was* – Coda returns to the present moment in telling (Di. mode)
132. The way has not been easy.	*new way of life* (Ae. mode)
133. The new way of life was strange at first, but all my thoughts were on it.	*all my thoughts* – focus
134. The going was sometimes slow; halting were my [steps] among the difficulties of the [path]. But always when troubles came, when doubts assailed and temptation was strong and the old desire returned, I knew where to go to for aid.	*the going was slow* *[steps]/[path]* – (Im./Ae. mode) *troubles, doubts, temptation* *the old desire returned* *I knew where to go* (Ae. mode)
135. Helping others also strengthened me and helped me to grow.	*helping others to grow* (Ae. mode)
136. Today I have achieved, through all these things, a measure of happiness and contentment I had never known before.	**IP-C2: A Growing Self** **Coda** – *Today I have achieved* a measure of . . *never known before* (Ae. mode)
137. Material success has mattered little.	**Coda** – *not material success*
138. But I know my wants will be taken care of.	**Coda** – *my wants taken care of*
139. I expect to have difficulties every day of my life; I expect to encounter stops and hindrances, but now there is a difference.	**IP-C3: The Resolved Self** – (Im./Ae. mode) **Coda** – *I expect difficulties every day of my life* – anticipation (Ae. mode) *now a difference* – resolution (Ae. mode)
140. I have a new tried foundation for every new day _____.	**Coda** – *new tried foundation/ every new day* (Ae. mode)

a rollercoaster of experiences that descend deeper and deeper into alcoholism. In order to proceed with a full narrative analysis the overall autobiographical narration can be broken down into these self-contained smaller fabulas (each coded here as a ***fab***), at least in principle each of these has the basic *Abstract/Setting/Complication/Evaluation/Result/Coda* structure proposed by Labov and Waletzky. The Rail Rodder's full narrative is introduced by a brief overall ABSTRACT (coded in capitals, because of its overall/meta-status, as well as doubling as Abstract for the first ***fab***), and this is further coded as *Praxis mode* (Pr.) because it relies upon the narrative practices concerned with the opening phase of introducing the act of story-telling. *Seg*. 1 also introduces the first ***fab*** which we call 'meeting up with the hoboes'. We code the idea of an *American Whittington* as exemplifying the *Cultural mode* (Cu.) as it draws and builds upon a classic story character (Dick Whittington) cleverly modified to the American context. Furthermore, we code the first identity position adopted by the Rail Rodder as **IP-1: Ready for Adventure**, which reflects the direction the fabula is taking and the prevailing mood reflected in the sjuzet (an underlying sense of self that the Rail Rodder experiences).

Table 10.3 Coding notation

and strong . . – Sjuzet is underlined
*– Labov and Waletzky (**Abstract, Setting, Complication, Evaluation, Result, Coda**)
{. .} – Omissions. Identifiers removed, etc. (not required for this example)
•**fab** – Start of a sub-plot/narrative episode that contributes to the overall fabula.
IP-1 – Identity Position 1; **IP-C1** – Identity Positions of the Coda.
['clear the way'] – highlighting/[sq.brackets] for word/phrase that seems to function in both fabula and sjuzet
Em./Co./Di./Pr./Cu./Im./Ae. mode – coding of the narrative modes (i.e. narrative intelligence)

The highlighted phrases ['clear the way'] and [a siren call] quickly announce a second identity position **IP-2: Seduction**. In particular, we code 'a siren call' as exemplifying both the Cultural mode and Imaginative mode (Cu./Im.), since there is a specific reference being made to a classic story of antiquity, as well as its imaginative application to the psychological experience of hearing a freight train approaching, especially its personal significance in the context of the particular story that is unfolding.

The ***fab*** starting at *Seg*. 22, that we have called 'finding work', runs through to *Seg*. 31. This ***fab*** starts with the highlighted phrase 'it was', which is coded as both Discursive mode and Praxis mode (Di./Pr.). The point here is that this phrase acknowledges the discursive demands being placed on the reader of the overall text needing a lead-in to a new ***fab*** introducing the next phase of the unfolding story-line, as well as the use of the familiar phrasing commonly used in narrative praxis. The sjuzet here – '*hard and uncomfortable* …. and '*more than the squalid* …' are important descriptions that the story-teller wants to emphasise and embellish and dramatize for the reader, but are clearly not bounded in any essential way by the basic story being re-told. Indeed, the point here is that this re-telling of the story is just one of many possible re-tellings that could vary widely in their detail, emphasis and drama, etc. It is in this unbounded part of the narrative (i.e. the *sjuzet*) in which the identity positions are revealed, and depending upon the overall narrative structure can be progressive, can be regressive, or as in the case of our Rail Rodder are presented as a 'roller coaster' of ups and downs. Three other identity positions are coded in this phase of the story-telling: **IP-3**: **Young/full of energy**, **IP-4: Good time (boy/man)**, and **IP-5**: **A tired self**, and these subtly anticipate the more exaggerated ups and downs that are to follow (but *Segs.* 32–125 are omitted here).

This more or less summarizes the core of the NOI approach to coding this section of the working transcript. The rest of the coding examines the use of such phrasing as: 'so', 'soon', 'again' and 'still' as argumentative phrases involving timing, reflection, emphasis, commentary, outcome, etc. Comments also highlight phrasing of the discursive locutions being employed, as well as carefully tracking the Labov and Waletzky fabula structure (i.e Setting, Complication, Evaluation) towards a provisional Outcome/Result. Indeed, in *Seg*. 30 the Result of 'arriving broke' works as both a Result and cryptic Coda, but also as Complication for the next ***fab*** (because of space limitations not included here).

The coding analysis presented here is striking for being largely focussed upon the sjuzet, at the expense of the fabula. This is for two basic reasons: (i) NOI recognizes that the sjuzet is crucial for a developing psycho-narratology and has been for far too long ignored in narrative inquiry, and (ii) NOI emphasizes that the 'prizing apart' of sjuzet and fabula needs to be tackled first. Of course, the fabula can be coded with a similar degree of thoroughness in terms of temporal structure, plotting, themes, genre, etc., where the Cognitive/Intentional Mode will be heavily implicated, together with the Discursive Mode reflecting the situated-occasioned action of the story-telling, and the Praxis Mode reflecting the traditions and conventions of story structure.

The concluding section of the working transcript is presented in Table 10.2b, where the final *Segs*. 126–140 can be seen to be coded as predominately made up of sjuzet. This entire section is coded as the CODA (capitalized as this establishes the overall purpose of the entire narrative), and is significantly expanded with several specific codas (*Segs*. 136 through 140). The dominant mode here is the Aeolian Mode, reflecting the insight and inspiration that has emerged from the roller coaster journey, and the act itself of re-telling the story. It is almost certain that the Rail Rodder has told various versions of this same story many times before. This type of story is of course typical of many told at AA meetings, collected in such texts as the *Big Book,* and the overall impression is that the chance to write this down for publication has been an Aeolian moment in its own right.

The underlying ***fab***: 'learning to win my way' is brief and to the point, but the imaginative commentary, the emphasis and depth of reflection offers insight into a transpersonal experience that would be difficult, if not impossible, to study and explore in any other way. Of course, there are Cognitive/Intentional, Discursive, Praxis and Cultural modes all in operation here as well, but

with a Coda such as this, it is the Imaginative and Aeolian Modes that come to the fore, and therefore sjuzet dominates over fabula. The three identity positions coded are **IP-C1: New Self**, **IPC-2: A Growing Self**, and **IPC1-3: The Resolved Self**, trace this Aeolian journey. This is an example of sustained narrative reframing, a major shift in identity positioning, contained largely within the sjuzet parts of the narrative. While not every story-telling will be able to so explicitly demonstrate these aspects of narrative intelligence so well as in the present example, it is not impossible to imagine that every story re-told contains a gleam of the inspirations and satisfactions that the re-telling must have involved. A summary of the coded identity positions in the data analysed here can be found in Table 10.4. It should be noted that many more IPs emerged in the story-telling through the original material (i.e. *Segs*. 32 to 125).

In summary, it must be noted that this separation of sjuzet from fabula, is just a first step in separating form and content, and by no means exhausts this distinction (n.b. part of the form of a narrative is embedded in the content, i.e. in the sequencing of events as a plot structure, and in the complexity and coherence employed). And, while the analysis of sjuzet is especially challenging, the type of analysis illustrated here does need to be recognized as merely the necessary first step before reintegration of sjuzet and fabula at a later stage of analysis (although a psychologist with little knowledge of transpersonal psychology might find some of this analytical work beyond their scope).

One further matter concerns making mistakes in the first steps of coding. On several occasions, when data was first analysed, a small mistake was later found to be made in the coding, which although perhaps insignificant still caused some confusion until it was corrected. The point is that making 'mistakes' in interpreting and analyzing qualitative data is not usually easy to detect. But being able to spot such mistakes we see as a positive strength of the NOI approach.

Finally, the basic coding analysis can be followed by a number of further approaches to narrative data analysis, seven of which are described below.

FURTHER APPROACHES TO NARRATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Simple Content/Thematic Analysis

This is the most basic approach to narrative analysis (see Chapter 2 in this Volume), covering a range of possibilities that have been widely used in the field of qualitative inquiry, but are somewhat superficial, and are not able to do justice to the complexities of the narrative form being studied. Riessman (2008) sees it as probably the most widely used method of narrative data analysis, especially in applied settings, and useful as a method for placing the emphasis largely upon content. In some respects it is quite possible to apply the approach of thematic analysis originally proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) (see also Chapter 2 in this Volume), but this would depend upon the nature of the original research question. However, it should be noted that it is generally accepted that a story cannot be reduced simply to a set of themes, and some preliminary analysis of sjuzet and fabula is always recommended.

Holistic/Categorical–Content/Form Analysis

Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998) have proposed an approach that uses four basic perspectives to analysing narrative. Its strength is that it is probably more comprehensive than many other approaches, and it overlaps to a great extent with the NOI approach. Indeed, it is a methodology that can be used as a direct follow-up to sjuzet–fabula analysis, an example of which was given in the previous edition of this chapter (see Hiles and Čermák, 2008: pp. 154–160).

Discursive/Dialogical Analysis

This is an important topic and was discussed earlier in this chapter as a significant development in

Table 10.4 Coding identity positions

Summary of IP-Coding:	
IP-1 – 'Ready for adventure'	**IP-C1** – 'New Self' (Coda)
IP-2 – 'Seduction (Siren call)'	**IP-C2** – 'A Growing Self'
IP-3 – 'Young/full of energy'	**IP-C3** – 'The Resolved Self'
IP-4 – 'Good time boy/man'	
IP-5 – 'A tired self'	
etc. …	

the field. It relates to one specific mode of narrative intelligence. Personal narratives are constrained by the situated-occasioned action of their production. Narrative data analysis from this perspective tends to focus on the discursive and dialogical approaches to how story-telling will inevitably reflect considerations of the prevailing local social context and dynamics of human interaction (see Chapter 6 in this Volume). Considerations of previous encounters, the perceived speaking rights of whoever is present, of who is being directly addressed, and what might be their expectations, all need consideration in understanding how a story becomes structured.

Story Network Analysis

Boje (2001) has focussed upon a range of analytical tools for analysing organizational narrative, and in principle this could be extended to various institutional, and/or family group contexts. The emphasis of this approach is its focus on the *social architecture* within which stories reside and circulate. Such organizational stories are dynamic and non-linear, assembling and disassembling as self-organizing systems. His approach to analysis also offers a visual way of story-mapping designed to code this complexity.

Visual Analysis

Riessman (2008) and Kim (2016) both include a consideration of the use of visual material alongside spoken and written discourse, and consider ways of integrating words and images, offering various approaches to visual narrative analysis. Riessman (2008: 179–180) remarks that: '*Working with images can thicken interpretation. Images can evoke emotions and imaginative identification, too often lacking in social science writing. Images can generate collective critique …. But such images can also dull the senses and give false sense of connection'*. In addition, Bach (2007) stresses that the *visual* is important and that *visual* narrative *inquiry* is an intentional, reflective, active human process in which researchers and participants can as part of a collaborative process explore and make meanings.

Critical Narrative Analysis

An explicitly critical approach to narrative analysis is best exemplified in the work of Emerson and Frosh (2004). They characterize their approach as psychosocial, embracing the critical approaches of discourse analysis combined with a sensitivity to a person's active construction of meaning in their lives. We would argue that it is possible to extend this work by considering the importance of undertaking a microanalysis of both sjuzet and fabula, together with the close study of emerging identity positions. Indeed, it is usually found that the subtleties of the sjuzet are especially important in understanding the ways in which the individual makes and re-makes meaning with respect to re-telling a story. Such a perspective promotes an active contestation between identity positions and subject positions. Throughout such critical analysis, interpretation is sustained by a continuing refrain: '*Why is this story told that way?'*.

Organic Inquiry

Clements (2011) has developed a method of transpersonal inquiry (cf. Braud and Anderson, 1998) that offers an explicitly narrative approach. Organic inquiry involves a three-step process of preparation, inspiration, and integration governing both data collection and analysis. The approach to data analysis involves the cognitive integration of liminal/spiritual encounters (i.e. Aeolian) with the data, inviting transformative change, which consists of both changes of mind and changes of heart. There is particular emphasis placed on preserving the authentic voice of participants' narratives. Clements sees this approach as offering processes for cultivating these changes, not only to researcher and participants, but additionally to readers of the research by engaging the reader in a similar process of transformative interpretation.

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

In the previous edition of this chapter we discussed three critical issues: the need to do justice to the full range of narrative phenomena; the complexities and challenges of interpretive analysis; and methodological transparency. Above we have acknowledged current progress with respect to the study of a wider range of narrative phenomena, and have set out in this chapter a way of meeting the complexities of data analysis meeting the requirements for transparency.

We consider just four further critical challenges: the integration of a fully developed fabula

coding into NOI; the need for a better theoretical understanding of the role of narrative thinking in everyday life; the wider implications of the recognition of an explicitly abductive approach to qualitative data analysis; and the contribution that narrative inquiry can make to psychology as a human science.

The need to develop a focus on fabula coding within NOI is a pressing issue, but not one that we consider to be particularly serious. NOI recognizes that the fabula is the defining feature of narrative discourse, but from a psycho-narratology perspective it is toward an understanding of the sjuzet that was given priority. In addition, there is a great deal of theoretical understanding of narrative structure within the various multidisciplinary approaches to narrative inquiry. The task now is to work to bring these properly within the NOI umbrella.

The development of the DreamCatcher model of narrative intelligence was aimed specifically at trying to theorize and understand research findings that are focussed on the nature of everyday narrative thinking. The basic cognitive science approach does not seem to do justice to the range and complexity of narrative phenomena, which has led us to consider the possibility of a need for a third cognitive revolution in psychology (cf. Hiles and Čermák, 2008; Hiles et al., 2009). One further matter that needs addressing concerns the relationship between the notion of a human narrative intelligence and the growing attention being given to dual-process theory (Evans, 2010; Kahneman, 2011; Stanovich, 2011). From the perspective of dual-process theory, narrative thinking could be seen as possibly the example par excellence of what has been called '*fast*' thinking (also called: *Type 1, System 1,* or *Heuristic thinking*). The implication of this is that narrative thinking is merely intuitive, primitive and 'fast', regarded as error prone, disorganized and secondary to 'slower' rational thinking. Such a gross over-simplification of human cognition into '*two modes of human thought*', is not helpful, and fails to recognize that particular modes of *fast* thinking might have certain very important evolutionary advantages! Moreover, fault lines have begun to appear within dual-process theory itself. Recently, Kahneman (2011) has suggested that *System 1* should include both '*expert*' and '*heuristic*' intuitions, and, Stanovich (2011) proposes splitting *System 2* into the '*reflective mind*' and the '*algorithmic mind*'. Indeed, these fault lines offer the prospect of perhaps the notion of a '*quadratic mind*'! The lesson here is simple – there is a need to develop a firm theoretical basis for psycho-narratology that is based upon its own empirical findings and not suppressed by research taking a quite different theoretical perspective, that would seem to dismiss narrative thinking as merely intuitive and primitive. The DreamCatcher model was our first attempt at a theoretical underpinning for NOI research, and has the potential for being a model for the human sciences (Hiles et al., 2011b). The challenge is to develop such ideas further.

The issue of abductive reasoning is not only relevant to the theorizing of narrative thinking, but is also implicated in the *logic of coding* in narrative data analysis. We assert that the data analysis approach set out in NOI is an explicitly *abductive* process, because theoretical constructs based upon narratological theory are explicitly applied in coding procedures. The thrust of the present chapter can serve to draw attention to how many other approaches to qualitative data analysis employ equivalent abductive data analytic methodologies (e.g. conversation analysis, discourse analysis, interpretative phenomenological analysis, and some applications of grounded theory, see Chapters 5, 6, 12 and 14, respectively). However, this issue is almost never properly discussed. It seems clear that the accepted idea of qualitative research as involving largely an inductive approach to inquiry, especially with respect to data analysis, is a matter that desperately needs to be examined closely. In this respect, NOI offers a challenge to other qualitative methodologies to join in constructive debate on this critical issue.

Perhaps, more than any other qualitative approach, narrative inquiry offers a challenge for a new vision of psychology. Narrative has the potential to be the great discovery for psychology, offering a portal to human experience and awareness. Personal narratives offer rich and complex data that suggest a dynamic and non-linear underlying intelligence that stretches far beyond much of the current thinking in the cognitive sciences. The challenge here is to explore how narrative inquiry can contribute to a broader human science approach to psychology, to consider possibilities for a 3rd Cognitive Revolution, together with examining ways of embracing Harré and Moghaddam's (2012) vision of a *psychology for the third millennium.*

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11

The Descriptive Phenomenological Psychological Method

Amedeo Giorgi, Barbro Giorgi†[1] and James Morley

Phenomenology is a philosophy that began in 1900 with the publication of *Logical Investigations* by Edmund Husserl (1970). In that work Husserl introduced a novel way of examining and studying the phenomenon of consciousness. It should be remembered that psychology was founded in 1879 as the science of consciousness by Wilhelm Wundt in Leipzig. Wundt pursued the study of consciousness primarily by the use of empirical methods. Later, when the behaviorist movement (Watson, 1913), dominated the field, positivistic approaches became dominant. These approaches made sense because both empiricism and positivism, historically, were philosophies associated with scientific investigations: empiricism since the seventeenth century and positivism since the nineteenth century. Since phenomenology was the most recent philosophy to support scientific endeavors, and its criteria and emphases differ from those of empiricism or positivism, it has not been easily assimilated by psychology. It has taken time for psychologists to respond to what it has to offer. The exception that proves the rule is the impact that it had on the Würzburg experiments on thinking (Humphrey, 1963) that took place in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Like most intellectual movements phenomenology is not all of one piece. While Husserl laid out the main dimensions of the phenomenological movement, almost every follower of his deviated from him in some manner or other. Since there are a variety of phenomenological interpretations one should not be surprised that several interpretations of the phenomenological method have taken place within psychology. In this chapter we will detail one way in which psychologists have adapted an articulation of the philosophical phenomenological method for its scientific purposes and only briefly describe some other interpretations without any effort at evaluation.

In a previous version of this chapter we offered a mostly historical and theoretical explication of the phenomenological movement in psychology. We covered the various interpretations of the meaning of phenomenology when applied to psychology. While including a synopsis of this historical review ahead, this new chapter is intended as an example that demonstrates how the method can be concretely applied to descriptive data, but we urge that it not be construed as a completed research project. Examples of complete contemporary applications will be referenced at the very conclusion. But before doing so, it is important to spell out the intricate but different and difficult interdisciplinary relationship between the philosophical and psychological levels of analysis.

Throughout most of its history, especially in the West, science has been based on some

form of empirical philosophy. At the beginning of the twentieth Century a new philosophy – phenomenology – was introduced which also had scientific aspirations. Phenomenology is not so much contradictory to empiricism as it is more comprehensive because phenomenology acknowledges certain realities that empiricism does not, e.g. givens such as ideal entities (numbers) or irreal objects (essences). For phenomenology these non-sensorial objects are given in experiences, and by acknowledging them experiential analyses can be more accurately achieved. It is important to mention this difference at the beginning because very often in our day when phenomenology is so little well understood, phenomenological psychological research reports are read and judged by empirical criteria rather than by phenomenological ones. In addition, since a phenomenological perspective brings to light aspects of a phenomenon that empiricism does not, it deviates from certain specific empirical criteria.

Phenomenology is a complex, comprehensive and intricate philosophy that thematizes consciousness and its functions. But because consciousness manifests itself very differently than physical phenomena, a special descriptive method was developed in order to analyze consciousness, and without proper use of this method, no claims regarding the use of a phenomenological method can be properly made.

In the twentieth century phenomenology became a popular philosophy and many philosophers became attracted to it and developed interpretations of it that differed from its founder, Edmund Husserl (e.g. Gurwitsch, 1964; Heidegger, 1962; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Sartre, 1956). Consequently, social scientists who became interested in phenomenology appealed to different versions of it as they were expressed in the twentieth-century philosophical literature, and so divergences of a phenomenological method also exist in the social science literature. We shall not speak to all of these differences within the context of our presentation of a method. Rather, we shall concentrate on the version of a phenomenological psychological method based on the thoughts of its founder, Edmund Husserl (1983), that was developed by the lead author of this article and we will show that the method is both scientifically rigorous and psychologically fruitful.

Perhaps the best way to introduce phenomenological philosophy is to provide the description of it as articulated by one of its contemporary supporters. Burt Hopkins (2010: 83), in introducing phenomenological philosophy writes:

> Husserl's pure phenomenology is driven by the goal of making philosophy a rigorous science. By 'science' he understood a method of research capable of generating possible true and false propositions on the basis of evidence. By 'rigorous' science he understood a science that had advanced to the point of being in the possession of a methodology whose basic concepts and criteria for distinguishing true from false propositions were sufficiently demonstrated to permit an ongoing research agenda available to and embraced by a community of researchers. And by evidence he understood the legitimizing source of scientific and philosophical concepts in an experience more original than, but nevertheless related to, their conceptuality.

We believe that hardly anyone would disagree with such generic statements about the nature of science because the disagreements usually come when the general criteria are implemented. But we want to indicate that phenomenological philosophy and empiricism often have different criteria for the same purpose – a positive scientific project. Also, it should be appreciated that in the above statement, as noted before, Hopkins is speaking only about phenomenological philosophy. As we proceed to work out a phenomenological *psychology* and its method, the same understanding of Husserlian philosophy will be in force.

Now it has to be emphasized that phenomenological science is founded upon the phenomenon of consciousness and its various manifestations. Of course, this was the original definition of psychology but mainstream academic psychology originated and developed within the perspective of empirical philosophy. Because the criteria came from empirical philosophy, mainstream scientific psychology based its findings on introspective data or it correlated conscious dimensions with sensory givens of one type or another or with bodily functions. The phenomenological approach dwells on how consciousness presents itself and its functions. This focus results in two key factors that are necessary whenever studying consciousness. The first is that *consciousness is intentional*, which means that it is primarily directed toward an object which may be real or not-real and which may actually be absent, and the object may be immanent to the conscious process or transcendent to it. The key thing is that an intentional act of consciousness is directed toward something, and the object toward which it is directed may actually exist in the world (a tree in the yard), may no longer be alive (Napoleon), or may be an image in the steam of consciousness itself (my image of my boyhood home). An intentional act may also be 'empty', which means that my act is directed toward something that is missing, in which case the act is known as 'signitive'. Thus, I may be looking for

my glasses which I placed somewhere but I can't remember where, and so to understand my random behavior searching through my office one simply has to understand, that which seems like strange behavior, simply means that I'm looking for my glasses. When I find my glasses, the intentional act is fulfilled and the acknowledgement of that fact is known as an act of identification. When I find my glasses, it results in an identification between the empty intention that triggered my behavior and the object that fulfilled the quest.

The second feature that has to be acknowledged is that *consciousness is essentially non-sensorial*. We become aware of consciousness in ways that are radically different from how we become aware of things. Consciousness is the *means* by which we become aware of all sorts of physical, material, biological phenomena but it itself is none of these things. It is the medium of access to anything whatsoever that can be experienced, including irreal (non-sensory) phenomena such as ideas or numbers, but we have awareness of consciousness itself without appearances. When we reflect on our lived experiences we become aware of them but not because they appear. Appearances are correlated to things of the world and their manner of being known is different from the way we know our own lived experiences. Acts of consciousness can produce objects like images and dreams but they are very different from the objects of worldly perception and also different from our awareness of our lived experiences. In order for a method to be fruitful in researching consciousness, it has to respect the two characteristics just described.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD

In the description of phenomenological philosophy that Hopkins provided above he mentioned that Husserl stated that phenomenology had posited a method by means of which phenomenological analyses could be done. He articulated the method generically but now we want to apply it in a more broadened and specific way. Husserl's philosophical phenomenological method requires three steps: First, one turns toward the object whose essence must be determined and one *describes* it; second, one must assume the attitude of the *transcendental phenomenological reduction*; finally, one must describe the essence or invariant characteristic of the object with the help of the method of *free fantasy variation*. We shall now elaborate each of these steps.

But before we present the particular steps, we want to stress the importance of attitude while conducting phenomenological research. Before any specific procedures are implemented Husserl emphasizes that all knowledge derived from sources other than what is directly given to consciousness has to be bracketed. This is known as the *epoché* which means that knowledge coming from an attitude other than the phenomenological one is put aside and rendered non-functional. All givens to be dealt with seriously have to be present to an act of consciousness that is within a phenomenological attitude. In ordinary life one functions within the natural attitude, which is the attitude of daily life and common sense. Enacting the *epoché* allows one to leave the natural attitude and prepares one to enter a phenomenological attitude, of which there are several.

In the first step of the philosophical method, the phenomenon that is to be analyzed first has to be carefully described. Phenomenology's main concern is with lived experiences so precisely how the experiences are lived need to be described by the experiencer. Philosophically, the experiences that are described are usually those lived by the philosophers themselves. This style of research allows the philosopher to conduct first person analyses on their own descriptions which is a key perspective for phenomenology. The ability to reflect on one's own experience opens up dimensions of the lived experience that would otherwise be inaccessible.

In the second step, the researcher must assume the transcendental attitude by means of the transcendental reduction. The transcendental attitude within which phenomenological philosophers must function in order to do their analyses is one which gives the philosophers access to pure consciousness. A pure consciousness is one that in no way is shared with empirical reality. The consciousness that is revealed with such an attitude is not a human consciousness nor that of any other existing creature. Because it is untouched by any empirical reality it refers to any *possible* existing consciousness but not to any *actually* existing consciousness. It permits a philosophical type of analysis that seeks to understand consciousness as such before it is interspersed with empirical reality.

In the third step, because concrete experiences are so diversified the phenomenologist seeks a result that is more stable to communicate to other researchers so he will seek the essence of the experience with the help of the method of free imaginative variation. The transcendental attitude is once again required here. With this method one systematically varies key dimensions of the concrete phenomenon in order to see what effect the

variation has on how the phenomenon appears. If the given 'collapses' as a result of the variation then it can be claimed that the dimension is essential for the phenomenon to appear as it really is. If the object is only slightly modified because of the variation and is basically still recognizable, then the dimension varied is considered to be accidental rather than essential. The essential features of the phenomenon also have to be carefully described.

The above description is of Husserl's philosophical method. However, we are not doing philosophical analyses but psychological ones. Therefore, our attitude and method vary from what Husserl prescribed. We are seeking a method that is genuinely phenomenological but also human scientific. Therefore, we have to modify the method Husserl invented in order to arrive at results that are human scientific and psychological rather than philosophical. But first, we want to review the history of how the term 'phenomenology' has been applied to psychology.

BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH OF VARIOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL APPLICATIONS OF THE METHOD

There is only space here for a very condensed sketch of how phenomenology entered into the field of psychology, but a full treatment of its philosophy is given by Spiegelberg (1982) and a more complete treatment of the development of phenomenological psychology is given by Amedeo Giorgi (2010). The entry of the phenomenological approach as a method into psychology can be told in terms of five categories, all of which refer to methods or research practices.

Goethean and Brentanian Pre-philosophical Phenomenological Approaches

This is a type of phenomenological research that is *avant la lettre*, so to speak and it consists of two historical streams that eventually merged. Today, to speak about phenomenological psychology means to demonstrate how insights from the phenomenological philosophy that began in 1900 are informing the development of psychology. However, certain styles of thinking and working that were harmonious with phenomenology were being applied to science in general and to psychology in particular prior to 1900. Goethe (Müller, 1952; Seamon and Zajonc, 1998; Sepper, 1988) the famous poet and humanist applied such principles to the study of morphology in botany and the experience of color and light, while Hering (1964) applied it to the study of vision. The other stream was initiated by Franz Brentano who was a philosopher, but his work that influenced psychologists most was written from a psychological perspective. Brentano was renowned in Germany for his lectures and he influenced a whole generation of scholars including Meinong, von Ehrenfels, Husserl himself, Freud and Stumpf. Brentano (1874) published *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkte* and in that work he introduced the idea of intentionality which became one of the cornerstones of the phenomenological movement after Husserl modified Brentano's understanding of it in significant ways. Carl Stumpf, as mentioned, was a student of Brentano's and he also spent time with Hering at Prague, and from Hering, Stumpf learned about the Goethean style of research and subsequently integrated it with what he knew from Brentano. Stumpf and Husserl were colleagues together at Halle, so important exchanges took place at that time as well. The approach used by both Goethe and Brentano consisted of careful descriptions of the 'givens' without recourse to speculation, hypotheses or theories. In general, phenomenology shares those values, but of course it includes much more.

Grass-Roots Phenomenology

This type is called 'grass-roots' because it developed in midcentury North America independently of any philosophy and was based primarily on pragmatic interests. Donald Snygg (1941) introduced the perspective and then he was later joined by Arthur Combs and they jointly published a work (Snygg and Combs, 1949) detailing their outlook. The basis for the phenomenological label here was that the research emphasis was primarily on 'the experiential world of the other'. The royal route for understanding the other, for Snygg and Combs, was to understand how he or she understood his or her experiential world. Unfortunately, from a phenomenological perspective, Snygg and Combs tried to fit experiential processes into the natural science cause–effect framework of mainstream psychology, and that limited their development. But of course, the phenomenological approach also uses the experiential world of a person as the basis for a psychological

understanding of that person, but the framework is different.

Interpretive Phenomenology

This type of phenomenology is probably the most popular type being used in psychology. Husserl had said that the phenomenological method was descriptive based upon the intuition of the given. His famous student Heidegger, claimed that the true phenomenological method was interpretation. This caused a division among phenomenologists that is still not resolved. Based on Heidegger, consequently, hermeneutic phenomenological methods have been developed both in philosophy and psychology. Packer and Addison (1989) have applied a hermeneutic method to psychological issues based upon Heidegger's work. Max van Manen (1990) also employs a mostly interpretive approach although he is receptive to descriptive features as well. However, as van Mannen works in the interdisciplinary field of teacher education, his approach is designed for maximum flexibility across disciplines and age groups. Finally, some British psychologists have recently developed an interpretive method, known as Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), to apply to psychological topics. Chapter 12 in this *Handbook* presents a complete depiction of this method.

Descriptive Phenomenological Method

Other psychologists have followed Husserl and have developed strictly descriptive phenomenological methods (see Chapter 12). The lead author of this chapter, Amedeo Giorgi (1970b, 1986, 2009) has developed one such method and so has Moustakas (1994). With descriptive approaches one tries to describe the experiences being lived through very carefully and once the raw data has been obtained, a thorough phenomenological psychological analysis of the data takes place within the perspective of the phenomenological psychological reduction. Without the reduction, no claim that the analysis is phenomenological can be made today. Again, this special attitude shift involves the epoché, which means to set aside all knowledge not being directly presented to consciousness, and then to consider what is given not as actually existing but merely as something present to consciousness. The presented intuitions are then carefully described and analyzed. Since this is the method that this chapter deals with ahead, no more needs to be said here.

Phenomenological Analysis that Begins Transcendentally and Returns to Positivity

There are actually several forms or types of phenomenological reductions in Husserl and the method we are presenting in this chapter uses only one of them – the phenomenological psychological reduction. But there is also what Husserl famously calls a 'transcendental' reduction which shifts the analysis to another level of consciousness beyond the psychological. One could call this a philosophical level of reflection whereby the researcher becomes aware of the *conditions* for the possibility of any experience. Davidson (1989) and later with Cosgrove (1991, 2002) recommend this procedure whereby one starts with a purified consciousness and then follows the establishment of psychological consciousness via the transcendental level before proceeding to the analysis of the concrete psychological phenomenon. This is the most difficult type of analysis to perform.

THE DESCRIPTIVE PRE-TRANSCENDENTAL PSYCHOLOGICAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD

Having first spelled out these five different ways in which phenomenology has also been applied to psychology we will now proceed to a fuller explication of the descriptive phenomenological psychological method. The psychological phenomenological method includes the same steps as the philosophical method (description, reduction and essence) but the steps are not followed in an identical way. Criteria related to scientific psychological research (rather than that of philosophy) modify the implementation of the steps but the steps remain consistent within the entire context of phenomenological philosophy.

The first major difference occurs with the very first step because the descriptions come from others rather than from the researchers themselves. Theoretically, one could have the researchers describe lived experiences and then have them analyzed by the describers of the experiences but, unlike in philosophy, this is not an acceptable procedure within the context of modern empirical natural scientific psychology. Empiricists are

skeptical of such a procedure because when the person who provides the data is the same person who does the analysis the susceptibly to an undetected bias is too strong. Contemporary empiricists are skeptical of any first person account that is not verified by others. The challenging question by the empirical critic would be: 'How do I know that your description is not unconsciously in the service of your theory of learning? If you describe the experience and then analyze it yourself, you could easily find exactly what you are looking for.' Certainly, such an objection can be answered theoretically, but phenomenology can also be adapted to a broadened research context where the experiences of others can be taken into account.

Consequently, within the psychological research context, a person other than the researcher-analyst always provides the data. Furthermore, descriptions are usually given by ordinary persons who are describing within the naïve natural attitude and may likely have no idea what phenomenology is. Now this could challenge the whole phenomenological nature of the research because phenomenological research depends upon first person analyses. However, third person descriptions do not prevent first person analyses and this will be explained more thoroughly below. Besides, it is important for phenomenology to grow by including the experiences of others. Further discussion of the legitimation of this step can be found in Giorgi (2009: 96–98).

While phenomenological philosophers employ the transcendental reduction, psychologists do not. They use what Husserl (1977) called the *phenomenological psychological reduction* and we prefer to call the 'scientific reduction.' The psychological reduction is less complete than the transcendental one. The transcendental reduction aims for a completely purified consciousness which has no relationship with anything empirical. The phenomenological psychological reduction does not achieve that degree of purity. As Husserl (1974: 41) states:

> Such self-perception is essentially founded in this experience, and in such a manner that its own sense-bestowal and positing of existence inseparably perform a co-positing of physical being and finally of a whole space-time world …. Therefore, in order to preserve in its purity the purely subjective, the individual lived experience of consciousness, we must put out of operation all the objectivities posited therein, i.e., while we posit consciousness as existing purely as it itself, we must deny to ourselves the co-positing of that in it of which there is consciousness and which is posited.

There are two key implications of this statement. We mentioned above that the transcendental reduction speaks about any possible consciousness but no real consciousness. But as psychologists we are interested specifically in actual human consciousness so we do not bracket the positing of consciousness itself. But we do bracket the co-positing of the physical or any other objectivities that are given thematically to consciousness. But the horizonal space-time world is not bracketed, and that is the second implication. Thus, psychological subjectivity is understood as 'being in the world' and we begin to understand how subjectivity lives the experience of thematic objects. Another way to say this is that the acts of consciousness are not bracketed and are considered to be real, but the thematic objects of consciousness are reduced even if the worldly horizon is not.

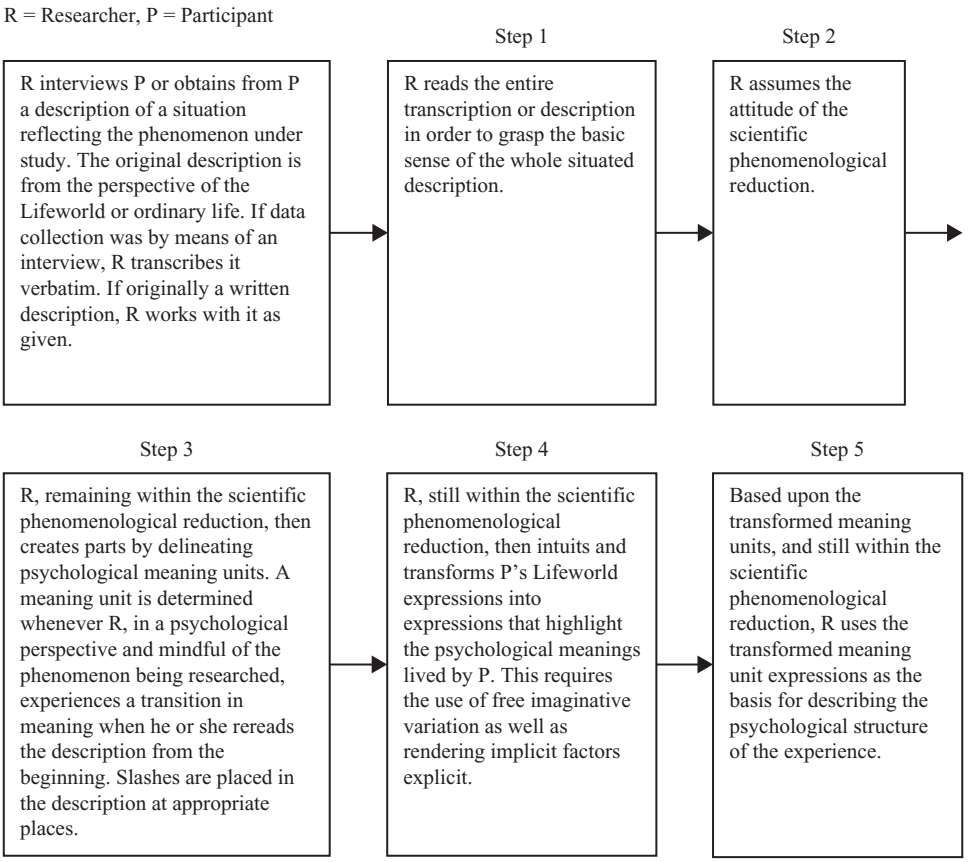
But for phenomenological psychology there is also a disciplinary implication: a psychological perspective towards the lived experience must also be assumed (Applebaum, 2012; Ashworth, 1996; Englander, 2016; Morley, 2010, 2011). Just as one must assume a transcendental perspective in order to discover transcendental subjectivity or a mathematical perspective to understand mathematical symbols, so one must assume a psychological perspective in order to understand lived experiences in a psychological way. Philosophers are usually content to acknowledge that any consciousness dependent upon naturalistic factors is psychological. but the analysis of such experiences requires the assumption of a psychological perspective toward such experiences. To assume a psychological perspective means to view the lived experiences as manifestations of the lived meanings and values expressed by concrete human subjects.

The third difference from the philosophical method is the type of result achieved. Because of the assumption of the psychological attitude toward the data, the essences that are apprehended are psychological essences and not philosophical ones. Psychological essences are typical, not universal. It is often understood that psychological results are in a middle range of theoretical achievement which means that there is always a more universal essence (philosophical) above it and most probably, lower level essences below it (e.g. essences belonging to specific individuals).

This completes the discussion of the key steps of the phenomenological psychological method, but not necessarily of the research. Once the structures are gotten, there follows dialogue with the raw data in order to draw out important implications and with the results of similar studies. Qualitative data offer many opportunities for insightful comments.

What directly follows is a flowchart (Figure 11.1) of the five steps involved in the application of the phenomenological psychological method to

Figure 11.1 Flowchart of data analysis process



the analysis of descriptive qualitative data. In previous publications we have referred to this as a four-step process but we now feel it is important to emphasize the scientific reduction by highlighting it as a distinct step thus making it five steps. Next, we will offer a presentation of two descriptions of learning and a sample of a two-column meaning unit analysis of both descriptions. We will conclude with an explication of the five steps used in the analysis and a discussion of the general structures attained through the analysis.

THE RAW DATA

The lead author of this essay began his critique of mainstream quantitative methods in 1966 (Giorgi, 1966) and inaugurated the development of his interpretation of the phenomenological psychological method in 1970 (Giorgi, 1970a, 1970b) and has pursued that development over the course of several decades (1971, 1975, 1985, 1992, 1998, 2000, 2012). A phenomenon to be analyzed was also required and since psychology was still dominated by behavioristic perspective at the time, he decided to concentrate on the phenomenon of learning. Consequently, when teaching his research classes he asked his graduate students to obtain several descriptions of learning. Eventually he accumulated hundreds of descriptions, of learning some of which have been analyzed (Giorgi, 1985), but many more remain. All of the descriptions were obtained within the context of the ethical rules in force at the time.

The two very brief descriptions that are used as exemplars in this article are also from the 1970s. They were the next two descriptions that were at the top of a pile and were in no way pre-selected for any special purpose. These two descriptions

were chosen in a completely random way. We believe that the choice of descriptions to be analyzed is best left to chance because in that way one can more forcefully demonstrate the power and flexibility of the method.

Data can be obtained by either having a participant write an experience or by interview. In general, people offer fuller descriptions in interviews than they do when writing. By chance, the two descriptions we will be using in this example demonstrate the two choices. It can easily be seen how the written description (Beach description) is much shorter than the description provided by the interview. With interviews, the descriptions are recorded and then transcribed. But it should be kept in mind that there is no 'perfect description': there are good ones, adequate ones and inadequate ones. The good ones allow for a rich analysis of the experience, and the adequate ones will allow a structure to be developed, but inadequate ones do not yield significant outcomes and their analyses are usually discarded. So the criterion for data analysis to proceed is that the descriptions are good or adequate. Without further ado, here are the two learning descriptions to be analyzed, exactly as we received them:

P1: Beach Description

Question: Describe a situation in which you learned

Recently I sat on the beach by a river with a friend. We were the only two people there. The river was moving very slowly and the sunlight sparkled on it. While we sat there we saw birds flying and swooping down, skimming the water. I made a remark about the birds bathing in the river. My friend (who knows about birds), told me that they were not bathing, but feeding – scooping insects off the surface of the river. I thought it interesting but said I preferred to think they were playing. Reflecting on the situation I realize that I not only learned a piece of factual information about the feeding habits of birds, but I also learned that I have a very imaginative and fanciful streak which often comes out when I am in contact with nature. I also learned that, at times, I prefer my fancied explanations for things to the so-called 'real' ones. Reflecting on the incident also brought to mind memories of past creative or imaginative impulses while spending time in the woods – so I also learned that allowing my imagination more freedom in a natural setting is a pattern of mine since childhood. The incident made me resolve to make room for contemplative time in the country more often.

P2: Rifle Description

Question: Would you please describe a concrete situation from your experience out of which you feel you have learned something?

Well, this is what happened: my twin brother and me, we were sitting down a few years back and there it was – my Dad had his rifle put away in his closet where it was always at. And I looked at it, and I was a young kid, you know, and I wanted to go hunting, and I wasn't old enough yet, so we'd get it out and aim it at the wall, and we'd pull the trigger there a few times and it would go 'snap'. Well, I didn't know exactly what I was doing and well, we wanted to go hunting *so much* you know.

Well, my Dad was going to go out hunting a week later or so, and he took his rifle out, but he didn't test it you know. It was the first day of deer season and he saw a deer and went to shoot it and it didn't go off. The firing pin was broke! Well, he came home, and kind of knew what had happened. He had seen us click it once and had yelled at us. Well, he came home and really yelled at us. And I couldn't understand how he knew that we did it.

R: Question: Could you describe more specifically what it was you did?

What we did – I'd take the rifle out and aim it at something, cock it, and click it. What would happen is that the firing pin would go forward and ram against the rifle bolt since there was no shell, and that would put tension on it – a fissure would form – it would crack and maybe take a little piece of it. So what happened to my Dad is that the pin hit the shell but not hard enough, so the shell didn't go off but broke a piece of the pin. So it all had to be torn apart and fixed. He (Dad) didn't know it for sure at first until he asked the gunsmith and the gunsmith told him exactly what had happened. We had been 'dry-firing' it. We got paddled for it. But now I know to this day that you just don't 'dry-fire' a rifle. You can do it for a while, but then the stress builds up and it'll eventually break.

And I remember my Dad. He said: 'When you're old enough to go hunting, you'll never play with a toy weapon ever again – for safety purposes, never point a weapon at anybody unless you intend to use it on him.' And this was the understanding. If we ever wanted to go hunting we had to understand that. We had to give up our childhood ways. And we wanted to do this, but yet we were not doing it. We were still running around bang-banging each other. But we didn't get away with it, you know, like we thought.

R: Question: What exactly do you feel you have learned?

Well, in a way, from that experience, I learned that my father knew more about what he was talking about when he told us to do things than we did – that I wasn't so smart after all, and we weren't getting away with anything. Plus, I found out also that a weapon is a bit more of a piece of machinery – it was a little more precise than I had imagined. It's nothing that you can just bang around. I found out that what my father was saying about toy weapons is right – think about it as a weapon that can kill something: a piece of equipment you don't misuse.

Another thing I learned out of it is that every year, like I do now, I will always test my rifle out to make sure it's working. I just don't go out and assume it'll work right – not to let a deer come up, pull the trigger, and find out it doesn't work. And I think that's what my father learned out of it too. And I sight my rifle in. I don't take it for granted that when I threw it in the truck last year the sight wasn't knocked off.

Table 11.1 Data analysis samples

P1: Meaning unit analysis	
1. P states that recently she sat on a beach by a river with a friend. They were the only people there. The river was moving very slowly and the sunlight sparkled on it. While P and her friend sat there they saw birds flying and swooping down, skimming the water. P made a remark about the birds bathing in the river.	1. P states that she and a friend were alone sitting on a beach watching the sunlight dazzling off the slow moving river. Included in their vision were birds flying low and skimming the water. P commented on how the birds were bathing in the water.
2. P states that her friend (who knew about birds) told P that they were not bathing but feeding – scooping insects off the surface of the river.	2. P's friend, who was more knowledgeable about birds, corrected P and said that the birds were not bathing but feeding, scooping insects off the river.
3. P thought that it was interesting but said that she preferred to think that they were playing.	3. P acknowledges the correct version as stated by her more knowledgeable friend but she preferred to think of the birds as playing.
4. Reflecting on the situation, P realized that she not only learned a piece of factual information about the feeding habits of birds, but she also learned that she had a very imaginative and fanciful streak which often came out when she was in contact with nature.	4. P reflected on her situation and realized that she actually discovered some new facts about the feeding habits of birds but she also became more consciously aware that she engaged a fanciful mode of awareness whenever she was relating to nature.
5. P also learned that, at times, she preferred her fancied explanations for things over the so-called real ones.	5. P also acknowledged that she had a tendency to prefer fancied and/or imaginative explanations over the factual or realistic ones.
6. P states that reflecting on the incident also brought to her mind memories of past creative or imaginative impulses while spending time in the woods – so she also learned that allowing her imagination more freedom in a natural setting was a pattern of hers since childhood.	6. P reflected further on the incident and began to recall the times in her past when she also indulged in creative and imaginative impulses when she was present to nature. P rediscovered that it was in fact a habit of hers to allow herself to be fanciful and imaginative whenever she was in a setting with nature. She had been doing this ever since she was a child.
7. The incident made P resolve to make more room for contemplative time in the country more often.	7. The incident became an occasion for P to resolve that she would allow herself to be more imaginative and self-accepting with respect to her tendency to be in such a mode when in the presence of nature.
P2: Meaning unit analysis	
1. In response to a Q by R, P describes a situation in which he felt that he learned something. P recalls a time when as a young boy, P remembers.	1.

(*Continued*)

Table 11.1 Continued

P2: Meaning unit analysis

2. P states that he looked at the rifle and since he was a youngster and not old enough to go hunting on his own, so instead, he and his brother would get the rifle out of the closet and aim it at the wall and even pull the trigger a few times and he would hear the trigger go 'snap'! P acknowledges that he didn't know what he was doing but his desire to go hunting was so great.	2. For P, the dangerous and delicate weapon presented itself as an allure, but because he was too young, P could not use the complex weapon by himself, so instead, he and his brother would nevertheless take the complex weapon out of its resting place and aim it at a safe target and even make it function and he could hear the noise the complex weapon made when it functioned. Retrospectively P acknowledges that he did not fully understand what he was doing to the complex weapon, but his desire to actually use the dangerous and delicate weapon in a realistic setting was too great for P to simply leave the dangerous and delicate weapon where it belonged.
3. P then recounts that his Dad went to use the complex weapon a week later in a real situation, but he didn't test it. It was the first day of the season for hunting deer and he went to shoot it and it didn't go off. The firing pin was broken.	3. P states that a week later his father went to use the dangerous but delicate weapon in a real setting, but he had not tested it prior to its actual use. It was the first day of the season for hunting deer and his father saw a deer and decided to use the dangerous but delicate weapon and it didn't fire properly. A delicate part that had to function when the trigger was pulled was broken.
4. P recounts that his father came home and kind of knew what happened. P's father had seen P and his brother click the dangerous but delicate weapon and yelled at P and his brother. When P's father came home and really yelled at P and his brother and P couldn't understand how his father knew what P and his brother had done.	4. P states that his father returned from attempting to use the dangerous but delicate weapon in the real setting when the weapon failed and P states that his father seemed to be curious of what happened. P's father had seen P and his brother click the delicate weapon once before and yelled at them. When P's father returned he displayed anger at P and his brother but P was puzzled as to how his father knew what happened.
5. P describes what he and his brother did with the rifle. P states how he wanted to take the rifle out and aim it at something and cock it and click it. Then, the firing pin would go forward and ram against the bolt since there was no shell and that would put tension on the bolt – a pressure moved from – It moved crack and maybe take a little piece of it. So what happened when P's father used the rifle is that the pin … but in hard enough, the shell didn't go off but broke a piece of the pin. So it all had to be torn apart and stripped. P's father didn't know put pressure at first until he asked the gunsmith and the gunsmith told him exactly what happened. P and his brother has had been 'dry pinning it'. They get paddled for doing so.	5. P explains how he and his brother used the dangerous and delicate instrument in a playful way but damaging way and then explains the type of damage that happened to the rifle and how the damaging procedure was explained to his father by the gunsmith. P wrote the name that what he and his brother were doing and stated that they were punished for damaging the dangerous and delicate instrument.
6. But P states that he knows to this day that one does not 'dry pin' a rifle. One can do it for a while, but then the stress builds up and it will eventually break.	6. P states that he knows to this present time that one should not play with a dangerous and delicate instrument the way he and his brother did. P realizes that it may be harmless for a short time, but if one continues the dangerous and delicate instrument would eventually break.

(*Continued*)

Table 11.1 Continued

P2: Meaning unit analysis	
7. P states that he and his brother had to give up their childhood ways. Still, they wanted to do it and yet they were in doing it. They were still running around and bang banging each other. They would aim it at something else, never pointing it at each other. But they didn't get away with it like they thought.	7. P states that P and his brother realized that they had to give up their childish ways. P describes how they still played with dangerous and delicate instrument, but also how they held back somewhat. P insists that he and his brother never aimed at each other, and while they thought that playing with the dangerous and delicate instrument was of no harm to them, it did harm the instrument.
8. From that event P states that he discovered that his father knew more about what he was talking about when he told his children to do things that the children did – that P was not so smart after all and that P and his brother weren't getting away with anything.	8. P states that he discovered that his father was wiser about matters than he was and that he knew more about certain issues than P had assumed. P discovered that in relation to his father that he was not so bright after all and that he and his brother were not successful in hiding actions from their father.

DISCUSSION OF THE STEPS OF THE DATA ANALYSIS

Having presented the raw data and its analysis, we shall now more fully explicate the procedure that we have gone through that resulted in the data presented above.

1 The first step is to read through the written descriptions provided by the participants all the way to the end. In order to do a proper analysis one has to know how the described lived experience ends.
2 While the normal natural attitude is sufficient for the first step, the rest of the analysis requires that the researcher assumes the attitude of the phenomenological psychological (or scientific) reduction. This means that the objects that emerge within the description are taken to be phenomena or simply objects that present themselves to the consciousness of the experiencer but the notion that such objects really exist in the way that they present themselves is not acknowledged. They are always understood to be presences to the consciousness of the experiencer. This attitude is usually described by saying that the positing of the existence of the given object, which is usually performed within the natural attitude, is withheld. The assumption of this attitude establishes the phenomenological psychological perspective.
3 Now, since descriptions can be lengthy they have to be broken into parts so that proper analyses of the descriptions can be done. Since phenomenological analyses are concerned with the discrimination of meanings the separation of the parts of a unified description is based upon meanings, and each part is called a meaning unit and it is determined by a careful rereading of the description with the intention to distinguish parts from a phenomenological psychological perspective. As the researcher rereads the description, every time he experiences a relatively significant difference in meaning he marks the place where the difference is perceived and he continues to read. The sense of the meaning itself is not specified nor interrogated. That is done in subsequent steps. Here the differences are merely noted. It is important to realize that all of the meanings constituted in the analysis are interdependent which means that they cannot exist alone. Husserl calls such parts 'moments of a structure' precisely because of their interdependency.

The first column in the tables represent the meaning units basically in the language of the participants. We say 'basically in the language of the participants' because some minor changes do take place. Since the descriptions are not actually the experiences of the researchers themselves the descriptions are slightly altered in order to reflect the actual state of affairs of the researchers. The researchers are actually analyzing the experiences of others, so in order to avoid fusion between the researcher and the participant's experience, all first person statements are changed into third person statements – but otherwise remain the same. Nevertheless the analysis proceeds by

determining as accurately as possible the meanings lived by the participants insofar as such meanings are expressed in the data. Since the lived meanings are related to the participants' experiences they are equivalent to first person meanings. That is why only third person expressions are found in the first column of Table 11.1.

4 Once the meaning units are determined the task of the next step is to transform the meanings contained in the description in phenomenologically, psychologically sensitive ways. Thus the attitude to achieve this task requires one to not only be in the attitude of the phenomenological psychological (scientific) reduction but also that one be sensitive to the *psychological* meaning of what is being expressed. This task often necessitates that the original expressions of the participants be changed so that the psychological meaning of what the participants expressed can be more directly apprehended. In fact, the transformations that take place have a dual function: not only are they meant to express the meanings more directly with respect to the psychology of learning (in this case), they are also meant to generalize the meanings so that integration with other descriptions that may be very different becomes more feasible. Thus with P2, instead of staying with 'rifle' as the main theme throughout the description, we called it a 'dangerous but delicate instrument' because psychologically that is the role the rifle played in the description and also by generalizing to instrument, it would be possible to integrate other descriptions if they were dealing with useful objects other than rifles. It turns out that the other description did not deal with any useful object, but the psychological value of what P2 expressed is not lost in any case. Also, in P2's first meaning unit we described the instrument as 'looming large' to the perception of the brothers. Such an expression is meant to capture the physiognomic experience of the participant because it is psychologically richer. If the desire to use the 'weapon' were not so strong the whole learning experience would not have happened. In such a way we highlight P2's phenomenal or psychological world. As Stapleton (1983: 9) put it, 'The entire spiritual force of Husserl's phenomenology lies in the demand that one *see* what is meant. Phenomenological speech is descriptive speech, whose purpose is not to generate an accurate image of the original, but rather to make the original itself evident to clear intuition.' (italics in original). This is done by describing the lived experience of the researcher in the presence of the original description provided by the experiencer. In this way, the third person expressions of the experiencers are shaped in such a way that the manner in which the person experienced the phenomenon is highlighted. By this means it is the first person experience of the participant that is emphasized.

It is important to realize that the phenomenological psychological analysis of the original data is a process. Methodological criteria demand that every step of the analysis be presented as explicitly as possible so that a critical other can follow the analysis as closely as possible. In a way, the explicit presentation of the analytic process is a help to the critic because it allows her to pinpoint the exact spot where disagreement with the analysis might take place. This is part of what makes this method scientific – it's transparency to the critical other. In any case, phenomenological analyses are slow, and challenging, but there is no better way to get to know the data well and intuit what is needed.

As can be seen, our analyses were completed with two columns, but that is because the original descriptions were brief. When original descriptions are long, say 25–40 pages, then all the data cannot be handled in only two columns. It should also be noted that not all of the meaning units have to be transformed the same number of times because all meaning units are not equally psychologically rich. Some very rich meaning units may take three or four transformations and impoverished units may be accomplished with a single transformation. It is important to stress that the criterion is the best expression of the psychological meaning of a unit whether it is done once or several times.

5 The last step is to get the general structure of the experience. This is done by reviewing all of the transformations written in the second column in order to determine the essential ones. But the essential structure may be expressed in ways that are different from the individual elucidations because the latter are correlated with specific parts and the general structure relates to the whole description. This is an eidetic process utilizing the eidetic reduction. The eidetic reduction requires that the researcher looks at a particular phenomenon and then systematically varies it in order to determine its essence. The structures for the two descriptions are:

P1: General structure of learning for Beach sample
For P1, learning is the acceptance of a permission to indulge in one's imaginative and pleasant inclinations in certain worldly settings, and the resolution to continue to do so, despite a pronounced difference with a more authoritative other.
P2: General structure of learning for Rifle sample
For P2 learning consists in the acquisition of a sustaining, beneficial habit with respect to the treatment of a dangerous but delicate instrument that resulted from an early encounter with an authoritative other whom P2 discovered was correct in his advice as opposed to P2's desires. P2 also learned that an apparently rugged instrument could be damaged by childish play.

The above structures are the results of the study and the fact that there are two structures indicates that the two descriptions could not be subsumed into one structure. The major difference that accounts for that finding is the fact that in the first description learning was a wholly experiential process and the second one was about the handling of a physical object. It is interesting to see that one common denominator between the two descriptions is that both involved a relationship with a more authoritative other. However, in P2's case, he eventually went along with the authoritative figure's viewpoint but P1's learning meant resisting the authoritative figure's perspective.

If we look at the general structures we can see that they do capture what is essential about the two experiences with respect to learning. For P1 it was not a matter of acquiring a skill or being able to do something new, but rather of giving herself permission to do what she already knew how to do. We do not know all of the details of her history so we do not know the specific reasons that she did not allow herself to indulge in fantasy, but we do know that she affirmed this choice despite the preference for realistic descriptions by her friend. And we know that her choice was not situation specific because she resolved to do it more in her future. It was something like a permanent change in her character. I would say that her description was an adequate one: just enough data to intuit a structure.

P2's description, on the other hand, was a good one. There was plenty of detail and even accessory information. But the core of the learning situation was that he is now careful with his rifle because of this particular childhood experience and the way he related to his father at that time. He realized that his playing with the instrument caused his father to fail to achieve what he intended in a vital situation and undoubtedly that helped P2 to change his childish attitude. Today he acts completely responsibly with respect to the rifle precisely to avoid the situation that angered his father.

We shall now test whether the psychological structures genuinely capture the essential features of the original description. For P1 the structure indicates that what was essentially learning for P1 was that she permitted herself to indulge in depicting certain realistic settings in personally imaginative ways, notwithstanding the presence of a more accurate realistic description by her friend who understood the reality more accurately. In the face of whatever pressure the presence of her friend may have had on her, P1 resisted such pressure and chose to entertain her own preferred way of experiencing natural settings. P1 then recalled that she lived in her imaginative mode rather frequently when in the presence of nature. Perhaps she couldn't understand why she had departed from that mode, and so she made a resolution that she would continue with her preferred mode despite her friends more realistic preference. In a certain sense, she learned that she could indulge in the preferred imaginative mode, that her history told her was important to her, and for some reason she had given up. For her, the experience reflected an important change in her character.

For P2 what he essentially learned was to habitually treat a rifle in a careful way so that it was always ready to be used when one needed it. The circumstances that contributed to the formation of P2's habit are also important. P2 previously had a childish and playful attitude with respect to the rifle and such playful activity actually damaged the rifle so that when his father went to use it in a vital situation, it failed to function. The father correlated the failure of the rifle with his children's play and he scolded and punished them for it. He then advised them on the proper use of rifles, and P2 learned, belatedly, that his father was correct in his advice and that P2's childish attitude was wrong. P2 also learned how a certain type of childish play could damage a rifle and that a rifle was a delicate and potentially lethal instrument that could easily be damaged.

Sometimes, even larger contexts for learning show themselves. In the rifle example, it can be shown that retrospectively P2 appreciated the difference between a child's world of play and the more serious adult world with respect to lethal weapons. As a child, P2 'played' with a real weapon and caused it to malfunction. As an adult he treats it with proper respect and keeps it in functioning condition. He 'learned' to maintain a proper adult attitude with respect to lethal weapons.

More importantly, light is also thrown on general features of the process of experiential learning. P2 as a child, approached the use of the rifle playfully because that was a dominant feature of

his world at that age, even though such an attitude was not appropriate for the weapon. Partially because of that experience, P2 learned to adopt the proper attitude. Interestingly, many descriptions of the experience of learning show how an initial assumption brought to a situation is inappropriate and it is what accounts for failures that ultimately require a change to proper assumptions in order for correct performance to take place. The reason for this is the temporal characteristic of experiencing in general. Husserl (1991) has demonstrated that the experience of the present, now, is not a point but a certain spread. A present moment consists of a now and protentional and retentional threads. Protention refers to the experience of the immediate future and retention refers to the experience of what immediately receded into the past – but both belong within the present. Thus, the most recent lived experience and the most advancing lived experience belong to the present instant. When learning is meant to happen, persons, based on past experience or reasonable projections, anticipate what the experience is going to be like and often are wrong and so learning is required to perform capably. Thus, in a previous research study (Giorgi, 1985), a father assumed that his son loved to play chess, so he gave him a chess set, but then became aware that the son did not after all in fact like the game of chess. So the father had to reorient his understanding of his son's interest in chess. Also, a guest assumed that her past social behavior would be adequate for a new social situation but then discovered that it wasn't. In each case, the meaning protended for the new situation was not adequate, caused difficulties, and had to be changed. It is hard to approach new situations without some anticipatory meaning and if the anticipated meaning does not fit well, then learning ensues.

The determination of general structures is basically a reflective process that tries to determine what is essential to each description. It is more efficient if the descriptions fit under one structure but such a conclusion should not be forced. The discovery of differences is as important as uniformities. As noted above, these structures are typical and not universal. They are determined by going over the transformed meaning units in order to see what the key meanings are and if they relate to the whole description or not. Usually, one has to reword the transformed meanings so that they can be applied to the whole description and not just a part. Most frequently however new meanings have to be intuited to comprehend what is essential to the whole description. But the structure should contain implicitly all of the key meanings that contributed to the determination of the structure. The way to check for this step is to compare the written structure with all of the transformed meaning units that formed its basis.

Of course, the findings of a study should be compared with the results of other studies. As our purpose here is to only demonstrate a sample of the method, space only permits us to mention briefly that our results here are quite convergent with what Merleau-Ponty described using a different method and different analyses. Merleau-Ponty (1963: 96), in critically reviewing certain animal studies concerned with learning, stated that learning seemed to be 'a new creation after which the behavioral history is qualitatively modified' or that learning is 'a general alteration of behavior which is manifested in a multitude of actions.' Such generality is evidenced in our descriptions. P1 states that after that experience she will allow herself to be more imaginative with nature and P2 says that he now sights his rifle every time before he is going to use it again. Because of the learning the behavioral repertoire of our participants is qualitatively changed with respect to situations encountered in their lives. A fulsome discussion with Merleau-Ponty's understanding of developmental change as a gestalt 'restructuration' would certainly be warranted.

In conclusion we would only reiterate that, because they are so inseparably intertwined, we have explicated the link between phenomenological philosophy and its corollary in phenomenological psychological methodology. At the same time, we have distinguished the psychological adaptation from the purely philosophical method. Again, while what we have presented in this chapter is in no way a completed research project, we hope it has served as a sample data analysis offered for the purpose of illustrating the phenomenological approach to psychological research methodology and how its findings can be related to relevant findings in the literature.

CONCLUSION AND PROSPECTS

Our fidelity to Husserl's emphasis on description is a defining feature of this method. While we are fully aware that many contemporary qualitative methodologies tend to accentuate interpretation (see Chapter 16), we feel the descriptive emphasis continues to offer a significant contribution to the increasing repertoire of qualitative methods becoming available to psychologists. In other publications we had presented a full defense of this emphasis (Giorgi, 1970a, 2000, 2012, 2014) on the basis of, not only phenomenology's comprehensive critique of the domination of naturalist methods in

psychology, but also the epistemological *necessity* for a fully and radically qualitative psychology. The descriptive phenomenological method has been time tested over the course of several decades of research and we believe its strong foundations in Husserl's overall philosophy of science can withstand any criticism from experimental psychologists with regard to scientific legitimacy. Though the *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* is not exclusively devoted to this particular phenomenological method, many studies using this method have been consistently published in this journal since its inception in 1970. While modifications have been made, and adaptations have been employed for different topics and disciplines, the core essential steps have been shown to be robust and enduring. Applications show a broad spectrum of uses in psychology. We can review a short sample of applications on the following topics: decision making (Cloonan, 1971), social anxiety (Beck, 2013), early emotional memories (Englander, 2007), women's depression (Røseth et al., 2011, 2013), psychotherapy research (Giorgi, B., 2011), Alzheimer's disease (Ekman et al., 2012), being criminally victimized (Churchill and Wertz, 2015), medical trauma (Wertz, 2011) and even studies in law enforcement (Broomé, 2013). This is only a brief sampling of psychological phenomena to which this method is being successfully applied.[2] One recent development by Englander (2012) is the expansion of this overall Husserlian approach into the data gathering interview process. There is every reason to believe that, while staying faithful to the five core steps, this method can continue to be adapted to increasingly challenging phenomena and research topics. The enduring nature of this method gives every indication that it will continue to play a significant and lasting role in the accelerating diversification of methodologies we are witnessing in psychology today.

Note

1 We dedicate this chapter to the memory of Barbro Giorgi who was the beloved partner of Amedeo Giorgi and co-author of the previous edition of this chapter. She was a skilled and caring therapist, a promising phenomenological researcher and a dear friend to many in the phenomenological community.

2 Many doctoral dissertations have successfully applied this method, in various countries and professions. They would be too numerous to list here.

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12

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

Virginia Eatough and Jonathan A. Smith

INTRODUCTION

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is concerned with the detailed examination of personal lived experience. IPA is part of a family of phenomenological psychology approaches, all of which differ to some degree in their theoretical emphases and methodological commitments but are in broad agreement about the relevance of an experiential perspective for the discipline. IPA avows a phenomenological commitment to examine a topic, as far as is possible, in its own terms. For IPA this inevitably involves an interpretative process on the part of both researcher and participant. IPA is concerned with the detailed examination of particulars, first providing an in-depth account of each case before moving to look for patternings of convergence and divergence across cases. A text offering a detailed account of the theoretical foundations and empirical practices of IPA was published in 2009 (Smith et al.).

IPA was first articulated in the UK in the 1990s and initially was picked up as an approach to the psychology of experience in health and clinical/counselling psychology. Since then it has considerably widened its reach. It is now one of the best established qualitative approaches in UK psychology but is also used increasingly by psychology researchers throughout the world. In parallel to this growth has been a broadening of the domains of inquiry IPA is employed in. One now finds IPA research in organizational studies (e.g. de Miguel et al., 2015; Tomkins and Eatough, 2014), education (e.g. Denovan and Macaskill, 2013; Thurston, 2014), health (Cassidy et al., 2011; Seamark, et al. 2004), sports science (see Smith, 2016) and the humanities (Hefferon and Ollis, 2006). What appeals to researchers in these diverse fields is IPA's explicit commitment to understanding phenomena of interest from a first person perspective and its belief in the value of subjective knowledge for psychological understanding.

Beyond these developments, IPA continues to mature with evidence of researchers adopting a creative and imaginative stance to the approach which is in keeping with its original spirit – to provide qualitative researchers with *ways of thinking* about and researching psychological topics which are underpinned by phenomenology and hermeneutics. As part of the process of helping researchers to conduct excellent hermeneutic phenomenological research, one of us has written papers elaborating evaluative criteria for what constitutes a good IPA study (Smith, 2011a, 2011b) and these will be discussed later in the chapter.

The chapter begins with a discussion of IPA's intellectual origins emphasizing the phenomenological and hermeneutic touchstones which inform it. Following this, some key characteristics of IPA will be identified and described, namely, experience, idiography and interpretation. IPA has always encouraged engagement with other qualitative approaches as well as working with developments in mainstream psychology and these will be reflected on paying particular attention to cognition and language. This will be followed by a section examining the current picture of IPA research. We finish the chapter with some concluding thoughts.

THE INTELLECTUAL ORIGINS OF IPA: PHENOMENOLOGY AND HERMENEUTICS

IPA has a long and a short history. Although its articulation as a specific approach to qualitative research began in the mid 1990s (Smith, 1994, 1996), it connects with much longer intellectual currents in phenomenology and hermeneutics and with a quiet and persistent concern in psychology with subjective experience and personal accounts (Allport, 1953; James, 1890). Indeed a key motivation for the development of IPA was the articulation of a qualitative approach which locates itself firmly within psychology and acknowledges the discipline's historical lineage with respect to qualitative research (Eatough, 2012). In this section, our aim is to discuss some of the key ideas from phenomenology and hermeneutics which underpin IPA and situate it as an experiential approach to doing research that owns explicitly the interpretative activity of the researcher. For a detailed exposition of the theory and philosophy which informs IPA, readers are referred to Smith et al. (2009).

Phenomenology

Phenomenological philosophy is best conceived of as an ongoing project, one that aims 'to bring philosophy back from abstract metaphysical speculation wrapped up in pseudo-problems, in order to come into contact with the matters themselves, with concrete living experience'. (Moran, 2000: xiii). Husserl's rallying call 'To the things themselves' (*Zu den Sachen*) expresses the phenomenological intention to describe how the world is formed and experienced through consciousness. This intention is often understood as a 'stripping away' of our preconceptions and biases (such as those from science, tradition, common-sense), exposing the taken-for-granted and revealing the essence of the phenomenon whilst transcending the contextual and personal. For Husserl, this necessitates a shift from the *natural attitude* to the *phenomenological attitude* through a series of *reductions* leading back to the experience itself uncluttered by the detritus of prejudices acquired through the process of living one's life. For example, the end point of the Husserlian reductions is not the individual train journey we experience from our singular vantage point but what train journeys have in common, their *whatness* – the invariant structure which makes a train journey a train journey rather than a boat or car journey.

Similarly, IPA is committed to clarifying and elucidating a phenomenon (be that an event, process or relationship) but its interest is in how this process sheds light on experiences as they are lived by an embodied socio-historical situated person. Rather than transcend the particular, IPA aims to grasp the texture and qualities of an experience as it is lived by an experiencing subject. The primary interest is the person's experience of the phenomenon and the sense they make of their experience rather than the structure of the phenomenon itself. Arguably, it is this focus which has appealed to qualitative psychologists, especially those in applied areas who have a keen interest in understanding experiences of significant import, those which *matter* to individuals because they recast aspects of their lives through a demand for meaning-making. In sum, 'IPA has the more modest ambition of attempting to capture particular experiences as experienced for particular people' (Smith et al., 2009: 16).

This more particular aim connects IPA with Heidegger's working through of the phenomenological project and how to carry out experiential research. For example, Heidegger's proposal is that a human being is a *Dasein*, which literally means 'being there' but is typically understood as 'Being-in-the-world' (Spinelli, 1989: 108). This resonates with IPA's understanding of people and the worlds they inhabit as socially and historically contingent and contextually bounded. The great achievement of *Dasein* is that it replaces the individual predicated on Cartesian dualism (person/world, subject/object, mind/body and so on) with people as Being-in-the-world with things and with others. Our relatedness to and involvement in the world is mutually constitutive – we are a Being-in-the-world who is also a Being-with (*Mitsein*) in a with-world (*Mitwelt*). Moreover, it is an already existing world of language, culture, history and so on into which we are *thrown* (Heidegger, 1962/2004). As Merleau-Ponty (1945/2004: xii)

puts it, 'Man is in the world, and only in the world does he know himself.' The phrase 'the rich tapestry of life' gathers fresh meaning here standing for the inextricable interweaving of person and world and which is at odds with the idea of transcending the particularities of an individual life. The mutuality of *Dasein* is pushed even further by Merleau-Ponty and his ideas about how the body is a *body-subject* which discloses the world to each of us in specific ways. The phenomenological interest is with the lived body (*Leib*) not the body of physiological mechanisms and chemical interactions.

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is derived from the Greek verb, *hermēneuein*, to interpret and the noun *hermēneia*, interpretation and its aim is 'to make meaning intelligible' (Grondin, 1994: 20). Hermeneutics began with the exegesis of biblical texts and has developed into a more general concern with the process of understanding (Palmer, 1969; Packer and Addison, 1989). Similar to phenomenology, hermeneutics can be seen as an ongoing project, a form of practical philosophy, comprising of a wide range of thinkers and diverse traditions.

Within these traditions, there is a fair amount of 'definitional vagueness' (Gallagher, 1992: 3) and commentators have attempted to impose some order on this conceptual complexity. For example, two key developments in the history of hermeneutics have been identified: (a) the work of Schleiermacher, Dilthey and Heidegger described as representing a move from 'authorial intent to the linguistic turn' followed by (b) a further shift to 'dialectical hermeneutics' through the work of Gadamer, Habermas and Ricoeur (Sandage et al., 2008). An alternative mapping orders these thinkers and their works into three approaches: conservative hermeneutics (Schleiermacher and Dilthey); moderate hermeneutics (Gadamer and Ricoeur) and radical hermeneutics (Heidegger, and also Derrida and Foucault) (Gallagher, 1992: 10).

In brief, Schleiermacher proposed a twofold interpretative perspective made up of the *grammatical* and the *psychological* and it is this dual stance which gives rise to understanding. Similarly, Dilthey believed that the purpose of hermeneutics is understanding and, taking a more epistemological view, he proposed that hermeneutics should be the method for the human sciences. In addition to texts, hermeneutics can be applied to lived experience (*Erlebnis*) and understanding is the moment when 'life understands itself' (Dilthey, 1976). For both Heidegger and Gadamer, however, the emphasis is on how interpretation is a foundational mode of Being and that to live a life *is* to interpret.

A key difference between Schleiermacher and Gadamer is the former's focus on how interpretation tells us something about the individual and their individual intentions whereas the focus for Gadamer is the text itself and how it might be understood in the specific historical context it is being read. IPA aims to draw on both aspects in a productive manner; acknowledging Gadamer's claim that 'the essential nature of the historical spirit consists not in the restoration of the past but in thoughtful meditation with contemporary life' (Gadamer, 1990/1960: 168–169) whilst recasting Schleiermacher for the present-day:

> The texts examined by IPA researchers are usually contemporary or have been produced in the recent past and in a response to a request by the researcher rather than a purpose driven by the author. Under these circumstances we think that the process of analysis is geared to learning both about the person providing the account and the subject matter of that account, and therefore, that Schleiermacher usefully speaks to us across the centuries. (Smith et al., 2009: 37)

Thus, for IPA, our interpretations are, amongst other things, attempts to understand how we have come to be situated in the world in the particular ways we find ourselves. This hermeneutic standpoint is similar to Richardson, Fowers and Guignon's (1999) dialectical perspective:

> Our nature or being as humans is not just something *we find* (as in deterministic theories), nor is it something we *make* (as in existentialist and constructionist views); instead, it is *what we make of what we find*. (p. 212, emphasis in original)

IPA researchers acknowledge the inevitability of biases, preoccupations and assumptions when conducting research; they reflect on how these shape their research inquiries and, following Gadamer, they aim to engage with them fruitfully for the purpose of understanding. This means taking a questioning and dialectical stance to these fore-understandings and the material they are seeking to understand, recognizing it is an always-unfinished activity. This is because, very often, we are simply not aware of what our assumptions might be when we begin a piece of research, rather we become aware of them as we question and clarify our emergent interpretations (Smith, 2007). Importantly, our prejudices should not be thought of as inherently 'bad', rather we can have 'good'

prejudices which can be 'bridled' (Dahlberg, 2006) and revised, giving rise to more useful and creative interpretations. Fischer conveys this ongoing activity well, giving it a sense of constant reflexive motion on the part of the researcher:

> The researcher repeatedly discovers what his or her assumptions and interpretive understandings were and reexamines them against emerging insights. Findings 'regestalt', are again disrupted, and again 'regestalt'. (Fischer, 2009: 584)

In sum, Smith et al. (2009) capture IPA's dual phenomenological and hermeneutic framing when they say 'Without the phenomenology, there would be nothing to interpret; without the hermeneutics, the phenomenon would not be seen.' (p. 37).

KEY FEATURES OF IPA

Experience

Experience is the subject that IPA addresses and aims to understand in the context of the concrete and meaningful world of human being. Experience is a complex concept and for IPA it means attending to aspects of experience which *matter* to people and give rise to particular actions within a world that is 'always-already to hand' and inherently meaningful. This way of thinking about experience is similar to that of Yancher (2015) who suggests that experience can be understood as *concernful* involvement by situated participants rather than the contents of a private mind.

As agents who participate meaningfully in a meaningful world, humans encounter the events of their experience as mattering; that is, participational agency is characterized by a kind of *care* or *existential concern* with the affairs of living that provides a basis for action such as making judgments, taking positions, and engaging in cultural practices (Yancher, 2015, p. 109).

For IPA, attending to things that *matter* to people means distinguishing between different *parts* of experience and making decisions about which *parts* to focus on. Smith et al. provide the following example to illustrate what they describe as a hierarchy of experience ranging from small experiential parts to more comprehensive ones:

> … imagine that you are about to take a swim in the sea on a hot summer day. You may not be mindful of the pebbles under your feet until you remove your shoes, and then find that you have to hobble the last few steps down to the waterline. You may not be aware of the warmth of the sun on your back, until you begin to anticipate your first bracing contact with the cold water. Momentarily then, you are made aware of the flow of experience; for most of the time, however, you are simply immersed in it, rather than explicitly aware of it. Now imagine that the event has further significance for you: you have been a keen swimmer since childhood, but have not swum on a public beach for some years, since undergoing major surgery for a serious health problem. The anticipation of this swim takes on a host of additional meanings. Perhaps you are concerned about the visibility of scars or other changes to your bodily appearance. Perhaps you have been looking forward to this moment for some time, as a marker of recovery, and the return of a lost self. Perhaps you are simply wondering whether you will be able to remember how to swim! In any of these cases, the swim is marked for you as *an* experience, something important which is happening to you. (Smith et al., 2009: 2)

An IPA study could attend to the *small parts* of this experience, those moments of responsiveness such as how one becomes aware of the sun's warmth and what it is like to experience it. More typically, however, IPA researchers are more likely to focus on how the whole experience is meaningful in the context of one's life as it has been, is being and might be lived.

Experience is subjective because what we experience is a phenomenal rather than a direct reality. We 'stretch forth into the world' (Spinelli, 1989: 12) connecting with events, objects and people in the context of how they appear to us. IPA attends to all aspects of this lived experience, from the individual's wishes, desires, feelings, motivations, belief systems through to how these manifest themselves or not in behaviour and action. Whatever phenomenon is being studied, the emphasis is on how it is *given* to the person and how what is *given* has a quality of *mine-ness*. For example, there is something it is like to drink a fine wine, see the sun rise over a mountain, feel the pain of migraine, receive a diagnosis of dementia. Understanding this first person given-ness requires doing so from the perspective of the person experiencing it; in other words, treating the participant as the *experiential expert* in the phenomenon of interest.

Another way of thinking about this is that IPA researchers are interested in understanding the lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*), the realm of immediate human experience (Halling and Carroll, 1999: 98) from the perspective of the reflective meaning-making individual. The lifeworld is what all knowledge is grounded in – including both our lived subjective knowledge and the objective

knowledge of scientific abstraction – and both presuppose it. These different knowledges are captured beautifully by the following two descriptions of a table. The first is a description from the astrophysicist, Sir Arthur Stanley Eddington, and the second a contrasting description from the philosopher, Lubica Učník:

> My scientific X is mostly emptiness. Sparsely scattered in that emptiness are numerous electrical charges rushing about with great speed; but their combined bulk amounts to less than a billionth of the bulk of the X itself. Notwithstanding its strange construction it turns out to be an entirely efficient X. It supports my Y as satisfactorily as X No. 1; for when I lay the Y on it the little electric particles with their headlong speed keep on hitting the underside, so that the Y is maintained in shuttlecock fashion at a nearly steady level. If I lean upon this X I shall not go through; or, to be accurate, the chances of my scientific Z going through my scientific X is so excessively small that it can be neglected in practical life. (Eddington, 1933: xii)

> It is a table that unites people when they come to visit me and we talk in agreement. It also seems to divide us when we disagree. But it is always in between us, familiar and dependable: to put cups of coffee on; or indeed for whatever purpose we might use it at different times. I sit at that table when I am happy as well as when I am sad, and many memories come rushing in when I look at it. It is slightly damaged on one side from the time my daughter tried to climb up onto it and the table toppled onto her. Years later, she has no scars left, but the table reminds us of this event by the scratch that has remained there ever since: it is a memory writ large. I like to stroke that chipped table, as it reminds me of all the people who sat there once upon a time; and I imagine that others will sit there sometime in the future. It is not just a useful table that I have breakfast on, it is a part of my life. (Učník, 2013: 34–35)

The latter description is the lifeworld. For Husserl, these two descriptions of the same table are not, or should not be seen, in opposition to one another; rather the first one, couched in scientific formalized thinking, is 'our human achievement' (Husserl, 1970: §34d: 127) and presupposes the lifeworld. However, it is a partial description ignoring those aspects which are significant and meaningful for us as we live our lives; attending to these aspects is critical for a full understanding of what it means to be human. Knowledge comes in many forms and IPA is clear about the contribution that subjective knowledge of this sort can make to psychological understanding.

Idiography

Idiography is concerned with how to understand the concrete, the particular and the unique whilst maintaining the integrity of the person. Allport (1940) noted the decline of the idiographic perspective, the lack of interest in the individual case, and the increasing neglect of experience in psychology. A focus on all three, he proposed, would help to redress the limitations of psychology's preoccupation with actuarial predictions saying that 'An entire population (the larger the better) is put into the grinder and the mixing is so expert that what comes through is a link of factors in which every individual has lost his [sic] identity' (Allport, 1937: 244). He concluded that psychology was becoming the province of 'one-sided tests of method' (Allport, 1940: 17).

Although an idiographic approach continues to sit uneasily within psychology, more recently an interest in the idiographic has manifested itself in the development of strategies such as the single-case experimental design (Barlow et al., 2008; Barlow and Nock, 2009) as well as a range of experience sampling methods that emphasize natural settings and real-time and multiple occasions (Conner et al., 2009; Hurlbert, 2011; Hurlbert and Heavey, 2015). Descriptive Experience Sampling (DES) is one such approach (Heavey et al., 2010) demonstrating that the idiographic, the personal and the contextualized is not simply a qualitative concern.

In the context of qualitative research, IPA is resolutely idiographic, always beginning with the particular and ensuring that any generalizations are grounded in this. Rather than taking an either/or stance, IPA argues for (a) the intensive examination of the individual in her/his own right as an intrinsic part of psychology's remit and (b) that the logical route to universal laws and structures starts from an idiographic base, as indicated by Harré:

> I would want to argue for a social science … which bases itself upon an essentially intensive design, and which works from an idiographic basis. Nevertheless such a science is aimed always at a cautious climb up the ladder of generality, seeking for universal structures but reaching them only by a painful, step by step approach. (Harré, 1979: 137)

On a practical level, one way IPA studies express their commitment to the idiographic is by the use of single person case studies (e.g. Bramley and Eatough, 2005; Cheng, 2015; Eatough and Smith, 2006; Rhodes and Smith, 2010; Smith, 1991; Smith et al., 2000; Solli, 2015). One clear advantage of a single person case study is that they 'offer a personally unique perspective on their

relationship to, or involvement in, various phenomena of interest.' (Smith et al., 2009: 29). The holistic nature of the single person case study allows what Mischler (1984) called 'the voice of the lifeworld' to become visible. Thus, the case is a portrayal of the person's ways-of-being-in-the-world. However, case studies can do more than this; they can offer a *way of seeing* that illuminates and affirms 'the centrality of certain general themes in the lives of all particular individuals' (Evans, 1993: 8). Thus, the idiographic researcher is brought closer to noteworthy aspects of the general by connecting the individual unique life with a common humanity.

Beyond single person cases, IPA studies more commonly use small and situated samples so that each individual can be attended to idiographically before attempting a comparative analysis of participant material. The commitment to detailing the diversity and variability of human experience alongside demonstrating what are shared experiences amongst participants can create a tension, albeit often a productive one, that encourages creative thinking in how to retain the insights of both (Thackeray, 2015).

The potential of idiography is still being developed within IPA and in psychology more generally. One way to strengthen IPA's idiographic commitment is to design more studies which focus on multiple snapshots of experience and which emphasize patterns of meaning across time, exploring in ever more detail the historical and social contingencies of individual lifeworlds. We come back to this later in the chapter and point to how studies are beginning to do this.

Interpretation

IPA is an explicitly interpretative endeavour and this section introduces two ways this endeavour might be realized in practice, namely the careful development of and navigation between *layers* of interpretation and the concept of the 'gem' (Smith, 2011c). Underpinning this interpretative engagement are: the hermeneutic circle that lies at the heart of hermeneutic theory, Heidegger's notion of appearing, and IPA's 'double hermeneutic' (Smith and Osborn, 2003) and these three ideas will be discussed first.

The hermeneutic circle encourages researchers to work with their data in a dynamic, iterative and non-linear manner, examining the whole in light of its parts, the parts in light of the whole, and the contexts in which the whole and parts are embedded and doing so from a stance of being open to shifting ways of thinking what the data might mean. One way that IPA thinks about this part/whole dynamic is as a set of relationships which can be used to work interpretively with the data:

The part	*The whole*
The single word	The sentence in which the word is embedded
The single extract	The complete text
The particular text	The complete oeuvre
The interview	The research project
The single episode	The complete life

(Smith et al., 2009: 28)

Moving between these parts and wholes is one way of gleaning meanings from the material which can themselves be examined and amplified.

Smith et al. use Heidegger's notion of *appearing* to suggest that interpretation is similar to the work of detection. As such the researcher is *mining* the material for possible meanings which allow the phenomenon of interest to 'shine forth' (Smith et al., 2009: 35). In turn, these meanings are examined critically, compared with each other as well as with the researcher's evolving and shifting fore-understandings. However, this shining forth of the phenomenon is always in the context of the lifeworld of an embodied situated person. IPA's double hermeneutic is a reminder of this and is captured by the phrase 'The researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of what is happening to them.' (Smith et al., 2009: 3). Here, the double hermeneutic points to how interpretation and understanding involves a synthesis, in this instance, of research participants' sense-making (typically in an interview setting) and that of the researcher during the stages of analysis.

Doing IPA involves navigating between different *layers* of interpretation as one engages deeply with texts of participants' personal experience (Smith, 2004). The double hermeneutic can be invoked here also, suggesting that interpretative layers arise out of a dual interpretative engagement: a hermeneutics of empathy or affirmation and a hermeneutics of suspicion (Ricoeur, 1970). For Ricoeur, interpretation is 'the work of thought which exists in deciphering the hidden meaning in the apparent meaning, in unfolding the levels of meaning implied in the literal meaning' (Ricoeur, 1974, cited in Kearney, 1994: 101). For IPA, these two hermeneutics are employed to encourage researchers to adopt a both/and approach; on the one hand to assume an empathic stance and imagine what-it-is-like to be the participant, whilst on the other hand, to be critical of what appears to be the case and probing for meaning in ways which participants might be unwilling or unable to do themselves. The former aims to produce rich

experiential understandings of the phenomenon under investigation and remain close to the participant's sense-making. The latter involves the researcher putting aside what they have previously accepted at face value in order to develop a textured multilayered narrative of possible meanings. However, it is always the case, that for IPA, the starting point is the participant who is privileged as the source for the interpretative activity of the researcher. This sort of work requires sustained immersion in the data, pushing for more fine-grained interpretations whilst at the same time attempting to keep interpretative order.

Developing Interpretative Layers

To illustrate this textured multilayering, we present examples from two different studies, one on chronic pain (Osborn and Smith, 1998), the second on women's anger and aggression (Eatough and Smith, 2006b).

In the first example, four possible interpretations are offered which mirror the movement between the two hermeneutic positions (empathy and suspicion) described above. In an interview focusing on her experience of living with chronic pain, Linda says:

> I just think I'm the fittest because there are three girls and I'm the middle one and I thought well I'm the fittest and I used to work like a horse and I thought I was the strongest and then all of a sudden it's just been cut down and I can't do half of what I used to. (Osborn and Smith, 1998: 70)

There are several interpretative possibilities here, potentialities of meaning which can shed light on what might be going on for Linda. Taking this at face value and holistically (as in the parts and wholes discussed earlier) one understanding is that Linda is comparing herself to her sisters in order to emphasize how her pain has changed her. There seems little to dispute here; it is easy to imagine oneself in a similar situation and comparing oneself to others in order to get a grasp of what is happening. However, as Osborn and Smith go on to show, one can be more interrogative and focus in on Linda's metaphoric use of 'working like a horse'. Clearly, we know that Linda was never as strong as a horse but describing herself as such exaggerates the strength she had in the past in order to draw attention to how weak and fragile she feels in comparison now. Similarly when Linda describes being 'cut down' it evokes images of a scythe slicing through a field of grass or a crop of hay.

Deepening the interpretative engagement, one can examine the temporal referents: see Box 12.1, an extract from a paper by Jonathan (Smith, 2004) which pursues this.

This is a close reading of the data, a stretching of the interpretative threads which are tethered to Linda's actual words and which is likely to be supported with evidence elsewhere in the account. What IPA resists, certainly in the early stages, is

Box 12.1 Shifting time in Linda's extract

Linda begins in the present tense:

> I just think I'm the fittest because there are three girls and I'm the middle one.

So initially one might assume Linda is referring to herself now – well yes there probably are still three of them and her birth order won't have changed, but *I'm the fittest?* Surely she means 'I used to be the fittest', in contrast to how she is now? And indeed she then slips into the past tense:

> …and I *thought* well I'm the fittest and I *used* to work like a horse and I *thought* I *was* the strongest.

This seems to confirm that Linda is referring to a time in the past when she had such great strength and which she has now lost. So how does one explain the apparent contradiction, 'I am the fittest', 'I was the fittest'? Well I think this goes to the heart of the psychological battle for Linda, as her sense of identity is ravaged by her back pain. Thus, on the one hand, Linda acknowledges that she has lost an identity a strong, proud and autonomous self, which has been replaced by an enfeebled and vulnerable self. On the other hand, Linda still 'identifies' with the strong self so that in part her sense of who she is is still represented by the super-fit being in the image. Thus Linda is struggling between being taken over by a new self, *defined* by her chronic pain, and hanging on to an old self, *in spite of* that pain. This struggle is literally illustrated in the temporal changes in the passage itself (Smith, 2004, p. 45).

top down interpretations, those that import theory before one has had the chance to dwell with the data and work towards disclosing meaning. For example, as Jonathan points out in his paper, a psychoanalytic interpretation might be that the horse symbolizes Linda's sexual appetite which is frustrated by her pain. This psychoanalytic meaning-making is not necessarily wrong but it goes beyond the interpretative work of IPA and does risk severing the threads which connect the various possibilities of meaning and the account itself.

In the anger study we demonstrated the interpretative range of IPA, showcasing interpretations that were more closely grounded in participants' own accounts (Eatough et al., 2008) and ones which were more probing and questioning of their meaning-making (Eatough and Smith, 2006a, 2006b). To illustrate this range here, we present three extracts from interviews with a participant we have called Marilyn (from Eatough and Smith, 2006a). In the first one, Marilyn offers a reason for her anger, namely a hormonal one:

> It's awful but I mean that's all hormones as well which explains away a lot of my moods and aggression and that. But I mean I don't know whether it I mean I have got a lot of hang ups about my family but I think a lot of it is hormonal my aggression and things like that (p. 121).

What are the possible meanings that might be disclosed by a close and critical interpretative engagement? From the hermeneutic stance of empathy, the researcher can accept Marilyn's claim that hormones are responsible for her anger and point to how the claim negates alternative understandings and enables Marilyn to not take responsibility for her actions because the assertion can be seen as arising out of a biomedical discourse which denies agency. Alternatively, adopting a hermeneutics of suspicion means the researcher might home in on the phrase. 'I have got a lot of hang ups about my family' and question the robustness of Marilyn's hormonal sense-making. Indeed, Marilyn does have a troubled relationship with her family; in particular a painful relationship with her mother and the pervasive presence of this relationship in her accounts pointed to the importance of maintaining a more critical and probing attitude. As Kearney says, 'it is not sufficient simply to describe meaning as it *appears*; we are also obliged to interpret it as it *conceals* itself' (Kearney, 1994: 94).

Marilyn described a relationship defined by feelings of rejection and separateness:

> My mum was always with my brother, he was always you know, he was the lad and my mum used to be like, say that I used to look like my dad and she didn't like my dad so I always thought she didn't like me. It was that type of relationship, not close at all (p. 128).

The first sentence captures our attention and it shows that Marilyn thinks her mother prefers her brother to her. We can reflect that by the time most children reach adulthood, they are aware that there are qualitative differences in the ways they are loved by their parents. For many people, this can be a positive experience in that their individual qualities make up who they are and they are loved, if not because of them, then at least in spite of them. However, feeling that a sibling is preferred over oneself is very different, especially if that preference is overlaid with a negative comparison to a disliked and absent parent.

Staying with the first sentence we can reflect further on Marilyn's use of the word *with* and offer a tentative interpretation that mother and brother have a shared identity that excludes Marilyn and places her outside. To give support to this interpretation, we look for substantiation elsewhere in the data. And in this case it is not hard to find:

> She was always my brother [sic]. I mean my brother could never do anything wrong but I think that was because she was in two minds whether he was my stepfather's. She, I think she'd been having an affair with him and I think she might have thought he was my stepfather's and not my real dad's. She used to always compare me to my dad in my ways and my looks and my actions and that and it just wasn't, but I mean there was never any affection. I mean I can't remember ever her putting her arm around me and kissing me. My stepdad he used to, but my mum never. My dad was very loving. I remember that, he really was (p. 128).

The opening sentence carries tremendous symbolic weight; her mother and brother do not simply have a close bond, rather it appears they have psychologically merged for Marilyn into 'one' person. This supports the shared identity reading and at the same time pushes the interpretation further: Marilyn experiences the identification between mother and brother as not simply shared but actually merged.

Symmetrically, Marilyn and her father have become 'one', and it is a 'one' that is hated by her mother. From Marilyn's perspective, there is a clear division between herself and her father who

looked and behaved the same (the old family); and her mother, brother and stepfather (the new family). We do not know when Marilyn first became aware that her brother might be her stepbrother but whenever the suspicion arose it offered her an explanation for the perceived rejection. But having an explanation does not ease Marilyn's pain; rather, mother and brother and stepfather have become identified in a way that Marilyn feels excluded from. They form a nexus which amplifies Marilyn's sense of separateness.

Thus, in both examples, there is a deepening interpretative reading which shifts from foregrounding the participants' meaning-making to harnessing that of the researchers. The meaning-making of the researchers includes some more abstract properties and reflects their psychological thinking. For Linda, this thinking centres around identity issues whilst for Marilyn, the focus is on the damage that can be done when significant family relationships are experienced as isolating and polarized. In both cases however the researchers' thinking is still prompted by, and responding to, the account by the participant.

The Concept of the Gem

In a 2011 paper, Jonathan proposed the concept of the gem as a valuable interpretative tool for IPA specifically and experiential qualitative psychology more generally. The key feature of the gem concept is its capacity to *illuminate* and enhance interpretation and understanding. Typically, the gem is a singular remark which jumps out at the researcher or a small extract from an entire interview that the researcher is drawn to and has a hunch might be key to understanding 'a person's grasp of their world' (Ashworth, 2008: 4–5). In response to the question of what gems do, Jonathan proposes that they can provide analytic leverage, shine light on the phenomenon under study, on a whole interview transcript or even the entire corpus of data (Smith, 2011c: 7).

Jonathan proposes a spectrum of three types of gem: shining, suggestive and secret. A gem that shines, literally shines, with meaning; the meaning is manifest. For example, in a study by Smith and Osborn (2007) on the experience of severe chronic pain, Helen says, 'It's the mean me, my mean head all sour and horrible, I can't cope with that bit, I cope with the pain better' (p. 522). This is a shining gem because it conveys clearly and succinctly the debilitating impact of pain for this woman. This participant has extreme pain; indeed it is so bad that she can no longer work. And yet what the reader would consider excruciating is, for her, manageable. For Helen it is the psychological consequences of the pain, the impact on the way she sees and conveys herself which is so difficult to bear. The extract is clear and tells us something pretty shocking. It also stands as an important illumination on the accounts of the other participants in the study.

With a suggestive gem the meaning is less manifest, less present and the researcher has to work harder to disclose the meaning, moving repeatedly around and within the hermeneutic circle. Finally, the secret gem is the most elusive, can be easily missed and only shows itself through an absorbed attentiveness with the material which allows 'this small quiet part to be illuminated by the larger and louder corpus in which it is embedded' (Smith, 2011c: 13). Marilyn's utterance '*She was always my brother*' which was discussed earlier is one example of a secret gem.

COGNITION AND LANGUAGE

Whilst IPA takes a critical stance towards many of the dominant methodological and epistemological assumptions of the discipline, it challenges these from within by adopting an interrogative position to both its own findings and the extant psychological literature. For example, it shares Bruner's (1990) regret that the cognitive revolution led to a cognitive psychology of information processing rather than a psychology whose core concern was meaning-making as originally envisaged.

Jonathan (Smith, 1996) has pointed to how both social cognition and IPA share a concern with unravelling the relationship between what people think (cognition), say (account) and do (behaviour). Both epistemologically and methodologically this concern manifests itself differently; IPA conceives of cognition as 'dilemmatic, affective and embodied. It is complex, changeable, and can be hard to pin down, but it is cognition none the less.' (Smith et al., 2009: 191). IPA studies aim to demonstrate that when people are thinking and deliberating about significant events in their lives, this thinking is an aspect of Being-in-the–world and not simply detached disembodied cognitive activity. This is more akin to how some artificial intelligence theorists drawing on phenomenology, talk of structural couplings in which 'Thinking is not detached reflection but part of our basic attitude to the world' (Mingers, 2001: 110).

For example, in a study examining how families think about the process of donating the brain of a family member, it was clear that the decision

was not simply made through the rational deliberation of a person simply weighing up the pros and cons as the information processing perspective would have us believe. Rather, emotions, feelings and context were inextricably caught up with attempts to be rational (Eatough et al., 2012: 15). This insight grounded in personal descriptions of the *how* of decision making supports and adds flesh to current cognitive psychological theorizing that suggests decision making is underpinned by two qualitatively dissimilar systems: one that is affective, fast and intuitive and one that is more deliberative (Usher et al., 2011). IPA's re-appropriation of cognition has been fruitful, leading to a body of studies with ramifications for policy change in a wide range of arenas (e.g. Burton et al., 2013; Flowers et al., 1997; Oke et al., 2012; Spiers et al., 2015). Similarly, IPA researchers see fertile ground for collaboration with those cognitive scientists who are drawing on phenomenological philosophy to inform their embodied active situated cognition (EASC) approach (Larkin et al., 2011).

In sum, for IPA, cognition lies at the heart of the phenomenological project but it is a cognition that is 'dynamic, multi-dimensional, affective, embodied, and intricately connected with our engagement with the world.' (Smith et al., 2009:191). Following Husserl, IPA researchers wish to understand 'the experiences in which something comes to be grasped as known' (Moran, 2000: 108). (See Smith et al., 2009 for a discussion of the relationship between cognition and reflection).

Just as IPA conceives of cognition differently from cognitive psychology, it thinks about language in a fundamentally different way from discursive studies. The poststructuralist and social/cultural constructionist underpinnings of discursive psychology leads to an emphasis on the *effects* of language and discourse and what might be accomplished through talk, text and so on (Willig, 2012: 111). From this perspective, discursive researchers are interested in how people talk about and construct their experiences. In contrast, IPA, drawing from Heidegger, subscribes to a more expressivist ontology, viewing people as *existential world-disclosers* in a world of situated concernful involvement (see earlier section on experience) rather than epistemic world-constructors (Yancher, 2015):

> In this respect, it might be said that participational agents disclose (or reveal) a world through their concernful involvement; or that the world shows up for agents based on what they are doing as part of their fully-embodied, largely tacit practical involvement in the world. (Yancher, 2015: 111)

This position is not unlike that of symbolic interactionists such as Mead (1934) and Blumer (1969), both of whom espouse a particular image of human beings as creative agents who have a hand in constituting (as opposed to constructing) their social worlds, despite limitations imposed by material and biological conditions and social, cultural, historical linguistic processes. This is possible, in part, by appropriating, refiguring and discarding the linguistic conventions and discursive practices of one's culture.

Of course, IPA recognizes the action oriented nature of talk and that people negotiate and achieve interpersonal objectives in their conversations, and that reality is both contingent upon and constrained by the language of one's culture. Therefore it shares some ground with discursive psychology (Willig, 2003). However, IPA suggests that this represents only a partial account of what people are doing when they communicate. For IPA the lived life with its many vicissitudes is much more than historically situated linguistic interactions between people.

For instance, if we consider emotion: even if emotions and emotionality are discursive acts which can be analysed 'something like conversations' (Harré and Gillett, 1994: 154), they are not simply language games and/or an effect of discourse. Missing from such accounts are the private, psychologically forceful, rich and often indefinable aspects of emotional life. As Chodorow (1999: 165) points out: 'even emotion words and emotional concepts must have individual resonance and personal meaning'. She goes on to say:

> That thoughts and feelings are entangled and that thoughts are thought in culturally specific languages – these ideas do not mean that there is no private feeling or that any particular thought has only a public cultural meaning. Culturally recognizable thoughts or emotion terms can also be entwined in a web of thought-infused feelings and feeling-infused thoughts experienced by an individual as she creates her own psychic life within a set of interpersonal and cultural relations. (Chodorow, 1999: 166)

Our telling of the events in our life has personal relevance and an ongoing significance for the individual concerned (Smith, 1996). We propose that when people tell stories of their lives, they are doing more than drawing on the culturally available stock of meanings. People may want to achieve a whole host of things with their talk such as save face, persuade and rationalize, but there is almost always more at stake and which transcends the specific local interaction. Rosenwald (1992: 269)

poignantly notes: 'If a life is no more than a story and a story is governed only by the situation in which it is told, then one cannot declare a situation unlivable or a life damaged'. Amongst other things it seems to us that our personal accounts are also concerned with human potential and development, with *making* our lives by connecting the past with the present and future; they are 'imaginative enterprises' (Riessman, 1992: 232).

IPA AND OTHER QUALITATIVE APPROACHES

Other Phenomenological Psychology Approaches

Both phenomenological philosophy and hermeneutic theory are characterized by agreement as well as diverse (yet inherently connected) perspectives and emphases. This diversity has provided fertile ground for the development of a range of phenomenological psychology approaches which themselves have both different and shared emphases and commitments. These include descriptive phenomenology (Giorgi, 1997); hermeneutic phenomenology (van Manen, 1990); lifeworld research (Ashworth, 2016; Ashworth and Ashworth, 2003; Dahlberg et al., 2008); dialogal approach (Halling, 2008) and critical narrative analysis (Langdridge, 2007). In what follows we briefly describe some of these emphases (for a fuller discussion, see Dowling, 2007; Finlay, 2009; Langdridge, 2007).

A key feature that unites phenomenological psychologists is their interest in experience and their belief that studying experience can provide valuable insights into human life. Similarly, they are agreed that this study requires valuing the evidence of everyday life; it is through the close examination and reflection of this life that its meaningfulness and significance is made known.

A key concern emerges between the approaches with the differential weight they give to the place of description and interpretation. Descriptive phenomenology is heavily indebted to the ideas and method of Husserl which aim to develop 'the hidden intentionalities of consciousness so that we may examine their essential structures in a new, presuppositionless manner.' (Kearney, 1994: 18). The end result is a description which discloses the phenomenon and shows it in a pure and primordial sense. In the context of descriptive phenomenology, this aim manifests itself as a greater interest with the universal structures underpinning individual experiences of a given phenomenon rather than the individual experiences themselves. For example, moving from several singular experiences of joy to a structure or class of features which describe 'being joyful'.

In contrast, IPA is equally indebted to Heidegger and his view that 'the very term "description" already implies that what is described has been phenomenally *encountered* and *interpreted* "as" something.' (Churchill, 2014: 5). Hence IPA's attention to and incorporation of ideas from hermeneutic theory (see 'Hermeneutics' section above) with the goal of valuing particularity, preserving variability and acknowledging contingency.

The dialogal approach places a particular emphasis on fostering dialogue *between* researchers in order to deepen understanding of a phenomenon. It aims to facilitate a conversation which flickers with what Gadamer called 'a spirit of its own' and which arises out of authentic collaboration. The approach can be described as a discovery process of sustained and regular dialogue over a period of time which moves from individual to collaborative understanding. For this dialogue to be successful, researchers work at embracing both structure and freedom, what Halling has called 'disciplined spontaneity'. This requires researchers to commit to and value collaboration alongside a willingness to live with uncertainty and ambiguity; to be comfortable not knowing what the dialogue might 'throw-up' or where it might take you.

It is also possible for phenomenological researchers to attend to shared aspects of the lifeworld in order to deepen understanding of experience. These aspects or fractions are pervasive characteristics of each persons' lifeworld and include temporality, spatiality, embodiment, moodedness, self-hood, sociality, discourse and project (Ashworth, 2016). Spatiality refers to the physical environment that surrounds us, feelings of interior and exterior space, and our sense of place, home and dwelling – in other words, lived space. Attending to this lifeworld fraction can shed light on how ageing alters a person's relationship to their home, a relationship imbued with physical, cultural and personal meanings (Barry, 2012).

Finally, a more interrogative stance is taken with critical narrative analysis which takes up the hermeneutic insights of Ricoeur, in particular the hermeneutics of suspicion. This approach retains a focus on experience and subjective understanding but broadens the context to include the political sphere and extends analysis to include aspects of social theory, for example, work on sexualities and sexual citizenship (Langdridge, 2013).

These various methods have been described as 'a family of approaches, a fuzzy set where all share the basic tenets of phenomenology but each articulates an approach in a particular way.' (Smith

et al., 2009: 200). While exploring the rich potential of the different emphases of different phenomenological and hermeneutic approaches, we think it is valuable, at the same time, for experiential qualitative researchers to recognize their common grounding and purpose.

Other Qualitative Approaches

Although IPA is an explicitly experiential approach grounded in phenomenology and hermeneutics and one which places the person at the heart of all its research endeavours, it has always been open to working with other approaches in order to deepen experiential and subjective understanding. In the first edition of this book we proposed that IPA has a natural affinity with various forms of narrative analysis and this is supported by the growing number of studies using IPA and some form of narrative approach (Davidsen and Reventlow, 2010; Lavie-Ajayi et al., 2012; Thylstrup et al., 2015). In particular, we see common ground with those approaches which view narrative as an 'interpretive feat (Bruner, 1987: 13); this connects directly to IPA's interpretative commitment as well as taking the view that people are not simply tellers of stories but are involved in the mutual constitution of self and world. An interest in narrative beyond how it is constructed to how 'it operates as an instrument of mind in the construction of reality' (Bruner, 1991: 6), chimes with IPA's belief that lived experience is the fundamental unit of analysis.

For example, in the anger research described earlier in this chapter, we included an examination of how counselling sessions for one particular participant had begun to disrupt her longstanding narrative of biochemical agents as having causal explanation (Eatough and Smith, 2006b). We were struck by how this woman appeared caught up in a struggle to *re-story* her life (Gergen, 1999: 172), and how this reconstructive function is a key aspect of many counselling and psychotherapeutic approaches. The underlying principle is a narrative one; clients are encouraged to re-interpret their lived experiences so that their lives become more liveable. Indeed, one aim of counselling is to investigate the past so that 'it can be faced, renegotiated and in some respects even relived "but with a new ending."' (Jacobs, 1986: 5).

Beyond narrative approaches, there is the potential for fertile links to develop with Foucauldian discourse analysis because it shares a concern with how discursive constructions are implicated in the experiences of the individual (Willig, 2003). For example, in experiential emotion work when participants talk about both bottling up and venting anger they often invoke images of a *container* which is unstable and explosive. This symbolization is derived from the hydraulic model of emotion which has dominated both popular and scientific discourses throughout the twentieth century. This model supposes that our emotions are beyond our control, that they are 'discharge processes' that inflict themselves upon the individual. Consequently, we think of being driven by our anger and of our anger being out of control, metaphors which are imbued with passivity. This view of anger renders people as passive agents and is implicated in how anger is lived and experienced. Just as IPA works iteratively with the parts and wholes of participants' accounts, similarly it can work discursively and experientially, attending to myriad ways in which discourses are *lived* in the life of a person. Currently there are a small number of published papers which have used these two approaches either together (Johnson et al., 2004) or as part of a combination of several approaches (Frost et al., 2011; Josselin and Willig, 2014).

The past five years or so has seen a welcome and growing interest in pluralist approaches within qualitative psychological research (Frost et al., 2010; Johnson and Stefurak, 2014). In a recent article for *The Psychologist*, several forms of pluralist approaches were identified, suggesting they share the belief that:

> human experience is multidimensional and multi-ontological, that its exploration can be better served by combining methods to address the research question in many ways, and that embracing the differences that different paradigms bring can help us better understand the complexities of human experience and interaction. (Shaw and Frost, 2015: 2)

These approaches variously embrace pluralism that is methodological (Frost, 2009), analytical (Barnes et al., 2014), interpretative (Coyle, 2010) and dialectical (Johnson, 2012). Such diversity bodes well for qualitative psychology helping to foster collaboration which avoids 'methodolatry' (Chamberlain, 2000, 2012) and it is hoped that more qualitative researchers including those using IPA will embark on work which incorporates a pluralist sensibility.

WHAT DOES IPA RESEARCH LOOK LIKE?

IPA has produced a steadily growing corpus of research studies since its inception in the mid

1990s. In this section we discuss briefly the areas of psychology key constructs that seem to be emerging from the corpus, the implications of an idiographic sensibility as well as the expansion of data collection methods beyond the semi-structured interview which is the exemplary technique for IPA researchers.

The reach of IPA beyond psychology into other disciplines as well as its application by researchers to an ever-increasing range of topics leads us to reflect on whether certain themes can be identified from the corpus of published work. Typically, IPA studies explore existential matters of considerable importance for the participant. These matters are often transformative, bringing change and demanding reflection and (re)interpretation for the individuals concerned. As a result, it is possible to glean patterns within the studies: a concern with identity and a sense of self, a focus on participants' meaning-making and an attention to bodily feeling within lived experience. Significant events and topics may have considerable effect on the sense of self and IPA's detailed fine-grained analyses of individual lived experiences enable these effects to come to the fore.

Issues of identity and self may well emerge as a key organizing principle for IPA or even qualitative research more generally (Smith, 2004; Smith et al., 2009) and it is unsurprising that this is the case. IPA deals with issues that *matter* to people and that in some way, change or influence how people think about themselves and their place in the world. Similarly, IPA's concern with how participants impose meaning on events in their lives generates questions which can tap into 'hot cognition' – those matters in a person's life which are burning, emotive and dilemmatic or those involving 'cool cognition' – involving longer-term reflection across the life course. Increasingly, there is evidence of IPA researchers attending more explicitly to bodily experience (especially emotional experience) alongside sense-making and mentation and this is timely (Gill, 2015; Lewis and Lloyd, 2010; Loaring et al., 2015; Pemberton and Fox, 2013) because it connects with recent interest in affect (Burkitt, 2014; Cromby, 2012, 2015; Wetherell, 2012) but as importantly, it speaks to how IPA continues to develop, often through an engagement with the philosophy that underpins it.

As previously discussed, IPA is deeply committed to the idiographic method and this inevitably has consequences for sample size. The number of participants might range from one to thirty with the norm being towards the lower end, and increasingly, there is a clearer and more robust articulation for smaller sample sizes (Brocki and Wearden, 2006; Smith et al., 2009). For example, keeping sample size small and homogeneous and interviewing participants several times (e.g. Clare, 2002, 2003; Rodriguez and Smith, 2014; Snelgrove et al., 2013) is a strategy that retains IPA's idiographic emphasis whilst embedding any emerging patterns in a rich and detailed context. Clearly, a number of factors determine sample size: practical restrictions, the richness of individual cases and the strength of commitment to a case-by-case approach (Smith and Osborn, 2003). Nonetheless, IPA studies do not want to lose sight of the particularities of individual lives, emphasizing that convergence and divergence across these lives are more compelling when they emerge from a case-by-case approach. And although IPA wants to retain its flexible, non-prescriptive stance with respect to methodological issues such as sample size and strategy, form of data collection and so on, it is also increasingly confident in its promotion of studies with N=1 as having a central place in qualitative psychological approaches (Smith, 2004; Smith et al., 2009).

Interviewing is one of the most powerful and widely used tools of the qualitative researcher. A range of interview styles are possible and a range of terms are adopted for those styles (e.g. structured, semi-structured or unstructured). However, as with much else in qualitative research, there is considerable variability in how different researchers use these and how they work in practice. There is also lively debate about the importance of interviews for qualitative research in psychology (see special section on interviewing, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2005).

There is no a priori requirement for IPA to use the interview, and Smith (2004, 2005) has encouraged more use of other data collection methods such as diaries and personal accounts in IPA work. However it remains the case that the interview is by far the most common way of collecting data in IPA and for good reason – the real-time interaction with the participant gives major flexibility for the researcher in facilitating the participant in exploring their lived experience.

Typically, the IPA researcher employs semi-structured interviews which means developing a set of questions which are used to guide, rather than dictate, the course of the interview. One way to think about this is that the participant is the *experiential expert* (Smith and Osborn, 2003), a story-teller not a respondent with respect to the topic of interest while the researcher aims to be an *enabler* who helps the participant evoke and bring to life the phenomenon being talked about. Equally important is being open and receptive to novel and/or unexpected topics and issues introduced by participants. This requires the researcher to facilitate the giving and making of an account in a sensitive and empathic manner, recognizing that

the interview constitutes a human-to-human relationship (Fontana and Frey, 2000). An appropriate metaphor for the IPA researcher is a traveller who:

> wanders along with local inhabitants, asks questions that lead the subjects to tell their own stories of their lived world, and converses with them in the original Latin meaning of conversation as 'wandering together with'. (Kvale, 1996: 4)

Thus, the IPA researcher aims to enter into the lifeworld of the participant rather than investigate it; to move between guiding and being led; to be consciously naïve and open; and to be receptive to change and ambiguity.

IPA's continuing development as an experiential qualitative approach is reflected in the growing number of studies that employ multi-modal forms of data collection alongside the semi-structured interview. These include the use of focus groups (McParland et al., 2011; Palmer et al., 2010; Tomkins and Eatough, 2010); combining the typical IPA interview with other forms of creative interviewing such as the Imagery in Movement and Focusing approaches (Boden and Eatough, 2014); asking participants to create pictorial representations of their experience (Kirkham et al., 2015; Shinebourne and Smith, 2011); using a photo-elicitation approach (Lawson and Wardle, 2013); and poetry (Foster and Freeman, 2008; Gregory, 2011; Spiers and Smith, 2012).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

IPA encourages researchers to be imaginative and flexible in the design and execution of a research study within the parameters of some clearly accessible guidelines. This both/and position speaks to the novice as well as the more experienced researcher and highlights the dynamic nature of the research process. Qualitative researchers are in the business of wanting to variously understand, interpret, explain and know something. This means using tried-and-tested principles alongside a willingness to adapt these in the face of what research throws up – so neither a rule-bound rigidity nor a methodological free-for-all.

IPA is an experiential psychological approach that draws inspiration from phenomenological philosophy and hermeneutic theory. In this spirit, IPA *encourages* researchers using the approach to engage with its theoretical and epistemological underpinnings whilst recognizing that they are not philosophers and that often their research will be driven by pragmatic concerns. Even so, at the very least, IPA wants researchers to assume a sensibility which is imbued with these underpinnings, a phenomenological and hermeneutic stance which helps them achieve their aims of research that is 'experience-near'.

It is worth noting that IPA has always positioned itself as an evolving dynamic way of doing research and an approach which reflects critically on its development. These sentiments are very much in keeping with the spirit of phenomenological philosophy and hermeneutics. Jonathan (Smith, 2011a, 2011b) developed a set of evaluative criteria for IPA research so that IPA researchers can examine their work in light of these to ensure that they are sensitive to those touchstones and characteristics which define IPA. He proposes three quality levels (good, acceptable, unacceptable) which can be applied to published papers (so the emphasis is on the products of research rather than the process) and he delineates these carefully providing detailed examples of work that meets the criterion of good. In addition, he identifies the key characteristics that make for a good IPA; these include a sustained focus on a particular aspect of experience, rich experiential data, assessment of the thematic structure through the use of a measure of prevalence, careful elaboration of themes and of course, a detailed interpretative engagement with the material. It is likely that these criteria will be honed and further developed and it would be interesting to see the community of IPA researchers reflect on their usefulness.

So IPA continues to develop. It is being used to address an ever-wider range of research questions in an expanding array of disciplines. We have commented on the increasing use of multimodal forms of data collection supplementing the tried and tested in-depth interview. And the emergence of the pluralist qualitative position offers helpful grounding for the development of studies combining IPA with other methodologies. All of this is to be welcomed. For the researcher then the challenge, and the opportunity, is to design and conduct high quality research exploring the full potential of IPA while retaining its core commitment to the importance of sustained engagement with the individual's attempts to make sense of their personal lived experience.

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13

Q Methodology

Paul Stenner, Simon Watts and Marcia Worrell

INTRODUCTION

Q methodology is amongst the oldest methods in psychology with an explicitly *interpretivist* focus on the meanings the participants in a study setting attach to their social world (Bowling, 1997). It was first introduced by William Stephenson in a letter to *Nature* published in 1935. After completing a PhD in physics, Stephenson worked as assistant to Charles Spearman and subsequently also to Cyril Burt in the Psychology Department at University College London. His 1935 letter observed that the factor analytical techniques being developed at the time by Spearman (1927) (as well as Thomson, Pearson, and others), in order to facilitate the measurement and manipulation of supposedly essential traits, could also be deployed within a very different ontological framework and to a radically alternative end: namely, the systematic study of *subjectivity.*

Hence, Q methodology was designed expressly to explore the subjective dimension of any issue towards which different points-of-view can be expressed. Methodologically speaking, subjectivity is made the centre of concern in two related ways that correspond to the two main distinctive aspects of Q methodology: the collection of data in the form of Q sorts and the subsequent by-person correlation and factor analysis of those sorts. The Q sort as a form of data collection was developed for the purpose by Stephenson, not only to maximize the expression of subjectivity, but also to deal with the relatively unusual situation of a form of data analysis that, technically speaking, treats participants as variables rather than cases. The 'Q' in Q methodology thus refers to a distinction between procedures that correlate and factor traits (named 'R methodology' after the 'r' in the famous Pearson correlation) and those that do the same with persons or Q sorts (named Q methodology).

In simple terms, Q methodological studies involve a group of participants sorting a sample of items into a configuration (the Q sort) that, taken as a *gestalt*, reflects a relevant subjective dimension (e.g. personal degree of agreement with the items). The Q sorts of a number of participants – or, on occasion, numerous sorts from the same participant – can then be analysed by person to yield a smaller set of factors each of which identifies a highly inter-correlated cluster of Q sorts (i.e. Q sorts from within the group that are sorted in a similar way). Given the manifold possibilities of combination inherent in the Q sort task, Q sorts that are sorted in a similar way typically express a *shared and coherent point-of-view* on

the topic addressed by the item set. This point-of-view is then identified and explicated through careful interpretation of the factors or, more accurately, through careful interpretation of the different item configurations that typify each factor. Q studies duly allow the holistic identification and rich description of a finite range of distinct viewpoints relating to the addressed issue or subject matter. Depending upon theoretical orientation, such viewpoints are also referred to alternatively as 'understandings', 'perspectives', 'perceptions', 'representations' or 'discourses' (see Wolf, 2008).

Stephenson's concern with subjectivity will, of course, be shared by many who read this handbook. Such concern was nonetheless somewhat at odds with the positivistic, hypothesis led research that prevailed in the psychological discipline of his time. Despite his initial optimism and belief that Q methodology would allow the development of a new psychology (Stephenson, 1936), Stephenson never truly established his method as a serious alternative to the psychometric possibilities afforded by conventional factor analytic techniques. He developed and then directed the Institute for Experimental Psychology at Oxford, but subsequently left the UK for the USA after the Second World War and thereafter effectively left psychology, apparently frustrated with its intransigence. As a consequence, Q methodology all but disappeared from the UK and from psychology, continuing in the USA thanks to the efforts of individuals such as Steve Brown (1980) in fields such as political science. Q and its inventor have subsequently been all but written out of the history of British psychology, where most now associate Q sorting only with Carl Rogers!

Fortunately, Q methodology returned to the UK and to psychology during the 1980s as part of what has since been called 'the discursive turn'. A key moment here was the Q methodological conference held at Reading which was attended by Stephenson in 1989, the year of his death. This return, associated predominantly with the work of Rex and Wendy Stainton Rogers and their students, was inspired by the kind of constructivist and poststructuralist thinking best exemplified in the writings of legendary polymath Beryl C. Curt (e.g. Curt, 1994). In this context, subjectivity becomes a central concern once more and is theorized in relation to its enmeshment in the power dynamics of a culturally and historically shifting tectonic manifold of discursive practice. Here is Curt (1994: 119–120) describing this 'critical polytextualist' use of Q: 'What we were looking for as a method was the "opposite" of correlating "traits", something which correlated whole structures of readings (e.g. about people) in order to disclose how they "shake out" into sets of very similar accounts, i.e. shared stories'. Q methodology filled this need very nicely. So, despite its factor analytic heritage, Q finally found an adopted home for itself within UK psychology as a discursive, constructivist, and hence as an essentially *qualitative* method, which is why it has a place in this book.

POSITIONING Q: SOME NOTES ON NATURALISM

If Q is a qualitative method, it is nonetheless an idiosyncratic one. In this section we will unpack these idiosyncrasies. First, we position Q in relation to the important distinction between methodologies that aspire to *naturalism* and those which self-consciously provide an artificial set-up. Naturalism tends to be a goal of qualitative researchers, whilst experimentalists and psychometricians exploit artifice to gain generalizable quantitative data. At one extreme, ethnographers place great importance upon studying people in the context of their everyday lifeworlds, whilst at the other extreme, the best laboratory experiments are cleverly contrived artificial 'set-ups' designed for purposes of scrutiny and *measurement*. A qualitative interview falls between these two poles, since it has a distinctly contrived set-up designed for purposes of *communication* rather than measurement (it is a distinctly 'staged' forum of communication). The standard position is that qualitative naturalism gains ecological validity at the cost of a potential lack of precision whilst quantitative artifice gains reliability at the cost of a potential lack of relevance.

Q methodology involves its participants in an artificial set-up and thus does not aspire to naturalism. However, the set-up in Q methodology is neither about measurement *nor* communication in any straightforward sense. Certainly both number and communication are involved, but number is not deployed for the purposes of quantitative measurement and communication is deliberately restricted to a situation in which a participant responds to a set of items according to a subjective criterion (which do you *like*, which do you *agree* with, which are most *important to you*, and so on). This is clearly not naturalistic communication. Doing a Q sort does not involve the familiar ongoing communicative process by which participants exchange utterances in a sequence that unfolds over time. Instead, participants respond to a number of propositions that are usually typed on pieces of card, and they rank these into an order of subjective preference. There is often no interlocutor

present; the propositions lack a clear source; and the participant is not required to articulate an appropriate reply. Judged from the perspective of naturalism, these are problems indeed! However, the artifice of a Q methodological study is not an oversight that should lead to its dismissal, but is instead an integral aspect of its design. The participant is deliberately placed in the position of an *observer of statements* and asked to express their orientation towards a large number of these in a highly controlled form that has the virtue of permitting *direct comparison* with the orientations of other participants (or themselves on different occasions). Neither is this artifice restrictive. Q methodology makes overall item configurations its research target, and its design and procedure render an enormous number of possible configurations available to its participants (see Watts and Stenner, 2005a). The artifice simply serves its purpose.

At this point, it is useful also to contrast Q sorting with more familiar quasi-quantitative psychological procedures such as Likert-style questionnaires, attitude scales and personality measures. These typically aspire to be quantitative, in the sense that they claim to provide objective *measures* of unobservable phenomena considered a priori to have quantitative structure. Leaving aside the many valid criticisms of this aspiration, a participant completing an intelligence test or personality measure is, from the psychologist's point of view, an object that is passively subjected to measurement. What the participant subjectively 'thinks' or 'feels' about the meaning of the items they check is in principle irrelevant, just as their feelings about a tape measure are irrelevant to the question of how tall they are. The meaning of each item is carefully predefined in the process of designing the measure, and a certain 'monologic' is thus imposed through the practical elimination of qualitative variation. In standard psychometrics, individuals are thus scored by tests, and subjective variation is merely 'noise' that interferes with the objective 'signal' each item is pre-designed to score.

With Q sorting the situation is quite different. The Q sort as a data-collection form is designed to maximize the expression of qualitative variation and to record it in numerical form. It is assumed that one person's understanding of a set of items will differ qualitatively from that of another, and in this sense Q methodology can be likened to the repertory grid techniques of personal construct theory (Bannister and Fransella, 1971). The qualitative dimension shifts from being 'noise' (to be eliminated) to 'signal' (to be attended to). The Q sort can hence be seen as a means to carefully delimit and maximize the expression of qualitative variation at the level of subjectivity. It is less a measure than a vehicle for the controlled expression of subjective variation. To this end, Q sorting greatly amplifies the tendencies immanent in more familiar nominal and ordinal 'scales' by asking participants to rank a large number of items into an elaborate configuration according to their own likes and dislikes or, as Stephenson put it, according to their 'psychological significance' for any given participant (see Burt and Stephenson, 1939). Items of great psychological significance would hence receive a high ranking, with less significant items receiving progressively lower rankings. In this way, a large and formerly heterogeneous set of items can be rendered 'homogeneous with respect to…[a particular] individual' (Stephenson, 1936: 346). In the process of completing a Q sort, the set of items is *leant order from the perspective of the Q sorter*, and that order or pattern is captured in numerical form. The Q sort of one participant can then be directly compared with those of other participants. This process of self-conscious artifice is designed to enable a numerical expression of pattern that makes qualitative variation mathematically tractable. The shift in the status of qualitative variation from noise to signal thus constitutes a profound reversal. In the Q methodological situation, participants are not passive subjects but genuinely active participants who operate on a set of items from an explicitly self-referential point of view (from *their own* perspective). In contrast to standard quasi-quantitative techniques, therefore, in which individuals are scored by tests, in Q methodology 'the tests get … [the scores] instead, due to the operation of the individuals upon them' (Stephenson, 1935: 19).

HOW DO YOU DO Q? AN ILLUSTRATIVE STUDY

We think that's enough theorizing. This section offers a step-by-step guide to actually getting a Q methodological study done (see Box 13.1), accompanied by an illustrative study which, rather conveniently in the context, explores the meaning of qualitative research. All very helpful we think you will agree ….

Step 1: Formulating the Research Question

Like most qualitative methods, Q methodological studies are oriented by research questions concerning *meaning* rather than by specific testable hypotheses about causal relationships. Its strength

Box 13.1 Q methodology step-by-step

Formulating the Research Question

The subjective dimension of any issue towards which different point of view can be expressed, e.g. 'What is the meaning of 'quality of life'? 'What does love mean to you?' Ethical issues should be considered at this stage.

Generating the Q-set

The Q-set is comprised by numerous items based on your estimation of the concourse. Individually these should express a relevant proposition and together they should cover the 'concourse' of what we know to be sayable about the issue in question. Each item should be clearly expressed in ordinary language and randomly numbered.

Selecting a P-set

A typical sampling concern when selecting a P-set of participants to take part in a Q study is to maximize the likelihood of a variety of distinct viewpoints being expressed.

Collecting data

Collecting data from participants in the form of Q sorts with open-ended comments: This typically involves having participants rank order the Q-set into a quasi-normal distribution according to some subjectively relevant dimension such as 'most disagree' to 'most agree'. Through their unique response to the Q-set, each participant expresses their viewpoint on the topic in question. It is the overall pattern, configuration or *gestalt* of the sort that is of primary interest.

Analysing Q sort data

Q analysis involves correlating and factoring the data by-person in order to identify a small set of factors. Each factor will be loaded by a number of Q sorts that have been sorted in a substantially similar way.

Interpreting Q factors

Since the Q sorts loading on a given factor will have been patterned in a similar way, for each factor a single 'factor array' is generated by merging the highest loading Q sorts. This factor array can be taken as representing whatever 'point of view' is informing the factor. Each factor array is therefore subjected to an interpretation based upon an inspection of the complete set of rankings in combination with any open-ended data provided by the relevant participants. This can also be followed by a 'cultural analysis'.

lies in bringing an exploratory sense of coherence to research questions that have many potentially complex and often socially contested answers (Stainton Rogers, 1995). It has, for example, been used successfully to study issues such as child abuse (Stainton Rogers and Stainton Rogers, 1992), jealousy (Stenner and Stainton Rogers, 1998), irritable bowel syndrome (Stenner, Dancey and Watts, 2000), love and personal relationships (Watts and Stenner, 2005b), child phenomenology (Taylor, Delprato and Knapp, 1994), and psychoanalysis (Edelson, 1989). Some further and more recent applications of Q will be highlighted in the final section.

As the issue of the *meaning of qualitative research* will undoubtedly engender a range of different points of view, it seems a perfectly appropriate topic for an example Q methodological study. It is important to recognize, however, that we could still investigate such meanings in a variety of ways. We could seek 'representations' of the topic – what 'type' of people might engage in qualitative research for example? Alternatively, we could ask a 'policy' related question, such as how qualitative methods should properly be taught. Or, as we actually decided to do, we could consider 'theoretic' propositions (understandings or explanations) about how or why things are the way they are – such

that our example study seeks 'understandings' relating to the *meaning of qualitative research.* Typically, these different sorts of questions (e.g. questions dealing with descriptive, explanatory or prescriptive discourse) require different Q-sets, such that Q studies which attempt to span these various domains ordinarily require the participants to complete two (or sometimes three) separate Q sorts (Curt, 1994; Stainton Rogers et al., 1995).

Whatever the research question, however, the important point is that it be stated in a clear and straightforward fashion. It should ordinarily contain only one proposition. This is because it will inevitably dictate the nature and structure of the set of items (or Q-set) to be generated, and because it must also serve as a 'condition of instruction' for the sorting process itself. In our illustrative study, we were interested to ascertain our participants' understandings of qualitative research and we duly needed to create a Q-set that would properly facilitate responses to the question: 'What is your understanding of qualitative research?'

Step 2: Generating the Set of Items (or Q-set)

As we have already implied, having decided upon our research question we need now to generate a Q-set that adequately reflects, or which is 'broadly representative' of, the issue under investigation. This is envisioned as a *sampling* task in Q methodology, the aim of which is to provide an estimate (the Q-set) of a wider issue or cultural *theme.* Usually, the themes at issue for Q methodologists concern communication and are semantic in nature, although Q-sets can also involve sets of perfumes or colours, objects, pictures, or indeed anything at all, that be configured into Q sorts by subjective preference.

Questions about the nature and place of qualitative research evidently constitute a much debated theme within the sub-culture of contemporary academic psychology. Contributions to this theme can take many forms, from formal publications to seminar discussions to post-conference chats in the bar. This book, for instance, contains numerous contributions to the qualitative methods theme. Themes also involve the regulation of contributors. A professor speaks from a different position than a student or research participant for instance. From a temporal perspective, themes outlive contributions (and contributors), integrating themselves into gestalts with a structure capable of displaying great stability over time.

To carry out our sampling task successfully, therefore, we need to generate a Q-set which reflects as far as possible a full range of contributions to the qualitative debate. Stephenson referred to this field of communication as a *concourse*. This requires familiarity with the theme in question, which can be gained in numerous ways, such as being a participant observer, running focus groups or interviews on the theme, staying abreast of discussions and debates, and so on. Item generation can also be theoretically guided, drawing upon key texts in the literature. Such familiarity might then lead us to notice a number of distinct aspects to the concourse: a debate about the relative merits of 'understanding' and 'explanation' for example; a related tendency to polarize qualitative and quantitative techniques; and perhaps a perceived need for clear instruction in the application of qualitative methods? One contribution to the first of these could be expressed in a self-referential statement such as 'for me, qualitative methods are about *understanding* rather than *explanation*'. The second could be expressed in a proposition such as 'there is a vast gulf between the ways of thinking of qualitative and quantitative researchers', and the third might find expression in a statement such as 'all qualitative research should follow a good "how to do it" guide'.

There is clearly much more to be said and sampled in this concourse and hence we ultimately generated a Q-set of 100+ items that could subsequently be reduced to a final set of 60 (see Appendix 13.1). Whilst we would not dare to claim that this is an exhaustive set, we think that it serves the purpose of providing a broad estimate reflecting the nexus of current communication on this theme (including every aspect of the concourse is, of course, impossible). At the very least it should enable the reader to grasp the central problems at play. It is, in any case, not the Q-set itself that is of prime importance in this context, but what the participants *do* with it. The ultimate aim of a Q study is after all, to identify the various *positions* that participants adopt in relation to the provided items. For further discussion of Q-set sampling work see Brown (1980) and Watts and Stenner (2012).

Step 3: Selecting a P-set

We have stated that one important aspect of Stephenson's method is that in a Q study the *participants* are the variables and the *items* are the cases. If the notion of representative sampling has any purchase in Q, then it must be applied to the sampling of cases, and that means in the generation of the Q-set (although, as described above, this inevitably involves qualitative judgement rather

than the application of statistical principles). Reciprocally, the selection of the P-set (or participant group) is a very different process in Q methodology and so it becomes important not to impose traditional R methodological requirements onto Q methodological designs. Most notably, participants in a Q methodological study are *not* regarded as subjects from subpopulations whose responses can be extrapolated to estimate population statistics. This means that, in principle, relatively small P-sets can yield worthwhile results (as our illustrative study will demonstrate). Indeed, Stephenson's own work included a number of single-case studies in which the same participant produced Q sorts under a number of different conditions of instruction (Stephenson, 1953). Participants in Q studies are instead treated as strategic 'sites' from which a *limited independent variety* of subjective viewpoints can be heard. The aim is to gain access to that range of viewpoints, and not to make claims about the frequency of their occurrence amongst the general population (or about the 'personality' or 'attitude' of any individual participant).

This conception of participants entails some far-reaching theoretical assumptions. Here we touch upon an issue that is far from having been settled or agreed amongst Q methodologists, and we express our own take on it (see Stenner, 2008a; Watts and Stenner, 2012). The phrase 'limited independent variety', in fact, comes from Keynes's (1921) *A Treatise on Probability* where it features as its basic principle that whilst variety is to be expected in human social and economic life such variety will be limited in scope by various constraints (Stenner and Stainton Rogers, 1998).

In Q methodology, this entails the expectation that one will not find infinite variety in viewpoint, but a circumscribed range, and the aim is to identify and describe that range. This relates to the broadly constructivist observation that human experience is shaped and selected by the cultural semantics and normative practices available within the cultures that make up the broader social spheres in which people move and live their lives (Stenner, 2008a). A theme such as 'qualitative methods' is not just a subjective issue but, proximally, a topic for *communication*: a theme in discourse. As we implied earlier, such a theme is an inherently social product which outlives and presupposes individual contributions and which cannot properly be reduced to a psychic or individual level of abstraction. Of course, a theme requires the contributions of individuals and their subjective psychic input, but the level of its organizing principle is also *collective*. Culture – or at least the semantic aspects of it – is ordered into themes to which contributions can be made. These cultural themes constrain but do not determine the viewpoints of contributors, and are better viewed as providing the discursive environment for the formation of those viewpoints (see Watts, 2008).

Thus, between a theme and its contributions, at a middle level of redundancy, lie a limited independent variety of more or less socially sedimented (and historically contingent) orientations, positions or points of view on that theme. There are clear resonances here with Potter and Wetherell's (1987) notion of an interpretive repertoire, drawn from a different tradition of qualitative work. Indeed, a theme arises precisely as a function of its *problematic* or contested status. Debates about qualitative methods, to stick with our study example, will hence never be unitary but rather *polytextual* and appropriate analysis may duly require a *critical polytextualism* (Curt, 1994).

One further implication of the above is that the target of a Q study is not some isolated 'psychological world' of subjectivity, but the culturally available manifold of potential or virtual orientations which structure or pattern subjectivity. As we have stated, therefore, the objective of a Q methodological study is not to make claims about the individuals in one's sample but to identify and describe the virtual manifold of positions that are culturally available in a given temporal and spatial location. Particular individuals are hence literally sites for the expression of particular viewpoints, but no assumption need be made which might restrict a given participant to the expression of any single viewpoint (although in practice such restriction is often observable). Also, in line with post-structural theory, the manifold itself would be expected to shift its form historically and geographically, transforming psychic possibilities as it does so (Curt, 1994).

In practice, this all means that our qualitative methods Q-set should ideally be administered to a carefully selected sample of differently located participants (a typical Q study involves 40–60 participants). Such a P-set would reflect the range of positions and statuses available to contributors and would hence maximize the likelihood of having a range of different viewpoints represented. For example, one might wish to include:

(a) both expert and student representatives of different qualitative traditions (personal construct theorists, discourse analysts, conversation analysts, grounded theorists, and so on);
(b) those who like to mix qualitative and quantitative methods and those who identify solely as quantitative or qualitative researchers;
(c) those who work in applied fields and those who consider themselves 'pure' researchers;
(d) potential end-users of qualitative research;

(e) those who are critical of psychology and those who believe in its current mission; and
(f) those with a particular political or moral orientation (e.g. feminist or Marxist researchers) and those who aspire to neutrality.

For illustrative purposes, however, we have done something much more simple and straightforward. Our P-set was comprised of students taking an MSc in Psychological Research Methods at a UK university with a reputation for a strict 'natural scientific' approach to psychology (a member of what is known as the Russell Group of universities), and a group of trainee clinical psychologists drawn from a UK university which achieved university status relatively recently (post-1992) and which has a reputation for critique of this natural science model. Such a strategy was evidently unlikely to maximally capture the cultural manifold, but it *was* likely to allow the observation and explication of some suitably polarized viewpoints. And that is what we were after ….

Step 4: Q Sorting

Q sorting is what Brown (1980: 17) calls 'the technical means whereby data are obtained for factoring'. In practice, it is a convenient means of facilitating the subjective evaluations of the participants. In our example study, each participant was provided with the Q-set in the form of 60 separate (and individually numbered) cards. Thirteen numbered labels were placed in front of them, running from −6 through 0 to +6. Each participant was then asked to read through the 60 items and to sort them into 3 piles: 'agrees', 'neutrals' and 'disagrees'. This marks the beginning of the evaluation process. The participants continued the process by sorting the 60 items into the fixed quasi-normal distribution described in Figure 13.1. In effect, they are asked to respond to each item and to make a specific self-referential judgement about it – in this case a judgement of agreement/disagreement – and to do this *in relation to* all of the other items. The distribution provides a clear and meaningfully comparable framework for this sorting task. So for all participants the two 'most agreed with' items were placed under the +6 label, the three next most agreeable items were placed under +5, and so on across the distribution until the two 'most disagreed with' items were finally placed under the −6 label.

When participants felt comfortable with the overall configuration of their completed Q sort they recorded the numbers of the sorted items into a provided matrix (see Figure 13.2). It is usual in Q methodology also to gather some open-ended comments from the participants at completion of the process. The information gathered at this stage will clearly vary study-by-study – we asked simply for a brief paragraph outlining the participants' views of qualitative methods and research (see Watts and Stenner (2005a, 2012) for a full list of possibilities) – but it nonetheless represents an important part of the Q procedure, for such comments will be used to aid the later interpretation of the emergent factors.

We should also note at this point that the procedure described above can be adapted in a number of ways. One can, for example, work with 'free' as opposed to fixed distributions in Q methodology, which, as the name suggests, allow participants to assign any number of items to any of the available ranking positions (see Watts and Stenner (2012) for a longer discussion of this issue). It is also possible to use other face-valid dimensions to facilitate the sorting process – such as from 'least irritating' to 'most irritating' or from least to most 'productive for psychology'. One can also ask the same participant to do multiple sorts from different perspectives (e.g. me before taking my methods course; me as I imagine I will be after taking my methods course; how I imagine a radical Foucauldian might think, and so on). All such adaptations can elicit interesting results.

MOST DISAGREE											**MOST AGREE**		*Condition of sorting*
−6	−5	−4	−3	−2	−1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	*Ranking position*
(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(6)	(8)	(6)	(6)	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	*Number of items in each category n=60*

Figure 13.1 The Q sort distribution

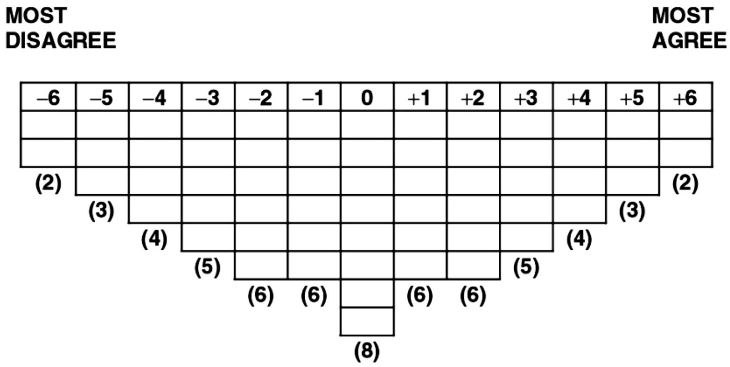

Figure 13.2 Q sort response matrix

Step 5: Q Data Analysis

Table 13.1 shows a selection of our basic Q methodological data (the first 8 items and 6 example participants). Note again here that in Q methodology, contrary to standard statistical procedure in psychology, the participants (the P-set) are regarded as variables and the items (the Q-set) as cases. Reading Table 13.1 by column we can see, for example, that participant *A* has given item 1 a ranking of +1, item 2 a ranking of +4, and so on. In its entirety (read from item 1 to item *N*), column *A* duly illustrates the completed Q sort of participant *A*. Reading by row, on the other hand, allows us to conduct a by-item comparison of individuals. We know already, for example, that participant *A* has ranked item 1 at +1, but we can see now that participant *B* has ranked it at –5, *C* at –4, and so on. Indeed, row 1 suggests that participant *A* finds item 1 (a statement which reads: 'Ultimately, there is very little "method" in qualitative methods') to be of far greater significance than any of the other illustrated participants. It is also possible to ascertain at this stage that participants *D*, *E* and *F* appear (as a group) to be markedly more positive about items 3 and 6 ('Social constructionism is the theoretical framework that best links all qualitative research methods' and 'Qualitative methods are synonymous with a reinvigorated philosophical awareness in many disciplines'), and markedly more negative about item 7 ('You should never trust a qualitative researcher who claims a factual status for their findings'), than are participants *A*, *B* and *C*. This may be a first indication of different groups (and points of view) at work within the data – an observation to which we shall return shortly.

In Q methodology the analysis proceeds by correlating these data by column (i.e. correlating the data in column *A* with those in columns *B*, *C*, *D*, *E* and *F*), such that the relationships between *complete Q sorts* can be established. Table 13.2 shows

Table 13.1 Raw data from six example Q sorts

	Persons							
		A	*B*	*C*	*D*	*E*	*F*	*N*
	1	+1	–5	–4	–4	–6	–5	…
	2	+4	+6	+4	+2	+2	+4	…
	3	–1	–2	0	+3	+3	+2	…
Items	4	+1	–1	–2	+1	+1	–2	…
	5	+2	+4	0	+1	+4	+3	…
	6	–4	–1	0	+1	+1	+2	…
	7	+3	+4	+3	–2	–5	–6	…
	8	–5	–5	–1	–2	–2	–2	…
	N	…	…	…	…	…	…	…

Table 13.2 Correlation coefficients for six example sorts

Persons		*A*	*B*	*C*	*D*	*E*	*F*
A	Correlation coefficient		0.531	0.618	0.217	0.163	0.274
B	Correlation coefficient	0.531		0.579	0.283	0.297	0.365
C	Correlation coefficient	0.618	0.579		0.491	0.374	0.428
D	Correlation coefficient	0.217	0.283	0.491		0.706	0.684
E	Correlation coefficient	0.163	0.297	0.374	0.706		0.780
F	Correlation coefficient	0.274	0.365	0.428	0.684	0.780	

the column-by-column (for which read 'person-by-person', hence the expression a 'by-person' analysis) correlation matrix that results when this process is carried out on our six example sorts. It can be seen that Q sort *A* correlates rather substantially with Q sort *B* (0.531), but even more so with Q sort *C* (0.618). There is an even higher degree of inter-correlation between sorts *D*, *E* and *F*. The remaining small correlation coefficients make it clear that *D*, *E* and *F* have considerably more 'in common' with each other than they do with *A*, *B* and *C*, and vice versa. This seems to reiterate the possible existence of two groupings in the data and hence two different 'points of view', one shared by participants *A*, *B* and *C* (who turn out to be students from our Russell Group university) and another by participants *D*, *E* and *F* (our trainee clinical psychologists). It is important to remember at this stage, particularly given our abbreviated table, that the correlations outlined above are of complete Q sorts. These necessarily take into account *all* the data from the correlated individuals (the ranking of items 1–60 inclusive), and not just an arbitrary selection of items.

When the data from all the participants in the study are subsequently reduced by means of a by-person principle components analysis (PCA) (see Table 13.3), two distinct 'factors' or components emerge. The first (factor 1) explains 54.85% of the study variance and the second (factor 2) explains an additional 22.60% (following varimax rotation). Further factors have eigenvalues of less than 1.00 (see Watts and Stenner (2005a and 2012) for the use or otherwise of eigenvalues in Q). As such, the two factor solution is preferred which explains a total of 77.45% of the study variance.

Lots of the study Q sorts loaded significantly onto one or other of these two factors. Table 13.4 illustrates only the respective factor loadings for our six example Q sorts. Such factor loadings are expressed as correlation coefficients which indicate the degree to which each Q sort correlates with each factor. We can see, for example, that the Q sorts of participants *D*, *E* and *F* all clearly associate strongly with (and hence are all 'exemplars' of the single viewpoint captured by) factor 1, whilst participants *A*, *B* and *C* exemplify factor 2 (we can tell this because they all have high loadings on 'their own' factor and negligible loadings on the other)[1].

It is apparent, therefore, that we do indeed have two distinct groupings within the data (an F-set of 2). This F-set clearly represents a reduction in the complexity arising from the relationships between the Q- and the P-sets. Perhaps most importantly, however, it is a reduction guided by the participants and not imposed by the researcher. The analysis simply serves to identify *pattern* in the data and this is achieved by observing associations

Table 13.3 Total variance explained

Component	*Initial eigenvalues*		
	Total	*% of Variance*	*Cumulative %*
1	3.291	54.853	54.853
2	1.356	22.595	77.447
3	0.489	8.147	85.594
4	0.397	6.617	92.211
5	0.258	4.295	96.506
6	0.210	3.494	100.000

Note: Extraction method: principal component analysis.

Table 13.4 Rotated component matrix showing factor loadings for six example sorts

Persons	*Component*	
	1	*2*
E	0.916	0.114
F	0.873	0.235
D	0.858	0.202
A	0.040	0.876
C	0.346	0.798
B	0.198	0.798

Note: Extraction method: principal component analysis. Rotation method: varimax with Kaiser normalization. The rotation converged in three iterations.

between the variables and explaining these via the emergent factors[2]. All the Q methodologist need do now is interpret these patterns and explicate the points of view in a holistic fashion. But this is nonetheless a very important part of the Q study, for it is necessarily where the qualitative detail emerges from the data.

Step 6: Factor Estimation

To enable interpretation to take place, an estimate of each factor must first be prepared. This is achieved by merging all the Q sorts that exemplify (or are significantly associated) with the factor in question. This procedure results in the creation of a single 'factor exemplifying' Q sort for each factor, sometimes also called a factor array, and it is these factor arrays that are subjected to interpretation.

Fortunately, dedicated Q methodology programs such as PCQ (Stricklin and Almeida, 2001) and PQMethod (Schmolck, 2002) make this process of factor estimation very simple and automated, but it can also be achieved using factor scores in SPSS. Using the SPSS facility for calculating factor scores, for instance, yields the following array for factor 1 (see Figure 13.3 below).

We can see from Figure 13.3 that the factor array for factor 1 takes the form of a single Q sort. This Q sort serves as a 'best estimate' for the factor. Reading from left to right it can be observed that items 7 and 1 each received a factor score of –6 (they are hence the two most disagreed with items for this factor), whilst items 52 and 36 received a factor score of +6 (making them the two most agreed with items). Note that in the original sorts shown in Table 13.1, sorts *D*, *E* and *F* ranked item 1 at –4, –6 and –5 respectively.

The factor array thus does not correspond to any individual Q sort, but is an ideal-typical representation of the factor that *D*, *E* and *F* exemplify. The advantage of this is that the process of interpretation can be based on a single Q sort array.

MOST DISAGREE **MOST AGREE**

–6	–5	–4	–3	–2	–1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6
7	12	17	37	28	13	9	4	46	32	25	29	52
1	54	51	43	56	45	16	49	14	33	50	57	36
	19	11	26	22	58	27	59	48	38	41	10	
		23	34	18	30	24	15	53	3	31		
			44	21	35	60	20	6	55			
				47	8	42	2	5				
						39						
						40						

Figure 13.3 Factor array for factor 1

Box 13.2 A small technical box: weighting factor exemplars

Another way of generating a factor array is literally to merge the Q sorts of factor exemplars in a procedure of weighted averaging. If we concentrate only on our six example sorts, the process of factor estimation would require that the Q sorts of participants *D*, *E*, and *F* be merged in order to generate an appropriate estimate for factor 1. However, in producing this merger, greater weight must be given to Q sort *E* than to *D* and greater weight to D than to *F*, since *E* (at 0.916) has the highest loader and hence best approximates the factor to be estimated. Q methodologists typically employ the expression given by Spearman (1927: xix, expression 29) to calculate factor weights (cf. Brown, 1980: 241):

$$w = \frac{F}{1-f^2}$$

where w is the weight and f is the loading. The weight for Q sort *E* would hence be:

$$\begin{aligned} w_E &= \frac{0.916}{1-0.916^2} \\ &= 5.7 \end{aligned}$$

The weight of Q sort *F* (which loads at 0.873), by contrast, is $w_F = 3.7$. This means that when calculating the factor scores for each item in the factor 1 array, Q sort *F* should contribute only 3.7/5.7 = 65% as much to the merger as Q sort *E*.

Step 7: Factor Interpretation

The interpretative task in Q methodology involves the production of a series of summarizing accounts, each of which explicates the viewpoint being expressed by a particular factor. These accounts are constructed by careful reference to the positioning and overall configuration of the items in the relevant factor array. The process demands great attention to detail, particularly given that Q methodological interpretation is necessarily constrained by (and can always be checked against) the subjective input of the participant group. This is possible because, in contrast to many other qualitative methods, that input is actually reflected in the observable structure of the relevant factor array. In a nutshell, the task is to reconstruct the subjective point of view expressed in the factor array and hence to 'breathe subjective life' back into the purely numerical representation. It is important to stress that the interpretation must be based upon the sort as an integrated whole or *gestalt* and not upon individual (or a minimal number of) ranking positions, for it is only in the context of the whole sort that the meaning of specific item rankings becomes apparent.

That said, one must inevitably begin the process via attention to specific rankings. And it is usually sensible to start with the most extreme rankings. We will illustrate the step-by-step *process* of interpretation below. The reader may wish to consult the full list of items (see Appendix 13.1) in order to further develop and consolidate this interpretation.

Starting with factor 1, the strong (+6) agreement with item 52 suggests a particular concern with defending the *standing* of qualitative methods within psychology:

> 52. It is very important to resist attempts to marginalize or devalue qualitative research. +6

This concern is also reflected in the negative pole of the distribution, since there is disagreement with a series of items which can be taken as devaluing or disparaging qualitative methods:

> 1. Ultimately there is very little method in qualitative methods –6
> 7. You should never trust a qualitative researcher who claims a factual status for their findings –6
> 54. The more we 'drift' in a qualitative direction, the more the prestige and influence of our discipline is threatened –5
> 19. Qualitative methods offer nothing more than a reading of a reading –5
> 12. Qualitative researchers have done enough criticizing: it is time they proved themselves with substantial empirical findings of their own –5

This viewpoint is hence clearly concerned with *defending* qualitative methods against anticipated critical attacks. We might call this the 'politics' of

methodology. The ranking of item 31 extends this theme by affirming the political nature of the research process itself:

> 31. Whether we like it or not, most research is inherently political: good qualitative work makes this apparent +4

Ethico-political values such as 'giving voice', 'freedom of expression' and influence from the 'ground up' also feature as key aspects underpinning the value of qualitative methods:

> 36. The value of qualitative research lies in the freedom of expression it affords its participants +6
> 10. The virtue of qualitative methods is that they give some control and 'voice' back to the participant +5
> 41. Good qualitative research works inductively or from the 'ground up' +4

A final point to note in this brief interpretation of the extreme ranking positions is that this factor supplements the ethico-political emphasis detailed above by also linking qualitative methods to some of the more traditional epistemic values of science:

> 57. Qualitative researchers are generating a cumulative knowledge base that will ultimately deepen our understanding +5
> 29. Qualitative methods are every bit as scientific as quantitative methods +5

Once an initial exegesis has been provided, like the brief one above, it becomes possible to use this additional information to illuminate subsequent factors by way of contrast with previous factors. The arrays of factors 1 and 2 are shown in Table 13.5 in a modified layout. This layout enables easy comparison of the item rankings across both factors, and it demonstrates immediately (turning our attention briefly to factor 2) that one of this factor's most agreed with items (item 22) was actually disagreed with by factor 1:

	Factor 1	*Factor 2*
22. Qualitative research has an important exploratory role to play prior to the application of quantitative methods in a mature science	–2	+6

This observation immediately alerts us to an important difference between the two factors which can be used as an interpretative 'thread' to be followed in the factor 2 exegesis. The ranking of this item (number 22) in factor 2 suggests that qualitative methods are being made sense of within the broader context of an accepted, rather than challenged, notion of 'mature science'. This hunch is further supported when other positive rankings are scrutinized, for example:

	Factor 1	*Factor 2*
40. The loss of reliability associated with qualitative methods is more than offset by their ecological validity	0	+6
2. Qualitative methods are necessary because many research topics are not amenable to objective measurement	+1	+5

These rankings indicate factor 2's broad agreement with ideal standards of scientific practice (reliability, objectivity, quantification), but which still acknowledge a place for qualitative research in cases where these ideals are presently unreachable. To the extent that qualitative methods can further this broader scientific agenda, they are considered acceptable and desirable, and in this respect it is notable that factor 2 disagrees *more* with the following item than factor 1, doubtless as a result of this concern with 'proper science':

	Factor 1	*Factor 2*
18. One cannot properly access psychological phenomena using qualitative methods	–2	–6

Accepting a *place* for qualitative methods does not, on the other hand, signal their equality with quantitative methods:

	Factor 1	*Factor 2*
29. Qualitative methods are every bit as scientific as quantitative methods	+5	–6
7. You should never trust a qualitative researcher who claims a factual status for their findings	–6	+5

Indeed, factor 2 perceives an acute need to standardize qualitative techniques in order to ensure

Table 13.5 Factor arrays

Items	*Factor*	*Factor*	*Items*	*Factor*	*Factor*	*Items*	*Factor*	*Factor*
	1	**2**		**1**	**2**		**1**	**2**
1	–6	–2	**21**	–2	+1	**41**	+4	–2
2	+1	+5	**22**	–2	+6	**42**	0	+3
3	+3	–3	**23**	–4	0	**43**	–3	–4
4	+1	–1	**24**	0	+4	**44**	–3	–1
5	+2	+2	**25**	+4	+2	**45**	–1	0
6	+2	–3	**26**	–3	–3	**46**	+2	–1
7	–6	+5	**27**	0	–5	**47**	–2	+4
8	–1	–4	**28**	–2	+5	**48**	+2	+3
9	0	–2	**29**	+5	–6	**49**	+1	–1
10	+5	+1	**30**	–1	+1	**50**	+4	–1
11	–4	–4	**31**	+4	–3	**51**	–4	–2
12	–5	0	**32**	+3	+3	**52**	+6	0
13	–1	–5	**33**	+3	0	**53**	+2	+2
14	+2	–2	**34**	–3	0	**54**	–5	–2
15	+1	–4	**35**	–1	+3	**55**	+3	+1
16	0	+4	**36**	+6	0	**56**	–2	+1
17	–4	+2	**37**	–3	0	**57**	+5	+3
18	–2	–6	**38**	+3	+1	**58**	–1	+2
19	–5	–1	**39**	0	–5	**59**	+1	+2
20	+1	–3	**40**	0	+6	**60**	0	+4

their greater approximation to what is perceived as the scientific ideal:

	Factor 1	*Factor 2*
28. There is an acute need to develop standardized ways of doing qualitative research	–2	+5
27. The first rule of qualitative research is that there are no rules	0	–5
16. All qualitative research should follow a good 'how to do it' guide	0	+4

Finally, factor 2 positions qualitative research firmly outside of the political sphere and, tellingly, social constructionism is not considered the best theoretical framework for it:

> 31. Whether we like it or not, most research is inherently political: good qualitative work makes this apparent +4 –3
> 15. Adopting qualitative research methods should be seen as a political act +1 –4
> 3. Social constructionism is the theoretical framework that best links all qualitative methods +3 –3

The section above was designed simply to illustrate the *process* of interpretation (see also Watts and Stenner, 2005a, 2012). The *product*, as mentioned briefly above, is typically a series of summarizing accounts, which holistically capture the viewpoint contained within each emergent factor. Ordinarily, titles are also chosen for each account to illuminate the content contained therein. Indeed, we would argue that it is the holistic (and perhaps also the inherently 'shared') nature of the Q methodological product that most differentiates it from other qualitative methods (which typically have a 'thematic' product) and which makes it an ideal complement to qualitative approaches that take 'themes' and/or the 'viewpoint-of-the-individual' as their primary research target (see Watts and Stenner, 2005a). We leave it to the reader to further experiment with Q and these related matters. It should be clear enough, however, that even this very small-scale illustrative study has enabled us to identify (and to begin the process of explicating) two very distinct understandings of qualitative research in the context of psychology – the first consistently voiced by three clinical trainees from a post-1992 university and the second by three MSc research methods students from a Russell Group

university. In the next and final section we will briefly consider some examples of published work using Q methodology which exemplify some of the strengths outlined above.

APPLICATIONS OF Q METHODOLOGY IN PSYCHOLOGY

Q methodology has most often been employed in the context of health psychology (Stainton Rogers, 1991; Stainton Rogers et al., 1995; Eccleston, Williams and Stainton Rogers, 1997; Stenner et al., 2000; Stenner, Cooper and Skevington, 2003). This is no doubt a result of Wendy Stainton Rogers's (1991) influential text *Explaining Health and Illness: An Exploration in Diversity*, which made extensive use of Q methodology to identify a wide range of everyday understandings about what it means to be healthy and ill, and what factors may be involved in the process of recovery.

One of the strengths of this type of Q methodological work has been its capacity to make explicit (and subsequently to illuminate) some of the grounds for *misunderstanding* and conflict that separate patients from professionals. Eccleston et al. (1997), for example, used Q methodology to compare the accounts produced by chronic pain patients (about their illness) with those of the professionals who deal with them. They found amongst pain patients a conviction that their pain has an organic cause – albeit a cause that the medical profession was not yet able to explain or cure. They also evinced a strong antagonism to the suggestion (which they attributed to the medical profession) that the pain may be psychological in origin. And, as it turned out, the medical professionals who took part in the study did indeed view chronic pain primarily in terms of dysfunctional learning, and necessarily placed emphasis on the need to manage the condition in the absence of an obvious cure. The grounds for disagreement are made obvious here. A recent study illustrates how these different perspectives play out in relation to the issue of the self-management of chronic lower back pain (Stenner et al, 2015).

Likewise, Stenner et al. (2000) identified seven distinct ways in which sufferers of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) understood and made sense of their condition. It was very clear as a result of this study that the more IBS participants disagreed with what they perceived as the doctor's view of their condition, the more antagonism they felt towards doctors. More specifically (and in common with Eccleston et al.'s pain patients), it was also clear that the main source of this disagreement concerned the tendency of the medical profession to construe IBS in psychosomatic terms. Following this argument it was not surprising to find that participants who *did* construe themselves as having some psychosomatic co-responsibility for their IBS also perceived themselves to have more positive relationships with the medical profession.

Further noteworthy studies in this general area include Collins, Maguire and O'Dell's (2002) work on smokers' perceptions of their own smoking behaviour; a pair of studies by Rayner and Warner (2003) and James and Warner (2005) which attended to the issue of self-harm using P-sets drawn from the general public, patients, and professionals in the area; and Jordan, Capdevila and Johnson's (2005) exploration of body image amongst a sample of women who had recently given birth. This latter study in particular illustrated the capacity of Q methodology to reveal understandings, explanations, and accounts that depart significantly from those ordinarily proffered and published by experts working in the area. Indeed, participants in the Jordan et al. (2005) study argued that body image was of more 'variable' import than the literature generally claimed, and showed that body image itself was often strongly tied to broader contextual issues such as having children; a dislike of change (not just bodily change) following birth; and one's overall sense of happiness and wellbeing.

Another of Q methodology's strengths is its ability to facilitate the study of highly complex and contestable social issues, and through its findings to communicate a sense of order in such complex domains. Watts and Stenner's (2005b) study of partnership love exemplifies this well. Whilst the literature in this area is marked by 'conflict, confusion, and disagreement' (Fehr, 1988: 557) and by definitions that often 'seem incomplete and dry versions of an often explosive experience' (Beall and Sternberg, 1995: 417), a simple Q study involving 50 participants was able to reveal a clear series of interconnected accounts of partnership at work in our culture. Ranging from a central (or culturally dominant) account of love promoting the need for an effortful demanding mutual recognition, trust and support, to a hedonistic love in which self was prioritized over other and physicality over emotionality. These accounts emphasized the holistic nature of the participants' experiences. They also clearly demonstrated the *polytextuality* of love – that love is not 'one thing' – but a delimited range

of possibilities for thinking about, managing, and conducting intimate relations.

The central issue for Q methodology is the subjective dimension – peoples' own meanings, understandings, points of view and so on – and their expression in a context that makes no a priori assumptions about the value or significance of a particular account. If it is psychologically significant to the participant, that significance is enough for the Q methodologist. Indeed, it is precisely this freedom and emphasis on the 'subjective' that led Celia Kitzinger (1987) – well known for her classic Q methodological study on the social construction of lesbianism – to promote Q methodology's suitability for feminist inquiry. In her words:

> Q-methodology's focus on uncovering research participants' own perspectives, understandings and definitions, instead of simply measuring participants' understandings in relation to an operational definition imposed on them by a researcher, is one of the key features that should make this methodology attractive to feminist researchers. (Kitzinger, 1999: 268)

Snelling's (1999) work on the multidimensional nature of the feminism construct is a prime example. This work also allows us to revisit an earlier point: namely, the emergence of unexpected or surprising perspectives through Q methodological analysis. The item configurations, factors, and accounts that emerge from a Q study do so because of the self-referential operations of the sorters (not the views of the researchers) and cannot emerge unless the sorters make sense of the Q-set in a sufficiently co-ordinated and coherent manner (see Stainton Rogers, 1991). Given the many sorting possibilities available to the participants, it is almost inevitable that accounts emerge which the researcher may not have expected, anticipated, hoped for. Of the five factors reported by Snelling, for example, four were resonant with established feminist theory (e.g. radical, liberal and 'post-feminist' factors appeared as might be expected), but the fifth factor – which was associated with the highest number of study Q sorts – revealed a humanist perspective on feminism which, Snelling argued, was not recognized by most taxonomies of feminist theory.

Senn's (1993) study on women's views of pornography revealed two perspectives not previously written about in the theoretical or empirical literature. The first expressed discomfort about the messages being conveyed by pornography and the fact that their (male) partners actually used it, but also conveyed relief that the *type* of pornography preferred by their partners was not more extreme, violent, or degrading. A second considered pornography to be in principle 'non problematic', but still objected to the limited range of women considered to represent the 'pornographic ideal' in sexually explicit materials.

Q studies have also proliferated beyond the confines of a narrow definition of psychology, including psychologically relevant studies in the fields of personal relationships (Watts and Stenner, 2014), nursing (Noori, Baumann and Cordingly, 2008), administration (Brown, Selden and Dunning, 2008; de Graaf and van Exel, 2008–9), social work (Ellingsen, Størksen and Stephens, 2009), education (Liu, 2008; Wheeler and Montgomery, 2009; Cirigliano, 2012; Pruslow and Red Owl, 2012; Ramlo, 2012), social policy (Ockwell, 2008), recreation research (Ward, 2010), human rights research (Stenner, 2011) and development studies (Mbeng et al., 2009). Dziopa and Ahern (2011) present a systematic literature review of the applications of Q technique and its methodology which readers may also find interesting.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Since the first publication of this handbook, the use of Q methodology has continued to develop. On a conceptual level, a special issue of *Operant Subjectivity 32*(1) has further addressed the theoretical basis of Q methodological research. In this issue, Stenner (2008a: 46–69) and Watts (2008: 46–69) both argue for a broadly constructivist or constructionist epistemology, whilst Wolf (2008: 6–28) makes the case for a continued emphasis on operant subjectivity. Capdevila and Lazard (2008: 70–84) also frame their Q work using social constructionism and make the case that Q is particularly helpful for representing marginal voices.

On a practical level, Watts and Stenner (2012) have published an accessible textbook which walks the novice through all stages of a Q methodological study. FlashQ is another practical development which facilitates online use of Q. It was created by Hackert and Braehle (2006) as a free application to conduct Q studies online and many such Q studies have now been completed and published successfully (for example, Westwood and Griffiths, 2010; Davis and Michelle, 2011; Robison and Rhoads, 2014). Also, on a technical level, Dijkstra and van Eijnatten (2009) have explored new modes

for evaluating reliability and validity in Q-mode work, Danielson (2009) and Baker et al. (2010) have developed the combination between Q research and surveys (called Q2R research), and Newman and Ramlo (2010) have highlighted the 'mixed methods' potential of Q. Rachel Baker's Q2R work is notable for its international impact. It was funded by the UK's Medical Research Council methodology panel and sought to connect qualitative questions concerning subjective perspectives with quantitative questions concerning the distribution of such perspectives within the wider population. Collecting proper Q data from the large number of participants required for surveys is cumbersome and time consuming, and the data format is ill-suited to the estimation of population statistics. Talbot (1963/2010) devised a Q-block method which involved selecting just those items which clearly characterize Q factors, and arranging them into small 'blocks' of items that can be presented to survey participants for ranking. A simple scoring technique provides a convenient way of estimating which factor each survey participant would be most likely to load were they to have completed the full Q sort. Baker et al. (2014) constructed 4 such Q-blocks based on a prior Q study of points of view concerning the values informing priority setting in health care (where decisions must be made about which health care technologies are to be funded). This enabled them to identify 91% of their 542 survey participants as 'belonging to' one of the three Q factors.

From its origins, it was understood that Q methodology might also employ Q-sets involving *images* (or smells, tastes, 'feels' and sounds for that matter), and the use of images has been taken forward in a number of studies, including O'Neill and Nicholson-Cole's (2009) study of fear images relating to climate change, Rhoads's (2008, 2009) image-based studies of viewers responses to films, and Schabel et al.'s (2009) study of smile aesthetics. Other interesting multi-media developments include the use of Q in audience research to identify distinctive audience reactions and perceptions (Davis and Michelle, 2011; Khoshgooyanfard, 2011; Thomas and Rhoads, 2012).

Research in the health domain has continued to develop (Baker et al., 2014), with Q work on patient perceptions of chronic illness and its management (Jedeloo et al., 2010; McParland et al., 2011; Stenner et al., 2015) depression in chronic illness (Alderson et al., 2015), patients' subjective experiences of transient neurophysiological dysfunction (Spurgeon et al., 2012), and on health relevant behaviours like smoking (Farrimond et al., 2010) and mindfulness (Morera et al., 2015). David Wulff has also developed an important new Q sort instrument for the study of religious or spiritual world views called the Faith Q sort (Wulff, 2009).

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Whilst it is encouraging to witness the continued growth of the Q methodological literature both within and outwith psychology, some critical observations are also in order. More than a decade ago, Stenner and Stainton Rogers (2004) referred to Q methodology as 'qualiquantological'. In deliberately coining this rather monstrous neologism they aimed to highlight something of the discomforting hybridity associated with Q. As Fine and Sirin (2007: 25) point out, this discomfort is an important and necessary feature of any genuinely critical research activity. In deploying factor analysis in a self-consciously subjective direction, Q methodology disturbs the clarity of the distinction between qualitative and quantitative and indeed challenges any neat separations between them, and any neat combinations. In addition to this conceptual challenge, good Q studies can also be critical and challenging in so far as they show the multiple and contested nature of the issues they study, refusing the tendency for any one perspective to dominate the field and pass as the singular truth. This entails both a tolerance of hybridity and a sensitivity to the power dynamics whereby certain perspectives tend to 'totalize' whilst others are 'marginalized', and a will to give voice to the latter (Capdevila and Lazard, 2008). Both of these positive features can be watered down or lost as Q – along with qualitative methodology more generally – becomes more widespread and established. Yet, along with this wish to retain the critical possibilities of Q, we must also agree with Ramlo and Newman's (2011: 187) desire that Q methodology be 'more than an isolated unique research method with a relatively small following'. It seems to us that, as it grows in popularity, Q methodology risks being misrecognized – and thereafter critiqued – as a mainstream method aiming at objective and generalizable truths. Efforts to find a fully technical basis for deciding which Q sorts exemplify which factors (Zabala and Pascual, 2016), or to deploy Q findings in R methodological surveys are important developments which open Q to mainstream use, but they should not lead users to attribute the status of stable fact to Q factors which are, after all, more like snapshots of psychosocial patterns

in process. There is a tendency to forget the essentially contestable and partial nature of any Q factor solution, and to assume that interpreted factors provide a definitive description of perspectives at play, or refer to enduring or essential features of the participants. An example of how this prompts problematic criticism is provided by Kampen and Tamás's (2014) passionate, but ultimately ill-informed, critique of Q methodology. As Brown et al. (2014) clarify in their robust response, these authors fail to grasp that qualitative methods aiming for rich descriptions of subjective issues cannot guarantee (and are not trying to guarantee) epistemological objectivity and researcher neutrality.

CONCLUSION

The previous section merely scratches the surface of the many applications of Q methodology in psychology. To conclude we want to point out what by now we hope is becoming obvious. Whichever research question Q is applied to, the result is the identification of a finite number of distinct subjective *points of view* (however these are conceptualized). Each such viewpoint involves considerably more than the expression of a given 'attitude' to a shared 'object'. In fact, a good Q study makes it very clear that what might superficially be taken to be different 'attitudes' are often in fact distinct ways of constructing the very 'object' under consideration. The bulk of psychology has been concerned with securing 'objective' knowledge from a 'third person' perspective. Q methodology, by contrast, is concerned with the self-reference of the first person perspective. The event of an emotional reaction, for example, can be observed 'objectively' by way of micro measures such as blood flow in particular parts of the brain or macro measures such as facial movements or ANS activation. But no amount of detailed objective measurement will answer the subjective question of how this emotion *feels* to the one experiencing it. We give the last word to Stephenson (1982: 246): 'instruments were never designed in Q to measure anything categorically…options were left free for measurement of subjectivity as a state of … not mind, but feeling …'.

Notes

1 It is possible to calculate a 'statistically significant' factor loading in the context of a Q methodological study. See Watts and Stenner (2005a; 2012) for further details.

2 For those who are sceptical about factor analysis or PCA, the same pattern could be detected using other techniques such as cluster analysis. A by-variable hierarchical cluster analysis on this data, for example, yields two distinct clusters corresponding to factors 1 and 2. In our experience, however, PCA or factor analysis give superior solutions when dealing with more Q sorts.

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APPENDIX 13.1: ITEMS USED IN THE ILLUSTRATIVE STUDY

01 Ultimately, there is very little 'method' in qualitative methods
02 Qualitative methods are necessary because many research topics are not amenable to objective measurement
03 Social constructionism is the theoretical framework that best links all qualitative research methods
04 Qualitative and 'critical' research go hand-in-hand
05 Qualitative methods bring originality and creativity to the research domain
06 Qualitative methods are synonymous with a re-invigorated philosophical awareness in many disciplines
07 You should never trust a qualitative researcher who claims a factual status for their findings
08 Only the most competent of undergraduate students are capable of handling a qualitative research project
09 The many qualitative methods in use have more differences than similarities
10 The virtue of qualitative methods is that they give some control and 'voice' back to the research participant
11 The rise of qualitative methods represents a 'feminization' of the research process
12 Qualitative researchers have done enough criticizing: it is time they proved themselves with substantial empirical findings of their own
13 Most students turn to qualitative methods in order to avoid statistics
14 There is a vast gulf between the ways of thinking of qualitative and quantitative researchers
15 Adopting qualitative research methods should be seen as a political act
16 All qualitative research should follow a good 'how to do it' guide
17 Qualitative researchers always seem to have some political or 'moral' agenda: this lack of impartiality is a concern
18 One cannot properly access psychological phenomena using qualitative methods
19 Qualitative research offers nothing more than a reading of a reading
20 A good qualitative study will yield results that can be generalized to other settings
21 The relativism of qualitative research may ultimately prove its undoing
22 Qualitative research has an important exploratory role to play prior to the application of quantitative methods in a mature science
23 The banal simplicity of qualitative research is deliberately obscured by a mass of unnecessary theory
24 To my mind, more effort needs to be directed at the mixing of quantitative and qualitative methods
25 All research methods teaching should include training in qualitative methods
26 Qualitative researchers prefer 'soft' topics like relationships and identities
27 The first rule of qualitative research is that there are no rules
28 There is an acute need to develop standardized ways of doing qualitative research
29 Qualitative methods are every bit as scientific as quantitative methods
30 Users of qualitative methods should think hard about how to make their knowledge claims reliable and valid
31 Whether we like it or not, most research is inherently political: good qualitative work makes this apparent
32 Qualitative methods provide a means to probe complex personal dynamics that otherwise go unnoticed
33 Qualitative data is necessarily a product of the situation and circumstances in which it is gathered
34 If a qualitative method cannot generate replicable findings, it can have no place in science
35 Qualitative research should be left to those with the knowledge to 'do the job properly'
36 The value of a qualitative method lies in the freedom of expression it affords its participants
37 The skills of the qualitative researcher are more 'artistic' than 'scientific'
38 The primary advantage of qualitative methods lies in their ability to deal with meaning
39 The most intelligent and creative students are attracted to qualitative research
40 The loss of reliability associated with qualitative methods is more than offset by their ecological validity
41 Good qualitative research works inductively or from the 'ground up'
42 For me, qualitative methods are about 'understanding' rather than 'explanation'

43 The findings of qualitative methods are rarely worth the time and trouble involved
44 The big problem with qualitative methods is that they cannot ultimately be used to test theories
45 Any good study will combine qualitative and quantitative techniques
46 The rationale for qualitative research is simple: the best way to find out about people is to talk to them
47 There are no guarantees or certainties in qualitative research
48 Any mature discipline will recognize the need for a variety of research methods, qualitative and quantitative
49 Qualitative researchers should pay more attention to the observational techniques of natural science disciplines like ethology
50 Quantification too often results in over-simplification and distortion
51 I would never dream of using qualitative methods in my own research
52 It is very important to resist attempts to marginalize or devalue qualitative research
53 Qualitative methods bring research out of the laboratory and into the real world
54 The more we 'drift' in a qualitative direction, the more the prestige and influence of our discipline is threatened
55 The adoption of qualitative methods often involves our re-thinking the nature of our research question
56 Qualitative methods appeal to those who see objectivity as an 'ivory tower' myth
57 Qualitative researchers are generating a cumulative knowledge base that will ultimately deepen our understanding
58 The real reasons for a person's conduct are often obscured by methods which rely on self-reports
59 Good qualitative research should be theoretically informed
60 Qualitative and quantitative methods are complementary: the former deal with subjectivity, the latter with objectivity

Factor 1

–6	*–5*	*–4*	*–3*	*–2*	*–1*
1. Ultimately, there is very little 'method' in qualitative methods	54. The more we 'drift' in a qualitative direction, the more the prestige and influence of our discipline is threatened.	11. The rise of qualitative methods represents a 'feminization' of the research process	26. Qualitative researchers prefer 'soft' topics like relationships and identities	18. One cannot properly access psychological phenomena using qualitative methods	13. Most students turn to qualitative methods in order to avoid statistics
7. You should never trust a qualitative researcher who claims a factual status for their findings	12. Qualitative researchers have done enough criticizing: it's time they proved themselves with substantial empirical findings of their own	17. Qualitative researchers always seem to have some political or 'moral' agenda: this lack of impartiality is a concern	34. If a qualitative method cannot generate replicable findings, it can have no place in science	21. The relativism of qualitative research may ultimately prove its undoing	30. Users of qualitative methods should think hard about how to make their knowledge claims reliable and valid
(2)	19. Qualitative research offers nothing more than a reading of a reading	23. The banal simplicity of qualitative research is deliberately obscured by a mass of unnecessary theory	37. The skills of the qualitative researcher are more 'artistic' than 'scientific'	22. Qualitative research has an important exploratory role to play prior to the application of quantitative methods in a mature science	35. Qualitative research should be left to those with the knowledge to 'do the job properly'
	(3)	51. I would never dream of using qualitative methods in my own research	43. The findings of qualitative methods are rarely worth the time and trouble involved	28. There is an acute need to develop standardized ways of doing qualitative research	45. Any good study will combine qualitative and quantitative techniques
		(4)	44. The big problem with qualitative methods is that they cannot ultimately be used to test theories	47. There are no guarantees or certainties in qualitative research	8. Only the most competent of undergraduate students are capable of handling a qualitative research project
			(5)	56. Qualitative methods appeal to those who see objectivity as an 'ivory tower' myth	58. The real reasons for a person's conduct are often obscured by methods which rely on self-reports
				(6)	(6)

Factor 1 cont'd

0	*+1*	*+2*	*+3*	*+4*	*+5*	*+6*
9. The many qualitative methods in use have more differences than similarities	2. Qualitative methods are necessary because many research topics are not amenable to objective measurement	5. Qualitative methods bring originality and creativity to the research domain	3. Social constructionism is the theoretical framework that best links all qualitative research methods	25. All research methods teaching should include training in qualitative methods	10. The virtue of qualitative methods is that they give some control and 'voice' back to the research participant	36. The value of a qualitative method lies in the freedom of expression it affords its participants
16. All qualitative research should follow a good 'how to do it' guide	4. Qualitative and 'critical' research go hand-in-hand	6. Qualitative methods are synonymous with a reinvigorated philosophical awareness in many disciplines	32. Qualitative methods provide a means to probe complex personal dynamics that otherwise go unnoticed	31. Whether we like it or not, most research is inherently political: good qualitative work makes this apparent	29. Qualitative methods are every bit as scientific as quantitative methods	52. It is very important to resist attempts to marginalize or devalue qualitative research
24. To my mind, more effort needs to be directed at the mixing of quantitative and qualitative methods	15. Adopting qualitative research methods should be seen as a political act	14. There is a vast gulf between the ways of thinking of qualitative and quantitative researchers	33. Qualitative data is necessarily a product of the situation and circumstances in which it is gathered	41. Good qualitative research works inductively or from the 'ground up'	57. Qualitative researchers are generating a cumulative knowledge base that will ultimately deepen our understanding	(2)
27. The first rule of qualitative research is that there are no rules	20. A good qualitative study will yield results that can be generalized to other settings	46. The rationale for qualitative research is simple: the best way to find out about people is to talk to them	38. The primary advantage of qualitative methods lies in their ability to deal with meaning	50. Quantification too often results in over-simplification and distortion	(3)	
39. The most intelligent and creative students are attracted to qualitative research	59. Good qualitative research should be theoretically informed	53. Qualitative methods bring research out of the laboratory and into the real world	55. The adoption of qualitative methods often involves our re-thinking the nature of our research question	(4)		
40. The loss of reliability associated with qualitative methods is more than offset by their ecological validity	49. Qualitative researchers should pay more attention to the observational techniques of natural science disciplines like ethology	48. Any mature discipline will recognize the need for a variety of research methods, qualitative and quantitative	(5)			
42. For me, qualitative methods are about 'understanding' rather than 'explanation'	(6)	(6)				
60. Qualitative and quantitative methods are complementary: the former deal with subjectivity, the latter with objectivity						

(Continued)

Factor 2

–6	*–5*	*–4*	*–3*	*–2*	*–1*
18. One cannot properly access psychological phenomena using qualitative methods	13. Most students turn to qualitative methods in order to avoid statistics	8. Only the most competent of undergraduate students are capable of handling a qualitative research project	6. Qualitative methods are synonymous with a reinvigorated philosophical awareness in many disciplines	1. Ultimately, there is very little 'method' in qualitative methods	4. Qualitative and 'critical' research go hand-in-hand
29. Qualitative methods are every bit as scientific as quantitative methods	27. The first rule of qualitative research is that there are no rules	11. The rise of qualitative methods represents a 'feminization' of the research process	3. Social constructionism is the theoretical framework that best links all qualitative research methods	9. The many qualitative methods in use have more differences than similarities	19. Qualitative research offers nothing more than a reading of a reading
(2)	39. The most intelligent and creative students are attracted to qualitative research	15. Adopting qualitative research methods should be seen as a political act	20. A good qualitative study will yield results that can be generalized to other settings	14. There is a vast gulf between the ways of thinking of qualitative and quantitative researchers	44. The big problem with qualitative methods is that they cannot ultimately be used to test theories
	(3)	43. The findings of qualitative methods are rarely worth the time and trouble involved	26. Qualitative researchers prefer 'soft' topics like relationships and identities	41. Good qualitative research works inductively or from the 'ground up'	46. The rationale for qualitative research is simple: the best way to find out about people is to talk to them
		(4)	31. Whether we like it or not, most research is inherently political: good qualitative work makes this apparent	51. I would never dream of using qualitative methods in my own research	49. Qualitative researchers should pay more attention to the observational techniques of natural science disciplines like ethology
			(5)	54. The more we 'drift' in a qualitative direction, the more the prestige and influence of our discipline is threatened	50. Quantification too often results in over-simplification and distortion
				(6)	(6)

Factor 2 cont'd

0	*+1*	*+2*	*+3*	*+4*	*+5*	*+6*
12. Qualitative researchers have done enough criticizing: it's time they proved themselves with substantial empirical findings of their own	10. The virtue of qualitative methods is that they give some control and 'voice' back to the research participant	5. Qualitative methods bring originality and creativity to the research domain	32. Qualitative methods provide a means to probe complex personal dynamics that otherwise go unnoticed	16. All qualitative research should follow a good 'how to do it' guide	2. Qualitative methods are necessary because many research topics are not amenable to objective measurement	22. Qualitative research has an important exploratory role to play prior to the application of quantitative methods in a mature science
23. The banal simplicity of qualitative research is deliberately obscured by a mass of unnecessary theory	21. The relativism of qualitative research may ultimately prove its undoing	17. Qualitative researchers always seem to have some political or 'moral' agenda: this lack of impartiality is a concern	35. Qualitative research should be left to those with the knowledge to 'do the job properly'	24. To my mind, more effort needs to be directed at the mixing of quantitative and qualitative methods	7. You should never trust a qualitative researcher who claims a factual status for their findings	40. The loss of reliability associated with qualitative methods is more than offset by their ecological validity
33. Qualitative data is necessarily a product of the situation and circumstances in which it is gathered	30. Users of qualitative methods should think hard about how to make their knowledge claims reliable and valid	25. All research methods teaching should include training in qualitative methods	42. For me, qualitative methods are about 'understanding' rather than 'explanation'	47. There are no guarantees or certainties in qualitative research	28. There is an acute need to develop standardized ways of doing qualitative research	(2)
34. If a qualitative method cannot generate replicable findings, it can have no place in science	38. The primary advantage of qualitative methods lies in their ability to deal with meaning	53. Qualitative methods bring research out of the laboratory and into the real world	48. Any mature discipline will recognize the need for a variety of research methods, qualitative and quantitative	60. Qualitative and quantitative methods are complementary: the former deal with subjectivity, the latter with objectivity	(3)	
36. The value of a qualitative method lies in the freedom of expression it affords its participants	55. The adoption of qualitative methods often involves our re-thinking the nature of our research question	58. The real reasons for a person's conduct are often obscured by methods which rely on self-reports	57. Qualitative researchers are generating a cumulative knowledge base that will ultimately deepen our understanding	(4)		
37. The skills of the qualitative researcher are more 'artistic' than 'scientific'	56. Qualitative methods appeal to those who see objectivity as an 'ivory tower' myth	59. Good qualitative research should be theoretically informed	(5)			
45. Any good study will combine qualitative and quantitative techniques	(6)	(6)				
52. It is very important to resist attempts to marginalize or devalue qualitative research						
(8)						

14

Grounded Theory Methods for Qualitative Psychology

Kathy Charmaz and Karen Henwood

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the grounded theory method and its evolution over sixty years since sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967) put forth their original statement of the method. They presented grounded theory as consisting of flexible, successive analytic strategies to construct inductive theories from the data. Over the past few decades, many qualitative psychologists have adopted grounded theory, as we outline below. We draw on developments in diverse subfields of psychology, interdisciplinary research, to which psychologists contribute, and selected contributions from key grounded theory researchers and researcher-practitioners within allied health and social disciplines.

While our chapter is targeted at issues customarily discussed about a particular methodology and set of inquiry methods, we limit our historical view of the method and instead write from the perspective of the present. We want our readers to have ready, up-to-date access to the substance, character, and developing use of grounded theory method, and to current debates about these methods. Grounded theory, as one of us has previously argued (Henwood and Pidgeon, 2003), is not a unitary method but a useful nodal point where contemporary issues in qualitative social science are discussed. The method originated in sociology but has become a general method that has informed qualitative inquiry across and between disciplines. We aim to capture fundamentals of these discussions but because of the vast number of relevant works, our review here is illustrative rather than exhaustive.

THE LOGIC, EMERGENCE AND USE OF GROUNDED THEORY

Grounded Theory Logic

Grounded theory methods consist of a systematic inductive, comparative, iterative, abductive and interactive approach *to* inquiry with several key strategies *for* conducting inquiry (Charmaz, 2006, 2014, 2015a). As grounded theorists, we integrate and streamline data collection and analysis through making systematic comparisons throughout inquiry by interacting with our data and emergent analyses. By making comparisons, we define the properties or characteristics of our codes and categories, discern research participants' and our

own assumptions about the studied phenomenon, make implicit meanings and actions explicit, connect our categories, and delineate the implications of our analyses. In addition, our comparisons lead us to identify negative cases (i.e. cases that do not fit the patterns we define in the data) and puzzling findings.

Since its inception, a major contribution of grounded theory has been its emphasis on simultaneous data collection and analysis. The iterative process of going back and forth between data collection and analysis prompts us to increase both the abstract level and precision of our emerging categories. We start analysing data from the beginning of our data collection and begin building inductive theoretical analyses but do not stop with inductive logic. Rather, we check and refine our emerging theoretical ideas about the data while keeping these ideas grounded in data.

In this sense, grounded theory methods are abductive (Charmaz, 2014; Richardson and Kramer, 2006; Strübing, 2007) because we rely on *reasoning* to account for surprising discoveries we find in the data by entertaining all conceivable theoretical explanations of them. Then we proceed to check these explanations empirically through further data collection – to pursue the most plausible theoretical explanation (Deely, 1990; Peirce, 1938/1958; Rosenthal, 2004; Shank, 1998; Stainton Rogers, 2011). Thus, a strength of grounded theory is that our budding conceptualisations can lead us in the most useful – perhaps a new or unanticipated – theoretical direction to understand our data.

Both the turn away from the positivist heritage in psychology and a growing interest in constructivism make grounded theory particularly appealing. Researchers with either objectivist or constructivist proclivities can adopt grounded theory strategies. Like many researchers in other fields, some psychologists such as Andrews et al. (2009) and Scull, Mbonyingabo and Kotb (2016) continue to use Strauss and Corbin's (1990, 1998) early texts to frame their studies. By now, however, numerous qualitative psychologists adopt the constructivist version of grounded theory (e.g. Buckingham and Brodsky, 2015; Byrne et al., 2011; Martin and Barnard, 2013). The constructivist approach embraces reflexivity and takes positionality into account – of the researcher's starting points and standpoints before and during inquiry, as well as the conditions shaping the research situation, process, and product. Constructivists view data as contingent upon language, co-constructed with participants, and rooted in relationships and the social, cultural, historical, and situational conditions of its production.

In contrast, objectivists assume that they make discoveries in a real world separate from themselves and develop theories whose generalisations transcend particularities. How objectivists and constructivists use grounded theory strategies differs. As constructivists avow, grounded theory is fundamentally an interactive and interpretive method (Charmaz, 2006, 2014). Not only do we interact with our research participants but also we interact with and interpret the resulting data about them through our successive levels of analysis. We select and use grounded theory strategies according to our interpretations of the data and assessments of our emerging analyses of them. The entire process relies on creating these interpretations. By using grounded theory methods, we learn *how* to raise the level of abstraction at each stage of the analytic process.

Grounded theory strategies provide ways of working with data – of seeking, interrogating, managing, and conceptualising data – but how we use these methods depends on our readings of our data, repeated scrutiny of them, and nascent analyses. Thus, grounded theory is an emergent interpretive method rather than a method of formulaic application.

This method appeals to psychologists for four major reasons: (1) grounded theory offers a rigorous approach to qualitative analysis; (2) it fits studying meanings of experience (Rennie and Nissim, 2015); (3) it can be used in conjunction with numerous qualitative approaches such as phenomenological psychology (Ataria, 2014), narrative inquiry (Doucet and Mauthner, 2008; Lal et al., 2012; Rice, 2009), thematic analysis (Griffith, 2016), discursive analyses (McCreaddie and Payne, 2010), participatory action research (Andrews et al., 2009), and varied mixed forms of qualitative analysis (Ehrlich et al., 2016; Floersch et al., 2010; Frost et al., 2009); and (4) grounded theory is useful in mixed methods studies (Butterfield, 2009). Psychologists have been moving away from atomised analyses of individuals and moving toward understanding the varied contexts in which they live. Adopting the logic of either objectivist or constructivist grounded theory furthers this move. Researchers with both epistemological leanings find that grounded theory strategies increase their efficiency and effectiveness in gathering useful data and in constructing focused analyses. These strengths combined with the logic and rigour of grounded theory make the method a good choice for both shaping quantitative tools and following up on quantitative findings in mixed method studies (e.g. Kamo et al., 2015).

Using Grounded Theory Guidelines

Grounded theory studies begin with open-ended research questions to explore but follow ideas that researchers generate once in the field (Pidgeon and Henwood, 2004). Grounded theory guidelines invoke at least a two-phased qualitative coding that fosters analytic treatment of processes from the start. (See Box 14.1 for an outline of grounded theory guidelines.)

Coding defines and designates what the data indicate and are about. Traditional grounded theory coding has favoured examining actions and events rather than the entirety or unity of research

Box 14.1 Basic grounded theory methods

GENERAL STRATEGIES

Engage in simultaneous data collection and analysis – early data analysis informs subsequent data collection, which then allows the researcher to define and follow leads in the data and to refine tentative categories.

Invoke constant comparative methods – involves making comparisons at each level of analysis, including data with data, data with codes, codes with codes, codes with categories, category with category, category with concept. Last, we compare our constructed grounded theory with theories and studies in the relevant literatures.

Develop emergent concepts – analyse the data by constructing successively more abstract concepts arising from the researcher's interactions with these data and his or her interpretations of them.

Adopt an inductive-abductive logic – starts by analysing inductive cases but checks this emerging analysis by entertaining all possible theoretical explanations and confirming or disconfirming them until the most plausible theoretical interpretation of the observed data is constructed.

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

Initial coding – begins data analysis early while collecting data by asking the kind of questions Glaser (1978: 57) raises: 'What is happening in the data?' 'In which major process(es) are participants engaged?' 'What is this data a study of?' 'What theoretical category does this specific datum indicate?' and Charmaz (2014: 116) asks: 'What does the data suggest? Pronounce? From whose point of view? We think about how our standpoints affect what we see, hear, and record. Throughout coding, constructivists emphasise that we bring our meanings and language to what we define as 'in' the data. Subsequently, we, too, are open to scrutiny. The researcher examines the data for its potential theoretical importance, uses gerunds to code for processes, and remains open to all theoretical possibilities. Codes are short, analytic, and active. Line-by-line coding fosters scrutiny of the data and minimises forcing them into preconceived categories and extant theories. Interrogating each bit of data for its theoretical implications begins the move from description toward conceptual analysis.

Focused coding – takes the most frequent and/or significant initial codes to study, sort, compare, and synthesise large amounts of data. Focused codes become tentative categories to explore and analyse. Focused coding expedites the research process.

Memo-writing – involves writing analytic notes to oneself throughout the research process to raise the analytic level of the emerging theory, identify tentative categories and their properties, define gaps in data collection, delineate relationships between categories, and engage in reflexivity about the research process. Memos become increasingly theoretical as analysis proceeds.

Theoretical sampling – entails seeking specific data to develop the properties of categories or theory, not to achieve representative population distributions. Researchers also use theoretical sampling to learn the range of variation of the studied category or process and to specify connections between categories.

Saturating theoretical concepts – means that gathering more data reveals no new properties of a theoretical category nor yields further insights about the emerging grounded theory.

Theoretical sorting and integrating – consists of weighing, ordering, and connecting theoretical memos (1) to show how the theory fits together, (2) to explicate relationships between theoretical categories or between the properties of one theoretical category, (3) to specify the conditions under which the category(ies) arises and (4) to state the implications of the theorised relationships.

participants' narratives. Initial coding opens the data to in-depth views. Line-by-line coding works well with interview and textual data. It forces us to look at bits of data anew, dissect them, and label them. Incident-by-incident coding provides a strong basis for making comparisons between data, particularly with intensive interview and ethnographic data.

After engaging in initial coding, we adopt the most frequent and/or significant initial codes as focused codes to examine large amounts of data. From the beginning, we compare datum with datum, datum with code, and code with code in written memos, or extended notes.

Memo-writing is the pivotal analytic step between coding and writing drafts of papers. Because memo-writing encourages us to stop and think about our data, codes, and/or emerging theory, we write them throughout the research process. Memos may range from fleeting ideas (Strauss, 1987) to analytic statements that take a code apart and explore its potential for development as a theoretical category (Charmaz, 2014). Memo-writing prompts us to develop our ideas about our codes and to treat significant ones as tentative categories to explore and to check through further data-gathering. As a result, later memos are more analytic and often serve as sections of the first draft of the research report.

After establishing some tentative categories, we conduct theoretical sampling to collect more data to fill out the properties of a theoretical category, find variation in it, and delineate relationships between categories. This sampling keeps the analysis grounded and makes it fit the studied phenomenon. As grounded theorists, we presumably sample until we achieve theoretical saturation, which means that we see no new properties of the theoretical category, its variations, or connections between categories. Criteria for saturation rest on a researcher's claims but not all claims to saturation are merited. An analysis with several major categories that rests on skimpy data can hardly be saturated.

After we have created a set of memos, we sort them to fit our theoretical categories and to integrate the theoretical framework of the analysis and then write the first draft of the report. Standard grounded theory practice includes creating the theoretical explication before revising the piece for a particular audience and positioning it in the literature. These practices encourage us to develop our ideas first and then compare them with earlier theories and studies.

In essence, grounded theory is a method of data analysis with the intent of constructing theory. Until recently (Charmaz, 2014, 2015b; Charmaz and Belgrave, 2012; Clarke, 2005; Doucet and Mauthner, 2008; Scheibelhofer, 2008), grounded theorists gave scant attention to data collection and some have reduced concerns about it to slogans such as Glaser's (2001: 145) 'All is data'. These grounded theorists argue that the quality and quantity of data is not problematic if the analyst achieves 'saturation' of categories. Yet they do not delineate useful criteria for what should constitute either viable categories or saturation. Consequently, some grounded theory studies skimp on data collection and tout description as theory.

Emergence and Evolution of the Method

Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed qualitative inquiry by offering systematic guidelines for managing and analysing qualitative data. They departed from mid-twentieth century conventions about conducting research because they advocated: (1) integrating data collection and data analysis, (2) constructing theories from qualitative research grounded in data rather than deducing testable hypotheses from existing theories, (3) treating qualitative research as rigorous and legitimate in its own right, and (4) eschewing notions that theory-construction belonged to an elite few. Their ideas challenged conventional positivist notions of qualitative research as impressionistic, a-theoretical, and biased, and undermined traditional assumptions about academic turf and hierarchies.

The objectivist and constructivist threads in grounded theory have their antecedents in Glaser and Strauss's contrasting intellectual heritages. Glaser drew on his rigorous training in quantitative methods and imported positivist assumptions of objectivity, parsimony, and generality into grounded theory. Strauss brought the pragmatist emphases on agency, action, language and meaning, and emergence to grounded theory, all of which support its constructivist leanings. Both Glaser and Strauss saw grounded theory as a method that facilitated studying processes.

Since 1967, each founder took grounded theory in different directions. Glaser (1998, 2003, 2013) still adheres to positivist principles of discovery, generality, parsimony, and objectivity and emphasises neutrality of data, variable analysis, and an authoritative researcher. He has, however, disavowed the quest for a basic social or social psychological process as forcing the data into a preconceived framework, rejected line-by-line coding in favour of incident-by-incident coding, and reversed his earlier insistence that participants will tell the researcher what concerns them.

For over a decade, Glaser (2003) has advocated using grounded theory methods to discover how research participants resolve a main concern rather than to study processes. Glaser's commitment to comparative methods has become more explicit over the years; his defence of small samples has grown more strident, and his dismissal of typical methodological concerns such as attention to accuracy, standpoints, and reflexivity has become more transparent.

Strauss (1987) moved the method toward verification and with Juliet Corbin (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 1998), added technical procedures that sparked Glaser's (1992) attack that their method was not grounded theory. Strauss and Corbin's techniques made the method more formulaic because researchers could apply these techniques *to* their data, rather than developing emergent ideas – and analytic strategies – *from* their interpretations of data. Corbin (2008, 2009) has expressed regret that readers see their earlier books as rule-bound and prescriptive. She also has redefined her perspective on inquiry in these books as dated. Corbin's (Corbin, 2009; Corbin and Strauss, 2008, 2015) recent shifts bring her closer to the constructivist approach.

Glaser's version of grounded theory remains positivist while Corbin's has become notably less so. Charmaz's (2000, 2006, 2014) distinction between objectivist and constructivist grounded theory provides an epistemological handle for moving grounded theory out of its positivist roots and further into interpretive social science. She adopts grounded theory strategies for coding, memo-writing, and theoretical sampling but shows how the resulting theory is constructed rather than discovered. A constructivist grounded theory is located in time, space, and circumstance, rather than general and separate from its origins, and aimed toward abstract understanding rather than explanation and prediction. Constructivists assume that (1) researchers are a part of what they see, not apart from it; (2) facts and values are connected, not separate; and (3) views are multiple and interpretive, not singular and self-evident. These assumptions lead to reflexivity about producing data, constructing theories, and representing research participants.

Clarke (2005; Clarke et al., 2015) extends grounded theory by integrating postmodern premises in her explication of situational analysis. She rejects twentieth-century grounded theory assumptions of generality, truth, discovery, and objectivity in favour of situated grounded theory analyses that take into account positionality, relativity, and reflexivity. Like numerous other scholars (e.g. Bryant, 2003, 2017; Charmaz, 1990, 2000, 2006; Henwood and Pidgeon, 2003, 2006; Tweed and Charmaz, 2011), Clarke sees grounded theories as constructed, not discovered. She states that researchers already have theoretical knowledge and likely considerable knowledge about their substantive areas and specific research situation before entering the field. Consistent with Strauss's intellectual legacy, Clarke (2005) not only constructs situational analysis from symbolic interactionist sociology and pragmatist philosophy, but argues that symbolic interactionism and grounded theory form a theory-method package in which ontology and epistemology are co-constitutive and non-fungible. Her position (1) builds on the pragmatist agenda of empirical study of experiences and practices in obdurate, but multiple realities; (2) assumes that perspectives on these realities, including researchers', are partial, situated, and constructed; and (3) takes the situation of inquiry as the unit of analysis. Clarke augments grounded theory analytic strategies with maps depicting complex situations, social worlds/arenas, and positions taken and not taken.

Grounded theory methods offer a path toward constructing theory, but not a direct route. If grounded theory methods point the way to theorising, why do numerous grounded theory studies remain descriptive? Three fundamental problems impede theoretical development. First, many grounded theorists do not attain the intimate familiarity (Blumer, 1969) with their studied phenomenon that permits looking at it from multiple perspectives and getting beneath the surface. Instead, their view remains partial and superficial. If so, they reproduce common-sense understandings of the phenomenon (Silverman, 2013) rather than regard such understandings as problematic objects of inquiry to take apart and begin to conceptualise. Subsequently, the finished categories remain mundane, descriptive, and devoid of theoretical incisiveness. A lack of intimate familiarity also reduces the researcher's awareness of the range of variation of the phenomenon, its reach, and connections with other phenomena and levels of analysis. Some grounded theorists (e.g. Glaser, 2003) express less concern about limited data collection. They argue that the inherent modifiability of a grounded theory allows extending or refining a theory later. Perhaps. But does it occur? Usually not. Thus, researchers need to aim for thoroughness and theoretical understanding of variation.

Second, the analytic process starts with coding in grounded theory but most qualitative coding remains topical, descriptive, and general. This coding leads to synthesising, sorting, and summarising data. All are useful but do not foster raising specific questions about the data and codes to take them apart and define what constitutes them. While coding, we define points and moments in

the data that suggest analytic leads or illuminate telling issues. What we do during initial analytic stages informs what we can develop later in the analytic process.

Third, many researchers who claim grounded theory do not move back and forth between collecting data and refining abstract categories. The logic of grounded theory calls for successively raising the level of abstraction of the analysis through interrogating it with emergent questions, filling and checking categories through theoretical sampling, and asking which theories best account for this analysis. If a researcher's main category is descriptive, theoretical sampling remains at a low level of abstraction and, moreover, many researchers who claim to adopt grounded theory strategies do not conduct theoretical sampling at all. Recognition of the problems above can prompt researchers to pose theoretical questions and pursue theoretical connections.

THE TAKE-UP OF GROUNDED THEORY IN PSYCHOLOGY AND EMERGENCE OF QUALITATIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Why and how has grounded theory come to have a place in psychology? What role has it played in the emergence of qualitative psychology? In this section, we trace grounded theory's insertion into, and influence upon, psychology's methodological repertoire as it has expanded to include qualitative approaches and methods. It took 20 years for grounded theory to come to psychologists' attention; however, having done so, it rapidly came to occupy a position in the vanguard of psychologists' qualitative approaches and methods.

The Earliest Grounded Theory Impetus: Clinical/Practitioner Psychology

The first psychologists who took up grounded theory principles and practices did so in the late 1980s (Rennie et al., 1988). These psychologists worked primarily in the clinical psychology (mental health) research arena, and articulated two key areas of methodological concern: (1) the need to seek out and utilise holistic methods for understanding and representing clients' and research participants' lived experiences and actions, *in situ*, and in their full complexity and (2) the importance of fostering forms of theorising within psychology for those seeking to combine their clinical/practical interests and academic research. Qualitative methods, and in particular grounded theory, were deemed to be important in both regards.

Researchers such as Rennie et al. found themselves outside the mainstream of an academic clinical psychology preoccupied with conducting controlled experimental studies – as was the discipline of psychology as a whole – and with emulating the standards and practices of a laboratory-based, natural science. This situation persists to some extent, as the research concerns and priorities of academic clinical psychologists resist change for institutional reasons. More recently, however, new demands significantly undercut, or at least interrupt, traditional priorities. Clinical psychology research must now show itself to be more directly relevant to patients' expressed concerns, as well as applying itself to the development and evaluation of treatment regimens and psychological/mental health services.

This latter situation has considerably strengthened the hand of those advocating the need for clinical (and its later derivative, health psychology) to adopt more flexible, qualitative, and contextualised methods. They afford a better fit between clinical psychologists' theories and practices and the meanings their clients assign to their experiences and problems. Hence, qualitative research methodologies and methods have gained acceptability, noticeably as part of clinical and health psychology's development in the UK and beyond. Grounded theory is one of the most popular and widely well-regarded of such methods (Marks and Yardley, 2004; Slade and Priebe, 2006) and has generated many valuable studies (e.g. Bennett et al., 2007; Horne et al., 2012; Jacobson, 2009; Priya, 2010).

QUESTIONING SCIENTIFIC ORTHODOXY, EXPANDING PSYCHOLOGICAL METHODS: CRITICAL GROUNDWORK FOR GROUNDED THEORY IN THE UK

Interest intensified in grounded theory from the early 1990s in the UK, as part of more general arguments for challenging scientific/methodological orthodoxy and creating a space for qualitative research within an experimentally, quantitatively and statistically defined discipline (Henwood and Nicolson, 1995). A major concern was with the unnecessary narrowness of psychology's preoccupation with the control, prediction, and

measurement of human behaviour and individual cognition. Social psychologists who critiqued ideas typically taken for granted within psychology about the practices and procedures of knowing and science (Harré and Secord, 1972; Gergen, 1973, 1982; Parker, 1989) – and who are now often known as social constructionists and critical psychologists (Stainton Rogers, 2011) – did the early groundwork. Proposals for an early progenitor of qualitative psychology, in the form of an approach called 'ethogenic' psychology (Harré et al., 1985), were also put in place. Research following this approach would analyse meaningful activity *in situ*, along with participants' everyday understandings or subjective accounts. Intelligibility and orderliness of conduct would be established in relation to normative expectations, and its predictability by positing 'real' generative psychological mechanisms and structures as opposed to abstract cause–effect (or in behavioural terms, stimulus–response) sequences. Although ethogenic psychology never really took hold, it flagged the possibility of psychologists refusing to privilege modernist/dualistic practices such as the measurement of behaviour over the study of meaningful conduct and people's subjective accounts, and the use of non-objectivist inquiry methods. In this way, it established the context of critical debate about psychological science, and prepared the foundation for grounded theory to enter UK (and later, North American) psychology.

Grounded Theory and Qualitative Psychology

In the contributions that made grounded theory visible in the UK (and later in US psychology), Henwood and Pidgeon (1992, 1995, 2003) argued directly for the uptake of grounded theory in psychology, as part of their wider observation that psychology had too long neglected the potential benefits of qualitative research approaches. In making this claim, Henwood and Pidgeon echoed a major argument of critical, social constructionist and ethogenic psychologists – that psychology's (dualistic) way of defining itself as an objective science opened up serious gaps in the logic and practice of psychological science. Additionally, they pointed out how grounded theory was a tried and tested qualitative social research method, developed within a cognate discipline (sociology), epitomising many of the real potentials qualitative research offered to psychology. Shortly thereafter, Smith, Harré and Van Langenhove (1995) forecast the possibility of fundamentally changing the discipline of psychology through qualitative research methods. By including Charmaz's (1995b) chapter on grounded theory in their edited volume, they brought the method into the classroom and increased its visibility among disciplinary colleagues.

Grounded theory offered psychologists a set of clearly articulated principles and practices for working outside the confines of their discipline's highly prescriptive quantitative stance. This method provided an entrée into the rigorous work of empirically gathering and analysing initially ill structured qualitative data, and of making sense of them in theoretical terms. It opened up a no less trustworthy or valid, but far more creative and exploratory logic of inquiry than hypothetico-deductive theory and practice. It provided individual researchers with a set of working principles and practices aimed at both 'disciplining' and 'stimulating' the theoretical imagination.

Psychologists using grounded theory could inquire into research problems with substantive relevance to specific problem domains (sometimes called 'real world' inquiry). As specified by grounded theory, one's primary concern must be developing a close and meaningful understanding of a particular, substantive problem or social arena (e.g. the involvement of patients in decisions about their care; the introduction of new technology into a clinical setting; the management of risks in hazardous industries). Out of such understanding comes the possibility of research knowledge of close relevance to the lives of people inhabiting such domains, and also to the work and decisions of practitioners and policymakers dealing with problems people encounter in their everyday worlds.

Grounded theory's specific intellectual antecedents in American pragmatist philosophy and the symbolic interactionist perspective (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934) provided a further reason for its relevance to psychology, and role in stimulating the development of qualitative psychology. This linkage should not be surprising since both look back to the late-nineteenth-century psychological writings of Dilthey, who insisted that it would be mistaken to pursue causal explanation at the expense of understanding or verstehen, and that psychological and social investigations, alike, should ask questions about the creation of meaning. Pragmatist philosophy instantiates the idea that the value of any theoretical proposition or explanatory claim depends less on testing it against some absolute, transcendent reality, and more on considering the kinds of actions and consequences it allows for as people encounter and negotiate their empirical world (what, as a meaningful construction, it is 'good for', Camic et al., 2003). Symbolic interactionism articulates

a coherent justification for studying how and why people come to attach meaning to their own and others' conduct, other objects of experience, and their efforts at understanding, and representation (Blumer, 1969). Symbolic interactionism takes action as a central concern. Thus, the combination of symbolic interactionism and grounded theory creates the potential for forging stronger links between psychology and sociology.

Grounded theory, then, provided a serious option to those psychologists who found themselves too constrained by psychology's traditional experimental and psychometric outlook. It posed a new mode of inquiry, creditably located in more expansive and constructive discussions of how to pursue human inquiry. It allowed psychologists to contemplate – many for the first time – how they might undertake exploratory research using qualitative, real world data, and with the goal of understanding and theorising about people's lived experiences and meaningful worlds, so that their research might – in the manner highlighted by Dey (2004) and Punch (2005) – make some contribution to the ways in which people live with their daily problems. Although ethogenic psychology tried to achieve some of these goals earlier, especially centring the study of the meaningfulness to people of their conduct and experiences in their everyday worlds, its designation as a separate type of psychology had, perhaps, not helped to sustain it within psychology's institutional structures.

What seems to have happened in the case of grounded theory is that initial interest in, and discussion of, grounded theory's potentials has translated into considerable demand to know 'how to do' psychological research using the method. The demand has come from clinical and health psychology research, as already noted, but also from social, critical, and applied psychology (see Charmaz, 2005, 2011b, 2017 for developing a critical grounded theory). The plethora of edited, introductory compilations of qualitative psychological methods texts appearing rapidly since the earliest days almost invariably continue to dedicate a chapter to grounded theory (e.g. Harper and Thompson, 2011; Smith, 2015; Smith et al., 1995; Wertz et al., 2011; Willig, 2001b, 2013), as have texts developed to support training in inter- and multi-disciplinary human and social research including psychology (e.g. Silverman, 2016). Increasingly, such chapters also draw upon a body of original research studies, a selection of which we feature to exemplify specific methodological points throughout the remainder of this chapter.

No discussion of qualitative psychology can overlook its global reach, and with it the increasing adoption of grounded theory methods around the world. Although early studies largely reflected methodological developments in the UK and North America, both robust studies using grounded theory (e.g. Atari, 2014; Rihacek and Danelova, 2016; Scull et al., 2016; Tuason, 2013; Veale and Stavrou, 2007) and contributions advancing this method (e.g. Hallberg, 2006) now appear from around the globe. Important contributions have been made in a number of areas, including suffering and trauma. Whether or not psychologists happen to be clinicians, they often have the privilege of being a part of breaking silences and giving research participants a space and time for reflection to share and transcend their suffering (e.g. Priya, 2010; Rosenblatt, 1995). Priya (2010), for example, not only constructed the categories of his analysis but also developed a research relationship through 'empathetic witnessing' that supported his participants' reaffirmation of a valued moral status.

Atari (2014) conducted 36 phenomenological interviews with Israelis who had experienced terrorist attacks and afterward developed posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). She used grounded theory to analyse their fragmented traumatic memories. Atari aimed to learn about their subjective experience, including that of their bodies. She argues that the fragmented bodily memory 'functions as a black hole' and also accounts for the individual's feeling the traumatic experience over and over again. This type of analysis not only conceptualises research participants' stories of their experience, but also holds significant implications for practitioners.

Approaches to Implementing Grounded Theory in Original Research Studies

One important message in introductory chapters on grounded theory as a methodology within qualitative psychology concerns the do-ability of research using grounded strategies and methods. Another concern is how researchers conduct original grounded theory over time, across a range of different sub-areas of psychological research, and in the form of smaller and larger scale studies by single researchers (e.g. Griffith, 2016; Lois, 2010; Priya, 2010; Tuason, 2013); students and their supervisors (e.g. Hussein and Cochrane, 2003; Qin and Lykes 2006; Tweed and Salter, 2000); collaborative research partnerships – frequently between clinicians and academics (e.g. Borrill and Iljon-Foreman, 1996); and as part of funded psychological and multidisciplinary projects often having a medical focus (e.g. Nielsen et al., 2013; Yardley et al., 2001), although not always

(Cox et al., 2003, Eaton and Sanders, 2012; Henwood and Pidgeon, 2001).

Looking across this range of studies, grounded theory ideas and practices have now been implemented and used in psychology, and in multidisciplinary studies involving psychology, in at least three different ways: (1) as a methodological approach supporting research that distinctively differs from traditional quantitative, hypothesis testing, experimental, psychological studies; (2) as a set of research principles and practical methods for describing, understanding and explicating substantive problems in less distinctive ways in its methodological approach to the quantitative, psychological mainstream; and (3) as a means of beginning an in-depth, qualitative investigation so that inquiries produce outcomes well-grounded in data, while other complementary approaches and methods are used to complete the theoretical explication and interpretation. This diverse set of interests is one reason behind the continuing, robust commitment shown in the perspective and methods of grounded theory within psychology, while consideration of these interests can illuminate debate about certain common practices.

Grounded Theory as a 'big Q' Qualitative Methodology

Willig (2001a) and Stainton Rogers (2011) introduce the terms 'big Q' and 'little q' to highlight the major differences brought to the tasks of designing, executing and reporting psychological studies when working outside the canon of hypothetico-deductive method. Willig describes the meaning of the two terms as follows: '"big Q" refers to open-ended, inductive research methodologies that are concerned with theory generation and the exploration of meanings, whereas "little q" refers to the incorporation of non-numerical data techniques into hypothetico-deductive designs' (Willig, 2001a: 11). The place of grounded theory studies within this schema is clear: they cannot be 'little q'. Accordingly, Willig (2001a) depicts grounded theory as the first of her 'big Q' methodologies enabling psychologists to explore 'lived experiences and participants' meanings'.

In discussing the position of grounded theory within Willig's schema, characterising grounded theory as more 'inductive' in nature does not mean reverting to a naively dualistic way of thinking about qualitative inquiry. Grounded theory procedures and practices are inductive in the sense of not seeking to confirm extant theory. But, they are also much more because they involve pushing understanding forward and theorising through intensive engagement with data, investigating its potentially varied and multiple contextual meanings, and checking to see whether the categories hold up. Within psychology, Henwood and Pidgeon (1995, 2006) have referred to this mode of inquiry as more 'exploratory' and 'generative', and as involving a 'flip-flop' between data and its conceptualisation. Willig (2001a) describes the qualitative inquiry process as epitomised by grounded theory as more 'investigative' in nature, always seeking to find out answers to questions, and never merely seeking to find out whether a single hypothesis is false or true when tested against a particular sample or quota of data.

One arena illustrating how psychologists have harnessed the exploratory/generative and questioning/investigative potential of grounded theory as 'big Q' psychology is critical, qualitative social psychological (specifically feminist) studies into women's life experiences and mental health (e.g. Allen, 2011; Bennett et al., 2007; Hussein and Cochrane, 2003; Martin and Barnard, 2013). Qin and Lykes's (2006) study exemplifies this approach. They used grounded theory to construct a critical feminist analysis from 40 interviews of 20 Chinese women graduate students about their experiences before and after coming to the US. Qin and Lykes identify a major process that these students experienced, 'reweaving a fragmented self', which includes three subprocesses. First, 'weaving self' refers to integrating traditional Chinese values into oneself, such as the high value placed on education, and being in a web of relationships that both sustained, yet constrained these women. Second, 'fragmenting self' depicts the discomfort and disparagement these women had endured in Chinese society and the self-questioning and critical consciousness it evoked in them. Third, 'reweaving self', involves reuniting the fragmented aspects of self to create a new and expanded self in the US. Yet these women also experienced racism, poverty, isolation, and an awareness of being cast as different and other in their host country.

Qin and Lykes' study illustrates grounded theory logic because they: (1) conceptualise a problematic process, (2) define the sub-processes constituting this major process, (3) treat and analyse these sub-processes as categories, (4) specify how the sub-processes evolve and are linked, and (5) outline the implications of their study. Grounded theory provides strong methodological tools for such research because the constructed theory is rooted in the experiences, meanings, and actions of the studied individuals.

The big Q/little q distinction encapsulates grounded theory's potential in supporting the practice of more 'critical' forms of applied, social

and health/clinical psychology. Grounded theorists and critical psychologists' concerns overlap as both seek to introduce a freshness and newness into arenas of investigation that are not well served by working within the parameters of normal, theory-testing, quantitative experimental science. Both specifically question reliance upon forms of prior theorising – and also reality-defining forms of public discourse (e.g. Hallowell and Lawton, 2002) – that embody dominant frames and values. Grounded theory also offers a specific set of principles and practices that can strengthen critical psychologists' goal of understanding and explicating people's own life experiences, everyday problems, and the complexity of psychological and social processes within particular, substantive inquiry domains.

Grounded Theory Forms Outside 'big Q' Psychology Within Psychology and Related Disciplines

In order to include recognisable forms of grounded theory studies lying outside the concerns and achievements of critical psychology, we now consider how social psychologists in other disciplines and practitioner-researchers have used grounded theory methodology and method. Medical sociology and symbolic interactionist social psychology have had a long and vibrant history of grounded theory studies (e.g. Corbin and Strauss, 1988; Charmaz, 1991, 1995a, 2011a). These areas share overlapping interests with psychologists as evidenced in the work of Charmaz and Lois, which we discuss in greater detail.

In a demonstration project (Wertz et al., 2011) illustrating five different ways of doing qualitative analysis in psychology with the same data, Charmaz (2011a) shows how grounded theory strategies lead to substantive theorising. The primary data consisted of two young women's personal accounts of an unfortunate event and subsequent interviews of them (although Charmaz also made comparisons with her own data). Teresa, who had aspired to becoming a professional opera singer, wrote about her experience of losing her voice after having surgery for anaplastic cancer of her throat. Gail wrote about injuring her arm just after she had made the gymnastics team at her college.

Charmaz begins with broad sensitising concepts such as identity and meaning, and explores possible connections with time. Her initial codes include 'voice and self merge', 'defining certain impairment', and 'experiencing forced loss'. Two major processes emerged through the analysis, losing and regaining a valued self. Charmaz focused the analysis on effecting intentional reconstruction of self after loss and distinguished between losing a valued self in a context of an uncertain future and experiencing a disrupted self with certain recovery. Conditions of uncertainty and awareness of permanent loss profoundly affect a person's meanings and actions. Under these conditions, regaining a valued self depended on facing loss, relinquishing the past self, drawing on lessons from the past, and realigning one's earlier dream with the present situation. Charmaz constructed her analysis from the perspectives and experiences of the studied individuals. Grounded theory provides a lens for seeing beyond established professional concepts rather than only seeing through them.

Jennifer Lois's (2010) study of homeschooling mothers is an exemplar of grounded theory research, reasoning, and theorising. Consistent with Barney Glaser's question about what kind of study does the data indicate, Lois discovered that her data led her in an unexpected direction. She began her research with an interest in the emotion work of homeschooling mothers and thought she had a study of domestic labor. As she proceeded, she discovered that the inordinate amount of time that homeschooling took was a crucial issue for these mothers.

Conceptions of the quantity of time devoted to homeschooling and the emotion work involved could not account for all of Lois's data. She imparts what can be transformative methodological advice when she says: 'You should keep coming back to the quotes that won't leave you alone' (in Charmaz, 2014: 194). One homeschooling mother of 12 children told Lois that being around children all day was not easy, and acknowledged that she could send them off to school. This mother stated, 'But what else was I going to do with my time? Hey, I could sit down and watch soap operas in the afternoon, but what better thing to do than to give it to your children?'

Lois sensed that the quote above was significant and defined it as unresolved data for which she needed to theoretically account. She followed abductive reasoning (Peirce, 1938/1958) to account for the puzzling finding. Lois sought more data to explore the meanings of such statements. When she examined these data she realised that her questions about mothers' quantity of time had only touched the surface of their temporal experiences (in Charmaz, 2014: 196).

After identifying 'Subjective sense of time' as a major theme in her data, Lois searched existing theoretical understandings about it. Was she theoretically contaminated by the literature in this field? No. In keeping with Henwood and Pidgeon's (2003) concept of theoretical agnosticism, Lois

maintained a critical view of the literature and an open eye on her data. She used ideas from the literature to sensitise her to possible meanings of time. Yet she was consistently informed by her data and her emerging analysis of them and constructed the category, 'time sacrifice'.

Many grounded theorists would have stopped with this category. One could rather easily define what time-sacrifice meant in the data, spell out its properties, show how the mothers became immersed in it, explain how it occurred, and outline its consequences. Such an analysis would produce a competent paper. But Lois did much more.

Instead of simply producing an analysis about time sacrifice, Lois built on both the extant literature and her data. She conducted some new interviews with focused questions to explore time sacrifice. How did Lois account for her findings? She realised that the mothers' daily temporal experiences and their meanings of them not only resulted in their 'manipulating temporal experience to manage their selves, but also to manage their emotions' (in Charmaz, 2014: 196). Their meanings and actions resulted in a particular type of construction of self, the sacrificial mother. This conception of self reduced the women's resentments about having no time and alleviated feeling guilty for wanting time for themselves.

Lois then developed new codes, 'Subjective Experience of Time', 'Time Management', 'Manipulating Emotions to Manage Time', 'Manipulating Time to Manage Emotions' and explored them further in follow-up interviews. Her work produced another code, 'Temporal Emotion Work'. Subsequently, she investigated this code more deeply by going back to the data and creating new codes: 'Sequencing: Eliciting Nostalgia and Anticipating Regret' and 'Savouring: Staying Present and Creating Quality Time'. Sequencing referred to the mothers' efforts to create good memories of the family's child-raising years and their fears of future regrets if they had not created these memories. Savouring meant treasuring present moments while using time to craft valued experiences.

These codes are intriguing, but what Lois did with them is more compelling. In her article, Lois posits a subclass of emotions, 'temporal emotions', that can only be felt by crossing 'timeframes' demarking the past, present, and future (Charmaz, 1991). Lois claims that temporal emotions cannot be felt without bridging the timeframe of the present with the timeframes of the past or future. The emotions of nostalgia, regret, disillusionment, ambition, hope, optimism, and dread cannot be experienced without bridging the present to the past or future. Lois concludes her grounded theory by pointing out that how we use temporal emotions significantly affects constructing a continuous self over time.

Lois's analysis underscores the significance of using grounded theory strategies to develop a successively more conceptual analysis. She engaged in the iterative process by going back and forth between her data and analysis. She sought additional data when her already collected data could not support her emerging analysis. She constructed focused questions to gather just enough new data to fill out her codes and tentative categories. By invoking abductive reasoning Lois developed a theoretical account of elusive data. Note that her codes reflect specific meanings and actions. Yet through studying these codes, and interrogating her data, Lois created an abstract general category: temporal emotions. In short, Lois's sequential coding and successive analyses led to a highly theoretical and innovative contribution.

Both Charmaz and Lois conducted a close coding in precise terms that aimed to capture, compare, and explicate specific meanings and actions in their interviews. Both researchers compared datum with datum, data with codes and categories, and categories with categories. Throughout the process, they asked analytic questions. By successively working from specific codes to general, but definitive, categories, they construct theoretical analyses. Thus, the way constructivist grounded theorists code their data and raise questions about them, as well as probe their emerging analyses, can resolve criticisms of grounded theory studies being descriptive.

Charmaz also uses grounded theory strategies to plumb ordinary meanings in her data and makes them objects of study, such as 'living one day at a time' (1991), 'making trade-offs' (1991) and 'making a comeback' (2011a). This strategy simultaneously fosters remaining open and curious about studied life, learning the logic of research participants' worlds, and minimises importing disciplinary concepts that contain imputed judgments, whether of participants' motivations or their worlds.

Grounded Theory in Practice-Oriented Research

In health and clinical psychology, grounded theory enables researchers to pay close attention to articulating the categories of experience and meaning that make up people's subjective/phenomenal worlds. This approach is both a major objective and an inextricable part of studying the social and psychological problems, questions and

issues under investigation – often concerning dynamic social psychological processes.

Byrne, Orange and Ward-Griffin (2011), for example, explored caregiving spouses' responses to care transitions after their partners were discharged from a geriatric rehabilitation unit. Byrne conducted interviews within two days before the partners' discharge, two weeks after discharge, and 4–6 weeks post-discharge. They defined 'reconciling in response to fluctuating needs' as the fundamental process the caregivers experienced. Caregivers had to reconcile the disjuncture and dissonance between their past and present lives. Reconciling included three sub-processes 'navigating', 'safekeeping', and 'repositioning', and showed how caregivers responded to their spouses' changing needs, as well as their own and those of being a couple. The authors delineated the contexts of reconciling as occurring in three phases 'getting ready', 'getting into it', and 'getting on with it'. Their study not only illuminates caregivers' experience but also hold implications for health policy and practice.

The usefulness of grounded theory studies for policy and practice is apparent in numerous areas. Health psychologists Ray Chilton and Renata Pires-Yfantouda's (2015) constructivist grounded theory explores what adolescents with type 1 diabetes confront in managing their care. As a result Chilton and Pires-Yfantouda produce an insightful conceptual framework for understanding and conceptualising these adolescents' psychological mechanisms and contextualising them in a self-management continuum. The authors carefully qualify their results by explaining that restricted access to only those participants who agreed to be interviewed precluded theoretical sampling. Nonetheless, they developed an analysis that can inform practitioners' treatment plans.

The rippling effects of the past are taken up by psychologists who use grounded theory to address clinical problems. Matthews and Salazar (2014) studied second-generation adults who were raised in religious cults. One of these researchers had been a second-generation cult member for 43 years while living in three countries. This researcher had both an insider and outsider view, as she is no longer a part of the cult. These authors distilled the themes in their data and used them to draw out specific implications for practicing counsellors.

Williams, King, and Fox (2016) also constructed sensitive recommendations following their in-depth study of people with a lifetime history of anorexia nervosa. They learned and analysed how anorexia nervosa comes to become a part of the person's self. These authors spell out specific points for practitioners to attend to and outline the kind of therapeutic interventions needed. They present a persuasive argument that practitioners must aim to disentangle the person's self from anorexia nervosa to recover from the disorder, rather than focusing primarily on weight.

In a study that recasts practitioners' definitions, Wright and Kirby (1999) sought to clarify and explicate the *in vivo/in situ* categories of experience and meaning of 'adjustment' to chronic illness relevant in the lives and worlds of people suffering end stage renal failure (ESRF), as a strategy to overcome poor conceptualisation of the term in a research literature dominated by notions of adjustment as 'a return to normal social roles (e.g. work), an absence of psychiatric caseness (e.g. on depression) or compliance/adherence with treatment' (Wright and Kirby, 1999: 259).

Clearly, for certain research purposes, and following some of the general principles of qualitative inquiry (e.g. Lincoln and Guba, 1985), charting or mapping out such categories of experience and meaning in more depth and detail than is possible in other forms of research aiming to count occurrences of events and establish general patterns, can be a valid research goal in and of itself. To an extent, this can also be the case, in grounded theory studies, when reporting early 'descriptive' stages of a project. In addition, providing a detailed description can be a primary means for researchers to demonstrate that they have, indeed, 'grounded' any subsequent theoretical abstractions in a solid foundation of data and have grappled with making sense of them. Nonetheless, grounded theory studies that report primarily descriptive findings have elicited criticisms from numerous different perspectives.

In the case of psychology, three main criticisms have arisen: (1) merely presenting the details and structure of experience does not amount to articulating a theory (a criticism that possibly insists on only using a complete version or a single 'true' definition of grounded theory); (2) arriving at categories of meaning and experience does not articulate or interpret their psychological meaning from the perspective of individual actors; and (3) simply reporting categories of experience and meaning does not provide an analysis of social dynamics or process, nor does it answer specific questions about or explore the theoretical and practical implications of the data (e.g. Willig, 2001b). From a sociological point of view, the weakness of such descriptive grounded theory studies lies in their reliance on a loose presentation of themes derived from the data in the manner of abstract empiricism, as if the data merely speak for themselves, and where the researcher fails to provide any analytical framing or reading of the data (Silverman, 2013). These criticisms may point out weak areas in specific studies for which the authors have claimed to use grounded theory. However, these

criticisms do not apply to the method per se. Nor do the criticisms argue against researchers varying in how they balance demands for detailed description and analytical/theoretical explications of participants' experiences and meanings.

Researchers who aim to use this method for theory construction need to develop 'theoretical sensitivity' (Glaser, 1978), the ability to discern and interrogate possibilities for conceptualising the data in abstract terms. Hence, these researchers create codes – and from them, categories – that carry analytic weight. From the early stages of analysis to the final report, the work becomes increasingly theoretically driven by the emerging analysis.

A notably different manifestation of grounded theory practice occurs when the method is no longer treated as a distinctively descriptive and analytical, open-ended/exploratory and investigative, creative/generative and exhaustive/rigorous mode of inquiry, but rather as a stage in an overall research process adopting a verificationist approach to method. For example, Michie et al. (1996: 455–456), studied family members attending a clinic for those at high risk of inheriting bowel cancer. They used grounded theory data analysis methods with interview data as a 'pilot study' to generate hypotheses about how people respond to predictive genetic testing 'to be tested in a prospective, wider scale, quantitative study'. Yardley, Sharples, Beech and Lewith (2001) used grounded theory, in an interview study of people receiving chiropractic treatment for back pain, as a starting point for a more complex, evolving, multi-phased design, shifting from an exploratory/generative to a verificationist study. They aimed to ascertain whether it was (dynamic) symptom perceptions, other factors (such as abstract illness representations and/or communication by and confidence in the therapist) or a combination of factors that influenced treatment perceptions and acceptability. These studies point to the continuing pull of discrete variable analysis and generalist hypothesis testing within clinical research, while also highlighting the valued (if, in its own terms, limited) role played by grounded theory within it.

Grounded Theory Used in Combination with Other Approaches to Achieve Theoretical Explication and Interpretation

A further variation in the implementation of grounded theory within psychology is its use in combination with other approaches. Studies in this mould clearly depart from the idea of grounded theory being a standardised package, conceiving of it instead as part of a flexible toolkit of methods. Interest has emerged in social science internationally in developing principled and practical forms of 'methodological combining' – interest that further encourage researchers not to think of methods as hermetically sealed (e.g. Henwood and Lang, 2005; Moran-Ellis, 2006; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2000; Todd et al., 2004). Within qualitative psychology, in fact, investigators have always made decisions and choices about methodology and method in the light of a broadening comparative, possibly critical, awareness and understanding of a range of qualitative perspectives and methods with first 'homes' within and beyond psychology (e.g. discourse analysis, ethnography, phenomenological theory and method, voice relational psychology).

Grounded theory and discourse analysis have been used as co-contributors as psychologists have worked across methodological boundaries. In their investigation into how men's sense of masculinity is implicated in their involvement in crime, Willott and Griffin (1999: 449) used grounded theory tactics to identify a stratum of *in vivo* codes (e.g. earning, money, and the family) in the form of 'words and phrases used repeatedly by discussants'. These codes were then used 'to divide the huge quantity of data into manageable pieces, before moving onto the more theoretical phase of the analysis' (Willott and Griffin, 1999: 449). At this phase, the researchers began to attach greater significance to ideas and practices from discourse theory: focusing in particular on how men positioned themselves in their accounts and arguments, and cultural discourses of gender, masculinity and criminality.

Typically, techniques for achieving theoretical abstraction, integration and explication in grounded theory studies are through the constant comparative method, Strauss and Corbin's three-Cs coding framework, Glaser's integrating families of theoretical codes, and Charmaz's theoretically sensitive interaction with and interpretations of data – which is perhaps the culmination of grounded theorists' aim to pay constant attention from the onset to theoretical possibilities in the data. In the two cited exemplar studies above, the authors built upon a range of ideas drawn from theory and the extant literature, to assist them in interpreting, integrating, and explicating the meanings in their data.

CONCLUSION

In summary, grounded theory studies in psychology attest to the strength of the method for

producing fresh ideas and challenging past truths. The rapid acceptance and ascendance of the method in the discipline confirm its usefulness in developing qualitative psychology. Like other scholars, perhaps psychologists first adopted grounded theory as a method of managing data and engaging in substantive coding. Yet grounded theory offers much more than coding strategies and data management. Raising the analytic level of initial coding practices is a start. Psychologists can enjoy a privileged place of access to people's concerns and experience and a sensitivity to felt meanings. Grounded theory gives these psychologists tools to treat them analytically in ways that ultimately afford individuals new ways of understanding their experience.

For academic as well as clinical psychologists, creating increasingly more theoretical memos advances the analytic process and can spark reflexivity about it. Engaging in theoretical sampling to sharpen abstract categories and to dig deeper into the phenomena also enhances clarity and precision. The potential of grounded theory's constant comparative method has yet to be mined as fully as it might be for constructing persuasive critical analyses to effect change. Taken to its logical extension, grounded theory holds much promise for new theorising in psychology, for critical inquiry within the discipline, and for innovative links between academic ideas and clinical practice.

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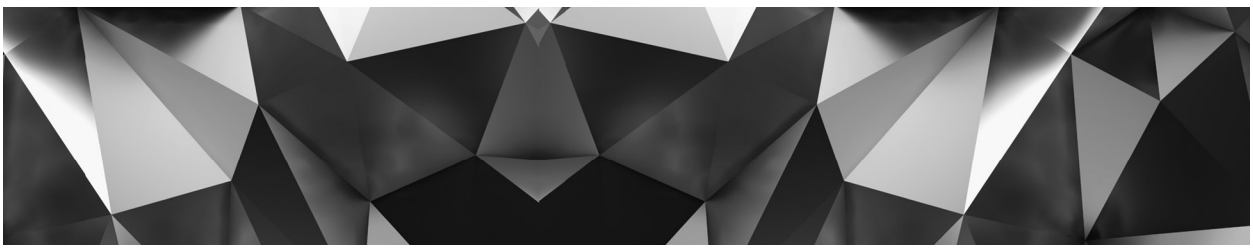
PART II

Perspectives and Approaches



15

Ethics in Qualitative Psychological Research

Svend Brinkmann and Steinar Kvale[†1]

INTRODUCTION

Qualitative research in psychology entails the power to explore human existence in great detail. It gives access to human experience and allows researchers to describe intimate aspects of people's lifeworlds. The human interaction in qualitative inquiries affects researchers and participants, and the knowledge produced through qualitative research affects our understanding of the human condition. Consequently, qualitative research in psychology is saturated with ethical issues. In his book on *Respect*, Richard Sennett gives a pointed description of the ethical intricacies of qualitative research (with particular reference to interviewing):

> In-depth interviewing is a distinctive, often frustrating craft. Unlike a pollster asking questions, the in-depth interviewer wants to probe the responses people give. To probe, the interviewer cannot be stonily impersonal; he or she has to give something of himself or herself in order to merit an open response. Yet the conversation lists in one direction; the point is not to talk the way friends do. The interviewer all too frequently finds that he or she has offended subjects, transgressing a line over which only friends or intimates can cross. The craft consists in calibrating social distances without making the subject feel like an insect under the microscope. (Sennett, 2004: 37–38)

In this chapter we address some significant ethical issues that arise when practicing the craft of qualitative research in psychology, and we will do so from the premise that ethical issues are an intrinsic part of the research process from the initial formulation of the research question through the actual interviews or field observations, to transcriptions and analyses, and even further when the publications of the study reach readers inside and outside of the scientific community. In qualitative research, ethical problems particularly arise because of the complexities of 'researching private lives and placing accounts in the public arena' (Birch et al., 2002: 1). When we observe and talk to people, analyse what they do and say, and publish our interpretations to the larger public, we are engaged in a process with inescapable ethical aspects.

We begin this chapter by pointing out the key role of moral issues and of qualitative research in early psychology. Then we turn to the common way of addressing ethical research today by means of ethical rules, guidelines, and ethics committees and outline their relevance for

qualitative research; here we focus on fields of uncertainty regarding informed consent, confidentiality, consequences and the researcher's role. Thereafter we go beyond ethics as rule-following to raise some principal ethical issues of qualitative research in psychology: we draw on ethical theories of duty, of consequences, and of virtue, address ethics and objectivity and criticize a 'qualitative ethicism'. We move beyond a micro ethics of the researcher–participant relation to include a macro ethics addressing the broader ethico-political consequences of the knowledge produced by qualitative research. We shall conclude with a brief discussion of how to learn ethical research behaviour. We shall focus mainly on qualitative interview research, which is probably the most commonly used qualitative means of inquiry in psychology, and although interview research shares many ethical issues with ethnographic and action research, for example, we are aware that these also have their own distinct ethical problems (cf. Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995).

ETHICS AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN PSYCHOLOGY

In today's handbooks and textbooks of psychology and other social sciences, the ethics chapter is often a small and marginal chapter, if included at all. This contrasts with the history of ethics in the social scientific disciplines. Historically, what we call social science emerged from moral philosophy, and the student of social science had to acquire moral dispositions as part of the curriculum. It was only late in the nineteenth century that the research university replaced the older moral model of learning in the academies that had put emphasis on the practical formation of the human being in light of moral standards. With the rise of the research university, social science increasingly strove to become a value neutral activity of pure observation in independence of society's moral values and traditions; to become 'a disembodied cognitive enterprise' (Bellah et al., 1985: 301).

Nineteenth-century psychologists like John Stuart Mill still prided themselves on belonging to the 'moral sciences', and many other early psychologists were deeply interested in moral issues, among them William James, Wilhelm Wundt (who wrote a volume on *Ethik*), and, perhaps surprisingly, Hermann Ebbinghaus (cf. Giorgi, 1992).

Later on, influential psychologists such as Freud, Piaget, and Skinner also investigated human moral life, albeit in widely different ways. Since then, however, morality and ethics have become marginalized as relevant issues in psychology, although there has been a recent interest in evolutionary psychological studies of moral beliefs.

The history of how psychology went from being a part of the moral sciences to become a value-neutral science is closely paralleled in how the discipline went from being a qualitative science of human experience to become a quantitative science based on experiments, tests, and questionnaires. Qualitative research in psychology is much older than usually recognized, and many founding pioneers in fact based much of their research on qualitative methods, which are rarely mentioned in today's textbooks on psychological methods. Here can be mentioned Wundt's cultural psychology, James's study of religious experience, Freud's investigations of dreams and his clinical method more broadly, Gestalt psychologists' research on perception, Piaget's interviews with children, Bartlett's studies of remembering, and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the body.

When researching humans who are concerned with how their lives and experiences are described, conceptualized, and analysed, it is impossible to separate completely the values and the facts, the ethical issues and the scientific issues. Now that qualitative research methods are reborn in psychology – mainly through the impact of qualitative research in other disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology and the health sciences – we may hope and conjecture that the discipline rediscovers its own roots in qualitative research and moral inquiry as well. In the last section, we return to a potential alliance of qualitative and moral inquiries.

ETHICAL GUIDELINES AND FIELDS OF UNCERTAINTY

Ethical issues are involved in the ends as well as the means of qualitative research. There is always an ethical *why* in research, related to the *ends* of the research activity: *Why* is it valuable to pursue this investigation? Who gains (if anyone) and who loses (if anyone) as a result of the investigation? Will it benefit the participants involved or the larger public? And if not, what warrants working further with this research question? The preamble to an earlier version of the ethical principles for the American Psychological Association (1981: 637) emphasized that, 'The decision to undertake research rests upon a considered judgement by the individual psychologist about how best to

contribute to psychological science and human welfare'. In subsequent versions, however, this phrase no longer exists (American Psychological Association, 2002). There is always also an ethical *how* in research, related to the *means* of the research activity: what is the most responsible way of conducting my research? How will I ensure that no one is harmed? Is it enough to obtain approval for my research project by a research ethics committee and be nice to people, or are there more complex ethical issues at stake?

In what follows, we address four of the fields that are traditionally discussed in ethical guidelines for researchers: informed consent, confidentiality, consequences, and the role of the researcher (cf. American Psychological Association, 2002; Eisner and Peshkin, 1990; *Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects*, 1992). Rather than seeing these fields as entailing questions that can be settled once and for all in advance of the research project, we conceptualize them as fields of uncertainty, i.e. problem areas that should continually be addressed and reflected upon. Rather than attempting to 'solve' the issues of consent, confidentiality etc. once and for all, qualitative researchers work in an area where it is often more important to remain open to conflicts, dilemmas, and ambivalences that are bound to arise throughout the research process. This demands going beyond the ethical guidelines and principles and focus more on the ethical capabilities of researchers, which we shall address further below.

Ethical Questions at the Start of a Qualitative Research Project

Below are outlined some of the questions that are raised by common ethical guidelines, which, while not being able to solve them unambiguously, qualitative researchers should ask themselves before embarking on a research project.

- What are the beneficial consequences of the study? How can the study contribute to enhancing the situation of the participants? Of the group they represent? Of the human condition?
- How can informed consent of participants be obtained? How much information about the study needs to be given in advance, and what information can wait until a later debriefing? Who should give the consent – the participants or others who speak on their behalf?
- How can the confidentiality of the participants be protected? How important is it that the participants remain anonymous? How can the identity of the participants be disguised? Who will have access to the interviews and other documents? Can legal problems concerning protection of the participants' anonymity be expected?
- What are the consequences of the study for the participants? Will any potential harm to the participants be outweighed by potential benefits? Will the interviews approximate therapeutic relationships, and if so, what precautions can be taken? When publishing the study, what consequences can be anticipated for the participants and for the groups they represent?
- How will the researcher's role affect the study? How can the researcher counteract over-identification with his participants, thereby losing critical perspective on the knowledge obtained?

We shall now turn to a more specific discussion of ethical guidelines concerning informed consent, confidentiality, consequences and the role of the researcher. We also depict the fields of uncertainty that these guidelines point towards.

Informed Consent

Informed consent entails informing the research participants about the overall purpose of the investigation and the main features of the design, as well as of any possible risks and benefits from participation in the research project. Informed consent further involves obtaining the voluntary participation of the people involved, and to inform them of their right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Through briefing and debriefing, the participants should be informed about the purpose and the procedure of the research project. This should include information about confidentiality and who will have access to the interview or other material, the researcher's right to publish the whole interview or parts of it, and the participant's possible access to the transcription and the analysis of the qualitative data. In most cases such issues may not matter much to the participants. If, however, it is likely that the investigation may treat or instigate issues of conflict, particularly within institutional settings, a written agreement may serve as protection for both the participants and the researcher. In particular, when it comes to later use of the research material, it may be preferable to have a written agreement signed by both researcher and participant, thereby obtaining the informed consent of an interviewee to participate in the study

and allow future use of the material (see Yow (1994) for examples of letters of agreement with participants).

Issues about who should give the consent may arise when doing research in institutions where a superior's consent to a study may imply a more or less subtle pressure on employees to participate. With schoolchildren, the question comes up about who should give the consent – the children themselves, their parents, the teacher, the headteacher, the school superintendent, or the school board?

Informed consent also involves the question of *how much information should be given and when*. Full information about design and purpose counteracts deception of the participants. Providing information about a study involves a careful balance between detailed over-information and leaving out aspects of the design that may be significant to the participants. In some interview investigations, such as those using funnel-shaped techniques, the specific purposes of a study are initially withheld in order to obtain the interviewees' spontaneous views on a topic and to avoid leading them to specific answers. In these cases, full information should be given in a debriefing after the interview.

Informed consent as an ethical field of uncertainty thematizes the conflict between a complete disclosure of the rationale of the research project beforehand (thereby rendering much qualitative research impossible), and withholding information from the participants, which may sometimes result in knowledge that can improve the condition of the larger public. There is further the issue of how informed consent can be handled in exploratory qualitative studies where the investigators themselves have little advance knowledge of how the interviews and observations will proceed.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality in research implies that private data identifying the participants will not be reported. If a study will publish information potentially recognizable to others, the participants often need to agree to the release of identifiable information. The principle of the research participants' right to privacy is not without ethical and scientific dilemmas.

There is thus a concern about what information should be available to whom. Should, for example, interviews with children be available to their parents and teachers? In studies where several parties are involved, e.g. in the case of individual interviews within organizations or with married or divorced couples, it should be made clear before the interviewing who will later have access to the interviews. Protecting confidentiality can in extreme cases raise serious legal problems, such as in cases when a researcher – through the promise of confidentiality and the trust of the relationship – has obtained knowledge of mistreatment, malpractice, child abuse, the use of drugs, or other criminal behaviours either by the participants or others. In the United States, a researcher may in advance obtain a certificate of confidentiality from the federal government, protecting against disclosure of the identity of their participants (see *Guidelines*, 1992: 6).

Qualitative research methods such as interviews involve different ethical issues than those of a questionnaire survey, where confidentiality is assured by the computed averages of survey responses. In a qualitative interview study, where participants' statements from a private interview setting may be published in public reports, precautions need to be taken to protect the participants' privacy. Here, there may be an intrinsic conflict between the ethical demand for confidentiality and the basic principles of scientific research, such as providing the necessary information for intersubjective control and for repeating a study.

Confidentiality as an ethical field of uncertainty relates to the issue that on the one hand, anonymity can protect the participants and is thus an ethical demand, but, on the other hand, it can serve as an alibi for the researchers, potentially enabling them to interpret the participants' statements without being gainsaid. Anonymity can protect the participants, but it can also deny them 'the very voice in the research that might originally have been claimed as its aim' (Parker, 2005: 17). We should also note that in some cases interviewees, who have spent their time and provided valuable information to the researcher, might wish, as in a journalistic interview, to be credited with their full name.

Consequences

The consequences of a qualitative study need to be addressed with respect to possible harm to the participants as well as to the expected benefits of participating in the study. The ethical principle of *beneficence* means that the risk of harm to a participant should be the least possible (*Guidelines*, 1992: 15). From a utilitarian ethical perspective the sum of potential benefits to a participant and the importance of the knowledge gained should outweigh the risk of harm to the participant and thus warrant a decision to carry out the study. This involves a researcher's responsibility to reflect on

the possible consequences not only for the persons taking part in the study, but also for the larger group they represent.

The researcher should be aware that the openness and intimacy of much qualitative research may be seductive and can lead participants to disclose information they may later regret. A research interviewer's ability to listen attentively may also, in some cases, lead to quasi-therapeutic relationships, for which most qualitative researchers are not trained. In particular prolonging long and repeated interviews on personal topics may lead to quasi-therapeutic relations. The personal closeness of the research relation puts continual and strong demands on the sensitivity of the researcher regarding how far to go in his or her inquiries.

Anticipating potential ethical transgressions also requires a thorough knowledge of the field of inquiry. Some interview researchers, oblivious of the significant differences of oral and written language, may thus have recollections of having hurt the dignity of their interviewees when they send back verbatim transcriptions of an interview or if they publish excerpts verbatim. Bourdieu et al. (1999: 623) have commented more generally on the dangerous game of publishing interview discourses: 'the analyst not only has to accept the role of transmitter of their symbolic efficiency, but, above all, risks allowing people free play in the game of reading, that is, in the spontaneous (even wild) constructions each reader necessarily puts on things read'.

The field of uncertainty that opens up when we consider the consequences of qualitative research is perhaps the most complex one, because it is often unpredictable. If a conversation between a researcher and a participant suddenly takes a turn and touches sensitive issues that obviously move the participant, how should the researcher react? Should she pursue these issues in a therapeutic vein in order to help the participant (and perhaps obtain important knowledge as a 'side effect'), but with the risk of ethically transgressing the participant's intimate sphere, or should she refrain from anything resembling therapeutic intervention with the ethical risk of appearing cold and aloof? The answer cannot be found in the abstract, but only by looking closely at the concrete situation and exercising good judgement (we return to this later).

The Role of the Researcher

The researcher as a person is critical for the quality of the scientific knowledge and for the soundness of ethical decisions in qualitative inquiry. Morally responsible research behaviour is more than abstract ethical knowledge and cognitive choices; it involves the moral integrity of the researcher, his or her sensitivity and commitment to moral issues and action. In interviewing, for example, the importance of the researcher as a person is magnified because the interviewer him or herself is the main instrument for obtaining knowledge. Being familiar with value issues, ethical guidelines, and ethical theories may help in choices that weigh ethical versus scientific concerns in a study. In the end, however, the integrity of the researcher – his or her knowledge, experience, honesty, and fairness – is the decisive factor. Given this dependence on the ethical judgements of the researcher, it becomes important to foster the ethical skills of qualitative researchers.

To the ethical requirements of the researcher belongs a strict adherence to the scientific quality of the knowledge published. This involves only publishing findings, which are as accurate and representative of the field of inquiry as possible, which are checked and validated as fully as possible, and striving towards a transparency of the procedures by which the findings have been obtained.

The *independence of research* can be co-opted from 'above' as well as 'below', by those funding a project, as well as by its participants. Ties to either group may lead the researcher to ignore some findings and emphasize others to the detriment of as full and unbiased an investigation of the phenomena as possible. Qualitative research is interactive research; through close interpersonal interactions with their participants, researchers may be particularly prone to co-optation by them. Researchers may so closely identify with their participants that they do not maintain a professional distance, but instead report and interpret everything from their participants' perspectives, 'going native' in anthropological language.

The field of uncertainty that is disclosed when reflecting on the role of the researcher can involve a tension between a professional distance and a personal friendship. Thus in the context of a feminist, caring, committed ethic, the qualitative research interviewer has been conceived as a friend, a warm and caring researcher. This early conception of the researcher as a caring friend has later been criticized from a feminist standpoint (Burman, 1997). Duncombe and Jessop (2002) argue that an interviewer's show of intimacy and empathy may involve a faking of friendship and commodification of rapport, sanitized of any concern with broader ethical issues. When under pressure to deliver results, whether to a commercial employer or to their own research publications, the interviewers' show of empathy may become a means to circumvent the participant's informed consent and persuade interviewees to

disclose experiences and emotions which they later may have preferred to keep to themselves or even 'not know'. With an expression from a therapist-researcher (Fog, 2004), an experienced interviewer's knowledge of how to create rapport and get through a participant's defences may serve as a 'Trojan horse' to get inside areas of a person's life where they were not invited. The use of such indirect techniques, which are ethically legitimate within the joint interest of therapeutic relations, become ethically questionable when applied to research and commercial purposes.

Ethical Protocols and Review Committees

The four fields of uncertainty concerning informed consent, confidentiality, consequences, and the researcher's role need be carefully addressed in qualitative research projects. They can be used as a framework when preparing an *ethical protocol* for a qualitative study. Within some fields, such as the health sciences, it is mandatory to submit a qualitative study to an ethical review committee before the investigation can be undertaken. There is wide variation between countries and disciplines as regards the requirements to go through ethical review committees. Such a requirement can on the positive side force the researcher to think through in advance value issues and ethical dilemmas, which are likely to arise during the project, and perhaps also encourage a novice to consult more experienced members of the research community. Even when not a formal requirement, it may nonetheless be of value when planning a qualitative research project to draft an ethical protocol. With a foreknowledge of the ethical issues that typically arise at the different stages of a qualitative research project, the researcher can make conscious choices while designing a study and be alert to critical and sensitive issues that may turn up during the inquiry.

However, the existence of protocols and ethical review committees should not lead researchers to think that the ethical uncertainties in qualitative research can be removed through appeal to a 'tick box approach' to ethical standards. Consent, confidentiality, consequences, and the researcher's role constitute fields of uncertainty, which can all give rise to ethical conflicts that cannot be dealt with simply by appeal to the ethical guidelines and review committees. Following Foucault (1984: 343), 'the ethico-political choice we have to make every day is to determine which is the main danger'.

The difficulties of specifying in advance the topics of qualitative studies, which are often exploratory, as well as of depicting in advance the specific questions to be posed in most qualitative interviews, constitute a potential problem by ethical review committees. Some committees may want to approve every interview question in advance, which may be feasible for the predetermined questions in a questionnaire study, whereas open research interviews also involve on the spot decisions about following up unanticipated leads from the participants with questions that have not been prepared in advance.

Parker (2005) has criticized ethics committees in the UK for presupposing that people will do the worst unless they are prevented from doing so. He argues that ethics committees often favour quantitative over qualitative approaches, indirectly prevent new forms of research that have not been described in the code, are bureaucratic in their use of checklists, and often with the result that researchers spend their time trying to get through the review process instead of engaging in serious thought about ethics. In the US, the Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) and their ethical guidelines for human subjects research have been criticized for serving a new methodological conservatism constraining participatory qualitative research (Cannella and Lincoln, 2011; Christians, 2011). Developed for experimentation in biomedical research, these guidelines have been extrapolated to the social sciences, where they are largely incongruent with interpretative and interactive qualitative research methods such as interviewing, field research, and participatory action research. While full informed consent is highly pertinent in high-risk medical experiments, it is less relevant and feasible in low-risk field studies and interviews. In fact, most field studies would be put to a close if full information to and consent from all the potential participants were a requirement. In particular when the IRB members are mainly quantitative-experimental researchers with little knowledge of qualitative research, adherence to detailed ethical guidelines may constrain and thus limit emergent qualitative research. Christians (2011) and Lincoln (2005) further argue that with the reconfigured relationships of qualitative research as cooperative, mutual, democratic and open-ended, key issues of common ethical guidelines become nonissues in a feminist communitarian ethics.

Although the above critiques appear valid in relation to the bureaucratic review practices of many ethical committees, there are wide procedural variations across countries, and rather than en bloc rejecting ethical guidelines and review processes as irrelevant, we believe they can

favourably be approached as aids in addressing ethical fields of uncertainty in qualitative research, and not as the final ethical authority as such. It should be borne in mind that ethical guidelines are constantly debated and revised, and qualitative researchers need to develop ethical ways of inquiry that are relevant to their own field. Ideally, ethics committees for qualitative research in psychology should consist of (or at least include) experienced researchers within qualitative research.

THERAPY AS QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

In the preceding section we have treated ethical guidelines and fields of uncertainty in relation to academic qualitative research. We shall now address some of the ethical issues raised by the form of psychological qualitative research which has had the most significant impact on our understanding of the human situation – the therapeutic interview. Textbooks of general psychology, as well as the public understanding of psychology, are today to a large extent based on knowledge originally produced in psychoanalytic interviews about personality, childhood development, sexuality, and neuroses (cf. Kvale, 2003). However, while academic qualitative researchers in psychology today may learn from therapeutic interviews, they should not try to imitate them uncritically. Here, we shall discuss some ethical tensions of the role of the therapist and that of the researcher and also differences in ethical issues raised by therapeutic and academic interviews.

The therapeutic relationship opens up a personal mode of inquiry, which is part of the therapeutic contract, but will be ethically questionable in most academic research settings. This involves the extended personal relationship between therapist and patient which facilitates access to deeper layers of personality, the indirect questioning modes, the penetrating interpretations, and the therapeutic possibilities of critically validating the interpretations through dialogue and, pragmatically, through behavioural and bodily changes.

In therapy, the main goal is a change in the patient, in research it is the advance of knowledge. A therapist needs to consider the ethical tensions by drawing the role of the therapist and the researcher closer together, particularly where a strong research interest may interfere with the therapeutic process. Freud (1963: 120) thus warned against formulating a case scientifically while treatment is proceeding, as it could interfere with the therapist's ability to listen to the patient with an open mind. In an academic interview, an interviewer's ability to listen attentively may in some cases lead to quasi-therapeutic relationships, which most interviewers neither have the training nor the time to enter into. In particular, long and repeated interviews on personal themes may lead the interviewee into a therapy-like relationship. The creation of close therapeutic interrelationships over several years, which may be required for obtaining insight into the deeper layers of personality, are ethically out of bounds for academic interviews.

Further, within a therapeutic relationship, it is ethical to access information indirectly. There is a common interest of both therapist and patient to promote change, and indirect forms of questioning and validation may be necessary parts of the joint venture of helping the patient change. In academic research, however, indirect interviewing violates the ethical requirement of the participant's informed consent.

Therapeutic interviews and research interviews also differ with regard to interpretation and validation of interpretations. When an academic interviewer makes interpretations, which go beyond the self-understanding of an interviewee, several ethical issues are raised such as: Should participants be confronted with the new interpretations of themselves, which they may not have asked for? And what should be done about disagreements between the participant's and the researcher's interpretations of a theme? Put sharply, in therapy it may be unethical if the therapeutic conversations the patients have asked for, and often paid highly for, do not lead to new insights or emotional changes. In research interviews, which the interviewees themselves have not asked for, it may be unethical to instigate new self-interpretations or emotional changes.

Fog (1992) has formulated the researcher's ethical dilemma as follows: the researcher wants the interview to be as deep and probing as possible which carries the risk of 'trespassing the person', and on the other hand to be as respectful to the interviewee as possible which in turn carries the risk of getting empirical material that only scratches the surface. In a study of living with cancer, a woman is interviewed and denies that she fears a return of the disease (Fog, 2004: 238). She says that she is not afraid, and she appears happy and reasonable. However, as a skilled interviewer and therapist, the interviewer senses small signals to the contrary. The woman speaks very fast, her smile and the way she moves her hands are independent of her words. Her body is rigid, and she does not listen to her own words. If the interviewer decides to respect the interviewee's words,

and refrains from anything resembling therapeutic intervention, then the written interview will subsequently tell the story of a woman living peacefully with cancer. Valuable knowledge might be lost in this way, which could only have been obtained by trying to get behind the apparent denial and defences of the interviewee. If society has an interest in finding out what it means to live with a deadly disease, then the researcher should perhaps try to go behind the face value of the woman's words? But what is in the interest of the woman? Perhaps it is best for her not to have her defences broken down, or maybe she will live a better life if she faces up to the reality of her disease?

Such dilemmas of conflicting scientific and ethical concerns cannot be solved by ethical rules, but will depend on the experience and judgement of the researcher. There may in some cases exist research options where the depicted dilemma does not arise. If the research interview above had been a therapeutic interview, it would have been part of the therapeutic process to go beyond the person's apparent denials, and possibly to facilitate painful self-confrontations, and as a side effect obtain more thoroughly checked and penetrating knowledge than what is ethically defensible in a research interview.

PRINCIPAL ISSUES OF ETHICS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

We shall now present some principal frames of reference for reflecting further on ethical issues raised by qualitative research in academic psychological settings and in professional therapeutic settings. In this section, we first discuss some ethical theories that are often invoked in discussions of research ethics, and we then introduce and expand on a distinction between micro and macro ethical issues. Furthermore, we address the question of objectivity in science and ethics, and consider a possible alliance of ethics and qualitative research.

Ethical Theories as Tools to Think With

Not only ethical guidelines, but also more broadly ethical theories, can favourably be conceived as tools to think with in qualitative research. The ethical theories that normally legitimate the judgements and decisions in research are a duty ethics of principles, a utilitarian ethics of consequences, and a virtue ethics of skills (cf. Kimmel, 1988; Eisner and Peshkin, 1990).

The *duty* ethics of principles, also termed a deontological or an intentional position, judges an action independently of its consequences. Moral actions are those that live up to principles such as justice or respect for the person. Kant's imperatives to 'Treat every man as an end in himself, and never as a means only' and 'Act as if the maxim of thy act were to become by thy will a universal law of nature' are well-known examples of duty ethics. These general ethical principles may be specified in ethical rules for research, and this kind of principle-based duty ethics may lead one to conceptualize ethics as a top-down relation from abstract and universal principles to rules for behaviour and finally to concrete ethical decisions.

The *utilitarian* position, also termed a *consequentialist* position, emphasizes the consequences of an action. Actions are judged by their effects rather than by the intentions behind them. The end purpose might be the greatest good for the greatest number, and what is good might be conceived as an increase in happiness, satisfaction or knowledge, for example. In the extreme versions of the utilitarian position, the ends come to justify the means. In a sense, utilitarianism agrees with the duty ethics that ethical principles are authoritative, and, according to utilitarianism, the principle is a utilitarian calculus with which to determine how to maximize utility or happiness.

In recent years, a number of moral philosophers have questioned the premise that we should primarily think of ethics as something that can be stated in principles and rules. The problem is that no principles or rules are self-applying or self-interpreting (Jonsen and Toulmin, 1988). Even if we succeed in formulating a general rule that all can agree upon, we still need to know when and how to apply the rule. A classic example is found in Plato's *Republic*, where the rule under discussion is that one ought always to return borrowed items to the owner. Socrates questions the universality of this rule: 'For instance, if one borrowed a weapon from a friend who subsequently went out of his mind and then asked for it back, surely it would be generally agreed that one ought not to return it, and that it would not be right to do so' (Plato, 1987: 66). We cannot go on forever formulating rules for when and how to apply them, for at some point we have to act.

A third position, often referred to as *virtue* ethics and developed in detail by Aristotle (1976), involves a more contextualist view of when and how rules and principles should be applied. This position does not necessarily advocate abandoning rules and principles, for moral rules (like those found in the documents of ethics committees) are still useful as rules of thumb, as 'descriptive summaries of good judgements … valid only insofar

as they transmit in economical form the normative force of good concrete decisions of the wise person' (Nussbaum, 1986: 299).There is thus a primacy of the concrete and the particular. Although ethics committees work on the basis of abstract ethical principles, it is noteworthy that Stephen Toulmin (1981), himself a former member of such committees, recounts that committee members could very often reach consensus on what to do in specific cases, but very rarely on which ethical theories and principles that could be brought forth to back their practical judgements.

The view that ethical theories and principles are tools to think with rather than ethical authorities has also been articulated by the psychologist and pragmatic philosopher, John Dewey. Dewey warned against reducing our moral experience to anything that a single theory about it or a set of rules could capture. As he said: 'a man's duty is never to obey certain rules; his duty is always to respond to the nature of the actual demands which he finds made upon him – demands which do not proceed from abstract rules, nor from ideals, however awe-inspiring and exalted, but from the concrete relations to men and things in which he finds himself' (Dewey, 1891: 199–200). Here, the ethical burden is shifted from theories and rules to the person in context, who interprets and applies the rules in relation to this context (cf. Brinkmann, 2004, 2007). Thus, the virtues and capacities of the researcher come into focus, and also the standards of the research community of which the researcher is a part. Notably the intellectual virtue that Aristotle called *phronesis* becomes important as the capacity to determine how to act well in concrete situations, and to decide which rules, if any, to apply. In the final section of this chapter, we reflect further upon how qualitative researchers can be educated so as to deal well with ethical issues in their work.

Qualitative Ethicism

Although we believe that it would be fruitful for qualitative research in psychology to rediscover its roots in moral inquiry, we do not think that qualitative research is ethically good in itself. The resurgence of qualitative studies in the social sciences (and now in psychology) has often been accompanied by a tendency among qualitative researchers to portray qualitative inquiry as inherently ethical, or at least more ethical than quantitative research. This can be called a qualitative ethicism (baptized and criticized by Hammersley, 1999). It is the tendency to see research almost exclusively in ethical terms, as if the rationale of research was to achieve ethical goals and ideals with the further caveat that qualitative research uniquely embodies such ideals. A qualitative ethicism can distract researchers' attention away from (a) the unanticipated consequences of a qualitative research project, (b) the inevitable power plays inherent in qualitative research, and (c) the cultural context in which the research is carried out.

As regards the first point (a), the human interaction in a qualitative investigation may have unanticipated effects, which are likely to be overseen if one starts with the premise that qualitative inquiry in itself has a moral superiority. Regarding the second point (b), it seems reasonable to conclude that qualitative research as practiced is in fact (and cannot but be) a power relation (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2005). In the case of the interview, we clearly find an asymmetrical power relation where the interviewer has the scientific competence and the right to pose questions and set the agenda. Usually, an interview is an instrumental conversation that is not its own goal, but conducted in order to serve the researcher's ends. Interviews can be manipulative, when interviewers use subtle therapeutic techniques to get beyond the participant's defences. Furthermore, it is generally the case that researchers uphold a monopoly of interpretation over the participants' statements, and enjoy the privilege to interpret and report what the participants really meant. These points all engender significant ethical questions. Concerning the third point (c), it can be observed that although quantitative research in psychology was historically connected to objectifying forms of power exertion, there is a case to be made that current forms of qualitative research in psychology relate to softer, seducing, and subjectifying forms of power in today's consumer society that have replaced the hard, objectifying, but more transparent, forms of power exertion in industrial society (and quantitative research) (Kvale, 2006).

Taking into account the research participants' options for counter-control – such as evading or not answering the interview questions – it still appears warranted to characterize qualitative research in psychology as saturated with more concealed forms of power exertion than quantitative and experimental research. It may even be that the potentials for close personal interaction and inquiry into intimate personal domains entail potentials for more dangerous ethical transgressions in qualitative research than in the more distanced objectifying forms of experimental-quantitative psychological research. For example, interviewing may involve what has been called commodification of the skills of 'doing rapport', where the researcher can be led into the unethical affair of 'faking friendship' in order to obtain

knowledge (Duncombe and Jessop, 2002). It may not be enough to ensure ethically responsible research if qualitative researchers are armed with good intentions and qualitative ethicism, for it is also necessary to situate the means of knowledge production in power relations and the wider cultural situation.

Micro and Macro Ethics

Ethical issues in qualitative research tend to be discussed in relation to the personal implications for the participants, whereas the wider social consequences of the inquiries rarely receive attention. In order to grasp the ethical intricacies of qualitative research in the wider cultural context, we introduce a distinction between micro and macro ethics. Micro ethics is the ethics of the concrete research situation and relate to issues like consent and confidentiality. The macro ethics on the other hand is concerned with what happens when the methodologies and knowledge produced circulate in the wider culture and affects humans and society. We shall now adopt more explicitly a macro ethical perspective and address potential consequences of the knowledge produced by qualitative research in a broader social situation (cf. Brinkmann and Kvale, 2005).

Ethical issues may differ when viewed from a micro and macro perspective. The participant may experience the concrete interaction between researcher and researched in qualitative studies positively, when a researcher with an authority position shows a strong interest in what he or she has to say. The wider social consequences of the knowledge produced in such studies may, however, in some cases be problematic. A good example of this are the Hawthorne studies, co-ordinated by the industrial psychologist Elton Mayo, where interviews were conducted that suggested that management's display of human interest to the workers could be a key factor in increasing their morale and industrial output (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939). More than 21,000 workers were interviewed, each for more than an hour and the interview transcripts were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. The purpose of the study was to improve industrial supervision. In a sophisticated methodology chapter, interviewing is presented as a new mode of industrial research, inspired by clinical psychology and anthropology. In their indirect clinical interviews, the researchers did not limit themselves to the manifest content of the intercourse, and they listened not only to what the person wanted to say, but also to what he or she did not want to say.

Qualitative market research is today perhaps the most extended and influential psychological qualitative research practice, and consumer interviews as individual motivational interviews or as focus groups may well follow standard ethical guidelines and also be enjoyable to the participants. On a macro level, however, the consequences may be more questionable. Focus group interviews about teenager attitudes to smoking may provide knowledge for improving the effectiveness of cigarette advertisements to teenagers, or the knowledge produced may be used in health campaigns to prevent smoking. In today's consumer society it is likely that there will be more funding available for producing and using knowledge on smoking attitudes for the tobacco industry's advertisements to increase tobacco consumption than for public campaigns seeking to decrease tobacco consumption.

The Hawthorne interviews served the management's interest in increasing the workers' morale and productive output, and motivational market interviews serve to manipulate the behaviour of consumers without their knowledge. It would be less conceivable that labour unions and consumer groups were allowed to conduct interviews with the management using corresponding interview techniques. While the vested and conflicting interests and power contexts of commercial qualitative research are rather visible, also potential less obvious partisan interests and power contexts of apparently impartial academic interview research should be considered.

Tensions of ethics on a micro and a macro level also arise in academic interview research. This can be shown within the context of a historic study on anti-Semitism, *The Authoritarian Personality*, by Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson and Sanford (1950). In the wake of the Second World War the researchers investigated a possible relation of anti-Semitism to an authoritarian upbringing. An important part of the study consisted of therapeutically inspired interviews, where the researchers used therapeutic techniques to circumvent their participants' defences in order to learn about their prejudices and authoritarian personality traits. In the psychoanalytically inspired interviews, the freedom of expression offered to the interviewee was seen as the best way to obtain an adequate view of the whole person, as it permitted inferences about the deeper layers of the participants' personalities behind the antidemocratic ideology. On a micro level this research clearly violated the ethical principle of informed consent, whereas on a macro level the knowledge obtained of the roots of anti-Semitism could have beneficial social consequences.

Ideally, ethical issues on a macro level can be approached by public discussion of the social consequences and uses of the knowledge produced. For example, in a large-scale interview study by Bellah and co-workers (1985) about individualism in America, the researchers saw the very aim of doing social science as a public philosophy, to engage in debate with the public about the goals and values of society:

> When data from such interviews are well presented, they stimulate the reader to enter the conversation, to argue with what is being said. Curiously, such interviews stimulate something that could be called public opinion, opinion tested in the arena of open discussion. (Bellah et al., 1985: 305)

Objectivity in Science and Ethics: and a Potential Alliance of Ethics and Qualitative Research

Sometimes ethics is seen as an annoying obstacle to producing exciting new knowledge. The often-heard irritation that one has to spend time preparing an ethical protocol for the ethical review committee is one indication of this. Would it not be better for the quality of the research if one could concentrate on refining the methods of qualitative research instead of having to think about the ethics of research? This is the case only if one thinks of ethics as something external to the practice of research. If we think instead of research *and* ethics as building on one and the same demand to be objective, then we can argue that ethical practices in qualitative research may simultaneously be conducive to good knowledge production.

What it means to be 'objective' in qualitative research, of course, is not easy to determine. The everyday meaning of 'objectivity' could be summarized as something like 'not imposing one's own biases unto something', and, as Latour (2000) has suggested, this is related to objectivity in the sense of 'allowing the object to object'. Ethical as well as scientific objectivity is about letting the objects object to what we do to them and say about them. Qualitative research in psychology seems particularly well suited to do so, since the research situation is not necessarily and inherently fixed as, for example, in many psychological experiments. In Milgram's obedience studies, to mention a famous case, it was predetermined in advance that the participant's responses were to be understood according to the binary concepts of 'obedience to authorities' or 'disobedience'. In qualitative research there is at least the possibility of a third option, and an important ethical and scientific attitude that should be cultivated in qualitative researchers is a willingness to let the object object and frustrate the investigations, since this is often at once a sign of important knowledge and of ethical issues. Freud (1963: 68) thus remarked that 'The whole theory of psychoanalysis is … in fact built up on the perception of the resistance offered to us by the patient when we attempt to make his unconscious conscious to him'. Objectivity in the sense of creating extreme situations where the objects are maximally provoked to object to the interviewer's interpretations is ethically out of bounds for most academic research interviews.

MacIntyre (1978: 37) has noted that 'objectivity is a moral concept before it is a methodological concept', and we learn what it means to be objective, impartial and fair in our moral lives before we do so as researchers. In qualitative research, ethics becomes as important as methodology when the question is production of objective knowledge, i.e. knowledge that has been produced through a process where the participants have been able to be 'interested, active, disobedient, fully involved in what is said about themselves by others' (Latour, 2000: 116). Here, there is little if any difference between scientific and ethical objectivity, and ethics becomes something helpful rather than an obstruction to the production of new knowledge.

We have above warned against what was termed 'qualitative ethicism', but nevertheless some genuine points of conversion between ethics and qualitative research exist. This is significant for the researcher who asks what resources there are available for thinking responsibly about ethics, if it is true that guidelines and abstract principles are not enough. Such ethical resources might in fact be internal to the practice of qualitative psychology. This concerns the potential option for research participants to object to the qualitative researchers' interpretations of their behaviour, mentioned above, as well as the coherence of the thematic fields of ethics and qualitative inquiries, and the role of 'thick descriptions' to which we turn now.

Ethics, as the study of moral phenomena, is concerned with phenomena that are practical, vague and uncertain, normative, qualitative, and particular. Together, these features provide a reason why psychology, although originally part of the moral sciences, to a large extent later has ignored the role of morality in human lives. Practical, vague,

normative, qualitative, and particular phenomena are ill suited to a discipline that has modelled itself after Newtonian natural science, using causal concepts and aiming to formulate universal, theoretical and non-normative laws about human behaviour. In the field of qualitative psychology, however, we also find psychological descriptions and analyses of phenomena that are practical (i.e. situated in practical contexts of life as lived), often vague rather than distinct, normative (or intentional), and also qualitative and particular. These common fields of concern point to a possible alliance of qualitative researchers and ethical theorists. What good qualitative researchers do might not be very different from what ethically proficient people do.

Good qualitative researchers master what has been called the art of thick description. The notion of thick description goes back to Gilbert Ryle (1971) and Clifford Geertz (1973). Mastering the art of thick description means to be able to understand the contextual and relational features of the phenomena we are concerned with. Similarly, it can be argued that in order to deal well with ethical issues, qualitative researchers should primarily cultivate their ability to perceive and judge 'thickly': 'As we move from the "thinnest" vocabulary toward the "thickest" phrases, we find ourselves increasingly committed to value-judgements' (Levine, 1998: 5). Moving one's index finger on a gun's trigger is morally neutral, firing a gun can be justifiable in certain contexts, but murdering someone with a gun is clearly bad. As we 'thicken' event descriptions, we see more and more clearly what the moral implications of the event are, often without having to invoke ethical principles (in this case, it is part of the meaning of the thick ethical concept 'murder' that it is morally blameworthy).

LEARNING ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

With the emphasis on the ethical capabilities and virtues of the qualitative researcher, the learning of ethical research behaviour becomes a key issue. A relevant source here is Aristotle's virtue ethics, which has also inspired the movement in social ethics known as *communitarianism*. Communitarianists reject 'the liberal self', the autonomous, isolated chooser presupposed in rational-choice theory, contractualism, and much psychological theory. Also the proliferation of ethical codes and committees can be seen as based on an idea of independent, autonomous agents that enter freely into contractual relations. In communitarianism, however, the self is conceived as constituted by communal attachments within communities and traditions (cf. Mulhall and Swift, 1996). A background of communities and traditions is needed in order to learn ethical research behaviour, and we shall here suggest two approaches to learning ethical behaviour: the skill model of Dreyfus and Dreyfus, and mastering the art of thick descriptions.

In a phenomenological account Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1990) have outlined a five-step ladder of learning ethical expertise, starting with explicit rules and reasoning, which, with increasing experience and expertise, recede into the background of skill and habit, where the highest form of ethical comportment consists of being able to stay involved and to refine one's intuitions. Moral consciousness then consists of unreflective responses to interpersonal situations, which in cases of disagreement may be attempted to be solved through dialogue.

We further point to the art of thick description as an approach to learning ethical behaviour in qualitative research. Learning to describe particulars thickly does not just involve learning rules, but learning from cases, and observing those who are more experienced in some research community. It is about learning to *see* and *judge* rather than learning to universalize or calculate. The art of thick description is similar to what the good (in a non-moral sense) qualitative researcher should master in order to produce new, insightful knowledge about the human condition. There are different ways of learning to 'thicken' events to help us act morally:

Contextualize. We thicken events by describing them in their context. In a court of law, for example, the question whether somebody did something intentionally is decided, not by citing theories or general rules, but by describing the context of the act (Levine, 1998). In courts of law, and in qualitative case studies, the question of generalizing from one case to another depends upon adequate contextual descriptions of the cases (Kennedy, 1979). Thick description situates an event in a context, and the experienced ethical reasoner knows which features of a context are relevant in order to judge it adequately. The skilled qualitative researcher understands the peculiar features of the research context, and how this context generates specific ethical issues to be addressed.

Narrativize. Those thick descriptions that incorporate a temporal dimension are called *narratives*, and 'narratives can carry moral meaning without relying upon general principles' … (Levine, 1998: 5). If we manage to pull together a convincing narrative that situates an event temporally, then we rarely need to engage in further moral deliberation about what to do. Looking at a situation as at a 'snap-shot', outside its temporal and social narrative context, will on the other hand make it hard to judge and act morally. If one is not provided with the kind of information necessary to

narrativize – e.g. if the researcher has never met the participant before and does not know her larger life story – then it is ethically wise to be lenient about one's interpretations and generalizations, and refrain from anything resembling therapeutic intervention.

Focus on the particular example. Within a virtue conception of ethics, Løvlie (1993) has attempted to overcome an opposition of explicit rules versus tacit skills by the introduction of examples. These may be in the form of parables, allegories, myths, sagas, morality plays, case histories, and personal examples. The qualitative researcher should know about exemplars of ethically justifiable and also ethically questionable research, in order to evaluate her practice and learn to recognize ethical issues. Generalizations, as found in formal ethical guidelines, should not blind us to the crucial particularities encountered in the research situation. As qualitative researchers are involved in concrete issues with particular people at particular places and times, they need to master an understanding of these concrete particulars in order to be morally skilful.

Consult the community of practice. The learning of ethical research behaviour is a matter of being initiated into the mores of the local professional culture. Our emphasis above on a shift from an ethics of rules to the ethical capabilities of the qualitative researcher should not imply an 'ethical overburdening' of the individual researcher. Qualitative research is rarely practiced by single researchers who confront their participants as isolated individuals. A researcher is usually part of a research community, and she is normally accountable not only to the participants but also to peers, superiors, students, her institution, and the discipline at large. When confronted with difficult ethical issues, it is often wise to consult the research community, and if one wants to improve the skills of ethical perception, judgement, and reasoning, one needs to receive feedback from others. We can only learn by being corrected, and this presupposes the existence of a community with sufficiently shared values and some agreement concerning when and what behaviours stand in need of being corrected. Learning qualitative inquiry in a research community where ethical and scientific values are integrated into daily practices may foster an integrated ethical qualitative research behaviour.

CONCLUDING PERSPECTIVES AND LOOKING AHEAD

In this chapter we have addressed ethical concerns in the practice of qualitative psychological research. We have attempted to go beyond research ethics as mainly following rules for ethical behaviour and emphasized the researcher's integrity, his or her ability to sense, judge and act in an ethically committed fashion. Whilst we have taken issue with a 'qualitative ethicism' which regards qualitative research as in itself ethical, we have pointed to similarities between qualitative research and ethical research, in particular the importance of the researcher's ability to provide situated thick qualitative descriptions, which include the value aspects of behaviour.

The shift of emphasis from a strict, formal rules-based ethics to the situated ethical judgements of the researcher should, though, avoid individualizing ethics in qualitative research by seeing them as mainly a concern for the participants and the integrity of the qualitative researcher. In this chapter we have argued not only for a de-formalization, but also for a de-centring of ethics in qualitative research. We have outlined a move from a micro ethics of personal participant-researcher relations to also include a macro ethics of the ethico-political effects of the knowledge produced upon the broader public. And we have gone beyond the focus on the integrity of the individual qualitative researcher to include the ethical values and support of the community of research practitioners and the ethico-political stance of the profession at large.

Since the first edition of this handbook was published, qualitative research has continued its expansion both inside and outside of psychology. This is a development that should be welcomed, but it makes the ethical issues even more pressing. One standing issue is related to what some (following Ritzer, 2008) have called the 'McDonaldization' of qualitative research, which results from its popularity and use for an increasing number of purposes (Brinkmann, 2012). McDonaldization represents a striving for efficiency, calculability, predictability and control – all of which are aspects of the kind of standardization that is characteristic of fast-food restaurants. But importing this kind of quick-fix fast-food logic into qualitative research, which demands a slow digestion of what people say and do, imagination and a love for heterogeneity and difference, involves a risk of treating people in standardized ways, which is exactly what is *not* required, given the significance of situated judgement in ethically difficult situations. Ethical standardization, of course, is found in what we called the 'tick box approach' to research ethics, but its opposite – an extreme anything-goes-as-long-as-people-are-happy attitude – is also problematic, since it carries a risk of ignoring the larger political problematics of the times, especially related to a consumer culture that is out of control. Striking a balance between

strict rule-based standardization and totally rule-free intuition should be an ambition for qualitative researchers and ethicists in the future. We suggest that the idea of qualitative research as a craft is useful for finding this balance (see Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). As qualitative research becomes increasingly relevant, it also brings along increasing numbers of ethical pitfalls.

Note

1 Steinar Kvale died in 2008, just before the publication of the first edition of this volume. Svend Brinkmann would like to express his deep gratitude to Steinar, who taught him how to think, write and work as a qualitative psychologist.

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16

Interpretation in Qualitative Research

Carla Willig

Interpretation is at the heart of qualitative research because qualitative research is concerned with meaning and the process of meaning-making. Qualitative researchers assume that people's actions are always meaningful in some way and that through the process of engaging with those meanings, deeper insights into relevant social and psychological processes may be gained. Furthermore, qualitative data never speaks for itself and needs to be given meaning by the researcher. Given that qualitative research is all about meaning-making one might expect qualitative research in psychology to be closely associated with the work of interpretation. However, this is not the case. The relationship between qualitative psychology and interpretation has been an uneasy one, and it is only recently that this has begun to change.

Traditionally, qualitative psychologists have preferred to use the term 'analysis' to describe their activities and they have distanced themselves from the language of 'interpretation'. Why might this be so? One reason may be the desire to distance qualitative psychology from an association with the arts and to fend off accusations of qualitative research being no more than intuition and lacking in validity.

The term 'analysis' invokes something sober and systematic, an activity that is carried out by technical experts who approach their work with objectivity, rigour and attention to detail. By implication, a successful 'analysis' can be expected to provide answers to important questions and to shape interventions in the real world. By contrast, 'interpretation' is associated with the arts, with creativity and with the imagination. People 'interpret' novels and poems and we talk about the ways in which a performer has 'interpreted' their material. 'Interpretation' is seen as stimulating, it is interesting and it can be illuminating; however, it is not seen as something that provides us with empirical knowledge; the kind of knowledge, for example, that allows us to build houses and develop medical treatments. The language of 'analysis' is associated with science whereas the language of 'interpretation' is associated with arts and humanities.

An association with science as opposed to the arts was felt to be valuable in the early days of qualitative psychology when researchers found themselves in a position of having to justify their choice of qualitative methodology and to defend its validity as a psychological research method on a par with quantitative psychology. It has been argued that until relatively recently much qualitative research has implicitly adhered to a positivistic epistemology (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2002)

which has meant that researchers were reluctant to move beyond taking data at face value, focusing instead on the careful and systematic categorisation of the data into 'themes' which were hierarchically organised and then presented as 'findings'. Within this framework, interpretation is not an acknowledged part of the process of analysing data and, as we noted in the first edition of this Handbook, anything resembling explicit interpretation '(…) does not enter the picture until the very end, when the "findings" are reflected upon in the discussion section of the report' (Willig and Stainton Rogers, 2008: 8). As a result, 'analysis' became the preferred term to describe qualitative research activities in psychology.

The second reason why qualitative researchers may have been wary of the language of interpretation is to do with their commitment to 'giving voice' to research participants. Qualitative psychology grew out of an understanding that the psychological knowledge which had been accumulated over the years was not simply a reflection of reality, an objective assessment of how people function. Rather that it was an edifice of theoretical and empirical work which was grounded in a particular tradition of pre-existing knowledge and expectations and which reflected, rather than challenged, basic assumptions about people which circulated in society at a particular time (see Gergen, 1973). Qualitative psychology's roots in the critique of positivist psychology and its commitment to the idea that qualitative research is there to 'give voice' to those who had been excluded from traditional psychological research (such as women, ethnic minorities, disabled people; that is, those who are in one way or another marginalised or socially excluded) mean that qualitative psychologists are highly sensitive to the dangers associated with the imposition of pre-conceived theoretical formulations upon research participants' experience. Within this context interpretation can be seen to carry the risk of distorting or silencing the voices of research participants by the way in which interpretative researchers bring their own ideas, theories and perspectives to bear on the accounts obtained in the study.

In 2008, in the introduction to the first edition of this Handbook we noted that qualitative psychology had been witnessing a 'turn to interpretation' (Willig and Stainton Rogers, 2008). In recent years, this interpretative turn has continued to gather momentum, giving rise to the publication of increasingly sophisticated qualitative analyses which engage with interpretation explicitly and unapologetically. At the same time, whilst the value of interpretation is more widely recognised, ongoing methodological discussions around the challenges and opportunities inherent in different approaches to interpretations ensure that qualitative psychologists continue to be mindful of the importance of reflexivity and the researcher's ethical responsibility in any interpretative act.

This chapter is concerned with qualitative psychology's relationship with interpretation. It identifies different approaches to interpretation and looks at how the most widely used qualitative methods make use of these. It also comments on the ethics of interpretation and reflects on ways in which interpretative research may be evaluated (a more detailed discussion of the use of interpretation in qualitative psychology and the issues raised in this chapter can be found in Willig, 2012). The chapter concludes with a review of recent developments in qualitative psychology which provide new interpretative challenges. These include pluralism, binocularity and the use of metasynthesis.

APPROACHES TO INTERPRETATION

The term interpretation was originally used to refer to the activity of making sense of particularly difficult or obscure documents which had been revered and held sacred for a very long time, such as mythical or religious writings. Interpretation became necessary because these ancient texts did not make obvious sense to contemporary audiences. In order for these texts to continue to play their traditional role within a culture, they needed to be made relevant again through the act of interpretation (see Sontag (1994: 6). The meaning of the term interpretation (or 'hermeneutics') was later extended to refer to any activity that sought to elucidate the meaning of a written text and applied across disciplines covering the interpretation of the law (legal hermeneutics), interpretation of the bible (biblical hermeneutics) and interpretation of the classics (philological hermeneutics). Eventually, interpretation began to be understood as a generalised human endeavour ('universal hermeneutics') and it was proposed that interpretation comes into play whenever we try to understand spoken or written language or, indeed, any human acts (see Schmidt, 2006, for an excellent introduction to 'hermeneutics').

Two Forms of Interpretation

Ricoeur (1970, 1996) suggested that there are two kinds of hermeneutics:

a 'hermeneutics of empathy (meaning-recollection)' where interpretation proceeds from

the bottom-up where the aim is to get closer to the intended meaning of a text;

a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' where interpretation is done top-down, generated on the basis of a 'suspicious' attitude which aims to reveal a deeper meaning beyond the surface.

He argued that these approaches to interpretation find different types of meaning in a text and generate different kinds of insights.

'Empathic' interpretations are motivated by a desire to get as close to the meaning of a text as possible by trying to understand it 'from within'. This means engaging with a text without importing theoretical concepts from the outside to make sense of it. 'Empathic' interpretations focus on what presents itself rather than what might be hidden; they seek to elaborate and amplify the meanings which are contained within a text rather than seeking to identify underlying structures that might have informed its manifest content. 'Empathic' interpretation involves paying attention to the characteristics of an account, making connections between its various attributes and noticing patterns. The aim of an 'empathic' interpretation is to gain a fuller understanding of what is being expressed rather than to find out what may be going on 'behind the scenes'. In other words, 'empathic' interpretations are concerned with how (rather than why) something is experienced and presented.

'Suspicious' interpretations, by contrast, seek to reveal a hidden meaning and in order to do this the researcher needs to interpret the clues contained within the text. This means that surface meanings (e.g. as contained in the words that are written/ spoken or the images presented) are not taken at face value but seen as signs which, if read correctly, will allow the researcher to access more significant, latent meanings.

Psychoanalysis (in its original 'classical' Freudian form) exemplifies 'suspicious' interpretation (see Ricoeur, 1970) by rendering apparently trivial or irrational phenomena (such as acts of forgetting or slips of the tongue) meaningful through following their traces right back to their origin so as to uncover their 'true' meaning. In order to be able to read the signs correctly and to decipher latent meanings, the 'suspicious' researcher requires a code with which to open up the text. This means that to produce a 'suspicious' interpretation the researcher needs to have access to a theoretical formulation which provides concepts that can be used to interrogate the text. 'Suspicious' interpretations seek to account for phenomena; as such they make sense of phenomena (be this a text, a symptom, a behaviour or a wider social phenomenon) by pointing to invisible underlying processes and structures which generate them. Given the important role that prior knowledge of relevant theories plays in 'suspicious' interpretation, this approach to interpretation positions the researcher as an expert who has privileged access to the meaning of the phenomenon under investigation. This claim raises ethical questions that will be discussed later in this chapter.

'Empathic' interpretation does not share 'suspicious' interpretation's ambition to explain why something occurred or what structures, processes and/or causal mechanisms might have generated the observed phenomenon. However, 'empathic' interpretation offers more than a straightforward summary of what someone has said or done. Since all types of interpretation are carried out with the aim of amplifying meaning, interpretation inevitably means adding something to what is already there. What differentiates 'suspicious' from 'empathic' interpretation is that the former imports theoretical concepts from outside in order to make sense of the data, whilst 'empathic' interpretation seeks to elucidate meaning that is implicit in the data.

The Hermeneutic Circle

While Ricoeur highlighted the differences between these two approaches to interpretation very effectively, he did not suggest that one of them should be chosen over the other. Instead, Ricoeur (1996) drew attention to the fact that the two approaches produce different kinds of knowledge, with one type of knowledge offering understanding (on the basis of an 'empathic' stance), and the other developing explanations (on the basis of a 'suspicious' stance).

The two types of knowledge complement one another as neither one of them can generate satisfactory insights on their own. In fact, the interplay between 'empathy' and 'suspicion' in the search for understanding is the driving force behind the hermeneutic circle through which all interpretative activity must move. The concept of the 'hermeneutic circle' (see Schmidt, 2006: 4 for a helpful account) acknowledges the impossibility of approaching a phenomenon without adopting a particular perspective in relation to it. Without adopting a standpoint we would not be able to find meaning in what we encounter, and so we need to draw on some ideas and assumptions in order to begin to make sense of it. At the same time, we do not simply project our expectations onto a blank screen in the outside world and then find what we are looking for. We do encounter something which we then make sense of with the help of the ideas and assumptions we brought to the

task. In the process of the encounter between our ideas and the world, our ideas about the world are modified in order to accommodate what we have encountered.

This process is contained within the notion of interdependency between the parts and the whole whereby the parts of a whole (for example, the words within a sentence) can only be understood on the basis of an understanding of the whole even though the whole itself can only really be grasped if we understand the meaning of the parts. So when we read a sentence, we notice that an understanding of the entire sentence helps us to make sense of the meaning of individual words. For example, the word 'blind' has a different meaning depending on the context within which it is used – such as 'Please, draw the blind' compared with 'She has been blind from birth'. At the same time, we also know that if we did not understand the meaning of individual words in the first place, we would not be able to form an understanding of the meaning of the whole sentence.

The hermeneutic circle demonstrates this interdependency between the parts and the whole in the process of making sense of something. It acknowledges that it is the relationship between the old that is already known (in the form of the interpreter's presuppositions and assumptions which are informed by tradition and received wisdom) and the new that is still unknown (in the form of the phenomenon that presents itself), together which makes understanding possible (see also Gadamer, 1991; Schmidt, 2006: Chapter 5). It follows that the process of searching for understanding always requires an element of empathy as well as an element of suspicion.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS AND INTERPRETATION

Although the creation of new understanding always requires an interplay between a hermeneutics of empathy and a hermeneutics of suspicion, there are differences in the extent to which qualitative methods are committed to one or the other approach to interpretation. Some methods (e.g. descriptive phenomenology) attempt to stay as close to the data as possible, seeking to capture the experiential world of their research participants without transforming it into evidence of underlying psychological structures or mechanisms. Others (e.g. psychoanalytic approaches) aim to uncover deeper layers of meaning in the data by going beyond the manifest content of what research participants are saying about their experiences in the search of explanations for what presents itself. Yet others (e.g. ethnography) involve a continual back-and-forth between an 'empathic' and a 'suspicious' stance in order to generate better overall understanding.

In order to map out how the most widely used qualitative methods engage with interpretation, we can place them on a continuum with *empathic interpretation* at one end and *suspicious interpretation* at the other (see Figure 16.1). A method's position on the continuum is determined by the research questions it seeks to answer, its use of theory and its relationship with the data. Locating a qualitative method on a continuum of orientations to interpretation can help us to think through the theoretical, practical and ethical implications of using the method; it should also assist us in evaluating qualitative research more effectively

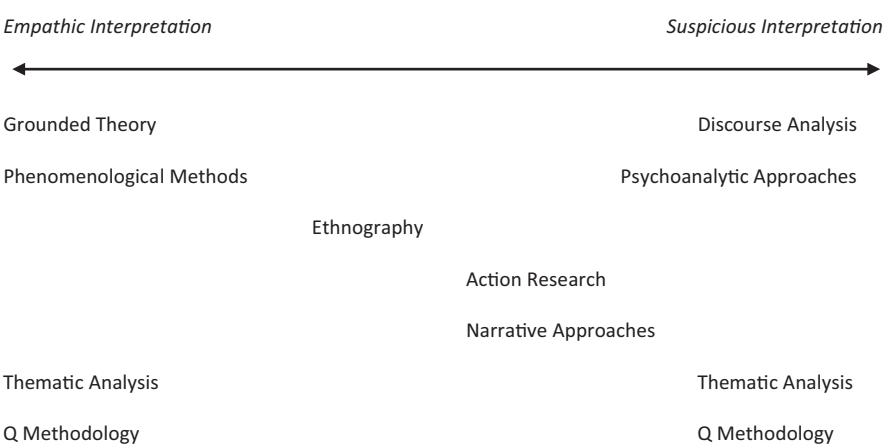

Figure 16.1 Continuum of approaches to interpretation

as evaluation criteria will differ depending on the approach to interpretation taken in the research.

The choice of terminology (*empathic* and *suspicious*) does not imply a value judgement regarding the desirability of the different styles, although I acknowledge that 'suspiciousness' is likely to be perceived as less desirable than 'empathy', particularly amongst psychologists. However, following Ricoeur, we need to remember that all approaches to interpretation have something to offer. We just need to make sure that we are aware of what a particular style of interpretation can and cannot deliver, what kind of insights it can generate and what its place may be within the wider project of the search for understanding.

In what follows I illustrate the interface between different qualitative methods and approaches to interpretation by reviewing the location of a range of methods on the continuum. Some methods map onto the continuum more easily than others and I have selected those which will serve the purpose of clarifying the relationship between a method's theory-base and its orientation to interpretation.

I have placed Phenomenological methods (Chapters 11 and 12) and Grounded Theory (Chapter 14) at the *empathic* end of the continuum. As it is primarily a research method's relationship with theory that determines its place on the continuum, both grounded theory and phenomenology qualify for this position. Phenomenology, with its mission of getting as close as possible to the quality and meaning of research participants' experiences by bracketing any expert knowledge and theories the researcher may already have about them, explicitly aligns itself with an empathic approach to interpretation. Interpretative phenomenological research (e.g. Chapter 12) is slightly more open to the idea of the researcher bringing meaning to the data by approaching it with their own pre-suppositions and expectations than descriptive phenomenological research would be. However, both methodologies caution against interpreting data through pre-established theoretical frameworks and both are committed to entering the phenomenon that presents itself in order to try to understand its meaning and significance 'from within'.

Grounded Theory, which was conceived in order to facilitate a process whereby new theories can be developed from data, would also need to be placed very close to the empathic position. As outlined in Chapter 14 in this volume there are marked differences between grounded theorists in terms of the strategies which they recommend to facilitate theory generation, with some (e.g. Glaser, 1992) advising against approaching the data with anything other than an open mind whilst others (e.g. Strauss and Corbin, 1990/1998) recommend the use of a coding paradigm to sensitise the researcher to the role of process and context, and yet others (e.g. Charmaz, 2006) emphasise the role of the researcher in constructing theoretical understanding. Despite these differences, I would argue that since theory is the end product of grounded theory research rather than its starting point, grounded theory is a data-driven, bottom-up method which therefore belongs near the empathic end of the continuum.

Moving towards the midpoint of the continuum, we find Ethnography (Chapter 3). The aim of ethnographic research is to obtain an insider view of a particular dimension of people's everyday lives by participating in it, overtly or covertly, for a sustained period of time. Although the ethnographic researcher enters the field with an open mind and although the research question driving ethnographic research is usually an open question about the meaning of a phenomenon to a group of people, I would argue that there is a theoretical basis to such research in that ethnographic researchers are concerned with the meanings and functions of specific cultural practices. So whilst ethnographic researchers are open as to the precise nature and content of people's actions within specific contexts, they do presume that people's actions have cultural and symbolic meaning and that such meanings are significant. As Griffin and Bengry-Howell (2008: 16) point out, 'Ethnography is founded on the assumption that the shared cultural meanings of a social group are vital for understanding the activities of any social group'.

I have placed ethnography in the middle of the continuum because it is committed to a theoretical base which directs the researcher's attention to certain aspects of the data by supplying the researcher with sensitising concepts such as the notion of 'cultural practice' or 'cultural meaning', whilst at the same time demonstrating theoretical humility and an attitude of not-knowing, as the researcher is seeking to understand what is going on from the point of view of those who are involved in the action. The ethnographer rejects the role of expert and aspires to maintain a flexible and reflexive stance despite their theoretical commitments which suggests that the mid-point of the continuum is perhaps the most appropriate place for this approach.

Moving a little further along towards the *suspicious* end of the continuum I have placed Action Research (Chapter 4). Like ethnography, action research seeks to better understand the perspectives of its research participants and it distances itself from an expert role for the researcher. Action research seeks to develop practical knowledge through engaging in collaboration with research participants with the aim of bringing about some

improvement in their everyday lives. The nature and direction of this change emerges from consultation with the research participants. As with grounded theory, the development of a theoretical understanding (in this case, of some aspects of social change) comes about as a result of conducting the research. This could indicate that action research should have its place near the *empathic* end of the continuum. However, I think we need to acknowledge that action research does rely upon a theoretical base which takes the form of a series of commitments including the belief that the most effective way of bringing about an improvement in people's quality of life is through forms of collective action, the belief that it is social practices which inform how people experience aspects of their lifeworld, and the belief that it is these practices that need to be modified in order to enhance individuals' well-being. Action research is 'a value-based practice, underpinned by a commitment to positive social change' (Kagan et al., 2008; see also Chapter 4 this volume) with 'social change' being defined as involving the redistribution of power in one way or another through empowering those who traditionally have little control over the conditions in which they live and work. Some action researchers are committed to sophisticated theoretical frameworks (e.g. Feminism or Marxism) which provide them with a theoretical toolkit and a series of hypotheses about social processes which will inform the ways in which they interpret the data. This type of action research would need to be placed even closer to the *suspicious* end of the continuum than less theory-driven form of action research.

Narrative approaches to qualitative research (Chapter 10) are particularly difficult to place on our continuum because there are such a variety of versions of narrative research which are concerned with different aspects of story-telling (see Smith and Sparkes, 2006, for a review of differences in approach and tensions within the field of narrative inquiry). Narrative researchers do share an interest in the stories people tell and in how people organise and bring meaning to their experience through constructing narratives about their lives. However, some narrative researchers are primarily concerned with the content of a story whilst others are particularly interested in a story's structure and form, its internal organisation and use of linguistic features. This suggests that some forms of narrative research are more psychological in orientation in that they explore the relationship between the stories that are told and the story-tellers' subjective experiences (thus adopting a phenomenological perspective), whilst others focus on the narrative strategies through which particular versions of human experience may be constructed (reflecting a discourse analytic orientation). It seems to me that a phenomenologically-inflected version of narrative research is less theory-driven and, therefore, would need to be placed closer to the *empathic* end of our continuum than a discursively-oriented version which needs to make use of theoretically-derived conceptual tools in its search for evidence of the various discursive strategies which are used in constructing a story and its characters. However, I would also argue that all narrative research is theory-driven, in that the researcher's theoretical premise (i.e. that telling stories is fundamental to human experience and that people make their lives meaningful through constructing narratives) will lead them to look for stories in their data. Because of this feature of narrative research I have placed this approach nearer the *suspicious* end of the continuum.

Psychoanalytic and discourse analytic approaches (see Chapters 6, 7 and 8 in this volume) are both placed at the *suspicious* end of the continuum. This may come as a surprise as these two approaches appear to have little in common given that one of them is concerned with internality (psychoanalysis) whilst the other focuses on the social construction of meaning through the use of language within specific social contexts (discourse analysis). However, both are theory-driven and take a top-down approach to interpretation in that they come to their data with a set of conceptual tools derived from theory. Both psychoanalytic and discursive approaches take a theoretical understanding of their subject matter (the 'psyche' in psychoanalysis and 'discourse' in discourse analysis) as their starting point and then read their data through this lens. Here, the theory underpinning the method of analysis provides the researcher with a clear direction as to what is of interest to the analysis and what is not, and it equips them with specific questions to ask of the data in order to drive the analysis forward. For example, theoretical constructs that can be mobilised by a discourse analytic researcher include 'discourse', 'discursive construction', 'interpretative repertoire', 'discursive strategy' and 'positioning' (amongst others) whilst psychoanalytic interpretations are informed by notions of emotional investment, the importance of relations within the family of origin, and the role of unconscious motivations (e.g. the need to defend against anxiety).

Thematic analysis (Chapter 2) appears at both ends of the continuum, indicating that it can be used to generate both *empathic* and *suspicious* interpretations. Thematic analysis is a method of analysis which helps the researcher identify patterns in the data. It guides the process of identifying themes in the data which capture meaning that is relevant to the research question. This means that it is the research question which will determine which

approach to interpretation is used in the analysis. In order to conduct a meaningful thematic analysis, the researcher needs to decide what these themes represent; and this decision will be informed by the particular research question the researcher has set out to address. A theme could represent a discursive construction, a thought, a feeling or a psychological mechanism, depending on what it is the researcher was looking for in the data. For example, themes could be taken at face value and understood as reflections of research participants' thoughts and feelings which would give the analysis a phenomenological inflection and place it near the *empathic* end of the continuum. Alternatively, the researcher could approach the themes identified in the analysis as something which still needs to be explained and turn to theory in order to do that. This would move the analysis towards the *suspicious* end of the continuum. Thematic analysis can underpin both 'empathic' and 'suspicious' interpretations and to reflect this, it has been placed at both ends of our continuum.

Similarly, Q Methodology (Chapter 13) engages with both types of interpretation but this time at different stages of the research process. During the first stage where patterns are identified through 'inverted' factor analysis (acting as a pattern analytic) the researcher adopts an empathic orientation to interpretation to produce a factor summary which encapsulates the key meaning elements that constitute a factor's point of view. This is followed by a suspicious interpretative phase where the researcher uses abductive logic to resolve the anomalies presented in order to come up with an explanation of 'what is going on'.

THE ETHICS OF INTERPRETATION

The process of interpretation poses significant ethical challenges because it involves a process of transformation. The material that is being interpreted is given new meaning by the researcher and this enables the researcher to shape what comes to be known about it. With this power to transform meaning comes responsibility. The researcher needs to reflect on what they are bringing to the material and the angle from which they are approaching it in their attempt to make sense of it. They also need to be mindful of the possible effects of their claims to know or understand something, especially if that something is somebody else's experience.

Suspicious interpretations in particular call for caution as here the researcher's adoption of the position of expert is based on the assumption that they know better than the research participants themselves what their experience means. As suspicious interpretations are informed by theories about what motivates people's actions (such as unconscious forces, socio-economic structures, cultural discourses, social norms and imperatives) they do not take accounts of experiences at face value. Looking for meaning beyond research participants' own understanding of what motivates their actions can generate novel insights especially in situations where research participants themselves struggle to provide an explanation for their actions. However, it carries the risk of imposing theory-driven meanings upon the data which may misrepresent participants and their experiences, for example by pathologising them. Some researchers (e.g. Flowers and Langdridge, 2007) are very uncomfortable with researchers reading theoretically-derived meaning into the data, and argue that in order to avoid the risk of misrepresentation it is better not to engage in suspicious interpretation at all. Others (e.g. see Hollway and Jefferson, 2005) argue that it is a risk worth taking as moving beyond the meanings contained within participants' own accounts of their experiences provides an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of what motivates people.

Interpretation in qualitative research clearly has an important ethical dimension and this means that researchers engaging in interpretation need to address ethical questions in relation to the interpretations they produce. There is the question about ownership. Who 'owns' the interpretation? Is it the researcher who produced it or is it the person who provided the account on which the interpretation is based? Another set of questions concerns the status of the interpretation. What does it provide information about? Does it actually tell us something about the phenomenon under investigation or does it tell us something about the interpreter and their assumptions and theoretical preferences ? How much of each of these is present in the interpretation and how do we know how much each of them contributed? Finally, there are ethical questions about the effects of the interpretation. What may be its wider social and psychological effects and, in particular, what may be its consequences for those whose behaviour has been interpreted in a particular way (see also Willig, 2012: Chapter 3, for a more detailed discussion of the ethics of interpretation)?

Evaluation

One more challenge that is associated with interpretation in qualitative research is to find a way of

evaluating interpretations. Given that interpretations are the products of a researcher's unique interaction with the data and of a process of meaning-making which can be informed by an empathic or a suspicious orientation, it is not so easy to establish what makes a 'good' interpretation.

As with any piece of qualitative research, an interpretation would need to be evaluated on its own terms by asking whether it has met its own objectives. Interpretative research can have very different goals; it can seek to capture the quality of an experience, or to identify underlying mechanisms or dynamics which generate the phenomenon under investigation. It can be concerned with understanding accounts of experience through the lens of existing theory, or it can seek to develop an entirely new theory. It can be empathic in orientation or it can be suspicious (or something inbetween or a combination of the two). It is only once the (intended) remit of the interpretation has been established that an evaluation can take place.

In what follows, I outline some strategies for validating interpretations and identify ways in which we may try to form a view about their usefulness. I draw on Williams and Morrow's (2009) very helpful paper on achieving trustworthiness in qualitative research to frame my discussion of these issues.

Williams and Morrow (2009: 577) propose three major categories of trustworthiness which they argue qualitative research ought to be concerned with. They are:

- 'integrity of the data'
- 'balance between reflexivity and subjectivity'
- 'clear communication and application of findings'.

My reflections on the process of evaluating interpretations is structured around these three categories. However, my operationalisation of them differs somewhat from Williams and Morrow's (2009) original version as I apply them to the evaluation of interpretations specifically.

Integrity of the data

This refers to the extent to which the data upon which an interpretation is based provide suitable and sufficiently rich material for the interpretation to be reasonably well grounded within it. To assess the 'integrity of the data' means examining the relationship between the data, and the claims that are made in the interpretation of it. As different approaches to interpretation require different types of data, it is important to ensure that the data that is being interpreted is compatible with the interpretative approach used. For example, in order to produce a convincing psychodynamic interpretation the researcher needs to have access to information about participants' early life and relationships with caregivers, whilst a credible phenomenological interpretation requires access to detailed first-person accounts of experiences the research participants have actually gone through themselves.

During the early stages of transformation of the data (from 'raw data' into some form of 'meaning units', for example) the researcher sets the scene for the types of interpretation they can then make of the data. For example, breaking up narrative accounts by extracting themes means that information about the structure and flow of the account is lost and its narrative dimension cannot be analysed (see McLeod, 2001; Sullivan, 2008). The 'meaning units' identified and refined during the coding process (be they themes, categories or discursive constructions) steer the interpretation in a particular direction and as a result alternative ways of giving meaning to the data are inevitably bypassed. It is crucial that the researcher reflects on the consequences of their chosen data-transformation strategies including those applied in the very early stages of the research as even the chosen transcription convention constitutes a form of interpretation (see Kvale, 1996; Emerson and Frosh, 2004).

Williams and Morrow (2009: 578) draw attention to the importance of the quantity as well as the quality of the data when they argue that 'quantity of data is key to filling out categories or themes in such a way that the reader is able to grasp the richness and complexity of the constructs under investigation'. This means that even where an interpretation comes across as plausible and interesting, the reader's confidence in its trustworthiness will be low unless there is evidence that the data on which it is based is sufficiently rich and comprehensive to convince the reader that the interpretation is grounded in the data and can account for a variety of related manifestations of the phenomenon under investigation. To conclude, evaluating an interpretation's trustworthiness requires careful scrutiny of its relationship with the data which have informed it.

Balance between reflexivity and subjectivity

Checking the 'balance between reflexivity and subjectivity' involves asking questions about the relationship between what the data offer up and the researcher's own perspective on the subject matter. It involves paying attention to the interplay between the participants' voices (subjectivity) and the researcher's interpretation of their meaning (reflexivity) (Williams and Morrow, 2009: 579).

The hermeneutic circle reminds us that in order to interpret an account the researcher needs to bring some pre-understanding with which to approach the text whilst at the same time being (and remaining) open to being changed by the encounter with the text. Interpretations of accounts produced by research participants, therefore, necessarily contain something that belongs to the researcher and something that emerges from the participants' accounts. What is seen as an acceptable balance between reflexivity and subjectivity will depend on the approach to interpretation taken by the researcher. For example, 'suspicious' interpretations invite more input from the researcher's chosen theoretical perspective than 'empathic' interpretations do. This means that an interpretation which claims to be informed by an 'empathic' approach to interpretation but which then proceeds to read participants' accounts through a highly prescriptive theoretical lens would need to be evaluated less positively than an openly 'suspicious' interpretation which has done the same.

The purpose of evaluating an interpretation is not to establish its absolute truth. Instead, evaluating an interpretation involves careful scrutiny of the balance between bottom-up (or participant-led) and top-down (or researcher-led) contributions to the meanings contained in the interpretation followed by reflection on the extent to which this balance is congruent with the researcher's declared approach to interpretation.

Strategies designed to increase the trustworthiness of interpretations such as participant validation or member checking are not appropriate to all types of interpretations. For 'suspicious interpretations', for example, a participant's lack of endorsement would not be a problem as the aim of the interpretation was not to reflect the participant's own understanding of their experience. Even a phenomenological reading can include interpretations of meanings which a participant may not necessarily recognise as their own (see Langdridge, 2007; Smith et al., 2009). However, if the aim of the research was to capture the meaning an experience has for a participant, then the participant's endorsement of an interpretation is a valid criterion for the trustworthiness of the interpretation. By contrast, if the aim of the interpretation was to identify an unconscious motivation, for example, then the participant would not be in a position to validate the interpretation and participant validation would cease to be a meaningful criterion to assess trustworthiness (see Hollway and Jefferson, 2000).

'Bracketing' requires the researcher to scrutinise their own assumptions and investments in particular ideas and perspectives, to be aware of them as something that belongs to them and to hold them lightly and flexibly during the process of data analysis. Williams and Morrow (2009: 579) argue that qualitative researchers need to 'recognise their own experiences as separate from the participants' stories' and bracketing helps them to do this. An interpretation which demonstrates the researcher's ability to maintain a critical distance to their own material is likely to be more convincing than one where the researcher fails to differentiate between their own views and experiences and those of their research participants.

Finally, remaining open to alternative interpretations is another strategy that can help to increase the trustworthiness of the analysis. However, different approaches to interpretation require different relationships with competing interpretative possibilities. More tentative, bottom-up approaches to interpretation allow the researcher to remain open to alternative readings throughout the coding process; in Grounded Theory, for example, a search for 'negative cases' forms part of the coding process. Any conceptualisations or hypotheses that emerge from this process are expected to be as data-driven as possible. By contrast, more prescriptive, top-down approaches such as psychoanalytic case studies draw on pre-existing theoretical constructs in order to make sense of the data and, therefore, necessarily close down alternative readings at a much earlier stage in the research process. Openness to alternative interpretations will then need to be demonstrated as part of a critical reflection on the results of the study.

Clear communication and application of findings

Williams and Morrow (2009: 580) remind us that clear communication and application of findings are essential if a study is to have an impact. To have what Williams and Morrow (2009) call 'social validity', a piece of research would need to be useful and relevant to society in some way, for example by improving clinical practice, by changing the way social problems are addressed and managed or by revealing limitations in existing approaches to a particular subject matter. According to such a pragmatist perspective, a study's value depends upon its usefulness to society (however this may be defined).

Applied to the evaluation of interpretations it means that here we are not so much concerned with an interpretation's validity but with its consequences. Having access to an interpretation can change the way in which people frame their experiences and position themselves in relation to them. They can become tools for action because they mediate people's relation to the world (see

Cornish and Gillespie, 2009: 802). The pragmatic value of an interpretation can be assessed by asking whether it serves the purpose for which it was conceived and whether it helps the researcher pursue their wider project. This indicates that an interpretation can only have pragmatic value, if there is such a project. However, most research questions in qualitative psychology seem to be informed by wider social or psychological concerns and many researchers are motivated by a desire to contribute to some improvements in people's quality of life.

In addition, an interpretation could be useful in ways that the researcher had not anticipated. A pragmatist perspective does not specify whose vision of 'social usefulness' a piece of research should speak to; it merely requires that it should be evaluated in terms of its usefulness. A pragmatist evaluation of an interpretation necessarily involves moral choices about whose interests ought, and which ought not, to be served by it.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The final section of this chapter is concerned with recent developments in qualitative psychology which offer new perspectives on interpretation. I shall focus on pluralism, binocularity and the use of metasynthesis as I believe that these offer opportunities for interpretation that transcend method-specific meaning-making. All three of these research strategies seek to integrate insights from two or more qualitative analyses. Pluralism and binocularity attempt to do this across methods whilst metasynthesis integrates results from several studies using the same (or very similar) method(s). Interpretation plays a significant role in this process of integration which is why these three methodologies provide qualitative psychologists with an opportunity to further explore the interpretative possibilities inherent in qualitative research. I anticipate significant further development in these areas in the near future.

Pluralism

In recent years, qualitative psychologists have begun to welcome methodological pluralism as a way of opening up qualitative research. Pluralist research is based on the premise that there is never a single truth that can be discovered about a phenomenon and that different research methods can illuminate a phenomenon from different angles. Using more than one method allows the researcher to generate a wider range of insights and therefore perhaps also a more complete understanding of the phenomenon. Frost (2009b), who has contributed significantly to promoting methodological pluralism (2009a, 2009b, 2011), points out that combining different qualitative approaches within the context of one study allows for a multi-layered understanding of the data. This then enables the reader to select those aspects which have meaning and value to them and which speak to their interests and concerns. A multi-layered reading of the data, therefore, has the potential to appeal to diverse interests.

A pluralist approach to qualitative research also allows researchers to examine epistemological tensions between different qualitative methods and to reflect on the implications of this for the kinds of insights generated by them. The Pluralism in Qualitative Research project (see Frost, 2009b) which compared different researchers' different interpretations of the same data set is a good illustration of this type of work, as is Lyons and Coyle's (2007) discussion of a range of readings of one and the same data set produced by different qualitative approaches.

Another way of practising pluralism in qualitative research is to analyse data repeatedly using different versions of the same approach. Frost (2009a) reports a study in which she applied a 'within-method pluralistic approach' in her analysis of an interview with a woman about the experience of the transition to second-time motherhood. Frost used different styles of narrative analysis, one after another, in order to produce several layers of analysis of the data. Each new layer added depth and texture to the interpretation. Approaching the interview through the perspective of Labov's (1972) model allowed Frost to identify the narrative structure of the account whilst viewing it through Gee's (1991) model helped her to gain a deeper understanding of the meanings contained within the elements of the story told in the interview and to explore the interviewee's beliefs and motivations. The use of reflexive awareness in a further reading of the text, this time with the aim of examining the effects of the interviewer's presence during the interview, allowed Frost to find alternative meanings in her interviewee's comments, and to adjust her understanding of the account in the light of these. Finally, a focus on the interviewee's use of metaphors and similes generated further insights into the emotional impact of second-time motherhood upon the interviewee.

A pluralistic approach to qualitative research seeks to amplify meaning in a way that reflects human experience which is itself complex, multi-layered and multi-faceted. Pluralism adopts a decidedly anti-reductionist stance and rejects the

idea that the meaning of a phenomenon can be pinned down once and for all. From an ethical perspective it could be argued that pluralist research avoids the pitfalls of mono-method interpretations which, especially if they adopt a 'suspicious' orientation, can impose meaning on the data and close down alternative readings. When a 'suspicious' interpretation forms part of a pluralistic reading and sits alongside other perspectives on the data, it loses some of its power in the presence of several interpretations. In this way it is less likely that any one of them will be imposed to the exclusion of all other possibilities. Switching between interpretative lenses to produce a multi-layered reading of the data helps the researcher to remain open to alternative readings so that even when they engage in theory-driven, more prescriptive styles of analysis to generate 'suspicious' interpretations, they do not close down the analysis.

The extent to which pluralistic research seeks to integrate its diverse readings of the data will depend upon the degree of compatibility between the epistemological bases underpinning the analytic methods used to produce the various readings. If their compatibility is high, it may be possible to produce a coherent story about the phenomenon under investigation which draws on the various readings that formed part of the pluralistic analysis. If compatibility is low, the various interpretations of the data are not integrated and sit alongside one another. The latter option does not make the research incomplete; rather, it speaks to the idea that, as Frosh (2007) has argued, searching for coherent stories to make sense of the data is perhaps not an appropriate goal in qualitative analysis in the first place. This is because the desire to 'make sense' may lead the researcher to disregard the presence of the tensions and contradictions that characterise human experience itself. Frosh (2007: 638; italics in original) reminds us that 'the human subject is *never* a whole, is always riven with partial drives, social discourses that frame available modes of experience, ways of being that are contradictory and reflect the shifting allegiances of power as they play across the body and the mind'. If this is so, qualitative interpretations that 'make sense' of human experience may not be able to capture the fragmentary and contradictory aspects of human experience.

Of course, the presentation of multiple and potentially conflicting readings contains its own ethical challenges. As narrative researchers have argued (e.g. Murray, 2003), and as has been demonstrated in research exploring the role of meaning-making in coping with difficult life-events (Frank, 1995), telling coherent and meaningful stories about experiences helps people to accept and to feel able to live with changed life circumstances. A 'polymorphism of marginal, "disintegrated" qualitative research' (Frosh, 2007: 644) may interfere with this process of developing coherent narratives to give meaning to unsettling experiences and an analytic strategy that seeks to 'disrupt' and 'disorganise' (Frosh, 2007: 644) may, therefore, conflict with research participants' own aim to 'make sense' of their experiences.

Binocularity

Binocularity is another expression of qualitative researchers' desire to produce a richer reading of their data than the adoption of a mono-method approach would allow. A binocular approach to qualitative analysis involves the examination of a data set through more than one lens during the course of data analysis (Frosh and Young, 2008). However, whilst a pluralist analysis allows different readings of the same data to sit alongside one another, leaving the reader to reflect on their relationship with one another, a binocular approach mobilises two analytic strategies that complement one another in order to produce a more complete reading of the data. Here, the two readings are intended to speak to one another and thus enable the researcher to combine the insights gained by each of them in order to produce a better understanding of the phenomenon.

For example, in their psychosocial analysis of narratives of brotherhood Frosh and Young (2008) produce an initial discursive reading of interviews in which they identify constructions of brotherhood and the discourses from which such constructions are drawn. This is followed by a second reading which deploys psychoanalytic interpretative strategies in order to 'thicken' the initial reading by focusing on emotionality which then allows the researchers to deepen their understanding of what motivates participants to talk about their brothers in the way that they do.

Similarly, Eatough and Smith (2008) work with two levels of interpretation, including an initial detailed phenomenological reading which produces a 'thick description', and a second reading based upon a more critical probing of the participant's sense making which informs an attempt to theorise the data, thus offering a deeper hermeneutic reading.

Another example of this type of work is Langdridge's (2007) critical narrative analysis (CNA) which seeks to offer a 'synthesis of a variety of analytical tools to better enable the analyst to work critically with the data and to shed light on the phenomenon being investigated' (Langdridge, 2007: 133). CNA works by combining aspects of phenomenological and narrative analysis.

Perhaps the most recent development in binocular research has been the attempt to combine Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA). Colahan (2014; see also Colahan et al., 2012) developed a dual focus methodology in order to investigate the experience of 'satisfaction' in long-term heterosexual relationships. He combined IPA and FDA in a cycle of analysis which allowed him to examine the interplay between language, culture and experience with the aim of developing an understanding of how participants experienced 'relationship satisfaction' within a particular social and discursive context. This is a welcome development as such a dual focus methodology allows researchers to situate subjective experiences within their socio-cultural contexts and thus expand the usual remit of IPA studies. It addresses the concerns of those who have criticised IPA for focusing on the individual and their immediate context rather than the wider social context within which the individual's experience is produced (e.g. Todorova, 2011). Smith (2011, 2012) has endorsed this as a fruitful future direction for IPA. However, by expanding its focus on social context, IPA would need to shift its epistemological position towards social constructionism. An alternative to expanding IPA's focus would be the adoption of forms of binocularity such as Colahan's dual-focus methodology.

Combining FDA and IPA aims to integrate the insights gained from each of these methods in order to produce a more complete understanding of the experiential phenomenon under investigation. Research questions driving this type of research are concerned with how lived experience is mediated by language. This means that the dual methodology researcher needs to address the question of how to synthesise the findings. Answers to this question will depend upon the researcher's conceptualisation of the relationship between 'discourse' and 'experience'. Possible conceptualisations include:

1 language-dominant ones which proposes that discourse constructs experience;
2 phenomenological ones which propose that experience pre-exists discourse but that discourse constrains how experience can be talked about;
3 positions in between such as one that proposes that discourse shapes experience by providing a context for it.

Depending on the researcher's preferred conceptualisation, the interpretative story told could be a top-down story (of how discursive resources produce particular experiential realities), a bottom-up story (of how experience is distorted, denied or silenced through discourses) or something in between (of how experience is transformed into accounts of experience through the use of available discursive resources).

Dual focus methodology is a very recent development and there are, as yet, not many published studies available for inspection. It will be interesting to see how researchers use this approach in future work.

Metasynthesis

The aim of metasynthesis is to produce '… a new, integrated, and more complete interpretation of findings that offers greater understanding in depth and breadth than the findings from individual studies' (Bondas and Hall, 2007a: 115). Metasynthesis has also been described as 'a goldmine for evidence-based practice' (Beck, 2009, cited in Ludvigsen et al., 2015). Qualitative research often has little impact on evidence-based practice due to the small number of participants involved in any one study. It is only when considered in aggregate that conclusions can be drawn which can be generalised to a population. Metasynthesis is one way of systematically aggregating, integrating and interpreting findings from a sample of qualitative research reports (Ludvigsen et al., 2015).

The earliest example of a metasynthesis in the literature appears to be Noblit and Hare's (1988) meta-ethnography which sparked off an interest in qualitative research synthesis. Researchers in nursing and health care research in particular embraced metasynthesis as a way of rendering qualitative research relevant and useful and the first metasynthesis in this field was published in 1994 by Jensen and Allen (Jensen and Allen, 1994). Sandelowski, Docherty and Emden (1997) captured the mood at the time by arguing that '[t]he time also has come to recognise that calls for yet more research – to gain better understanding of events or to resolve patient and practice problems – do not necessarily entail the collection of yet more new data from already overburdened people' (p. 370).

With the exception of Conversation Analysis (see Chapter 5), qualitative psychology's interest in synthesising findings from different studies is more recent (see Shaw, 2012). This is surprising given that the use of qualitative research synthesis in order to help develop the evidence-base for psychological interventions is equally relevant in this field. It could be argued that qualitative studies in psychology have accumulated without much

attempt to produce a coherent body of knowledge just as had been the case in nursing and health care studies (Sandelowski et al., 1997: 365).

Qualitative researchers who want to embark upon metasynthesis research are well advised to first review the literature on how to conduct a metasynthesis, as there are a number of approaches to choose from. Although all approaches share the view that metasynthesis research is always interpretative and never simply aggregative, there are differences in the extent to which metasynthesists seek to develop new theories in addition to building cumulative bodies of knowledge. Some approaches seek to offer novel interpretations of existing findings whilst others are more concerned with bringing together existing findings in a way that makes them both accessible and useful practitioners and policymakers. Another difference between approaches concerns the extent to which metasynthesists try to stay true to the primary researchers' interpretations of their data. Whilst some authors encourage the reinterpretation of primary data (e.g. Ludvigsen et al., 2015), others (e.g. Weed, 2008) advise against this. There are also different views regarding the ideal number of studies to be included in a metasynthesis, with Kearney (2001) arguing that the larger the number of studies included, the more saturated and transferable the results; whilst Sandelowski, Docherty and Emden (1997) propose that using more than ten studies compromises the interpretative validity of the analysis. Finally, there are different views regarding the use of quality parameters to assess studies, whether or not to use standardised assessment tools and whether exclusion criteria in general should be predetermined or idiographic (see Weed, 2008).

Apart from these perhaps rather technical issues, metasynthesists need to concern themselves with the question of interpretation. Thorne (2015) draws attention to the difference between metasynthesis as a qualitative research method in its own right designed to uncover new layers of insight, and work that describes itself as metasynthesis which 'seem[s] to take advantage of the technical advice for finding and organising material, but do[es] not quite do anything truly synthetic with it' (p. 1347). She argues that for a metasynthesis to be considered 'a distinct piece of scholarly research and not merely an option for organising and displaying available literature in the field' (p. 1348), it needs to be interpretative rather than merely aggregative, it needs to interpret diversity within the body of studies, and it needs to place their findings within the socio-historical contexts within which they have been produced.

This means that metasynthesis is a method of interpretative analysis rather than a sophisticated type of literature review, and, as such, it needs to attend to the complex conceptual and ethical issues outlined in this chapter. In fact, as Weed (2008) points out, the process of metasynthesis requires that the researcher engages in a triple hermeneutic whereby the interpretation of the metasynthesist is added to the interpretations of the original researchers and those of the research participants. The results of a metasynthesis, therefore, need to successfully integrate three levels of interpretation without losing significant aspects of meaning contained in each of them.

Metasynthesis is a challenging and time-consuming process but its benefits are worth the effort. I am currently experiencing this myself as I am in the process of co-authoring a metasynthesis of phenomenological studies of the experience of living with terminal cancer (Willig and Wirth, in preparation). Reading, reviewing, coding, interpreting and synthesising 23 sets of results felt overwhelming at times and yet there is something very powerful in paying close attention to the voices of so many research participants (over 300 across the 23 studies) describing their experience of their final life challenge. It was also rewarding to see how a complex and yet coherent picture of the dimensions of this life challenge emerged from the process of coding and integrating the emerging themes across the papers. We have created 19 theme clusters whose meaning and significance we reflected on for some time before grouping them under the four headings: 'holding on to life', 'living with cancer', 'liminality' and 'trauma'. It was at this stage that we felt the most aware of our own contribution to the meaning-making process. At the same time, we felt that conceptualising and thinking about aspects of participants' accounts in terms of theoretical notions such as 'trauma' and 'liminality' allowed us to see more of the meaning and significance of the impact of living with terminal cancer than we might have done had we stayed at a more descriptive level. A particular challenge to the metasynthesist is to find a balance between integrating findings across studies and preserving the unique features of each study's findings. This is, of course, a challenge posed by all qualitative research when it seeks to capture a range of individuals' experiences in the form of shared themes (see Willig, 2015).

It could be argued that without conducting metasyntheses, qualitative psychology would be unable to access a significant dimension of the insights it has accumulated over the years and which can only emerge when findings from a range of studies are examined in relation to one another. It is good to see that increasing numbers of metasyntheses are now being published by qualitative psychologists (e.g. Bennion et al., 2012; Shelgrove and Liossi, 2013; Barker et al., 2014). Most (but by no means all) of these are in the field of health psychology and concern themselves with the

experience of ill health, perhaps reflecting meta-synthesis' historical association with nursing and health care studies.

CONCLUSION

I hope I have been able to demonstrate that interpretation is an integral part of qualitative research. Any qualitative analysis of data constitutes an interpretation and it is, therefore, important that qualitative psychologists engage with the challenge of interpretation head-on. As I have argued in this chapter, decisions about how to approach interpretation, how to interpret ethically and how to evaluate an interpretation will need to be made as part of the process of designing and conducting a qualitative study. The more explicit we are about the approach we have taken, the more able the reader will be to appreciate and evaluate our research.

Recent work in qualitative psychology is taking the interpretative challenge further by exploring ways in which diverse interpretations and perspectives may be integrated in order to strengthen the impact of qualitative research. This is a welcome development which will advance qualitative psychology's methodological sophistication and its ability to address increasingly ambitious research questions.

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17

Qualitative Methods in Feminist Psychology

Mary Gergen

INTRODUCTION

Qualitative Methods have become prominent in a variety of social science areas since the 1980s. In general they have been seen in contrast to quantitative methods, and, in psychology, as a mode of discovery in the initial phases of a research process, or as an adjunct to quantitative methods of research. Among those identified as feminist psychologists, the receptivity to qualitative methods has been greater than it has in most other areas of psychology, but still these methods are viewed with some caution, given the centrality of more mainstream empirical methods, such as those related to hypothesis testing and experimentation.

Feminist psychology has always been a field in transition. Many questions have been raised as it has developed: Is feminist research simply a recipe in which we add 'women' to existing paradigmatic forms, then stir? Or should an entirely new discipline be forged? How far can one deviate from traditional empirical methods, and not be ghettoized? How free are we to explore our research interests using qualitative methods? How can qualitative methods enhance our feminist pursuits? These questions, among others, have been hotly debated and as yet remain unresolved within the feminist community. At the same time, many of the opinions emerging from these debates have shaped the support for qualitative methods in feminist psychology (Gergen, 2010; Hesse-Biber, 2007; Olesen, 1994; Wertz et al., 2011).

With the caveat that tensions exist within feminist research circles, I would advance the view that, at its core, feminist research is designed to seek social justice, to enhance women's voice and influence in society, and to explore alternative ways of understanding the world through women's experiences (Baker, 2006; Harding, 1987). With a focus on these issues, the methodological choice of qualitative research has been very important in that it allows for explorations of lives and institutions in their rich diversity and wholeness, rather than supporting research that elicits and dissects data in the service of a statistical plan based on group scores (Reinharz, 1992). The precise formulations of qualitative methods, the interpretations of research outcomes, and the presentational forms have produced many styles of feminist research (Chrisler and McCreary, 2010; Fonow and Cook, 1991). In addition to varieties of styles of research, there are theoretical variations as well. However, the discussion of qualitative methods in this chapter is primarily based on two epistemological orientations within feminist psychology: a feminist standpoint position and a

postmodern/social constructionist one (Gergen, 2001). The latter position is non-foundational, with the emphasis on the social construction of reality, primarily through discursive means. The feminist standpoint position is based on the view that research is in service of 'truth-telling', with some researchers grounding this truth in individual experience, and others rejecting the individual perspective for structural truths related to class, race, and other demographic variables. It is impossible to comprehensively describe all of these contributions to feminist psychology, but a sampling of qualitative methods within the major approaches is included below, commencing with a brief historical overview of the development of feminist qualitative research.

FEMINIST QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

1865–1965

As with all other sciences, women were not allowed to participate as fully functioning researchers in psychology until the end of the nineteenth century. Even then, they were few in number, marginalized as students and as researchers, and often deprived of the right to receive advanced degrees, publish in prestigious journals, or even to claim ownership of their ideas (Bohan, 1992; Furumoto and Scarborough, 1986). In terms of methods, the field of psychology in the late nineteenth century was fomenting with various forms competing for primacy. Qualitative methods, including introspection, were commonplace in early psychology. Despite the turn to experimentation and quantitative methods in the 1920s, especially in the USA, one of the first feminist psychologists, Mary Calkins, at Wellesley College, used qualitative methods in a study of social selves in interaction. In her work, she rejected the atomistic conception of the subject of psychology for a more interdependent one. Until today, the notion of relationship is a keystone of feminist research (Palmieri, 1983; Rutherford, 2011).

The 'Second Wave of Feminism'

The flowering of feminist research, particularly in North America, Western Europe, and the British Commonwealth countries began with the so-called 'Second Wave of Feminism', which followed by forty years the 'First Wave', the era of Suffragettes. Sparked by the publication of *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir (1949/1972) and Betty Friedan's (1963) *The Feminist Mystique*, energized by the civil rights movement, and supported by the huge influx of women into higher education, feminist researchers found a groundswell of support for the development of their discipline. One facet of their work was aimed at criticizing the positivist empiricism of mainstream psychology. As Carolyn Sherif (1987: 38) said, 'The orthodox methods of studying and interpreting sex differences were capable of delivering only mischievous and misleading trivia'. Feminists argued against research that had advantaged men and supported stereotypic notions of women and femininity (Weisstein, 1971). Other criticisms of traditional experimental and statistical research emphasized the claim that scientists could conduct research without being in a relationship with those who were being studied, and that research could be value-neutral (Gergen, 1988; McHugh et al., 1986). The outcome of the resurgence of feminism as a political movement in the 1970s and beyond provided a strong beginning for the shift in methods that followed.

The Turn Towards Qualitative Methods in Feminist Research

By the 1970s the quantitative approach was hegemonic in much of psychology. Feminist researchers tended to adapt these methods to feminist issues in part to protect themselves from being rejected from powerful publication domains and academic jobs (Lykes and Stewart, 1986). Despite this career pressure, some feminist psychologists, throughout the 1980s, took up qualitative methods; in the USA, they often published outside the mainstream, in their own books and in private periodicals, such as the Stone Center Papers at Wellesley College (cf. Belenky et al., 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Jack, 1991; Miller, 1976). Until today, the majority of feminist research psychologists in the USA engaged in quantitative work. For many, however, the corset of the quantitative distorts the body of inquiry, and much that is produced suffers from the constraints of the methods used. As a result, in recent years the expanding domain of practice has shifted toward an acceptance of qualitative research designs (Rutherford, 2011).

Many factors – social, political, and scientific – played a role in the transformation. Beginning in the 1980s, the 'French invasion' of postmodernism, which included the influence of French feminism, sparked interest in many new ideas, unsettled past

philosophical assumptions, and enhanced the desirability of qualitative methods (Moi, 1987). More directly, in the 1980s British and Commonwealth psychologists demonstrated forms of research that escaped the confines of traditional methods and advanced feminist ideals and research practices (cf. Henriques et al., 1984; Kitzinger, 1987; Squire, 1989; Stanley and Wise, 1983; Walkerdine, 1985; Wilkinson, 1986). In addition the founding of *Feminism & Psychology* in 1991 provided a journal that strongly supported qualitative work. Over time, feminist critiques of the dominant perspective seemed to have infiltrated the more mainstream scientific domains. Researchers wanting to explore relational topics were looking to escape, and qualitative means provided the key.

With the turn of the century, various trends suggested that the acceptability of qualitative methods was rising within the establishment; for example, when the feminist flagship journal of the American Psychological Association (APA), *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, modified its editorial statement to encourage submissions of qualitative work; the APA published its first book on qualitative methods (Camic et al., 2003); its first qualitative journal, *Qualitative Psychology,* was produced within a division formerly devoted to statistical methods; and in the UK, training in qualitative methods was required by the Economic and Social Research Council, a major funding source for postgraduate training in psychology, 'the times they [were] a-changin' (Marecek, 2003). Qualitative inquiry journals also increased in relevance. Among them are *Qualitative Inquiry* and the *International Review of Qualitative Research.* Also the increasing presence of electronic journals has widened publishing opportunities for non-traditional articles (e.g. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, or *Forum: Qualitative Sozialforschung*, archived at http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/issue/archive and *The Qualitative Report*). In addition to being virtual journals, many, including the *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* are Open Access journals, which means that they are freely available to anyone, without copyright protections. Other electronic journals that welcome qualitative work include *The Canadian Journal of Action Research*, *International Journal of Collaborative Practices*, and *Sociological Research Online*. Whether these shifts result in an increased presence and prestige of qualitative methods research in psychology is yet to be determined. At least discussions of qualitative research need not have 'some flavor of subversiveness and conspiracy', as Michael Bamberg (2003: ix) described his early experiences as a qualitative researcher in psychology.

It should also be mentioned that a great many research projects are highly complex, with an intermingling of qualitative and quantitative methods, or 'mixed methods', as it is frequently called (cf. Fine et al., 2003; Hesse-Biber, 2012; Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006; Jayaratne and Stewart, 1991; McClelland, 2014). Researchers often collect empirical data, which are subjected to statistical analysis, and then combine these results with qualitative inquiry approaches, such as in-depth interviews, which often give a more detailed, rich, and comprehensive picture of the subject matter under investigation. A recent mixed method study examined the mental health of women in prison using a structured interview that resulted in classifying the participants in terms of their mental illnesses (DeHart et al., 2014). The form, called the Composite International Diagnostic Interview, is derived from the classifications of the World Health Organization's criteria and the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, published by the American Psychiatric Association. The qualitative aspect of the study involved a subset of the participants who engaged in a life history calendar interview, in which various life events and life stages were illustrated, in order to help the women recall life events, some of which might have occurred decades ago. 'The mixed-method approach allowed us to identify specific qualitative exemplars to illustrate findings revealed in the quantitative analysis of interview data'. (DeHart et al., 2014: 142).

In another example of mixed methods, researchers studied differences between American and German mothers and grandmothers in terms of their ethnotheories of child rearing (Keller and Demuth, 2006). The study included interviews based on a picture card technique, as well as questionnaires. The analysis was done using a qualitative measure – a content analysis of conversations concerning parenting as generated by the photos, as well as on the quantitative measure, rankings of the photos in terms of representing good child care. It might be asked what makes this study feminist research, as opposed to straightforward developmental research. The line between feminist and non-feminist research is indeed blurred. However, in their conclusions, the researchers comment on the generous maternal leave time and excellent day care in Europe, as well as the income mothers receive, as compared with the USA, where they may not receive any special compensation for having a child, and there is more variability in day-care center quality. Brought to the fore, these contrasts serve to enhance awareness of structural factors influencing women's lives, their childrearing preferences, and their attitudes toward family membership and personal freedom. Qualitative

approaches allow for topics that are beyond individual responses to become a focus of concern, as is the case in this study.

It should be mentioned that there are controversies between researchers who are advocates of mixed-method projects and those who are leery of them. Critics suggest that quantitative researchers primarily use qualitative methods as 'window dressing' for their statistical results, as the quotation above (DeHart et al., 2014) indicates. Stories about prisoners or grandmothers may be more compelling and comprehensive than statistical tables. Many qualitative researchers are opposed to the integration of the two approaches, arguing that they are two epistemologically different scientific approaches to research, and, like oil and water, do not truly mix well.

TWO APPROACHES TO QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN FEMINIST PSYCHOLOGY

The Feminist Standpoint Position(s)

Feminist qualitative researchers share the notion that there is no 'God's eye view' from which to observe and describe reality; there is no neutral point from which a scientist can describe nature. Instead, all descriptions of experience and reality are made from a particular standpoint position (Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1987; Naples, 2003). Although there are diverse subgroups among them, for many of these researchers, the concrete experiences of women – for example, as mothers, housewives, or gardeners – become the grounds for discovering the nature of knowledge and the real. As Dana Crowley Jack (1991: 25) wrote with reference to her longitudinal study of 12 depressed women, 'They are the ones best situated to provide a clear picture of the intersection of female personality with culture …. Let us view depressed women as informants from the women's sphere … trusting them to locate and describe the stresses that render them vulnerable to depression'.

A predominant feature of feminist research, especially from the standpoint position, has been an intense focus on girls' and women's bodies. Researchers have examined topics such as eating disorders, sexuality, violence, childbirth; menopause, and the objectification of the body by a patriarchal society (e.g. Tillmann-Healy, 1996; Tolman, 2002). Each of these topics expands out into a massive array of qualitative research projects, most often executed by using in-depth interviews with women who have been involved with a particular experience. For standpoint feminists, the differences in embodiment between women and men figure prominently in theorizing gender. This view is in contrast to much of the research from the quantitative empiricist approach, in which gender/sex differences tend to be minimized, in part, to support the value of equality between the sexes (Hyde and Linn, 1986).

A brief survey of three major standpoint positions, Grounded Theory, Socialist Feminist Theory, and Attachment Theory, follows.

Grounded theory

For many feminists interested in qualitative work, the method of choice is a 'grounded theory' approach to data analysis. Typically, the grounded theory approach involves an intense and extensive reading of interview transcripts, which allows for the central findings to emerge through an inductive process. Grounded theory stresses the importance of the actor's point of view, which guides the interpretations of findings (Henwood and Pidgeon, 2003). Often the outcome of the research involves the development of themes, which are composites of the individual statements. The researcher tries to remain as neutral and unbiased as possible, as well as avoiding any premature notions of what might emerge from the data.

Grounded theory was introduced by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960s (1967). It has continued to develop and evolve into something quite different from the original work, which was designed, in part, as an alternative to the mainstream empirical methods, which tended to ignore individual voices of the so called 'subjects' in favor of combined group scores (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Today, grounded theory researchers have moved away from the original formulations, and have tended to emphasize a more constructionist approach. They recognize that the researcher is heavily implicated in the research process as they design the project, conduct it, and interpret the outcomes (Charmaz, 2006). As Charmaz has said, 'Data do not provide a window on reality' (2000: 513), but the researcher, as a 'distant expert' co-creates the meaning of the data in concert with the participants. The diverse strands that make up the grounded theory followers often are in contention with one another over the definition and the ideal way of doing grounded theory research (Boychuk Duchscher and Morgan, 2004).

Two exemplars of grounded theory feminist research include a study of African American women's sexual objectification experiences (Watson et al., 2012), in which semi-structured interviews revealed sociocultural factors that contributed to their sense of objectification, and another, also using semi-structured interviews, about the

stresses of transgendered people trying to develop authentic self-presentations in diverse interpersonal situations, while fending off the physical and psychological dangers of self-revelation (Levitt and Ippolito, 2014). Grounded theory research, a mix of the older inductive method and the newer constructivist approach, are heavily represented in feminist psychological research.

Socialist feminist theory

The socialist feminist position has been particularly influential in Europe, where a structuralist view of society predominates in contrast to a more individualist perspective characteristic of the USA. It is an important orientation that stresses the impact of social structure and economic conditions on women's lives. Thus, the study of women's experiences is interpreted from the standpoint of a particular social and economic structure. An early socialist feminist whose qualitative methods linked her political stance with research was Frigga Haug, who, with others, published *Female Sexualization: A Collective Work of Memory* (1987). Of special interest to feminist researchers was the work on emotion by Crawford, Kippax, Onyx, Gault and Benton (1992) in which shared memories of childhood socialization become reinterpreted through a feminist lens. This research served as a form of liberation from the existing sexist societal norms.

In the past 25 years dramatic political shifts, especially the break-up of the Soviet Union, have created changes in this orientation, which owed much to Marxist theory. In addition, tensions between Marxists and feminists have often surfaced because women's work as homemakers and mothers did not count as labor within the theory (Fraser, 1989). As Heidi Hartmann (1981: 97) wrote, 'Many marxists typically argue that feminism is at best less important than class conflict and at worst divisive of the working class'. More recently, critical feminists have tended to incorporate views of Michel Foucault into their feminist standpoint, especially on issues related to power and social control (Burman et al., 1996; Hekman, 1990, 1999; Sawicki, 1991; Weedon, 1987). An example of this type of research is Angel Juan Gordo Lopez's (1996) studies of the regulatory practices within gender identity clinics, and the ways in which the staff and patients exhibit the dynamics of resistance and regulation in the 'late capitalist market' (Lopez, 1996: 170). A Foucauldian approach is not without its feminist critics, however, as Foucault's position de-emphasizes the subject as agent in favor of attention to discursive fields. A fear within feminist circles is that the loss of the subject 'woman' reduces the potential of women to act politically (Ramazanoglu, 1989).

Attachment theory

A third important strand of feminist standpoint research is related to attachment theory, which focuses on gender differences related to early childhood experiences. In 1978 *The Reproduction of Mothering* (Chodorow, 1978) gave rise to a spate of standpoint research in the USA and elsewhere. One research group clustered around the feminist psychoanalyst Jean Baker Miller (1976) at the Stone Center, now Wellesley Centers for Women. At the heart of their qualitative inquiry is the theory of the 'self-in-relation' (Jordan et al., 1991). Often case studies are used to explicate issues of identity and the conflicts that arise between desires for connection and the societal requirements to be individuated. Through the stories of various clients, means for finding resolution through relational themes are examined (Jordan, 2010).

A second powerful source of standpoint research, led by Carol Gilligan, was Harvard University's Project on Women's Psychology and Girls' Development. Gilligan's *In a Different Voice* (1982), a classic in feminist qualitative research, involved interviews with women who made decisions as to whether or not to have abortions. These stories provided the groundwork for the development of her notion of contrasting justice with caring as orienting principles in making moral decisions. Other students and colleagues of Gilligan used qualitative research methods in institutional and community settings to study girls' and women's development. Two of the most well-known among these studies culminated in *Women's Ways of Knowing* (Belenky et al., 1986), a study of the different ways of learning that women use, as opposed to men, and *Meeting at the Crossroads*, a study of adolescent girls' development (Brown and Gilligan, 1992). Together Brown, Gilligan and their colleagues created the Listening Guide, a method of psychological analysis focused on multiple listenings to interview transcripts in order to discover evidence of voice, resonance and relationship as entry points for textual analysis. A significant contribution of this approach was that the relationship between the interviewee and the researcher was a focus of analysis as well (Gilligan et al., 2003). A recent special section of *Qualitative Psychology* was dedicated to the Listening Guide (Gilligan, 2015). In this introduction, Gilligan details the development of the Listening Guide. Two articles were included as exemplars of research that emphasized the Guide. Brian Davis (2015) explored

homosexual men's sexual identity through the Guide; Lori Koelsch's work involved creating 'I' poems, which are developed from the analysis of the 'I' or 'self' position in the Listening Guide protocol (Koelsch, 2015).

Resistance to the 'experience story' as truth from within the standpoint position

The notion that the experiences of individuals should be the basis for discovering woman's truth has been challenged from within the standpoint position as well as from without. Nancy Naples (2003), for example, has argued that the feminist standpoint position is one that is acquired through communal discourse among women; it is not an individual's story. Marie Mies (1991: 66) has agreed, writing, 'Many women [researchers] remain mired in the describing of experiences … The reason for this lies not in intellectual laziness … but in a superficial, individualistic, and deterministic concept of experience'. Mies argues that experience 'denotes the sum of processes which individuals or groups have gone through in the production of their lives; it denotes their reality, their history' (Mies, 1991: 66). This notion of a communal story, which qualitative research should uncover, is shrouded in mystery, however. How does a researcher discover this story? How does an integration of individual and group stories take place?

The tensions registered above raise questions about the value of experiential reports and the possibility of creating joint stories. Whose stories are used and whose are disqualified? What methods are used to create the synthesis? These are difficult questions to answer and produce conflicting methodological choices within the standpoint position.

The minority group challenges to the standpoint position

After the development of the standpoint position in the 1980s came a powerful backlash from women of color, who were offended by various trends within the feminist research community (hooks, 1984; Moraga and Anzaldua, 1981). The major criticism was that the 'woman's standpoint' tended to represent white, middle-class, able-bodied, academic women, who were controlling theory, research and publications, and thus the woman's standpoint position. This criticism fragmented the unity of the feminist movement, and it undermined the standpoint approach that had at its core an image of *womanness* as a coherent entity. Instead of being the oppressed, white women, especially middle class academics, became the oppressors. Thrown into question were the methods that had been used, the samples that had been selected, and the voices that had been heard (Cannon et al., 1991).

Patricia Hill Collins (1991), for one, was vocal in calling for a position that would clarify a standpoint of and for black women exclusively. For Collins, black women possessed a unique communal standpoint; the role of the black female intellectual was to clarify the standpoint for the black women. What was important was self-definition, self-valuation and black female-centered analysis. This argument suggested that the relationship of white women to minority women paralleled the patriarchal oppression of which feminists had complained, a view also promulgated by Barbara Smith (1983). In a more positive and recent vein, Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot and Jessica Hoffmann Davis (Davis, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005; Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997) with colleagues and students at Harvard University engaged in creating a qualitative method called 'portraiture' in which they creatively explored the lives of important women in black history. As a bridge between social science and art, portraiture is the integration of a series of images of a particular person or place created through multiple means, including archival work, field studies, interviews, conversations, and reflexive examination (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005). Researchers, as artists, are concerned with creating a textual portrait. Here a standpoint position is developed by the research team as they combine together their various perspectives. Striving for unity, 'the research portraitist, like a Spiderwoman, is weaving elements into a vibrant multifaceted whole' (Davis, 2003: 215).

Oral narrative history

Oral narrative history, a method of collecting the stories told by women in minority groups, has been vividly presented in a volume edited by Kim Marie Vaz (1997). Each of the chapters describes how oral histories were created with Africana women as participants and researchers, the form of their interactions, the mode of analysis and the ethical issues of doing this research (Green-Powell, 1997; Obbo, 1997). In Georgia Brown's (1997) oral history project with the women of New Orleans, various goals were undertaken, which required special methods of inquiry. For example, to examine the culture's traditional images of black women in Louisiana, it was necessary to study the historical context of these women's lives, including uncovering local discriminatory practices, employment options, and social norms. Within the interviews, participants

were often shown old family photographs to elicit stories of the past. In Brown's chapter, suggested questions for an oral history are included as well as a transcript of an interview. Angela Gillem's (Gillem et al., 2001) research on the struggles of identity formation for biracial black/white people, suggests that there are multiple facets to voice, even within one person. Within other racial groups, similar issues of voice, identity, polyvocality and story have been studied as standpoint issues (Kaw, 2003; Odeh, 1997).

Other groups who have felt excluded from the dominant standpoint position have also laid claim to the value of their voices. Among the most vocal are disabled people, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people, and the elderly. The dominant theme of these groups has been that oppression comes in many forms, not just as gender discrimination alone, but additionally as sexual, age, and disability discrimination (Kessler, 1998; Kitzinger, 2004; Russell, 2000; Tannenbaum et al., 2003). Oppression can be multiplied, and a research perspective that does not acknowledge diverse forms of discrimination is insufficiently inclusive (Fine et al., 2003; Palmary, 2006). Beginning in the late nineties, feminist psychologists began to formulate this notion of multiple and inter-related oppressive conditions as intersectionality (Bhavani, 1997). A textured understanding of intersectionality involves apprehending not only the intersections where identities cross one another, but the interconnections that are configured with one another (Bhavani and Talcott, 2012). The concept of intersectionality also helps to illuminate how race, class, and gender are intimately integrated and continually construct each other (Cole, 2009; Davis, 2008).

The Postmodern/Social Constructionist Position in Feminist Inquiry

For the social constructionist, or postmodern feminists who do qualitative research, a new world is opened, one that contains many fascinating and perhaps dangerous methodological and theoretical implications (Burr, 1995; K. Gergen, 2015a; M. Gergen, 2001; M. Gergen and Davis, 1997). The first important step in defining this approach is to acknowledge that the nature of the reality being explored by researchers is socially constructed, that is, it is dependent upon the shared linguistic endeavors of relevant communities (Wetherell, 1986). This approach calls into question the objective world, which is the basis of empiricist research, as well as the subjective world of the standpoint position. The 'real' world is not observed nor is it perceived, according to social constructionists. What is attended to as the 'real' is dependent upon the relational processes of groups in naming, defining and acting it. This is indeed a radical position that undermines the certainty of all research projects, including those from the social constructionist position. This approach also changes the nature of research. The most common reframing is to study the discourses and actions in which people engage and the relational processes in social groups rather than analyzing individual scores on scales measuring traits such as femininity, as empiricists might do, or inner feelings and 'experiences' as feminist standpoint researchers might do. Because of the loss of foundations that this position implies and the openness to various possibilities for doing research, the value orientations of the researchers play an important role in what is studied, what terms are used to describe the research, and the political consequences of a particular stance (Hepburn, 2000). These criteria strongly encourage the creation of innovative qualitative methods.

Defining gender and sex: A social constructionist perspective

It is now commonplace in feminist literature in psychology, to see the phrase, 'Gender is socially constructed'. Within most texts this means that the sex roles people play in their daily lives are formed and regulated by social conventions. Thus what it means to be a girl is defined culturally, and she 'does' gender (West and Zimmerman, 1987). As philosopher Judith Butler (1990: 140) formulates it, one's 'gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*'.

This notion of gender role as an enactment tends to produce a distancing of the qualities of sex or gender from the self. Within this perspective it is more customary to find an emphasis on multiple selves, situated selves, and the temporary blurring of self-other distinctions. This destabilization of the unit of the individual as the 'subject' of research challenges traditional research designs. Rather than having substance and stability, the self slips away, only to become realized in encounters. Often social constructionists acknowledge that the people they interview for a study have been co-created through the research process itself (M. Gergen and Davis, 2003). Because it is possible for a researcher to work within so many constructions of the world, all value positions, from liberal to conservative, are viable; regardless of orientation, feminist postmodern researchers promote feminist ideals within diverse

contexts, e.g. within the therapy context (Hare-Mustin, 1994), health settings (Miles, 1993), and other politically charged venues (Johnson and Parry, 2015; Russell, 2000).

Reflexivity as a facet of social constructionist qualitative research

An outgrowth of the social constructionist position is an emphasis on reflexivity within research endeavors, although other feminist researchers also emphasize this concern (Morawski, 1994; Naples, 2003). One facet of reflexivity involves researchers reflecting on their constructing capacities; there could be other ways of asking the questions, defining the terms, interpreting the findings, and presenting it to the reader, so one might ask why a particular approach has been taken (M. Gergen, 2001; Hoover and Morrow, 2015). In some cases, the researcher describes in detail her/his own involvement in the research, what the advantages and limitations of the research design might be, how the words are chosen, what the ethical judgments have been in creating the research and what the researcher hopes will become of the analysis (Sprague, 2005). Certain researchers consider reflexivity to be related to making explicit the power relations in the research process, for example by looking at the advantages the researcher may have vis-à-vis the researched (Lather, 2007).

Reflexivity is at the core of the qualitative method of autoethnography, in which the researcher uses her/his own stories within a particular situation as a means of bringing something to life. The researcher's body, in a sense, becomes a seismograph registering the dynamics of a situation. Carolyn Ellis (1995), for example, wrote about sharing life with her husband, who was dying from emphysema. By writing about her thoughts, feelings and conversations with her husband in various situations, she clarifies for the reader her grieving process as she vacillates among various voices – sympathetic, self-pitying, angry, kind, loving, lonely, resigned – within the relational tumult of this phase of her marriage. More recently an emphasis on the constructed nature of autoethnography has been added (Ellington and Ellis, 2008; Hosking and Pluut, 2010). The reflexive process also refers to an awareness of the social, political, and historical context in which one works (McNaughton, 2012). The framework in which the researcher and researched interact is an important element in influencing the nature of the research project, including exposing assumptions and expectations that often go unnoticed by the researchers without special efforts, as well as to reflect upon commentary from outsiders (Macleod and Bhatia, 2008).

A sampling of methods within postmodern/social constructionist research

While there are many possibilities for doing postmodern/social constructionist research, most are variations of methods well known in the qualitative research realm (Willig, 2013). In the following, several methods will be mentioned, with the aim of highlighting the feminist aspects of them.

Ethnography

In ethnographic work, the researcher becomes embedded in the social and physical world of a community that is not her/his own (Ellis and Bochner, 1995; Miller et al., 2003). Ethnography carries a reflexive aspect in that a researcher becomes intensely aware of her own position vis-à-vis the others with whom she engages in the project. It is also reflexive in that it is possible to engage with one's participants about the nature of one's research, the dilemmas and conflicts of interest that might be posed by the research activities and the ways that these issues become part of the research outcomes (Crossley, 2000). Michelle Fine and her colleagues and students at City University Graduate School in New York have been involved with 'critical' feminist ethnography for over two decades (Weis and Fine, 2000). Often they explored the lives of young people who are living on the margins of conventional society (Weis and Fine, 2000). Their goal has been to support and reveal the public and private spaces where these youth live and their forms of sub-culture. In their approach, the researcher becomes highly integrated into a particular community, and the outcomes reveal this participation directly or indirectly. Much research goes beyond simple reporting of the researcher's constructions of events to an emphasis on changing the community's outcomes. Wendy Luttrell (2003: 147), writing about her research with pregnant teens, describes it as 'activist ethnography' 'which enables researchers and those who are the subjects of research to change how they see themselves and are seen by others'. In Luttrell's research, the girls created a collaborative book in which self-portraits were organized, along with their descriptions of the picture. Luttrell describes how she 'curated' the girls' art forms and stories, and the conversations they had about their transition from girlhood to motherhood. Luttrell's conclusions are drawn from her extensive interactions with these girls. Eugenia Kaw (2003) drew on data from structured interviews with physicians and patients, as well as medical literature, newspaper articles and medical statistics, to study decisions by Asian-American women to undergo cosmetic

surgery for the double-eyelid operation or nose bridges. Kaw takes the position that this surgery is encouraged by gender and racial stereotypes in a culture that privileges female Caucasian facial forms.

Participatory action research

For feminist psychologists, Participatory Action Research (PAR) has played an important role in storying women's plight in various settings, and in helping to activate new social forms that improve their lives. PAR involves the researcher in an ongoing field project, at the invitation of those who are the local participants in the research. The central purpose of the research is to help the participants improve their lives, solve a problem or create new types of processes or organizations. The emphasis is much less on scholarly contributions to an academic field, and many times the research ends with the project's completion, without any formal record of its history (Van der Reit, 2008). For example, Niva Piran (2001) studied the students at a highly selective dance school using open forum meetings with the girls over a long period of time. Piran was concerned with the ways the culture of the school had evolved such that these young dancers experienced and perceived their own bodies and those of others in harshly critical ways. Through her encounters with them Piran was able to help the girls visualize and change their feelings about their own bodies, so that they could transform certain unhealthy practices being advocated by their teachers and other students.

Other feminist researchers who have been influential in participatory action research (PAR) include Joan Williams and M. Brinton Lykes (2003), who have worked with Guatemalan women, and have integrated photographic work into their research in efforts at healing following 36 years of civil warfare. Calling their project Photovoice, they gave each woman a camera with which to take pictures of their villages and their lives; in their report the researchers discuss their successes, as well as the difficulties, in creating positive social change with these women in the face of patriarchal challenges, especially from the women's family members and husbands. In recent years Lykes has broadened her PAR activities to include other issues of human rights violations, including migration and deportation (Lykes and Scheib, 2015). Finally, Geraldine Moane (2006) created a ten-week course entitled Liberation Psychology for Women as part of a certificate in women's studies offered at University College, Dublin. The aim of the research was to transform internalized oppression among Irish women into an externalized energy for political action. *The Sage Handbook of Action Research* offers other exemplars (Bradbury, 2015).

Discourse analysis

Feminist psychologists have been very active in using discursive methods in their research (Gavey, 1989, 2005; Hollway, 1989; Hollway and Jefferson, 2000; Lahti, 2015; Morgan and Coombes, 2001). In general, discourse analysis involves analysing written and oral language, primarily, in order to learn more about communicative interactions and their placement in social and physical settings. Researchers study the activities of speakers in terms of speech and writing habits, expressiveness, gestures, and other non-verbal indicators. At the heart of many feminist projects is the creation of a focus of attention on the gendered nature of socially constructed realities.

For example, Margaret Wetherell (1986) argues that femininity and masculinity are ideological practices despite appearing to be essential outcomes of biological differences. For Wetherell, discursive approaches to the study of gender focus attention on the linguistic repertoire in the culture and its ideological implications, rather than on the unique individual. The voice of the researcher becomes clearly identified because the interpretive act of creating meaning from the data is observable within the text. Thus, 'discourse analysis … must be unavoidably political and thus … engaged with feminism' (Wetherell, 1986: 93). Nicole Gavey's *Just Sex? The Cultural Scaffolding of Rape* (2005) demonstrates how everyday discourse about heterosexual relations supports the double standard and unequal power relations between men and women that limits women's choices and creates a cultural 'scaffolding' that permits rape. In '"I'm 15 and desperate for sex": "Doing" and "undoing" desire in letters to a teenage magazine', Sue Jackson (2005) reports on her analysis of letters to advice columns from girls. She describes how the sexual subjectivities of the girls are constituted in the letters and the identification of cultural resources drawn on within them. Promoting a feminist theme, Jackson is critical of the editorial stance of the magazine that both encourages the expression of sexual desire and then acts to suppress it. A recent study on women's lives at middle age highlights the ways in which medical discourse on menopause frames this period of life as a time of sexual atrophy and a loss of femininity. Researchers seek to challenge this discourse and instead try to position women as sexually thriving and lively (Ussher et al., 2015). In a study that highlights feminist issues regarding identity among Asian women living in East London, Woollett, Marshall, Nicolson and Dosanjh (1994)

included excerpts from interviews with these women, which serve to undermine mainstream cultural psychology's position that ethnic identity is stable; rather the research illustrates that the dualism between being an 'Asian woman' and being 'westernized' should be problematized. Contrary to most methodological streams in psychology, which require a unity of self, this research supports the view that identity may be multiple, malleable and situated.

Narrative research

Another prominent form of feminist research of various epistemological positions involves explorations of narratives. From the culture's repository of narrative forms, people learn to find their place in their social groups. As people identify with stories, so do they take on meaning in their lives (Lather and Smithies, 1997). This is especially relevant to minority and marginalized groups, who tend to be located in stories, without having a significant involvement in the creation of that story. This becomes a feminist issue because women are often auxiliary figures within the quest narrative, the monomyth, which is a hegemonic story of male domination. Research on narratives of the body also illustrated the differences in import that the physical aspects of identity have for women's accounts compared to men's (Gergen, 2001). In research on young adolescents, feminist researchers examined narratives extracted from a media video diary component of a 'tween' popular culture project with 71 pre-teen girls. Their task was to explore how these girls negotiate contemporary issues of femininity related to fashion marketing (Jackson, Vares and Gill, 2013). In recent research, women's stories of their experiences of retirement brought to the fore a type of story that is still relatively rare in western culture, as the concept of women retiring from a significant career was uncommon before this generation of older professional women reached retirement age (Cole and M. Gergen, 2012). Other researchers who have also promoted feminist values within the narrative field include Ruthellen Josselson and Amia Lieblich (1993).

Focus groups

A prominent form of qualitative research in many areas of the social sciences is the focus group. Typically a dozen or so people who share some attribute or interest are gathered together, with a facilitator, to explore a focal topic. A significant benefit of the focus group method is to encourage a synergy among the participants, so that conversations can be richer and more creative than if someone were individually interviewed (Marcu, 2016). Facilitators often have central themes they wish to pursue, and so are engaged in organizing and controlling the flow of conversation, so as to explore the relevant topics and to encourage all participants to have a chance to speak. Jane Giddan and Ellen Cole (2015), for example, created eight focus groups across the US among diverse groups of women in their 70s in order to explore their lives and their futures. At the other end of the age spectrum, young women explored the topic of beauty and ugliness as represented in a sitcom, *Ugly Betty*, within the context of a focus group (Goldman and Waymer, 2014).

Archival and institutional research

Not all feminist qualitative research is done with the active participation of others. Research can also be rendered with data from historical records, literature, and other cultural artifacts and institutions, as well as governmental agencies (DeVault, 1999; M. Gergen, 1992; Izraeli, 1993). Aida Hurtado (2000) for example, in '"La Cultura Cura": Cultural spaces for generating Chicana feminist consciousness', studied the operation of a theatre company and the roles assigned to the Chicana actresses. Originally organized to promote the integrity and cultural values of the Chicano culture, the role of women had become limited to virgins, whores or the feminine macho, often portraying an abstract character, such as Death or the Devil. The analysis by Hurtado emphasized how the women involved in the theatre resisted these classifications and eventually broke the control of the sexist directors.

PRESENTATIONAL FORMS OF FEMINIST QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The goal of honoring the voices of participants within feminist psychology has encouraged innovations in the presentation of qualitative research. This potential for openness has led to a great deal of creativity among feminist researchers (M. Gergen, 2001; Luttrell, 2003; Paget, 1990; Squire, 1991). A few examples illustrate the diversity of possibilities that have been produced.

In an exploration of sexual abuse, Karen Fox (1996) created a fictional conversation among a sex abuser in prison for molesting his granddaughter, his daughter, who was also one of his victims, and herself, the interviewer. The conversation is divided into three columns, with quotations from interviews serving as the dialogue. Across the page, the three perspectives are contrasted and

compared, with each person expressing a diversity of moods and understandings. The form allows for more insight into the complexities of emotional bonds between abusers and the abused than a more didactic form could yield.

Lesa Lockford (2004) has written about her experiences as a first-time 'dancer' in a 'gentleman's club' in New Orleans. For Lockford, performance is a form of doing feminist research, as well as presenting it. She has incorporated striptease performance into her research presentations at conferences and in the classroom. Her investigation involves the multiple meanings of abjectification of the female body. The feminist edge of these performances take many shapes – as a critique of existing social norms emphasizing the importance of stereotypical standards of beauty, as an artistic mode of expanding the realm of the possible in human physiognomy, or as a form of abjection.

Drama is also a means of conveying feminist qualitative work. Ross Gray and Christina Sinding (2002) used transcripts from interviews with women with breast cancer and oncologists to create a dramatic script, which they presented in many venues in Canada; they also wrote a book relating their experiences of creating this drama, which included commentary by the actresses, women with metastasized breast cancer. The theme of this play, created originally for hospital personnel, was to stress the need for health workers to consider first the person and secondarily the illness, in defining their patients. Here the discovery phase, interpretation, and the presentation of research were encapsulated in dramatic form, with audience involvement as part of the performance. Another drama, *Emancipatory Acts* is a play about black motherhood in the US, written by Amira Davis (2010) explored racialized mothering, social memory and collective agency from her situatedness as a black woman and mother. With poetry, music, dance, and dialogue, the women characters explore their stories, going back to ancestral mothers of Africa, and finally to a mythical past. The play 'seeks to resurrect traditions of hope, survival and self-actualized living' (Davis, 210: 475).

Using another modality for presenting her research, Glenda Russell (2000) incorporated interview material into music. From research gathered in reaction to Colorado's vote to limit the civil rights of homosexuals, Russell produced an oratorio, called *Fire*, which was performed by a choir in several concerts. Several performance pieces have been created to explore feminist issues including becoming an aging woman (M. Gergen, 2001), and developing a social therapy (Holzman and Newman, 1979). A more detailed exposition of performative work in the social sciences, especially related to gender issues is *Playing with Purpose: Adventures in Performative Social Science* (Gergen and Gergen, 2012).

ISSUES OF ETHICS IN FEMINIST QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Ethical considerations are at the core of feminist qualitative research (Marecek, 2003). There are many reasons for this. Qualitative research often depends upon the quality of the relationship between researcher and researched. These relationships are often of long duration, tend to be personal and friendly, often involve collaboration, may affect families and sometimes whole communities, may include a high degree of self-disclosure about intimate topics, and may involve contact after the research project is ended. All of these aspects create the potential for ethical questions to arise. There are also issues of confidentiality that become difficult to handle if, for example, participants are promised anonymity, and yet the nature of their participation makes it difficult to disguise who they are. In addition, researchers may be torn between being forthright in their interpretations of their outcomes from the study, and careful not to offend their participants, who may be allowed to review the transcripts and interpretive comments related to their actions. Because of all of these characteristics of research, feminist psychologists often find themselves deliberating about the 'right' thing to do when faced with multiple and conflicting demands. Nicola Gavey, for example, described the ethical complexities of advocating for the notion of individual sexual empowerment for girls in a world replete with dangers associated with sexual injustice and inequality (2012). There are no simple answers to these dilemmas, but they frequently emerge when feminists engage in qualitative research projects.

THE FUTURE FOR QUALITATIVE FEMINIST RESEARCH

The future seems promising for feminist qualitative research. 'The growing interest in qualitative methods has been likened to a paradigm shift in the spirit of Kuhn's (1970) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*' (Ponterotto, 2005: 97). Many of the recent qualitative studies are rooted in postpositivist paradigms, which are highly congenial to

qualitative approaches, although more traditional feminist researchers have also become more welcoming of such research endeavors. As research funds become more restricted in the social sciences, the appeal of qualitative research may increase, as it is often possible to design inexpensive studies that have important outcomes. The call for a greater awareness of cultural diversity and issues related to globalization have also enhanced the prominence of qualitative work. Working with international partners, connecting via the internet and only rarely meeting face-to-face, expands the scope of exploration, and encourages creative collaborations around qualitative research.

Finally, the strict separation of quantitative and qualitative research is increasingly being challenged. The mixed methods approach can offer complementary versions of analysis, each providing insights into a set of data (Evers, 2016). Whether the blending of two different forms of analysis is coherent depends upon the initial assumptions of the researchers (K. Gergen, 2015b; Landrum and Garza, 2015). In recent years, the use of computer programs to analyse qualitative data has expanded, thus further complicating the relationship of qualitative and quantitative research (Ireland and Pennebaker, 2010). Although capable of many types of quantification of textual material, it is unclear how helpful such forms of analyses are in satisfying the goals of qualitative researchers who are attempting to retain the integrity of participants' voices within their studies. Much needed for the advancement of qualitative methods in feminist psychology is more training for researchers, as well as more emphasis in graduate school curricula on qualitative methods of research. In addition, journal editors and other gatekeepers need to become more open to the potentials of qualitative methods and more sophisticated in evaluating them. Qualitative methods are no longer the stepchild of an empirical science. Feminist researchers are among those who are and will be primary beneficiaries of this new openness to qualitative research projects.

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18

Postcolonialism and Psychology: Growing Interest and Promising Potential

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INTRODUCTION

In the first edition of this book published in 2008, we categorized postcolonial psychology as embryonic: at the time very few psychologists were using postcolonial theories and approaches to illuminate broadly psychological issues. Since then, there has been some growing interest, to which we refer below. Nevertheless, despite recent contributions to postcolonial psychology literature under the banner of critical psychology (Bhatia, 2014; Moane and Sonn, 2015; Painter, 2015; Teo, 2005) as well as a number of books tackling the psychological in relation to postcolonial theory in the last decade (Anderson et al., 2011; Bhatia, 2007; David, 2011; Good et al., 2008; Hook, 2012; Macleod, 2011; Moane, 2011), postcolonial psychology is far from being an established or significant sub-discipline of psychology. The growing interest and positive responses to some of the work (e.g. Parker, 2012) must, however, be seen as encouraging in demonstrating the promising potential of postcolonial approaches in psychology, particularly in the political and social conditions of the twenty-first century.

By way of orienting the reader, we start this chapter by outlining some of the key tenets of postcolonialism. This must of necessity be brief and unsatisfactory, not least because postcolonialism itself is a slippery term, representing the gathering together of a variety of theoretical writings and understandings under one rubric.

Despite the increasing interest in postcolonialism in psychology, there has been little systematic discussion of the implications of this approach in terms of research. We lay the foundations of this discussion by unpicking the possibilities of postcolonialism in understanding the politics of research, specifically the politics of location, the politics of representation, and the politics of practice. We go on to consider the broad research aims postcolonial psychology should address, as well as productive sites for such research. We provide examples of qualitative research in postcolonialism.

POSTCOLONIALISM: A BRIEF BACKGROUND

Postcolonial theory emerged chiefly because of a burgeoning critical awareness of colonialism and its aftermath within Commonwealth Literary Studies with the break-up of the British Empire (McInturff, 2000a). Postcolonialism, however, is a

contested term, with much debate being conducted about the (non)meaning of the term. Indeed, Young (2001) argues that postcolonialism is not really a theory at all but rather a set of conceptual resources. There is no single methodology but rather a constellation of shared political and social objectives that draw on a range of insights and theories, including poststructuralism, postmodernism, feminism, Marxism, and psychoanalysis (Loomba, 2015).

The commonality in various forms of postcolonial critique centers on the intermingling of the past with the present in ways that illuminate how power relations of the present are embedded in colonial history. The ramifications of colonialism in both colonizing and colonized countries are highlighted through analyzing the politics of anticolonialism, neocolonialism, race, gender, nationalisms, class, and ethnicities. The experiences of the marginalized periphery are foregrounded and set against the hegemony of 'Western' knowledges; the material, cultural, and psychological factors in maintaining and disrupting colonial and neocolonial power relations are examined (Loomba, 2015; Sagar, 1997; Young, 2001).

Edward Said's (1979) theory of Orientalism provides a prime example of this. Drawing on poststructuralist scholarship, he analyses how the colonized were represented through the discursive mechanisms of knowledge and power. He writes that European scholars created the structures or references about the Orient – their language, history, society, and way of life – by employing highly specific discourses and systems of representations (Bhatia, 2014). These discourses were created and managed by European cultures to colonize and regulate the natives and their 'civilization, peoples, and localities' (Said, 1979, p. 203). They were deeply integrated in the 'European material civilization and culture' (Said, 1979, p. 2).

One frame through which postcolonial theory is measured and evaluated is whether it has the conceptual armory to unpack the complexities of the postcolonial condition. One such phenomenon or social condition that has pre-occupied postcolonial theorists is how to understand the varied ways in which the colonizer and the colonized were shaped by a mutually evolving psychology (Bhabha, 1994, Gandhi, 1998). For example, Albert Memmi (1965) wrote that colonial racism is built on the foundations of three key ideologies. First, the colonizers articulate the cultural superiority of their language, mode of thinking and living and construct the natives or the colonized as primitive and backward. Second, the colonizers frame the cultural differences as natural by using the power of science and use this 'scientific truth' as justification to exploit and rule the natives. Third, the culture of the colonizer is constructed as the unfolding universal principle that is intended to erase local conceptions of history, myth, and time in the colonies.

The eviscerating tentacles of colonization do not end with the colonial period: they reform themselves in the postcolonial period to ravage the mind, psyche, body, and the nation. There is, however, an inherent paradox in the postcolonial imperative because it has to study how the postcolonial condition arises out of the brutal and militaristic colonial apparatus, while reinventing and reframing the inaugural moment of independence as separate from that long oppressive duress of colonization. Many key colonial and postcolonial thinkers and leaders have argued that the postcolonial project was essentially a psychological project that entailed a 'recovery of self' (Nandy, 1989), imitated a dialogue on a 'new humanity' and renewed 'humanism' (Fanon, 1963), and moved toward creating the conditions for 'autonomous dignity' (Memmi, 1965).

One of the tasks of postcolonial theory then becomes to take seriously not only theorizing about the terror of colonization and Orientalism, but also 'the idea of a psychological resistance to colonialism's civilizing mission' (Gandhi, 1998, p. 17). The mantle of resistance in different disguises and in different eras has been a core pursuit of postcolonial theory. Frantz Fanon (1963, p. 250) advocated a complete decolonization of the mind in his book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, by stating that 'Total liberation is that which concerns all sectors of the personality'.

By engaging with European history, the colonial framework, and its vast repository of knowledge and thought, postcolonial theory 'provincializes' and 'localizes' the universal principles that has embodied much of European knowledge. The postcolonial project does not necessarily discard or reject European thought, but instead it argues that 'European thought is at once both indispensable and inadequate' in helping us understand the diverse forms of living, thinking and being in 'non-Western', postcolonial nations (Chakrabarty, 2000, p. 16).

POSTCOLONIALISM IN PSYCHOLOGY

The manner in which postcolonialism has been taken up by scholars in psychology over the last decade varies. Moane (2011) orients her analysis to gender and colonialism, outlining how oppressive social conditions can lead to debilitating internalized oppression. At the same time, she

identifies transformational psychological and social processes and practices. Using South Africa as an exemplar, Hook (2012) turns to postcolonial authors to understand psychological theorization of racism and oppression, similarly exploring strategies of resistance to racialized oppression. Hook (2012) deals with two important questions: (1) How does one create a critical psychology that examines the psycho-political conditions that produce psychological experiences of racism, postcolonialism, and oppression; and (2) Why has critical psychology, with its emphasis on social justice and inequality, neglected to apply analytical insights from the field of postcolonial theory?

Bhatia (2007) and David (2011) home in on particular groups of people. In *American Karma*, Bhatia (2007) explores how postcolonial immigrants recreate and re-story their identities in the face of experiencing racing, showing how the larger American society define the Indian diaspora through the orientalist tropes of exotic sarees, thick accents, chutney-sandwiches, the British Raj, the *bindi*, saree, and their brown skin, while the Indian migrants deploy the postcolonial script of being from an ancient superior culture, reposition Indian-ness as spiritual and moral, and employ the language of universal human identity and color-blind multiculturalism to reframe their identity. David (2011) highlights how colonialism and oppression have impacted Filipino and American Filipino psychology, creating a 'colonial mentality'.

Macleod (2011) tackles a specific problematic – 'adolescent pregnancy' – to highlight the colonialism implicit in developmental psychology accounts of 'adolescence' and how these continue to 'construct a threat of degeneration' with regard to early reproduction. In an edited book, Anderson, Jenson, and Keller (2011) highlight how psychoanalysis simultaneously shaped colonialist understandings of native cultures and allowed for theorizing that underpinned anticolonialism and illuminated postcolonial trauma.

Bhatia (2002) shows how the power to represent the 'non-Western' 'Other' has always resided, and continues to reside, primarily with psychologists working in Europe and America. The exporting of Euro-American universal psychology 'as is' for the consumption of 'Third World' psychologists has led to a neocolonialism or 'second colonization' (Nandy, 1989, p. xi). This kind of colonialism colonizes the mind as well as the body and 'helps generalize the concept of modern 'West' from a geographical and temporal entity to a psychological category. The 'West' is now everywhere, within the 'West' and outside; in structures and minds' (Nandy, 1989, p. xii). This neocolonialization takes place in Psychology through the under-representation of, for example, African experiences in psychological literature (Mpofu, 2002), the normalization and universalization of white, middle-class male characteristics (Sampson, 1990; Sonn, 2004), the reproduction of particular understandings of what psychology is about (or what Montero and Christlieb (2003) call symbolic colonialism), the provision of tools of measurement that are complicit in modes of (neo) colonialist forms of regulation and governance (Bulhan, 1993), and the skewing of the production of knowledge through dependence on 'Western' sponsoring agents and publishing houses, unequal research resources, conference locations, and publishing practices (Staeuble, 2005).

Postcolonial psychology has been utilized by scholars to examine how globalization, through the mechanism of neoliberalization, creates conditions of social inequality, disparities, social alienation for large numbers of populations residing in both the global South and the global North (Bhatia, forthcoming; Mirchandani, 2012; Nadeem 2011). For example, Bhatia examines how multinational call centers use modern forms of 'postcolonial mimicry' to socialize Indian youth into an exploitative corporate culture. Postcolonial mimicry in this sense is not a subversion of the language and modes of dressing and customs of the dominant majority, as Bhabha (1994) has argued, but instead it is an essential practice that is central to the survival of workers in a neoliberal economy (Bhatia, forthcoming). Drawing on postcolonial theory, Mehdi Boussebaa, Shuchi Sinha and Yiannis Gabriel (2014) describe offshore call centers a result of a world-wide phenomenon of 'Corporate Englishization' that is based on a colonial-style hierarchy of power relations that simultaneously erases and maintains the Otherness of the call center and information technology workers in India.

RESEARCH: POSTCOLONIAL THEORY IN ACTION

Research in postcolonial psychology is, in many respects, an exception to the rule in psychology where qualitative research has had to fight the dominant quantitative paradigm for a space in legitimate knowledge production. In postcolonial research, qualitative research is the dominant mode of investigation although there is the odd quantitative study to be found (see, for example, Allpress et al., 2010), who use survey data to understand the association between shame/guilt and support for reparation, and David's (2008) structural equation modelling that factors what he

terms 'colonial mentality' into an understanding of depression).

Postcolonial research, apart from being mainly qualitative, is inextricably linked to politics, not least of which are the politics of research. For example, postcolonial scholars have critiqued: methodologies that create vantage points from which to colonize or objectify the subjects of research; research that excavates the 'global South' for the advance of 'Western'[1] theory; research conducted in the global South that models itself on global North issues (Lal, 1999; Smith, 1999).

Bearing this in mind, postcolonial researchers need to pay careful attention to the politics of their research. This implies more than a mere acknowledgment of power relations and politics, but an explicit commitment to an emancipatory project. In the following sections, we concentrate specifically on the politics of location, the politics of representation, and the politics of practice, all of which pose particular challenges to the postcolonial researcher. We discuss research aims and choice of research sites, and showcase two research projects.

THE POLITICS OF LOCATION

Research and theory within a postcolonial frame, as with other critical psychologies, implies being constantly vigilant and reflective in terms of self, other, context, process, assumptions and theory. Much of the discussion concerning this type of practice has, in qualitative research, gone under the rubric of reflexivity. In this, the multiple, contradictory and socially constructed interactive and reflexive positionings of practitioners, researchers, academics and participants along the axes of race, gender, class, ability, sexual orientation, and religion are acknowledged and deconstructed.

Postcolonialist writers, however, add a new dimension to this type of reflexivity in talking of the politics of location. An analysis of the politics of location involves, in addition to the above, an analysis of the epistemic privilege of academic discourse, the presumed authenticity of native accounts, the political intellectual location within which we choose to position ourselves – e.g. feminist, anticolonial, antiracist (Lal, 1999), and how location may work in the interest of privilege and power and re-impose a discourse of cultural hegemony (Giroux, 2009). This moves the reflexive account beyond a scrutiny of individual subjectivity that has the danger of slipping into an (at times guilt-ridden) confession of the researcher's positioning or their emotional investments, and that fails to acknowledge the intricacies of the micropolitics of research interactions that criss-cross insider–outsider boundaries in dynamic and complex ways. A politics of location contends with: the nature of one's insertion into a research process; the relational space that is created in this process; the imperialism of the research endeavor; the insider or outsider status of the researcher (or as Smith (1999) points out the multiple ways in which we are insiders and outsiders) to the community of people being studied; and, finally, what differences in positioning mean in the actual analysis rather than leaving the self-confessions as a circumscribed prologue.

An example of this kind of analysis of the politics of location is provided by Sonn (2004) who, as a black South African immigrant in Australia working with Aboriginal people, problematizes the oppressor–oppressed, black–white binaries that structure much critical discussion about power relations in research settings. He argues that they mask other dimensions of power and privilege, such as professionalism and location within an academic institution. In his paper he grapples with his location as simultaneously an insider, a position created by processes of black othering, and an outsider, a migrant with a 'different history, culture, social and psychological reality' (p. 142).

The politics of location in terms of knowledge production in postcolonialism is, however, a complex affair. Responses to Said's work in terms of this provides an illuminating illustration. Exile, as both an existential and epistemological concern featured prominently in Said's (1993, 1994) understandings of the intellectual endeavor. Said believed that the ethical intellectual must always occupy a position of outsider or exile ('outside the mainstream, unaccommodated, un-coopted, resistant' (Said, 1994, p. 52)). This allows for the possibility of distance from and discomfort in both 'home' and the new location, and therefore the possibility of 'challenging the system, describing it in language unavailable to those it has already subdued' (Said, 1993, p. 404). Exile, for Said, is not material only, but may also be metaphorical in the sense of alienation from familiar traditions – 'restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled, and unsettling others' (Said, 1994, p. 53). In the postcolonial world, this type of alienation can be as true of researchers in the global North as of researchers in the global South, both of whom are inevitably caught in empire's after-effects. Collins (1999), for example, talks of the black intellectual in the United States as an 'outsider within'.

Several scholars have responded to this. McInturff (2000b) points out that exile works only because we once belonged somewhere and that there are limits to exile, a point that Said

(1993, 1994) in fact did not deny. Zeleza (2005) warns against the fetishism of exile in that beneath structural and political reasons for exile may lie an angst of flight from being 'African', 'Arab', 'Asian', or 'Latin American'. Exile in the global North, he argues, can represent a desire for academic legitimacy and the marketability that such a center provides. Indeed, critics such as Dirlik (1994) and Ahmad (1992) have contested the status and the knowledge claims made by postcolonial migrants who live in exile, but who carve out a space of postcolonial privilege through their politics of location in the American academy. The postcolonial migrant-intellectual, Ahmad argues, has created postcolonial studies and its concomitant modes of inquiry by conducting research in privileged institutions that are alienated from the real material context of global capitalism and global South conditions of cheap labor and economic poverty.

To conclude, paying attention to the politics of location implies being aware not only of the anticolonial or antiracist position that one chooses in designating a mode of inquiry, but also of how those positions choose us as researchers. How does our own privilege as researchers influence what social and psychological phenomenon we study, how we study this phenomenon and why we study it? Our mindfulness of our politics of location in our research has to work towards disclosing and making visible those assumptions that are intractably embedded in our autobiographical trajectories of class, race and the location of our work in either the global South or global North academies. By revealing the conflicting and multilayered architectural design of those assumptions and how the politics of locations shape structures and positions, we are better equipped to understand how we make meaning of our objects of study: that is, how we represent people and the world in our research paradigms.

It is important to note here that this acknowledgment of the politics of location does not mean that we can only aspire to partial and situated knowledges. The politics of location is imbricated within the production of critical investigation and analysis. Walby (2000), in a paper entitled 'Beyond the politics of location' takes up this point. She acknowledges the importance of including an understanding of differences of social location in feminist theory, but simultaneously makes a strong case for the power of argument, for reasoned debate, that moves the discussion beyond a recognition of existing social groups to one in which redistribution and transformation become possible agendas. She cites the work of Mohanty (a well-known postcolonial feminist) as fitting into the latter category. She believes that Mohanty is often misinterpreted as arguing for situated knowledges, whereas she (Mohanty)

> is not content to leave white western feminism as a situated knowledge, comfortable with its local and partial perspective. Not a bit of it. This is a claim to a more universal truth. And she hopes to accomplish this by the power of argument. (Walby, 2000, p. 199)

THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION

In the politics of representation the 'authorial Self confronts and inscribes the Other as a "captive" object: an object that we capture via new technologies of inscription – such as tapes, surveys, interviews, word processing, videos, and so forth' (Lal, 1999, p. 117). The inscriptions are then represented in the form of research reports, journal articles and theses. The politics of representation is complex, a complexity captured in the debates in postcolonialism about voice. In subaltern studies, for example, Guha (1988) and others raised questions about how the colonized muted subject and small voice is represented in history, how the subaltern's identity is constructed and through what channels or mediums the identity of the subaltern gains expression. In Spivak's (1988) famous essay, 'Can the Subaltern Speak', the young Bengali widow, Bhubaneswari Bhaduri, did not speak not because she was silenced or muted, but rather because she was depicted as someone who was not capable of being in a dialogically constituted speaker-listener relationship. The question for Spivak is not whether the subaltern can speak, but whether she has been given the space, the privilege and the status of an equal communicator in the dialogical relationship. The historically muted subject in subaltern studies historiography cannot speak because this communicative space is not provided where his/her agency can be asserted or inserted. The terms of representation, the channels of communication and the language which she can use to express her agency is either decided by the colonizer or the ones who come to rescue her oppressed subjectivity. With regard to the latter, Spivak (1988) argues that the desire to represent the Other in authentic terms is a utopian politics, rooted in the epistemic violence of imperialism.

Thus, representation in postcolonialism does not imply overcoming differences to evidence the true, authentic experience of participants in a particular situation. Rather, it is about recognizing

that representation is a production not a reflection of reality, that it is a process in which the discourses and silences invoked by the researcher and those invoked by the participants in question meet, challenge, dovetail, diverge, and generally construct new, hybrid understandings. It means creating points of departure rather than arriving at set understandings. As Young (2003) puts it 'There are always already meanings, intentions, and subjectivities spinning off into future significations because of what researchers can and cannot hear, because of traces of the past and present that are unspeakable, because of subjectivities that shift and contradict the *very telling* of stories, the *naming* of experience' (p. 705, emphasis in the original).

The politics of representation means asking questions about the processes and mechanisms through which the Other is constituted rather than invoking the authenticity of the Other (a project encouraged by Spivak and Mohanty as well as Foucault). This is taken up by Cruz and Sonn (2011) who argue for a decolonizing standpoint in community psychology. This approach, they argue, disrupts static understandings of culture, social markers and group differences that often infuse community psychology, allowing for a more nuanced, dynamic, and historically located views of particular 'communities'.

Where voice must inevitably be thought of, Young's (2003) notion of rhizovocality proves useful. Rhizovocality is multiple and contingent; it is '*difference within and between and among*; it highlights the irruptive, disruptive, yet interconnected nature of positioned voices (including the researcher's) that are discursively formed and that are historically and socially determined – *irrupting from discursive pressures within/against/outside the research process*' (p. 707, emphasis in the original).

Homi Bhabha's (1994) use of *ambivalence* is also valuable here. His work on the stereotype provides some insight into the subtleties of representational and identity politics in postcolonial contexts, in particular the role of the psyche. Ambivalence allows individuals to hold two contradictory beliefs in the act of representation. Stereotypes are produced that exaggerate difference with the Other yet simultaneously maintain the stability of the Other as *other*. He describes stereotyping as the manifestation of deep-seated beliefs that can be disavowed in often subtle forms of speech that sustain differences between the 'West' and the 'Third World'. It is 'a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always "in place", already known and something that must be anxiously repeated … ' (1994, p. 95). Ambivalence therefore is central to the persistence of discriminatory power in research or representational projects. Located at the intersection of reason and affect, it legitimizes the re-invention of colonized spaces whilst concealing and maintaining the neutrality and legitimacy of 'Western' thought and research practices. It raises the need to disrupt the less visible ways in which representational projects give an image of the present as ahistorical and outside of the colonial encounter.

The politics of representation is inextricably linked to the politics of location, something often not acknowledged. Spivak (1988), in discussing a Foucault-Deleuze conversation, states quite strongly that '[t]he banality of leftist intellectuals' lists of self-knowing, politically canny subalterns stands revealed; representing them, *the intellectuals represent themselves as transparent*' (p. 275, our emphasis). Mohanty (1991) extends this by positing that in representing 'Third World' women in particular ways, 'Western' women are inevitably engaged in a process of self-representation.

In a different vein, noting that feminist, postcolonial and antiracist writings emerge from particular geopolitical and intellectual spaces, Mohanty (2003, 2013) argues that these representations need to be attentive to the micropolitics of context and struggle, as well to the macropolitics of global socio-political systems and processes. She notes concern with the de-politicization of feminist, postcolonial and transnational theory in neoliberal, national security driven contexts.

What has not been touched on yet in terms of representation and an aspect of research that is undertheorized is the question of language and translation. Swartz (2005) refers to linguistic imperialism, in which indigenous languages are replaced by the languages of colonizers, thereby silencing the subaltern. 'The subaltern's experience of his or her own life in translation [is] caught forever between the disenfranchised mother tongue and the public voice' (p. 510). This extends the traditional understanding of translation within research in which rigorous back translation is recommended to ensure linguistic and conceptual equivalence. This rather technicist approach to translation ignores the power relations inherent in who designs the initial instrument and commissions the translation, who does the translation (Drennan et al., 1991) and what silences and erasures are produced in the translation process. Situations that require face-to-face interpretation produce complex social dynamics. The researcher may view the interpreter simply as a language specialist or, more complexly, as cultural specialist, or as advocate for the participants (Drennan and Swartz, 1999). Each of these contain their own set of potential colonizing power relations.

THE POLITICS OF PRACTICE

As highlighted above, disrupting the dynamics of power in location and representation are central to postcolonial research. As psychologists, we may want to think of how these are played out through methods that address the link between the internal workings of the mind and external institutional and social dynamics, a kind of 'psychopolitics' of the postcolonial (Hook, 2012). By stressing the mind, psychologists adopting a postcolonial approach can conceptualize research methods that prioritize *consciousness* as a psychological process that dismantles internal, relational and global forms of power and their historicity, that allows for disruption and contradiction in location and representation, and that centers a liberatory approach.

Fanon's (1986) work on the psyche of the oppressed, Freire's (1970) notion of conscientization, and ideas of black consciousness (Biko, 1978; Manganyi, 1973), represent a common thread in the development of postcolonial theory and one that explores the link between the psychological and the political. Across this body of work, consciousness is the process by which individuals and communities make sense of their everyday realities through a dialogical process of reflection and action, bringing into focus historical explanations to their current conditions.

Recent psychological studies of the postcolonial have shown how a deliberate focus on consciousness in the research process can assist communities to challenge historical, racialized, and gendered representations of underdevelopment (Kessi, 2011), and raise awareness of the multiple dimensions of oppressive power (Kessi, 2013) whilst mobilizing communities towards social action. Combining participatory action research with visual tools, in this case Photovoice methods, these studies also shift the traditional researcher-participant dynamic by placing 'participants' as the researchers and experts of their own lives and the researcher as a facilitator in the process of constructing alternative narratives and promoting social action (Kessi and Boonzaier, 2017).

RESEARCH AIMS

Fundamental to the politics of research are the research aims – what questions are asked and how they are posed. While there clearly could be a host of pertinent research questions in postcolonial psychology, underlying these should be three fundamental aims. Firstly, readings of psychology that neglect colonialist history and postcolonial power relations should be undermined (Okazaki et al., 2008). Given the paucity of acknowledgment of the colonialist or postcolonialist problematic in psychology, this may well stand for a large chunk of psychological research currently being conducted. This process would involve 'researching back', as Smith (1999) so aptly puts it after the 'writing back' phrase used in Literary Studies. An example of this would be to 'research back' on how postcolonial subjects have been theorized, produced, and reproduced in mainstream psychology. The purpose here would be to undermine the manner in which the Other has been treated in psychological research, which is generally through invisibility, pathologization, or exoticization. It would be to highlight how, as either the invisible and silent/incoherent absent trace, or the pathologized present, the Other is the substance that inhabits and defines the norm (white, heterosexual, middle-class males living in liberal democratic states). This implies taking both the colonized and the colonizer (in their multiplicities) as the objects of investigation; it implies questioning generalizations (especially those emanating from the center) and routinely asking the question 'Which people, which women, which children do you mean?'

The second aim would be to produce contextually relevant and theoretically driven studies that interweave the intra-psychic with the postcolonial problematic, the personal with the political. An example is researching identity in formation of postcolonial diasporas, borderlands, and the transnational migrant communities in Europe, North America, and Africa. Postcolonial research has emphasized this mixing and moving, continuous and ongoing process through which many 'non-Western/European' immigrants reconstitute and negotiate their identity in transnational ways (Bhatia and Ram, 2001, 2004). The web of contradictory discourses related to home, tradition, community, nation, and loyalty experienced by new immigrants as well as their children demand that we rethink our traditional notions of immigrant adaptation and acculturation (Bhatia and Ram, 2004; Bhatia, 2007).

The third aim would be to produce knowledge that has an explicitly liberatory intention. In this, the complexities of colonialist legacies, neocolonialism, and postcolonial power relations that intersect gender, religion, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, ability, and age would be acknowledged and undermined. Abstractions that predefine who the Other, the colonized, are would be refused. Contradictions and disparities contained within oppressive discourses and practices would be identified and dissected, creating spaces for

emancipatory hybridity. Silences created by the erasure of the Other in imperialist power relations would be highlighted. Transversal relations of commonality across those marked by 'Otherness' would be identified, communicated and acted upon in strategic ways (see Macleod, 2006).

As pointed out by Mellor (2015), these aims are premised on a reading of the current literature on a particular topic through a lens that highlights potential colonialist assumptions/approaches. Mellor recommends asking a number of questions of the literature, including the assumptions, possible prejudices, or stereotypes that are invoked, how those researched are portrayed, and whether there is any 'deficit thinking' (p. 184) implicit in the research.

RESEARCH SITES

In order to engage with the postcolonial problematic, postcolonial research needs to be conducted in real, virtual or imaginary meeting sites, or liminal spaces. The notion of liminality is, of course, not new to psychology (denoting the threshold between sensation and the subliminal). Bhabha (1994), however, uses it in a different sense, describing a liminal space as an 'interstitial passage' (p. 4), similar to the art historian Renée Green's description of a stairwell – 'the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white' (p. 4). It is important to pay attention to these liminal spaces because 'the boundary becomes the place from which something begins its presencing' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 5). Thus, liminal spaces are the spaces in which racialized, classed, and gendered differences are simultaneously held in relieve and, paradoxically, shown to be a chimera. They are spaces in which the past occupies and simultaneously ceases to occupy the present – where continuities and discontinuities join hands.

In locating research at these sites, the researcher creates the opportunity for destabilizing binary oppositions, showing how their necessity is premised on concealed projects of power and hegemony (Quayson and Goldberg, 2002). Binary oppositions (center–periphery; black–white; self–other) are shown to be interdependent, with, for example, 'Western' subjectivity depending historically on interactions with subjugated others and currently on dialogical encounters created through transnational migration and globalization.

Conducting research in liminal spaces is, however, a complex affair. Lal (1999) argues that we should understand the research process as a function of the site within which the research is conducted: 'Where the social world that is being investigated is a sexist and hierarchical one, the process of research is sure to become a sexist and hierarchical social interaction' (p. 111).

POSTCOLONIALIST QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

So, how do postcolonial researchers actually conduct research? Within disciplines, such as Literary Studies, Anthropology and History, where postcolonialism is reasonably well established, methods such as colonial discourse analysis, ethnography and historiography are popular. However, other qualitative methods are starting to be taken up by postcolonial scholars, as evidenced in the Table 18.1.

Because of its origin in Literary and Cultural studies, postcolonialism has been dominated by textual and theoretical work. We are, however, seeing how solid qualitative research has much to offer the broad field of postcolonialism. By illuminating the 'nuts and bolts' of people's lives and interactions, qualitative research provides fresh insights and new perspectives in postcolonialism, simultaneously magnifying and deepening current understandings.

Furthermore, postcolonialism brings a new and interesting dimension to qualitative research – in particular an acknowledgment of a constellation of power relations that has, for the most part, been lacking in qualitative research. Postcolonialism affords qualitative research new vistas, new questions, and new reflections. Conducting research from a postcolonial perspective will, however, never be an easy endeavor – issues of the politics of location, the politics of representation, the politics of practice, where research is conducted, what questions are asked, how the research is conducted and how knowledge is disseminated will not be passed over with simple explanations. Despite this, it is a necessary, but also neglected, component of the social science project.

It is clear from the above that postcolonialism has started to make its mark on psychology. Postcolonialism has much to offer psychology scholars interested in qualitative work. It offers the potential of deconstructing the 'center' as the normalized present and foregrounding the 'periphery' or the absent trace, while at the same time avoiding the search for the myth of origin. It allows us to theorize hybridity and multiplicity while not slipping into rampant relativism. It dialogues with theory from the global North

Table 18.1 Examples of qualitative research in postcolonialism

Methods used	*Data source*	*Brief explanation*	*Examples*
Colonial discourse analysis	Mostly written texts and archives, but other sources, including interviews and even music	Analysis of discourse (often but not always Foucauldian) highlighting (neo)colonial constructions of the Other	Initiated by Said (1978) in *Orientalism*; Holden (2001); Nyairo and Ogude (2003); Nkomo (2011)
Narrative analysis	Interviews, autobiographies	Exploring the conditions of possibility in which the colonized and colonizing subject emerges	Asher (2005); Blix et al. (2012)
Historiography	Archives, texts	Reading against the grain to uncover blind spots and recuperate evidence of subaltern agency	Subaltern Studies group (e.g. Guha, 1998); Swartz (2005)
Genealogy	Texts archives	Utilizing Foucauldian notion of descent to trace the emergence of colonial subjects and objects	Butchart (1998); Keller (2008); Nasir (2015)
Organizational analysis	Texts, organizational records and arrangements, interviews, training videos, observation	Analysis of (neo)colonial institutional practices and power relations	Prasad (2003)
Case study	Interviews, observation, records	In-depth study of specific case (group, organization or individual) in which (neo)colonial power relations are manifested	Reineke (2001); Sampaio (2004); Meng and Meurs (2009)
Ethnography	Interviews, participant observation, records, policy, media	A de-centered practice that overcomes its colonial history by examining the subject position of the ethnographer, collapsing the 'us' and 'them' assumption and privileging local knowledge	Parameswaran (2002); Racine (2003); Tucker (2010)
Comparative research	Interviews, archives, texts, observations	Contextual analyses of systems, groups of people or texts	Mohanty (1999); Hickling-Hudson (2002); Licata & Klein (2010)
Participatory Action Research	Participation in individual and group dialogue and action	Accountable research that is driven by participants and that focuses on change within a given (neo) colonial setting	Guruge & Khanlou (2004); Kessi (2011, 2013)
Deconstruction	Texts, interviews	Employment of Derridean concepts such as *différance* to expose exclusions and absent traces in (neo)colonial discourse	Power (2006); Fougère & Moulettes (2012)
Thematic analysis	Texts, interviews	Highlighting themes that speak to colonial power relations	Jackson (2010)
Visual analysis	Images (e.g. art, films, landscapes, drawing)	Analysis of images as signifiers of (neo)colonialism	Rajan (2002); Bandyopadhyay (2011)

while simultaneously challenging the neocolonialist assumptions produced in this context. It brings to foreground the relationship between Euro-American psychology and the status of indigenous psychologies in the rest of the world. It undermines readings of psychology that neglect colonialist history and postcolonial power relations, that are complicit in (neo) colonial forms of exploitation, that under-represent or else exoticize particular categories of people, or that normalize and universalize the white, middle-class male. It attunes its understandings to socio-historical conditions that permeate local and global power relations, interweaving the intra-psychic with the postcolonial problematic.

Note

1 We have written 'global South' and 'Western' in scare quotes here to highlight the constructed nature of these broad global entities, including the 'global North', 'First World', 'Third World' etc. Our use of these terms by no means suggests that these are homogeneous blocs or that the interests in these broad regions are identical. Nevertheless, given current global power relations, and the history of colonialism, we feel that they have heuristic value. We, therefore, deploy the terms, but in a manner that simultaneously problematizes them.

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19

Community Psychology

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INTRODUCTION: EPISTEMOLOGY AND ONTOLOGY OF COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

Community psychology has emerged internationally over the past fifty or more years, for varying purposes and in unique social, political, and cultural circumstances. Community psychology may be defined most simply as the applied study of the relationship between social systems and individual wellbeing in the community context[1]. Like many subdisciplines, community psychology is concerned with understanding and promoting factors that affect health and wellness. It is an applied social science, a vocation, and an analytical perspective (Levine et al., 2005). The common thread in its emergence has been the recognition of inequity and injustice within social systems and the resulting negative impact on individual and community wellbeing (Kloos et al., 2012). Alongside this thread has been the realization that traditional psychology has played a significant role in maintaining damaging social relations and structures (Prilleltensky, 1994; Kloos et al., 2012). Community psychology has emerged, then, as a psychology seeking to enhance wellbeing via social change and social justice (Levine et al., 2005; Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2010). Where community psychology becomes distinct from other fields of psychology, is in its focus on: adoption of ecological and historical perspectives; recognition of social power differentials; preference for 'praxis' over theory, research, or practice alone; and values-based practice (Levine et al., 2005; Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2010). These distinguishing foci represent core tenets of the field, and are expanded upon below.

Ecology and History

This tenet comes from the 'ecological analogy', in which the principles of ecology (or environmental biology) are applied to human behavior. The ecological principles of interaction between plant and animal populations and habitat, ecosystem, and biosphere are analogized to the interaction of individuals with their community, environment, society, and world. These spheres of influence or ecological levels are like a Russian nesting doll, organized around the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and include political, cultural, environmental, institutional, and organizational spheres. An additional component of such a contextual approach is the temporal, or historical realm (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 1992). This ecological

understanding informs the understanding that multiple levels of environments influence human behavior (Sarason, 1967; Wandersman and Nation, 1998), and that it is social contexts, rather than psychological or biological deficits, which are the fundamental cause of major social problems (Maton, 2000; Levine et al., 2005).

Power

Power can be understood as the ability to express one's own will. It is a phenomenon that is experienced in every social relationship through the use of resources, agendas, and ideologies (Lukes, 1986; Neal and Neal, 2011). Although power is not inherently good or bad, it can be wielded to both purposes and spans individual, group and structural levels of social power (Angelique et al., 2013). Through the use of resources, agendas, and ideologies, power can become unequally distributed across entire groups of people, leading to domination of one group's interests over another's. Community psychology recognizes that this is indeed the case in our contemporary society, and that the effects of this situation have far reaching consequences for the health and wellbeing of all individuals (Levine et al., 2005; Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010). As such, researchers must seek to better understand the role of power in the maintenance of unjust social conditions (Evans et al., 2016). Power, then, is a focus for study and change, including the hierarchical relationship between researchers or academic experts, and disenfranchised groups (Srebnik, 1991).

Praxis

Community psychology values action to affect socially just changes (Jason, 1991). Change is believed to be possible by preventing and/or intervening in damaging social systems, and creating alternatives to the current system. To enact change, we must strive to understand our current world, test new and different ways of existing, and assess/evaluate their use. Research plays a central role in the development of knowledge, and is believed to be key in creating, enabling, and evaluating these alternative systems. Community psychology, like many psychologies, values an empirical grounding to action-oriented work and efforts for change (Tolan et al., 1990; Kloos et al., 2012). This intersection of action for change and empiricism, along with the development of explanations (or theory) is termed 'praxis'. Research is a key component of this praxis. Lewin (1946) suggested that to achieve praxis, researchers engage in a cyclical process of action and reflection: action for system or social change with reflection on the process of change. The aim of this cyclical research is to simultaneously increase our understanding of the world, while facilitating a process of sustainable change.

Values-Based Practice

A core belief of community psychology is that values are ever present in the perspectives we take, theories we generate, research we conduct, and practices in which we engage (Kloos et al., 2012). This belief questions the validity of traditional psychology's claim that it is a neutral and objective social science. Community psychology posits that the pursuit of objectivity is itself a value which, like all values, is based in a set of assumptions and beliefs about the world (that is, epistemology and ontology). Community psychology then holds dear an acknowledgement of these assumptions and beliefs about the world (Kloos et al., 2012), and pursues ways of working that reflect values of social change (Jason, 1991; Prilleltensky, 2001). Key assumptions are that our social worlds are unevenly stratified in terms of wealth, class, race, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality (Griffin, 1995; Nelson, 2013). The values we then adopt as community psychologists are meant to guide research and action efforts to change systems of inequality (Jason, 1991; Prilleltensky, 2001). In this chapter, we focus on six core values in community psychology: empowerment and self-determination; diversity and multiculturalism; psychological sense of community; collaboration and democratic participation; health, wellness, and the prevention of psychosocial stress; and social justice.[2]

OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PARADIGM

In community psychology, as in other fields, there is no one accepted philosophy of science. However, to fully appreciate the fit between community psychology and qualitative research, it is important to briefly state the underlying assumptions about research that appear to be dominant.[3] Specifically, in the minds of many community psychologists, a distinction must be made between *methods* versus *paradigms*. For example, although

some social scientists understand and employ both qualitative and quantitative methods, many do so from the perspective of the logical positivist, in which phenomena can only be validated (i.e. found to be true) using deductive, or quantitative means. For these researchers, qualitative methods become the handmaiden of the quantitative paradigm, and are seen to be exploratory at best. Likewise, some researchers adopt the stance of the social constructivist, privileging qualitative over quantitative methods because, to them, context is the sole determinant of truth. For other social scientists, a more pragmatic or instrumental approach is taken, where both paradigms are recognized as separate philosophical entities, equally useful as tools for approaching knowledge, and the choice of application and method depends upon research questions (Banyard and Miller, 1998; Langhout, 2003; Newman et al., 2003). It is from this latter position that we write our chapter; from this point forward, when we refer to qualitative methods, we speak from the perspective of the pragmatist. However, this does not mean that the authors of this chapter are completely homogeneous in our paradigms and perspectives. For some, the conversation between pragmatic research and a more critical research approach continues (Nelson and Evans, 2014).

Many psychology researchers have been reluctant to look beyond quasi-experimental design to qualitative research. Fears of rigorless methods are understandable, but must be assuaged: the qualitative paradigm has strict standards for quality. Specifically, criteria of trustworthiness, including credibility, transferability, authenticity, dependability, and confirmability, give researchers important ways to assess and evaluate qualitative work (Erlandson et al., 1993; Glesne, 2011 as cited in Brodsky et al., 2016). Thick description is a stated objective for good qualitative research, in which vivid details of context and history are equally important data to report as what is gathered from the target of study (Erlandson et al., 1993; Banyard and Miller, 1998; Stewart, 2000). Other objectives include: member checks, reflexivity, audits, triangulation, and sustained engagement and observation (Brodsky et al., 2016).

THE FIT BETWEEN COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY AND QUALITATIVE METHODS

As previously mentioned, the field of community psychology rests firmly on several core tenets: ecology, history, power, praxis, and values. Here, we examine our understanding of these tenets and how they relate to, or fit with, qualitative methods in the field. Qualitative methods include, but are not limited to: qualitative interviews, narratives, ethnography, case studies, observation, focus groups, photovoice and other arts based methods, artifact analysis, and discourse analysis. We argue that many complex social phenomena and circumstances undergirding these values can only be comprehensively studied using qualitative methodology. For these reasons, it behooves social scientists to take on, understand, and appreciate the qualitative paradigm and its methods.

Community psychologists have expressed the necessity of expanding the focus of research and practice to multiple levels of analysis, beyond the psyche of the individual human. This means thoroughly examining the context or ecology of any given phenomenon, and constructing actions that work on multiple levels. In addition to spatial context, community psychology emphasizes the study of temporal context, or the history, of any given phenomenon. Without understanding these enveloping, transactional factors, it becomes very difficult to design a plan for lasting and effective change for people in real-life social circumstances. Qualitative methods share this appreciation of ecology, history, and multiple levels of analysis. Qualitative methods also allow the design of the research and theory itself to evolve and change according to contextual feedback; in this way, any study is crafted to suit the phenomenon, rather than bending the phenomenon to suit a preconceived study (Stewart, 2000).

One of the most recognized congruences between community psychology and qualitative methods involves the importance of power and praxis. Community psychologists hope to equalize the distribution of power in social arrangements, and to facilitate the process of *empowerment*, whereby people, organizations, and communities can gain control over their destinies (Rappaport, 1987).[4] One way to do this is by fusing social science research with action for social change to create praxis. Qualitative methods have played an important role in empowerment and praxis, if in no other way than by providing a means for marginalized people's voices and narratives to be heard (Banyard and Miller, 1998; Stewart, 2000; Stein and Mankowski, 2004). Qualitative methods can also create important systems of representation, whereby researchers become stewards of stories, experiences, and constructed knowledge of the respondents, rather than just recipients of data (Stewart, 2000; Stein and Mankowski, 2004).

The commitment to values is highly important to community psychologists. Values drive much of the work in our field, whether as a topic of study,

or as a goal for the research process itself. The qualitative paradigm and its methods facilitate this commitment to values by requiring researchers to be reflexive and make explicit their own biases, backgrounds, and beliefs, and how these elements affect their study (Kidder and Fine, 1997; Brodsky et al., 2004; Brodsky et al., 2016). Not only is it acceptable in qualitative research for the researcher to have a personal tie to the study; it is expected. It is not expected, however, that qualitative researchers will allow their commitment to stated or unstated values to truncate a research conversation or blind them to data. Once making clear their own investment in the research, social scientists must work to remain open to all possibilities while they examine the evidence, and regularly revise their theories (Kidder and Fine, 1997).

In this chapter, we use the lens of our last community psychology tenet, values, to examine qualitative methods. We highlight particular studies that we feel exemplify efforts to understand and promote six core values in community psychology (see Table 19.1). First, these studies were selected because we believed they were well done and clearly illustrated community psychology's core values through their processes and/or outcomes. A second aim was to include studies conducted by students as well as professionals across the international community. Third, we chose to use many studies to give a broad understanding of the qualitative methods landscape, rather than a deeper, more focused treatment of one or two methods. Towards the end of our chapter, we highlight tensions and limitations of using qualitative methods in our field. Finally, we conclude with a brief description of emerging directions in the field as well as recommendations for future directions.

UNDERSTANDING AND PROMOTING COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY VALUES

Because community psychology values praxis as central to the discipline, qualitative methods are used both to understand the world and to promote action to change it. Community psychologists seek to understand how values operate in community settings, and actively work to use this knowledge to generate action that promotes those values. As such, community psychologists often utilize qualitative approaches to put core values of empowerment and self-determination; diversity and multiculturalism; psychological sense of community; collaboration and democratic participation; health, wellness, and the prevention of psychosocial stress; and social justice at the forefront of inquiry and action (see Table 19.1).

Not only do these values provide *content* for study and *targets for action* but they also suggest a values-based *process* by which research and action are conducted. Ideally, the values we promote in our inquiry and action are also the means by which we engage community members in constructing knowledge and designing action strategies. For example, while empowerment is a phenomenon of interest, and a desired end result of interventions, it can also be considered a principle for how we conduct research. As we have mentioned earlier, qualitative methods have the potential to privilege the voices of those with less power in an empowering research process. Participatory qualitative approaches also have potential to be based in values of empowerment, and collaboration and democratic participation, whereby researchers engage community members in the design,

Table 19.1 Qualitative methods in community psychology

Community psychology value	*Qualitative method*	*Example*
Empowerment and self-determination	Participant narratives, participant-observation, interviews, focus groups and document reviews	Bond et al. (2000) Brodsky et al. (2011)
Diversity and multiculturalism	Interviews, participant and researcher narratives, and focus groups	Bond and Harrell (2006); Harrell and Bond (2006) Hopkins and Blackwood (2011)
Psychological sense of community	Interviews, focus groups, and visual research methods	Roos et al. (2014)
Collaboration and democratic participation	Public meeting records, interviews, and organizational case studies	Culley and Angelique (2011) Bess et al. (2011)
Health, wellness, and the prevention of psychosocial stress	Participant-observation, focus groups, document reviews, and interviews; mixed methods	Arcidiacono et al. (2009) Browne et al. (2013) Velázqueza and Fernándeza (2015)
Social justice	Interviews, 'cumulative theorizing', participant-observation, and action research	Huygens (2005) Shpungin et al. (2012)

implementation, and interpretation of community research. For community psychology, the aim is to conduct research and action in a manner that is congruent with the values we wish to promote.

What follows are a few examples from the field that highlight how community psychologists utilize qualitative methodologies as a way to understand and promote shared values of empowerment and self-determination; diversity and multiculturalism; psychological sense of community; collaboration and democratic participation; health, wellness, and the prevention of psychosocial stress; and social justice and how we attempt to infuse these values into the research process.

Empowerment and Self-Determination

Definition and rationale

Empowerment is a complex, multi-level construct related to individual psychological concepts such as self-efficacy, self-determination, and internal locus of control, but operating interdependently at the individual and collective (group, organization, and community) levels (Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995). Unlike purely social-cognitive concepts, empowerment is also defined by behaviors (such as critical reflection and participation in decisions that affect one's life or work) as well as knowledge, thoughts, and skills (e.g. political awareness, optimism, effective leadership qualities). It is both a process (based on those behaviors and abilities) and an outcome (e.g. greater access to, and control over, resources and decisions; Zimmerman, 1995).

Qualitative methods are particularly appropriate for studying empowerment and self-determination for two major reasons. First, phenomenological research strategies, such as ethnographic interviews, focus groups, and participant observation tend to give participants a more meaningful participatory role, power, and freedom (i.e. more 'voice and choice') in the research process than do experiments, closed-ended surveys, non-participant-observational methods, or use of existing data. Second, the complex, contextually dependent nature of empowerment processes can only be fully explored through the rich and nuanced knowledge gained from qualitative methods. In particular, narrative data collection and analytic methods provide insights into dynamic empowerment processes, opportunities for citizen collaboration, and communal narratives and personal stories, which are themselves empowering resources (Rappaport, 1995).

Exemplars

Community psychologists recognize the potential use of individual and community narratives as a way of understanding the lived experiences of marginalized groups and as an empowerment intervention strategy (Bond et al., 2000; Maton, 2000; Rappaport, 1995, 1998). Rappaport (2000) points to the importance of narratives in empowerment, suggesting, because empowering narratives are resources, they are distributed unevenly by social class and other statuses. The right to tell one's own story is an index of power and psychological empowerment.

An evaluation of the Listening Partners Program (Bond et al., 2000) provides a rich example of how qualitative methods – in this case in-depth interviews with women living in poverty – that focus on participant narratives can be both a means of empowering those who have been denied their voice as well as of documenting their experiences. Community psychologists have used dialogue and reflection in participatory action research projects to engage communities in the process of building shared narratives focused on empowering members. They have used qualitative methods to explore the disempowering effects of dominant cultural narratives on members of marginalized communities and have studied the impact of empowering community narratives on the lives of participants in school communities, religious communities, and mutual self-help groups.

A growing amount of community psychology research – especially qualitative work on empowerment – is international. The more culturally 'other', or literally foreign, research participants are in relation to the researcher, the more important it is for the researcher to reflect their actual voices in the research process. It is important not to assume that a global Eastern/Southern respondent and a Western/Northern psychologist have similar understandings of, for example, 'objective' survey questions or responses. A great example of work reflecting the voices of international participants is the work of Brodsky and colleagues (2011) which used content analysis of in-depth, semi-structured individual and group interviews, as well as participant observation and archival document review to examine individual and organizational resilience and empowerment processes among members of The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), a secular underground resistance, humanitarian, political/peace advocacy, democratic, educational and human rights organization in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Through these methods, researchers prioritized the voices of women, while providing key insight into RAWA.

Diversity and Multiculturalism

Definition and rationale

Much like aforementioned values of empowerment and democratic participation, values of diversity and multiculturalism are both an area of content for community study and a process by which research and action are conducted. Values of diversity and multiculturalism are reflected in research and action designed to raise awareness of diversity, study inter-group relationships in diverse organizations or communities, and build research partnerships across diverse communities (Bond and Harrell, 2006). Inherent in such research and action is the understanding that experience and identity are shaped by differing social norms, institutions, and policies within and between communities and that attention to and respect for these differences is crucial to understanding community wellbeing (Trickett, 1994; Prilleltensky, 2001).

Qualitative research methods provide a particularly useful framework for attending to diversity and multiculturalism in community research and action. Methods such as qualitative interviews, participant and researcher narratives, and focus groups can contribute to complex, nuanced understandings of individual and group experience in communities. Qualitative methods allow participants to express subtleties in understandings of diversity that may not be captured by more quantitative analyses. In addition, quantitative methods are a tool to incorporate diverse voices into the research process to support multicultural understandings of community.

Exemplars

In a particularly noteworthy special issue of *The American Journal of Community Psychology,* Bond and Harrell (2006) compiled a series of 22 researchers' stories (articles) about tensions and dilemmas integrating community psychology's value of diversity into practice. Emphasis was placed on the importance of examining practitioner's everyday experiences of diversity related challenges, rather than successes, as a tool to understand complex nuances in diversity research and action. Stories were selected based on four criteria. Stories must have identified a clear dilemma within the research or action process, been clearly written and focused, incorporated diversity into type of dilemma experienced, and represented racial, ethnic, and gender diversity in populations studied and in authorship. For a comprehensive list of included articles and analysis of diversity within each, refer to Bond and Harrell (2006).

In addition to providing material for the special issue, the 22 diversity research stories became a qualitative dataset used to develop three diversity principles for community psychology: *community culture, community context, and self-in-community* (Harrell and Bond, 2006). Each principle is grounded in a fundamental assumption, process emphasis, core question, orienting stance, and focus area. *Community culture* is grounded in the assumption that all communities have multiple cultural characteristics and diversity dynamics. This principle emphasizes processes of observation and description to understand communities of interest. Core research questions explore existing dimensions of diversity and their effects on the community. In pursuit of these questions, researchers adopt a position of 'informed compassion' (i.e. maintaining emotional distance, while being connected to the community) to explore diversity, intergroup relationships, and general pace of life in the community. *Community context* is based on assumptions that diversity is based on historical, socio-political, and institutional forces within a community. This principle seeks to understand diversity in context by asking what aspects of context, past and present, affect diversity within a community. *Self-in-community* examines the effects of one's own background, identity, culture, and values on diversity work. This principal is achieved through personal reflective work, paying close attention to one's connections to power and privilege in the context of the diversity work and their positive or negative potential to affect the community. Together, these principles, grounded in qualitative findings, support a dynamic framework for understanding diversity in the context of community research.

A second exemplar is primarily rooted in social psychology, but has important implications for community psychology. Hopkins and Blackwood (2011) examined British Muslim's understandings of identity and citizenship, focusing on how others' perceptions and assumptions about Muslim identities affected Muslims' ability to participate in the public sphere. In a series of 28 qualitative interviews with British Muslims recruited from local and national Muslim organizations, researchers explored subjects including, but not limited to: Muslims' positions within society, inter-group relationships, anti-Muslim sentiments and stereotyping, exclusion, and religious and national identity. Results highlighted participant experiences negotiating interactions with others whose perceptions of Muslim identity were often discrepant from their own. Emphasis was placed on the role of these discrepant understandings in limiting British Muslims ability to actively

participate in the public sphere and definitions of British Muslims as Muslims rather than Britons.

While this study is topically relevant to values of diversity and multiculturalism, perhaps its greatest strength as an exemplar lies in its approach to analysis. This article is a particularly striking example of quality thematic analysis. Hopkins and Blackwood seamlessly weave together a number of extracted interview quotes to illustrate analytical points. These quotes contribute to complex, nuanced understandings of participant perspectives on experiences within a multicultural setting while supporting voices of the British Muslims.[5] In this way, researchers embrace not only values of diversity in the research process, but also related values of empowerment.

Psychological Sense of Community

Definition and rationale

The development and promotion of psychological sense of community (PSOC) is an established core value in community research and development (Townley et al., 2010; Kloos et al., 2012; Neal and Neal, 2014). Seymour Sarason famously suggested that PSOC, or 'the perception of similarity to others, an acknowledged interdependence with others and the feeling that one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure', is 'the overarching criterion by which one judges any community development or plan' (1974, pp. 157–158, as cited in Townley et al., 2010). PSOC has been conceptualized as a marker of healthy communities (Talo et al., 2014) and is regarded as a largely positive aspect of community which should be valued and promoted. This emphasis on the importance of PSOC in community research is evidenced by a growing body of literature examining both the factors contributing to PSOC and effects of PSOC on individual and community wellbeing (Graham and Ismail, 2011). Much of that literature is grounded in McMillan and Chavis's (1986) theory of PSOC, which highlights four elements of PSOC: membership or notions of belonging to the community; mutual influence, the impact of the individual on community and community on the individual; fulfillment of needs and perceptions of benefit; and feelings of connection to community and community members. However, recent literature has begun to criticize this model of PSOC, advocating for expanded theoretical understandings of PSOC in community and individual wellbeing (e.g. Nowell and Boyd, 2010) in addition to exploration of existing theory. As such, PSOC remains a crucial area of interest within community psychology.

Exemplar

Roos, Kolobe, and Keating (2014) is a particularly dynamic and robust example of qualitative research in PSOC. This study examined connections between sense of community and place in the experiences of elderly South African women who had been forcibly removed from their homes and communities during apartheid. Through the lens of forced removal, the researchers explore concepts of community and belonging in a group of women aging in a community that is not their own by choice. The researchers used the Mmogo-method® (Roos, 2008; Roos, 2012) and focus groups to explore the women's experiences of community and place. The Mmogo-method® is a process in which groups of individuals make individual visual representations of a phenomenon of interest (in this case a place of belonging) using clay, beads, cloth, and dried grasses. Once finished, participants are asked to share their work with the others, explaining the meaning behind the visual representation. Participants then work together in focus group discussions to establish and examine key themes emerging from the visual representations in a collaborative process of data analysis and member checking. These processes are recorded through photography and audio recording and thematically analyzed.

This project culminated in a rich, nuanced descriptions of the effects of historical and political disruptions of place on South African women's experiences of community. Through the creation of visual representations, the women were able to creatively explore their own experiences of community and share them with others. In this sense, the methods employed were both a process for developing sense of community as well as a process of data collection.

Collaboration and Democratic Participation

Definition and rationale

Values of collaboration and democratic participation speak directly to issues of power distribution. Specifically, they are about the process of decision making, and the creation of organizational structures that work to include those most affected by the decisions. In addition, the notion of democratic participation implies that each decision-maker will have an equal say throughout the process. These values are related to inclusion and diversity, and can provide tools for facilitating both. However, the practice of collaboration and democratic participation requires a willingness on

the part of those in charge to share their power, and to accept decisions made by the group.

Often in research, social scientists do not include their participants as collaborators in the process, nor do they view their participants as equals, but simply as sources of information who require little in return. Such a non-mutual relationship smacks of exploitation, particularly in community research. In our own experience, community members' lingering resentment and frustration about prior 'one-way' research experiences has made the formation of new relationships with researchers exceedingly difficult, and for good reason: when information is one of your primary resources, it ought to be protected.

Qualitative research methods can be important tools for fostering collaboration and democratic participation. First, qualitative research regularly involves the inhabitance of your respondents' world for participant observation. In many ways, this means stepping into someone else's shoes – as your experiences from your subjects' vantage point become data, you are more able to value their reality as your own. This can be an important beginning step toward equality and shifts in power. Second, any qualitative study will change as data are gathered and analyzed. There is a natural collaboration here between subject and inquiry, as the voice of the subject guides the inquiry. Finally, in doing qualitative research, no insider knowledge of statistics or experimental design is necessary. Rather, intimacy with the data may be of primary importance. These methods lend themselves to the inclusion of participants who have no research expertise, but are the best authorities on their own experiences. By the end of the process, participants may leave with new skills, knowledge, and personal connections.

Exemplars

Culley and Angelique (2011) provide detailed descriptions of settings, environmental and political circumstances, and public participation in specific nuclear power controversies in Pennsylvania and Georgia, with important broader ecological policy relevance to global climate change and environmental justice. They used public meeting transcripts; field notes on participants, the setting, and additional observations; and Nuclear Regulatory Commission website documents and other information to determine how social power manifested via the official public participation processes. One methodological implication of this study is the sheer volume and richness of publicly available qualitative data, particularly on a heavily regulated industry and political process such as nuclear energy.

Another example of qualitative research on democratic participatory processes focuses on staff and community member participation in decision-making structures and practices in different types and sizes of community-based human service organizations (Bess et al., 2011). The researchers adopted an organizational learning perspective to examine the role participation plays in increasing organizational capacity to meet community needs. They used qualitative case study analyses of a youth development organization, a faith-based social action coalition, a low-income neighborhood organization, and a large human service agency. Case studies were based on content analysis of 38 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with key informants, field notes and reflections of brief, student service-learning participant observations, and additional information from service directories and organizational documents. In an effort to adhere to its own theoretical ideas about the value of community collaboration and participation for scholarly as well as organizational learning, the research project itself also involved a Community Advisory Board, made up of leaders and middle managers representing each of 10 non-profit organizational types plus several at-large members from local government and a university. In these ways, the researchers successfully fostered collaboration and democratic participation in the project.

Health, Wellness, and the Prevention of Psychosocial Stress

Definition and rationale

Health, wellness and the prevention of psychosocial stress constitute the pillars of wellbeing. Wellbeing is a positive state of affairs, brought about by the satisfaction of personal, relational, and communal needs. While subjective feelings of wellbeing and happiness are important, they do not tell the whole story of wellness. Objective factors such as poverty and access to resources also matter. Physical health and emotional wellbeing depend not only on individual level factors, but also on societal dynamics and circumstances (Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2010).

Qualitative methods can illuminate the relationship between material conditions and the phenomenology of wellbeing. When using only quantitative measures, a rather deceptive picture of happiness emerges. Above a certain threshold of material wellbeing, people of different classes,

gender, or ethnic background report similar levels of happiness on a ten point scale. This has led psychologists such as Seligman (2002) to claim that gender, class, or race do not make a difference in levels of happiness. There are multiple psychological reasons why people choose to report high levels of happiness regardless of various conditions of disadvantage; among others, the need to represent oneself as happy and a reluctance to admit sadness or disappointments in life (Eckersley, 2000). If we were to rely exclusively on quantitative self-reports of personal wellbeing we would be highly misled. When talking with people about their life, people from disadvantaged groups report extensively on the influence of discrimination, poverty, exclusion, and oppression on their lives. Unless we get to know people's lives intimately, our sense of their health and wellness is incomplete at best and inaccurate at worst.

Exemplars

What qualitative tools can deliver in the area of health, wellness, and the prevention of psychosocial stress is a richly textured description of life's vicissitudes. A variety of qualitative methods have been used to explore people's conceptions of health and wellbeing and to capture their journey from vulnerability to resilience.

Velázqueza and Fernándeza (2015) used community diagnosis, a participatory qualitative method that combines interviews, focus groups and participatory reflection workshops to explore gender-based violence in the community of San Pedro Mirador, Machay, Peru. Authors engaged several groups of community members that were diverse in terms of gender, age, and social role within the community. Participants were invited to identify sources of gender-based violence as well as strengths, resources, and practices of resistance and resilience that community members engage to combat violence. Collectively community members created knowledge around experiences of gender-based violence, identified some of the sources, and discussed the implications of how violence is naturalized in the community. Among their findings were connections among state-sponsored violence cloaked in narratives of necessary social control and the ways in which those narratives permit and excuse more interpersonal forms of violence. Participants recommended interpersonal and collective strategies for reducing violence and supporting resiliency for those who have experienced it.

The authors identify benefits of this particular method as both ethical and political. Ethically, the authors are committed to exploring and presenting violence in social-ecological context so that the structural dimensions of violence can be explored. This method highlights the interplay among individual, relational, and collective levels of violence, as well as the strengths and resiliencies of the women involved. The political advantage of this method involves engaging participants as citizens capable of, and poised for, social action, and sees this impulse for activism as a route to improve participants' health and wellbeing.

Arcidiacono, Velleman and Procentese (2009) used qualitative methods in an action research paradigm to enhance and explore findings from a large, multinational quantitative study of patterns of disempowerment in families with a family member who was experiencing heavy alcohol or drug abuse. The study had three primary aims: (1) improve knowledge of experiences, stressors, and resiliencies for family members of substance users, (2) improve treatment methods and strategies, and (3) develop evidence-based training for service providers working with substance abusers and their families. Study collaborators conducted 2–3 hour semi-structured interviews with 113 Italian families about family structure, nature and consequences of the family member's substance abuse, strategies and support for coping with the effects of substance use, general health and wellbeing of the family, and hopes for the future. The findings from the interviews revealed that Italian respondents were more relationship-oriented and expressed more collectivist values, especially pertaining to the family unit, than participants in other countries. Furthermore, interviews revealed regional differences within Italy. Both of these findings allowed for creating intervention and education strategies that were tailored to the contexts in which they were being implemented.

This study included an impressively large sample size as compared to most other qualitative studies, an aspect that contributed to reliability and transferability of the finding to inform a broad-scale intervention strategy. Authors engaged several methodological adaptations to enable analysis of such a large body of rich data. Rather than audio recording interviews, data collectors took detailed notes including verbatim quotations during the course of the interview. Within 24 hours of conducting the interview, the data collector wrote a detailed report of the interview in which s/he outlined key concepts and themes presented in the report, supported them with quotations and examples, and described non-verbal cues and interactions that occurred within the course of the interview. These reports were then analyzed using more traditional coding and theory-building strategies. Authors noted that such methods would not be appropriate if the object of study were discourse itself; however, because the study was intended to

design action-based interventions, methods that allowed the interviewer to focus on issues and recommendations brought forth by the participants were adequate and preferable. Along with exhibiting the importance of qualitative research for adding intimacy and complexity to understandings of health and wellness, this study demonstrates the importance of tailoring qualitative data collection and analysis strategies to the intended outcomes of the study, particularly when research is practiced within an action research framework.

Social Justice

Definition and rationale

It is difficult to identify an aspect of health and wellbeing that is not affected by the allocation of resources and obligations in society. Social justice refers precisely to this distribution of pains and gains and should be understood as both procedural and distributive in nature (Prilleltensky, 2012). This includes the fair and equitable distribution of power, resources, and burdens and is at the heart of community psychology, deeming structural injustices as intolerable and the source of economic, social, and political oppression (Sandler, 2007; Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2010; Evans et al., 2016). Compelling evidence from qualitative research demonstrates that the poor suffer more than the middle class, unequal societies more than equal ones, and that there are deeper inequities in power and justice across gender, and racial lines, including myriad physical, psychological, and social problems (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010).

Qualitative research is particularly valuable in understanding and creating conditions for social justice. The richness of qualitative data and methods has the potential for understanding and articulating the complex conditions of injustice and the diverse and contextually based processes and conditions for moving towards a more just world. One particular method that contributes to this value is action research (Lewin, 1946; Argyris, Putnam and Smith, 1985). Action research is a practical approach to studying and working towards justice research and can be used as a tool for change, for raising awareness, for unlocking the complexities of the power structures that reify social and structural injustices, and for documenting and learning from actions targeted at creating transformative change.

Exemplars

Qualitative research can help us understand and promote justice in all its complexities. In community psychology qualitative methods are used to both *understand* and document instances and processes of social justice (Brodsky, et al., 2011; Narayan et al., 1999) as well as to *act* upon and create conditions for justice (Shpungin et al., 2012). This research can take on many shapes, two exemplars are included to bring this value to life.

An example of a large qualitative study in the service of social justice comes from Aotearoa/New Zealand. Ingrid Huygens, a community psychologist involved in the struggle to uphold and restore Maori rights, has documented the movement through innovative qualitative techniques. In an effort to inform practice, she explored how treaty workers disseminate the history of Maori oppression and the rights owed to the Maori people among dominant groups under the Treaty of Waitangi (Glover et al., 2005). She participated in conferences and workshops where movement workers shared lessons and theorized about what worked and how. As a participant, she not only recorded other people's perceptions, but also facilitated learning and growth through a technique she called 'cumulative theorizing' (Huygens, 2005). After every workshop she would summarize the lessons and present them to the next group, so that each group could build on the theorizing of the previous effort. She developed visual techniques for diagramming and representing the insights obtained in learning circles. As a participant in the movement, she upheld the values of knowledge for action. As a qualitative researcher, she contributed to the process of social change by conceptualizing how social justice evolves.

Action research can also be used as a tool for change within local and institutional contexts. In one feminist action research intervention, Shpungin et al. (2012) used an engaged process to examine issues of sexism and patriarchy within a professional organization with the goal of creating conditions for social justice and the disruption of cultural norms. The researchers worked in partnership with underrepresented membership groups from the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA) to problematize and de-normalize the concept of *silencing*. In this intervention, silencing was defined as occurring 'when a member's voice seemed to be ignored, devalued, shut out or truncated – either subtly, directly, or through lack of accommodation and/or support' (Shpungin et al., 2012, p. 46). Rooted in anti-oppression work, this action research process aimed to raise awareness, and provide models of alternative ways of communicating through the development of a theatre-based intervention developed from a collection of first person narratives of silencing within SCRA. With an intentional focus on the structural-level

factors of silencing, an iteration of Boal's (1979) static 'Forum Theater' was used. This process included the conversion of first-person narratives into thematic monologues and skits by a committee made up of SCRA members with lived experience of silencing. Volunteers acted out the skits and monologues. The skits and monologues covered four emerging themes, silencing through: racial microaggressions, group silence and omission, being talked over, and association. The skits were presented at a national conference to raise awareness of silencing as a structural issue within the organization, and to promote action to address structural level injustices based on gender, race, nationality, and ability. These exemplars demonstrate the creativity and rigor that qualitative methods and resulting data can bring to understanding and creating conditions for social justice.

TENSIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF USING QUALITATIVE METHODS IN COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

Philosophical Tensions

A philosophical tension exists regarding research in community psychology. This tension centers on the *purpose* of qualitative inquiry. Namely, what is the purpose of qualitative research in community psychology? Regardless of method, Nelson and Prilleltensky (2010) have urged community psychologists to use the critical paradigm to inform research. The critical paradigm suggests that knowledge should be in the service of human liberation (Habermas, 1971). Sloan (1996) argues that researchers in psychology need to take a stance beyond neutrality towards critical engagement in social transformation. Whereas action for liberation is a value and an aim in community psychology, not all research conducted by community psychologists has this transformational purpose or potential. Additionally, not all community psychologists agree that our research should be used to promote what are largely political ends (as if inaction is not political). Dialogues in our field reveal that there is no consensus that our research should be about seeking knowledge in action for social change (Nelson and Evans, 2014). Furthermore, there are ethical implications of conducting research with the aim of changing the status quo (O'Neil, 1989). Who decides what actions are valid and who should benefit? What values will be privileged over others (Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2010)? The answering of this question is a negotiated process that evolves over time, in which some values are privileged over others and in which some voices are inevitably more powerful in directing the discipline's course. What is important to note is that, unlike other disciplines, in community psychology the discourse about values has been and remains front and center and inevitably has implications for methods. The shared hope is that this tension can be sufficiently addressed by putting values, power, reflexivity, and structural analysis in the foreground (Flyvbjerg, 2001; Fisher et al., 2007).

If action is indeed an aim for researchers in community psychology, qualitative methods have limitations. Qualitative research may not necessarily promote action to respond to society's problems. Because of its open-ended stance, qualitative methodologies certainly enable but do not guarantee critical analysis, or action towards liberation. For a research method to realize this transformative potential it requires an active effort on the part of the researcher to place data collection, interpretation, and theorizing into the social, economic, and political context to help transform these conditions (Weis and Fine, 2004).

There are some researchers who have difficulty with the community psychology rhetoric of community, social justice, empowerment, and wellness. Even as community psychology purports to be an antidote to more individual-focused psychologies, there is a danger that the understanding of social problems and the strategies offered might still neglect the larger social, economic, and political forces impinging on wellbeing. Lillis, O'Donohue, Cucciare and Lillis (2005, p. 284) argue that community psychology tends to have a 'dominant bias associated with a liberal world view'. They suggest that the field has a tendency to narrowly define community and misguidedly frames social justice in terms of liberal economic theory. Fryer, McKenna and Hamerton (2000) posit that use of the term 'wellness' emphasizes what is needed, focusing on deficits instead of strengths and maintaining the status quo while diverting attention away from addressing root causes. Worse still is the possibility that these concepts have been so often misused that they have become meaningless for research and inquiry.

Community psychology has also been criticized for emphasizing some tenets of the field over others. Through most of its history, the field emphasized *community* over *power* and sense of community dominated the narrative for decades (Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2010). Empowerment

was heralded as a way to correct this overemphasis on community and bring some attention to the importance of power and control over resources. The use of empowerment in research and action, however, has too often focused on individual power and psychological sense of empowerment rather than the dynamics of power or the leveraging of it by individuals and communities (Riger, 1993). Lately, the field has begun to acknowledge the need to balance psychological empowerment and empowering processes with equal attention to social justice that includes a redistribution of resources and the political milieu in which such decisions are made (Speer, 2002; Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2010).

Issues of Scientific Legitimacy

In most areas of psychology in the USA, qualitative research generally seems to receive less respect by journal editors and reviewers, funding agencies, tenure and promotion committees, and other arbiters of academic prestige and legitimacy than does quantitative research.[6] This may be due to most qualitative research being less generalizable and less amenable to hypothesis testing than studies done with large, representative samples or experimental designs with random assignment. However, external validity and experimental control are not appropriate standards of scientific rigor for qualitative research. If editors, reviewers, and colleagues understood and applied the appropriate standards of methodological rigor to qualitative studies, they would see that their internal validity is often stronger than most quantitative research.

Given the many arguments for, and examples of, qualitative methods in community psychology, it may be surprising that community psychology in the USA has historically suffered from the same anti-qualitative bias as the rest of the discipline. Although the *Journal of Community Psychology* (*JCP*) has always been open to qualitative and theoretical work, the *American Journal of Community Psychology* (*AJCP*) is the official journal of the APA Division of Community Psychology and it rarely published qualitative studies until the mid 1990s. Qualitative work is now very prominent in all community psychology journals internationally, including *JCP, AJCP*, *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community*, *Psychosocial Intervention, Community Psychology in Global Perspective, Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice,* and several non-English journals in the field.

Community psychology has always been an applied field based largely on action research conducted in collaboration with many different professional and client stakeholders. Research in the field has also become increasingly interdisciplinary, including work in community health and epidemiology, evaluation of educational and other prevention programs, policy analysis, multiculturalism, self-help and mutual assistance, and community organizing and development (Perkins and Schensul, 2016). These intersectoral (e.g. university–government–local organization–community) and interdisciplinary partnerships have been one reason community psychologists have adopted qualitative research designs, particularly in collaborations with, or methods borrowed from, anthropologists, ethnographers, and qualitative sociologists. As the above exemplars illustrate, qualitative approaches such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and individual, organizational, and community narratives can provide powerful evidence that is methodologically and analytically rigorous, theoretically dispositive, meaningful to all participants, and thus politically persuasive.

EMERGING DIRECTIONS

Qualitative data have long been combined with quantitative strategies to produce mixed-method studies. Traditionally, mixed methods studies have taken the form of quantitative surveys combined with qualitative interviews or focus groups, and, in general, the purpose of the qualitative data have been to add texture and nuance to the quantitative findings. Increasingly, community psychologists are integrating qualitative data with other research methods such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and social network analysis. For example, in a special issue on use of GIS in community research and intervention, Perkins, Larsen and Brown (2009) used GIS to evaluate the community-wide impact of a neighborhood revitalization project. A variety of geo-coded data sources were used to create color-coded neighborhood maps, which were then visually examined and analyzed to identify spatial patterns and residents' proximity to both problem areas and assets in much more compelling, meaningful, and effective way for presentation and decision making with community groups.

Along with these developments, the increasing availability of qualitative data via social media sites and other online venues presents new opportunities and challenges for community psychologists. Social media and other online data allow community psychologists to examine broadly held

social beliefs and understand the saliency of dominant cultural narratives in ways that might have previously been difficult to access. For example, Browne, Pitner and Freedman (2013) analyzed online responses to media stories about two health disparity research projects. From their analysis, they identified four primary themes related to addressing health disparities in racially charged contexts. Specifically, they observed biases toward understanding health disparities as a result of individual-level behaviors, resistance to naming structural racism, concerns about critical framing of health disparities as a divisive act, and criticisms that discussions of health disparities were 'political' in nature. The authors conclude that educating others about health disparities requires pedagogical preparation related to race and other structural factors influencing health. This study represents a resourceful way to capture public sentiments that might not otherwise be easy to engage or elicit in traditional qualitative data collection formats, and provides a template for other, similar studies seeking to examine ideological barriers to social change. At the same time, these methods raise new methodological challenges around issues such as sampling, observational bias, and informed consent. As community psychologists continue to use and develop online technologies for means of data collection, it will be essential to develop standards of methodological and ethical rigor. Finally, although we found little evidence of these methods in our review of published community psychology literature, researchers in other disciplines are using the availability of online technologies to facilitate participant contact, especially around sensitive or taboo topics. Technologies such as Skype, online chat rooms, and closed social media groups provide fora for gathering information from participants around issues that they might be unlikely to discuss in person. Exploring these formats and their use for community psychology research will continue to expand the methods and possibilities for creating new knowledge around under-studied topics.

LIMITATIONS IN APPLICATION

Like psychologists in other fields, community psychologists face many of the logistical constraints of organizing and carrying out qualitative research including time and resources. As community psychologists using qualitative methods, the greatest gap we experience between the 'is' and the 'ought' surfaces as we try to balance values in our research with the contextual demands of the real world. A practical way in which this tension manifests is in the temporal domain. The value of collaboration in research implies that community psychologists devote time to building trust and a shared understanding of project goals and the research process with community members who are project partners. We often hear the stories from community members of researchers coming into the community, collecting data, and leaving without providing any tangible benefit to the community. The resentment and distrust community members harbor after such experiences is both justified and understandable. However, it makes the task of building relationships evermore important yet time consuming, and this extended timeline may not mesh with funding timetables or publication demands. That being said, in our experience, the quality of the process of engaging community has direct implications for the quality of the research in terms of access and community members' willingness to participate.

A second related challenge concerns tensions between values of empowerment, collaboration, and participation and stakeholder demands. Ideally, community psychologists work with community members to develop research protocols (particularly for interviews and focus groups) that reflect the informational needs of the community as well as the researcher. Here research is valued for both its contribution to action and theory generation. In our experience, the process of including multiple voices in this process results in higher quality products and provides opportunity for voice and choice. Practically speaking, however, researchers may not be able to engage in that process until they have project funding with a pre-established protocol that has gone through a lengthy review from funders and an institutional research board. We have found ourselves in this situation in our work and have opted to involve community members in formulating research questions after the fact, returning to our review board to have new protocols re-approved as the projects unfold. With these oversight demands, negotiating the questions to ask and who should ask them can be a drawn-out process with costs in terms of time and efficiency. Moreover, community members can become frustrated with such delays when the need for action is pressing.

Another way that community psychologists ideally apply their values in their research is by involving partners in data collection and analysis. Insiders have a unique perspective and knowledge of community to bring to qualitative research and may be seen by others as having a more legitimate role to play in asking questions. Yet, numerous challenges arise in implementing this practice.

First, in the USA, federal regulations make it difficult for university research teams to involve members outside the university in research activities (e.g. data collection, data analysis). All research team members must be certified in human subjects research by the university oversight board. This makes it difficult for community-based researchers to partner with community members in these activities because it precludes the possibility of publishing data collected or analyzed by 'unapproved' community members in academic journals. Therein lies the obvious dilemma because without these publications or the privileges of tenure, researchers may not be able to continue their change efforts in community.

Community psychologists navigate these challenges in different ways, some opting to make clear distinctions between their academic research for publication and their involvement in action research for the community. Others choose not to partner with community members in this process, but in other project activities. When members have not been collaborators in analysis of the data, community psychologists will use member checks to ensure that community members have a way of voicing dissenting views and offering new meanings. However, this falls short of ideal because the community's lack of direct access to the data can reinforce power differentials and the image of the researcher as expert – both of which clash with community psychology values. In the end, values, as well as the skills and interests community members bring to the project, and other resource demands determine how community psychologists approach decisions in these areas.

CONCLUSION

Community psychology has much to gain by further employing qualitative methods in the effort to make social change. As we illustrated above, qualitative research methods can be key to the integration of community psychology values and aims by balancing process with outcome. In this way, researchers can adhere to values in the research process while achieving real change in human lives and conditions.

For the future of community psychology and qualitative methods, we advocate two directions. First, more research and action should be devoted to understanding the dynamics of power. Although much attention has been given to the process of empowerment, not enough is known about the substance of power itself, and how it works. Such a complex and varied subject lends itself to qualitative research methods.

Second, we advocate the integration of more participatory action research via qualitative methods. To do this, we must as members of the research community attend not only to the needs of our community partners, but also to our own institutional boundaries and constraints. The standard protocol for acceptable empirical research often does not make room for diverse voices. We must work to make the equal participation of 'non-experts' just as legitimate in the construction of knowledge through research.

Notes

1 'Wellbeing', or 'wellness', has been studied from many perspectives and is thought to be more than simply good health or the absence of pathology (Kelly, 2000; Prilleltensky and Nelson, 2000). 'Community' can be defined as a group of organisms that interact and share a common environment. In human communities, the environment may be proximal, dispersed, or virtual. In all three forms, the adhering element in community is mutual interests.

2 Our original 2007 chapter initially identified four core values and we believe diversity and multiculturalism, and psychological sense of community must also be considered prominent core values that appear frequently in qualitative research in community psychology.

3 Community psychologists have frequently discussed philosophies of science in specific conference sessions, on the American Psychological Association Division listserv and in other venues. The debate has often been heated, and has created important opportunities for collective reflection.

4 Terms and values such as 'empowerment', or 'community, wellness, and ecology', or 'strengths' may be overused, ambiguous, and frequently coopted for vague rhetorical purposes. They may lack consensus as to definitions and measures. Yet there is also complexity, conceptual clarity, scientific rigor, and strong empirical support associated with each of those terms (Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995; Jamner and Stokols, 2000; Kelly, 2000; Maton et al., 2004; Levine et al., 2005). Community psychologists tend to find real and useful 'pearls' in murky waters.

5 Here it is important to note that the researchers did not include mention of any process of member checking of their findings, an expected practice within community psychology. However, due to the robustness of included extracts, we maintained this article as an exemplar of quality analysis.

6 Psychology in other countries does not appear to share this bias, at least not to the same degree.

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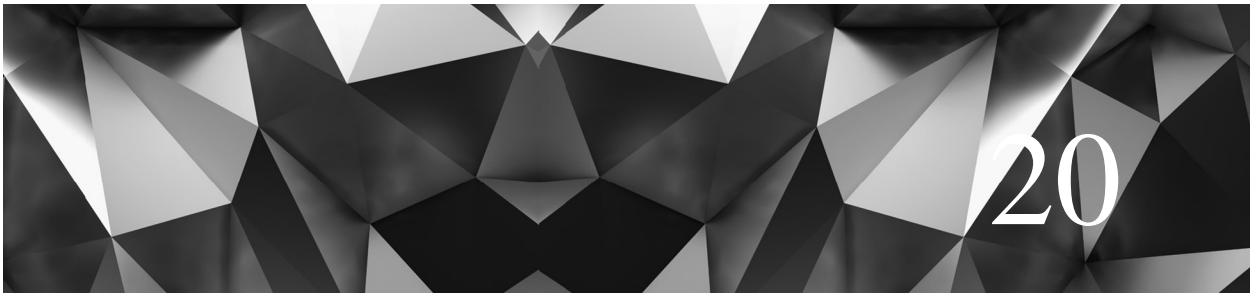

Social Representations

Uwe Flick and Juliet Foster

INTRODUCTION

Since its inception and elaboration by Moscovici (1961, 1963) over fifty years ago, the theory of social representations has become an important framework for researchers all over the world. 'Social Representations' is neither a label for a methodological approach nor for a particular method. The term 'Social Representations' denominates a research perspective, which originates broadly (although not exclusively) from social psychology, but has also been adopted in other areas of research, including health psychology, education and developmental psychology. The first study that both defined and described social representations (Moscovici, 2008[1]) focused on understandings of psychoanalysis, and was a quantitative content analysis of the press combined with a representative survey. From the outset, then, social representations theory has also incorporated a more experimental tradition of methods (see Flick et al., 2015, for more discussion). However, very early, a qualitative tradition of social representations research also developed with Herzlich's (1968/1973) study of representations of health, based on interviews with a small but focused sample. Consequently, the research perspective of social representations is not necessarily linked to qualitative research, and to assume this would be as much of a mistake as to see it as a method in and of itself. However, for many issues studied from this perspective, qualitative research is more appropriate than other approaches. Simultaneously, the theory of social representations can be a fruitful framework for conceptualizing and doing qualitative research in psychology.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given its broad and deliberately ambitious theoretical scope, social representations theory is not a methodologically prescriptive theory. Although this is intentional, the theory's methodological polytheism was an early source of criticism (Jahoda, 1988). Although some early attempts were made to operationalize the theory and give advice on how to 'do' social representations research (see Breakwell and Canter, 1993), Bauer and Gaskell (1999) rightly point out that, at the point at which they were writing, there was little guidance for any researcher on the implications of the theory for empirical research. The situation has now changed (see Flick, 2001; Wagner and Hayes, 2005; Bauer and Gaskell, 2008; Flick et al., 2015), but this does not mean that there is a consensus on the 'right' way to research social representations, nor indeed agreement over whether such a thing would be

desirable in the first place. Many researchers continue to employ the theory in more quantitative studies; Moscovici (1988) and Wagner and Hayes (2005) cite several examples of experimental studies using the theory. However, it is our contention that there is an important reciprocal relationship between qualitative research and social representations theory, in that both have a lot to gain from one another.

In this chapter we will firstly highlight some of the main points of the theory, and its historical context, in relation to qualitative research. We will then move on to consider the methodological implications of the theory, focusing in particular on some of the benefits afforded by the theory from a methodological point of view, and providing some examples from our own work and that of other researchers in the area. Finally, we will consider some of the challenges for the qualitative researcher using social representations theory that are still to be addressed, and draw some tentative conclusions for the future.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The theory of social representations was a response to what has been termed the 'crisis' in social psychology (Farr, 1996), when theorists struggled to determine what the focus of study within the discipline was, and, perhaps more importantly, what it should be (Moscovici, 1972). It represented an attempt to take the 'social' seriously once again, moving away from the more individualistic focus of, for example, attitude theory (Jaspars and Fraser, 1984), while at the same time not ignoring the 'psychic phenomena' of the individual (Moscovici, 1998: 214). Drawing upon a number of concepts, including Durkheim's (1898) notion of the collective representation (Farr, 1998), and the work of Lévy-Bruhl, Piaget and Vygotsky (Moscovici, 1998), Moscovici sought to elaborate a social psychology of knowledge (Duveen, 2000), a theory that takes common-sense understanding seriously (Moscovici and Marková, 1998), considering its development and elaboration in social contexts, and its purpose in everyday life. The diversity of 'founding fathers' of the theory is notable, and perhaps makes the variety of methods used in social representations studies (some of which have been less associated with psychology) less surprising.

Numerous excellent, and more comprehensive, descriptions of the theory have been published in the last 50 years (e.g. Moscovici, 1973, 1984a, 1988; Farr, 1987; Jovchelovitch, 1996; Marková, 1996; Duveen, 2000; Sammut et al., 2015). However, it is important here to consider certain key features of the theory that make it of particular relevance to researchers using qualitative methods. In particular, we will focus on issues of meaning and social context in theory and research.

Meaning and interpretation are often said to lie at the heart of qualitative research (Bauer et al., 2000; Flick, 2014). They are also concepts that are central to social representations theory: the theory maintains that common sense or lay understandings are all too often denigrated and seen as inferior to other forms of knowledge, such as scientific or expert knowledge (Foster, 2003b). Instead of seeking to place common-sense understanding in a hierarchy of knowledge, social representations theory takes as its starting point the notion that common-sense knowledge provides social groups with ways of understanding the world around them, and of communicating about it (Moscovici, 1973). Through the twin cognitive processes of anchoring and objectification (Moscovici, 1984a), individuals within a social group can make sense of unfamiliar concepts, by associating them with existing ideas and images.

Definition of Social Representations

Moscovici (1998: 243, emphasis added) defined social representations along a constructionist trajectory in stating:

> what defines a social representation. If this meaning should be pregnant, it must be that it corresponds to a certain recurrent and comprehensive model of images, beliefs and symbolic behaviours. Envisaged in this way, *statically*, representations appear similar to *theories* which order around a theme (mental illnesses are contagious, people are what they eat, etc.) a series of propositions which enable things or persons to be classified, their characters described, their feelings and actions to be explained, and so on. Further, the 'theory' contains a series of examples which illustrate concretely the values which introduce a hierarchy and their corresponding models of action … In fact, from the dynamic point of view social representations appear as a 'network' of ideas, metaphors and images, more or less loosely tied together, and therefore more mobile and fluid than theories. It seems that we cannot get rid of the impression that we have an 'encyclopaedia' of such ideas, metaphors and images which are connected one to another according to the necessity of the

> kernels, the *core beliefs* … stored separately in our collective memory and around which these networks form.

There are two crucial points within the way that the theory deals with this process of meaning-making, both of which emphasise the artificiality and indeed futility of trying to differentiate between the individual and the social (Moscovici, 1973, 1998; Jovchelovitch, 2007). Firstly, representing is a social process, that is, it is undertaken by individuals within a social group, in order to create and maintain a shared 'code' (Moscovici, 1973: xiii). Representations are not created anew, or as an individual enterprise: rather, they are represented, as members of social groups draw on existing, socially shared stocks of knowledge. Secondly, social representations, once developed and elaborated, come to constitute our reality: they are the ways in which we come to order and understand the world, and can become taken for granted. We cease to see them as the way we represent and understand a concept, and begin to see them *as* the concept itself (Marková, 1996); as such we are socialized by our representations (Moscovici and Hewstone, 1983). However, while representations develop and exist against a background of historically constrained social knowledge (Rose et al., 1995), they are created and sustained by a thinking society (Moscovici, 1988), thereby balancing the influence of the individual and the social.

The social nature of social representations theory becomes even clearer when we consider the role of the social group within the theory. Moscovici moved on from Durkheim's theory of collective representations in elaborating his ideas because of a conviction that in an increasingly fractionated and diverse society, few collective representations, shared by the whole of society, could survive[2]. Instead, different social groups could draw on their own histories and understanding to create representations that differed from one another. It is for this reason that Bauer and Gaskell (1999) maintain that research into social representations must study particular 'natural groups', that is, individuals who share a common project with regards to a representational object. Moscovici's (2008) work on the representations of psychoanalysis held by three different groups (Catholics, urban liberals, communists) provides the perfect example here: Catholic ideas of psychoanalysis drew on the image of confession to understand the psychoanalytic session, differing, therefore, from communist ideas and so on. Gillespie (2008) furthers consideration of this as he develops the idea of alternative representations and semantic barriers: different groups are not unaware of other representations of a particular object, but engage in various strategies to maintain their own ideas in the face of these alternatives. This recognition, and indeed celebration, of the multiplicity of perspectives and voices within a society is another aspect that social representations theory shares with many approaches within qualitative research. The researcher using social representations theory seeks to elicit, examine and understand this multiplicity of perspectives in their own social context. This is also important because representations do not merely exist within the heads of the individuals who subscribe to them, or within the conversations that members of a social group might have: instead, they are exhibited, reinforced and developed in our social surroundings, in architecture (Foster, 2014a), in routines and practices (Foster, 2007), and in social structures such as 'clans, churches, social movements, families, clubs etc', (Moscovici, 1998: 216). Qualitative approaches allow a closer consideration of this multiplicity of factors involved in social life, and in social understanding.

METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS THEORY FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

What, then, are the implications for doing qualitative research if we adopt the perspective of social representations theory? As already mentioned, a variety of methods, both qualitative and quantitative, have been employed. However, we argue that certain qualitative methods are more appropriate in many cases of social representations research, although, as is universally the case, choice of methods must be driven by, and grounded in the research questions (Gaskell and Bauer, 2000; Flick, 2014).

Moscovici has made several important points regarding methodology and social representations that are of relevance here: firstly, early on in his elaboration of the concerns that led him to develop the theory of social representations he highlighted the problems of an over-reliance on student populations in psychological research, and pointed out that social psychological research was often too focused on a particular group in terms of nationality, class, age and political leanings (Moscovici, 1972). He has also voiced concerns regarding the possibility of studying representations, in all their richness and complexity, in laboratory experiments (Moscovici and Marková, 1998). The dangers of failing to consider wider

context have perhaps been illustrated in the recent highly publicised failure to replicate many social psychological experiments (Aarts et al., 2015). Moscovici (1984a, 1988) instead draws attention to the value of observation and of studying conversation in its social context. In conversation with Ivana Marková (Moscovici and Marková, 1998), he maintains that creativity in research is crucial, especially for the development of a field. Indeed, one need not confine oneself as a researcher to the work and methods associated with a particular field: other subjects, art and literature might have a lot to impart to any researcher (Moscovici, 1972). Some studies of social representations have indeed drawn upon both these areas in more detail (e.g. Chombart de Lauwe (1971) on representations of childhood in literature and De Rosa (1987) on mental illness in art). More recently, Howarth has used art and photography in her work on representations of ethnicity and racism, both to elicit representations (Howarth, 2007) and in work with communities who are positioned in certain ways, challenging and changing representations that can be damaging and disturbing (Howarth, 2011; Howarth et al., 2014).

Methodological Rules for Studying Social Representations

Moscovici (1984a) also suggested some methodological guidelines for studying social representations. Although it can be assumed that it was not qualitative research that guided his own research interests, these suggestions can be easily linked to the methodological discussions in qualitative research.

The first refers to the genesis of social representations: Moscovici maintains that any study should take this into account, and that 'when studying a representation, we should always try to discover the unfamiliar feature which motivated it and which it has absorbed'. He maintains it is particularly important that the development of such a feature be observed from the moment it emerges in the social sphere (Moscovici, 1984a: 28). This can be approached in different ways. One way is to use participant observation in order to analyse the process of making a new phenomenon familiar and of integrating it into daily practices or routines. If this is inappropriate, given that many phenomena already exist and their relevance and meaning have already been established, this programmatic suggests that a social representations study should retrace, at least retrospectively, the emergence and influence of a theory, a cultural object, etc. This procedure can be actualized by asking (a certain group of) people to tell the story of a phenomenon or their version of this story to achieve thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973) of the object of interest. It may also be possible to trace the development of a representation as the public first becomes aware of a new phenomenon (or an older phenomenon being framed in a new way) via analysis of media, interviews and other means: studies of early discussions of HIV/AIDS (see Joffe, 1999), of biotechnology (Gaskell and Bauer, 2001), and of assisted reproduction (Zadeh, 2014) are all good examples of this approach. A retrospective consideration of the media and other archive material may also allow for a consideration of the emergence of social representations of an object (see, for example, Brondi et al., 2012, on representations of the environment in relation to the Chiampo river over thirty years, or Foster (2014b) on the ideas about treating mental illness through performance in psychiatric hospitals in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries).

In addition to this, Moscovici (1984a: 52–9) puts forward

> four methodological principles: (a) to obtain material from samples of conversations normally exchanged in society … (b) to consider social representations as a means of re-creating reality … (c) that the character of social representations is revealed especially in times of crisis and upheaval, when a group or its image are undergoing a change … (d) that the people who elaborate such representations be seen as something akin to amateur 'scholars' and the groups they form as modern-day equivalents to those societies of amateur scholars that existed about a century ago.

The first principle here suggests the use of methods of conversation analysis (Heritage, 1985) to study social representations or to conduct open interviews or focus groups (Lunt and Livingstone, 1996). In both cases ways of creating a specific image of an object can be revealed. In this context, it is important to state that a lot of the discourses that are most significant for dealing with a certain cultural object in a society (and for the social representations linked to it) no longer take place in locally and physically limited interactions but in symbolic contexts. This is, for example, the case in certain professions, where members share a common background of theories and professional socialization, but do not communicate regularly in face-to-face conversations. Despite this they share common social representations that have consequences for their action and interaction.

If, accordingly, we want to study 'the unceasing babble' (Moscovici, 1984b) that produces, changes and exchanges social representations,

'natural' groups may become less important in comparison with symbolic groups, whose members are not in direct communication with one another but who influence the genesis and development of representations in society via their symbolic membership of such groups. Here it becomes difficult to apply the discourse analyses Moscovici suggests. Stimulating (or even simulating) such a discourse in interviews is a possibility, and may allow examination of the ways in which members deal with the issue under study. For example, interviewing general practitioners about the health concepts in their day-to-day practice with patients may reveal how far the current discourse about prevention, public health and health promotion has permeated the target groups and their routines, or how far they still stick to an earlier discourse (see Flick et al., 2003, 2004).

Social Representations and Discourse Analysis: Historical Debates and the Need for Coexistence

In the 1980s, in the UK especially, a linguistic or discursive turn in (social) psychology could be observed (e.g. Potter and Wetherell, 1987, 1998; Harré, 1998). This turn led to criticism of the concept of social representations (e.g. Potter and Litton, 1985; McKinlay and Potter, 1987). In this context, psychology focused on what people are talking about or on texts of such discourse. As this discursive approach has developed, it has placed even more emphasis on the need to move away from more 'artificially' elicited conversations, and instead has focused more on conversations as they occur (see, for example, Hepburn and Potter's 2011 examination of family mealtimes). In many ways this may seem to resonate with Moscovici's proposal above – that is, to study conversation in context as it happens. However, the role of cognition in this approach is more complicated, and it has been argued that in the programmatic rejection of studying cognition and in instead emphasizing discourse, aspects of knowledge, its social distribution and construction are neglected. Similarly, little attention is paid to the notion that there is something like thinking, and a subjective social construction of realities through thinking about phenomena before, after and parallel to talking about them (see Voelklein and Howarth, 2005, for an excellent review of these debates). In focusing on everyday discourse instead of studying knowledge in a purely cognitive way, discursive psychology and social representations research hold in common the rejection of cognitive psychology as a dominant or exclusive model for social psychology, and even as a major approach to social phenomena. Social representation theorists have focused on interactions and the 'unceasing babble', in which social representations are produced and transformed. Social representations theory as a research programme has always tried to integrate the study of knowledge and the study of social practices. Social representations theory shares with discursive psychology its critical stance against social cognition research but avoids its purported shortcomings regarding knowledge and thinking. In its research, social representations theory complements knowledge and thinking as inner realities with discourse and communication as outer realities. This is completed by studying social representations as objects. In this way, studying social representations arrives at a more comprehensive understanding of social phenomena than focusing purely on discourse or cognition alone allows. Thus, looking back on the debates of the 1980s, while these may have had relevance for largely British debates on the future of social psychology, they have had less impact on social representations research in other languages and cultural contexts. If we turn to what has developed since then, we see two research programmes in psychology with similar aims – to provide alternative views on how people (and societies) think and communicate about specific topics. Both focus on some sorts of knowledge – representations or discourse – both are interested in understanding how a society, certain parts of it, or (some of) its members act and react to, think, reflect and talk about a specific issue, topic or process. Both are, not exclusively but increasingly, using qualitative research to answer their research questions empirically.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN STUDYING SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS

Qualitative methods more generally are used to discover how people deal with certain issues in everyday life or institutional practices. Instead of starting from theories and testing them, 'sensitising concepts' are required for approaching the contexts to be studied. In contrast to a widespread misunderstanding, these concepts are indeed influenced by prior theoretical knowledge. But here, theories are developed from empirical studies. Knowledge and practices are studied as *local* knowledge and practices (Geertz, 1983). Research in psychology, in particular, is often seen as lacking in relevance to everyday life in that it does not pay sufficient attention to describing the facts of a

case. Instead of this, studying subjective meanings and mundane experience and practices is recommended, as is focusing on narratives (Sarbin, 1986; Bruner, 1987), discourses (Harré, 1998) and social forms of knowledge in local or group specific diversities (like social representations; Moscovici, 1998, 2000).

Collecting Qualitative Data for a Social Representations Study

Although the field is in the process of constant proliferation, we can identify several common features of qualitative research (see Flick, 2014 for more details). Qualitative research is (or should be) driven by the idea of the appropriateness of methods and theories to the issues under study, thus leading to the variety of approaches and methods that may be suitable.

Certain methods may be especially useful to researchers using social representations theory. In particular focus groups and narrative interviews might be pertinent to the study of representations in everyday conversation; ethnographic work might also be of particular relevance in terms of examining representations in their social context, as they are evoked, elicited and developed (Duveen and Lloyd, 1993; Foster, 2014c). Ethnography can examine the way that representations are shot through everyday life not only in conversation, but also in our material surroundings and social routines. It might also be an important way of bringing to the fore representations that are taken for granted, or if there is an unconscious element to representation (Käes, 1984; Joffe, 1996): in Jodelet's (1991) classic study of the representations of madness in a small French community that took in patients from the local psychiatric hospital as 'lodgers', respondents denied the idea that mental illness was contagious in any way in interview, yet Jodelet was able to observe the rituals of separation that governed their lives, as they washed the crockery and laundry of the lodgers separately from their own, suggesting a continuing fear of contagion through bodily fluids.

Considering the socially shared and constructed aspect of social representations is key to all of these methods. However, it could be argued that these more idiographic methods only allow us to examine the way that social representations are presented and developed microgenetically, that is, within the social interaction of individuals as they communicate with one another (Duveen and Lloyd, 1990). Other aspects of the development of social representations must also be considered: representations are generated through sociogenesis, that is the development, transformation and diffusion of knowledge within wider society (Duveen and Lloyd, 1990): the media, for example, play a significant role in this process and many social representations studies incorporate an analysis of the representations presented in newspapers, television and so on (Farr, 1993); research involving analysis of representations on the internet is also increasingly common, and important (Bauer and Gaskell, 1999), with internet forums regarded as particularly fertile for research into social representations (Holtz et al., 2012). A third process of social representations, ontogenesis, is the means through which individuals take on and reconstruct representations as they develop and participate in social life (Duveen and Lloyd, 1990). In order to consider this aspect of representational work, longitudinal studies (Bauer and Gaskell, 1999; Brondi et al., 2012) or developmental studies of children (Lloyd and Duveen, 1992; Howarth, 2007) can be particularly useful.

Triangulation in the Study of Social Representations

Several of these examples already highlight the fruitfulness of using different methods in one study of social representations. Such a triangulation (Flick, 1992, 2004a, 2004b, 2007) can rely on independent methods such as participant observation and document analysis, as in the case of Jodelet (1991) whose study is rightly considered paradigmatic in social representations theory. As mentioned above, in this study Jodelet used qualitative methods to analyse the existing representations of mental illness and the mentally ill in a village in France in which families hosted ex-patients as 'lodgers'. In order to find out how these representations influenced daily life in the village, Jodelet used anthropological and ethnographic methods. The study lasted four years and included the following methodological steps (for more details, see Jodelet, 1991: 18–19):

1. Participant observation at all places (streets, cafés, shops, households, and where patients work) in which mental illness becomes visible and topical in the field under study.
2. Reconstructions of the history of the 'Family Colony' through interviews with witnesses and analysis of documents about this historical development.
3. Interviews with professionals ('visiting nurses'), who support the patients in the families and with the families who are hosting patients.

4 Findings from these sources were used to develop a comprehensive questionnaire in order to survey attitudes towards different aspects of the lodging and care for the patients in the family.
5 This survey was followed again by intensive interviews with a representative sample of the population who had answered the questionnaire. These interviews aimed to deepen and validate the survey results.

Another example is the study of Lloyd and Duveen (1992), who used ethnographic methods, mainly participant observation, in school classrooms in order to study gender identities of primary school children. They employed unsystematic observations in classrooms of two schools of different types in order to develop interviews and more directed forms of observation.

Observations and field notes focused on three areas:

1 Classroom interaction, in the context of activity organized by children and by adults through which children expressed their gender identities.
2 Talk about gender in the classroom, in which children usually commented on the gender arrangements visible in their activity while adults employed gender to organize activity.
3 Institutional representations of gender offered in concerts, assemblies and exhibitions, organized by the schools for children and parents, and also representations of gender expressed in official school and local authority publications (Lloyd and Duveen, 1992: 44).

The authors showed how the social ascription and distribution of gender roles in the classrooms influences social categorization in the conduct of the class, group formation, handling of certain objects (toys, puppets, cars), the shaping of activities, the use of spaces (specific areas of the classroom, allocations and reservations of corners for boys or girls) and behavioural styles, and is expressed through these at the same time.

Triangulation may also combine different methodological approaches within one method, such as question–answer sequences and narratives in the episodic interview, as in the examples of Flick, Fischer, Walter and Schwartz (2002) and Flick, Fischer, Neuber, Walter and Schwartz (2003). Triangulation can include several qualitative methods – as in these examples – or qualitative and quantitative methods (often referred to as mixed methods) as in Bauer and Gaskell (1999). Qualitative research using different methodological approaches focuses on different aspects of social representations. Firstly, the contents of existing representations are identified and analysed: what do people – or a specific group of people – know and think about a specific issue – for example, inhabitants in a rural village about mental illness, at a given moment? Secondly, the social distribution of representations is analysed: what differences in existing knowledge and thinking about an issue can be identified and to which social differences can they be linked? Except in the case of hegemonic representations, which are widely – almost collectively – shared (Moscovici, 1988), social groups are generally distinguished and differences between their knowledge and thinking about the issue are demonstrated. Alternatively, different representations of an issue are found and the groups who hold them are identified. Sperber (1985) coined the term of analysing the 'epidemiology of representations' for such a study, but here the focus is on the content and social distribution (sharing and rejection of knowledge), and less on the frequencies or statistical distribution of knowledge. A third focus is the development of existing representations – through studying documents, Jodelet (1991) was able to show how the concepts of mental ill health or madness have developed over the years in the specific context of her study. In our study on the use of health concepts by health professionals (Flick et al., 2003) for example, we studied (1) how the professionals conceptualize issues like health, health promotion and prevention by asking for subjective definitions of these issues, (2) how these conceptualizations differed between two groups of professionals – general practitioners and home care nurses – and from those that could be found in lay populations, (3) how they used these concepts in their day-to-day practices with their clients and how their concepts have changed over the years of professional practice by analysing narratives given as part of the interviews, and (4) the relevance of these issues as part of university and professional education for these groups by analysing training plans and curriculum documents, and linked this to the subjective assessments we received from our participants about their training. The more general representation of the issues in the profession was finally (5) studied by analysing coverage in professional journals in these fields. For this, content analyses of printed media were added. All in all, such triangulation may identify content, differences, distributions, developments and contexts of a social representation. In this project, we no longer focus on the social representation of something in the whole of society as Moscovici did in his study on psychoanalysis in France (2008).

Instead, specific parts of society are identified as relevant for the research question of the study and the representations held within these parts of society are studied in greater detail and differentiation. For these purposes, use of qualitative methods and in particular of multiple qualitative methods has become increasingly important in the study of social representations.

Analysing Qualitative Data in a Social Representations Study

Some of what has been said on the subject of the collection of qualitative data in a social representations study similarly applies to data analysis. In concrete terms, which specific methods should be regarded as appropriate and used for analysing the data depends on what is being studied. However, we should distinguish here between the concrete procedures (or methods), which are applied to the analysis of fragments of data (see the later part of this chapter for examples) and the analytic attitude taken in using them. If we take the suggestions for analysing qualitative data made by Strauss (1987) and Strauss and Corbin (1998), we find different procedures for how to code the data collected from interviews, focus groups or participant observation. These procedures go from a more open and exploratory approach (open coding) to more focused ones intending to give the data and analysis more structure (axial and selective coding). These techniques can in principle be useful for breaking down the data (as was the intention in Strauss's works) in a social representations study, too. However, the analytic attitude of Strauss and his colleagues is to develop a theory of an issue, which has, up to that point, not been understood, explained and theorized in a satisfying way. A prominent example is interaction with and about people dying in hospitals (Glaser and Strauss, 1965). In pursuing this aim, there are normally no a priori assumptions about groups (in a field or a society), nor the idea that there are differences in the representations of that issue to be found through comparing the different groups. Thus, the intention of a grounded theory study is to develop a concept and a theory around this concept from the empirical material. In a social representations study, the intention is to examine any differences between social groups in what they know about a specific issue – in the representations of this issue they hold. Sometimes this is focused on one specific group, which is implicitly or explicitly opposed to other groups that are not studied. For example we compare the representations of health and ageing for two groups (doctors and nurses) and the comparison of both is intended to show the social quality of such a representation. Alternatively, we pick a specific group – e.g. homeless adolescents – and analyse their representations of health and compare the results with what is known from other studies about other groups' representations of that issue, for example average adolescents.

The difference on a methodological level, which we should keep in mind, is the analytic attitude: data analysis (and often previous data collection) in a social representations study is driven by a comparative perspective with a focus on different social groups – families and lodgers in the case of Jodelet (1991), girls and boys in Duveen and Lloyd (1993) for example. This comparative perspective makes it more difficult to apply, for example, the analytic procedures suggested within grounded theory research, which do not imply such group-related comparisons. Therefore, modifications seem necessary in some cases. Instead of theoretical coding in the sense of Strauss, Flick (2014) therefore suggests the use of thematic coding in social representations studies. In the interpretation of the material, thematic coding is applied as a multistage procedure with respect to the comparability of the analyses. The first step addresses the cases involved (for example, interviewees coming from different groups), which are interpreted in a series of case studies. As a preliminary orientation, a short description of each case will be produced, which is continuously re-checked and modified if necessary during the further interpretation of the case. This case description includes several elements. The first is a statement which is typical of the interview – the 'motto' of the case. A short description should include information about the person with regard to the research question (e.g. age, profession, number of children, whatever is relevant to the issue under study). Finally, the central topics mentioned by the interviewee concerning the research issue are summarized. After finishing the case analysis, this case profile forms part of the results, perhaps in a revised form. Then – and different from Strauss's (1987) procedure – a deepening analysis of the single case, which pursues several aims, should be carried out. The meaningful relations in the way the respective person deals with the topic of the study should be preserved, which is why a case study is done for all cases. In the analysis, a system of categories is developed for the single case. In the further elaboration of this system of categories (similar to Strauss), first open and then selective coding is applied. Selective coding here aims less at developing a grounded core category across all cases than at generating thematic domains and categories for

the single case first. After the first case analyses, the developed categories and thematic domains linked to the single cases should be cross-checked. A thematic structure results from this cross-check, which forms the basis for the analysis of further cases, in order to increase their comparability. The result of this process is a case-oriented display of the way the case specifically deals with the issue of the study, including constant topics (e.g. strangeness of technology), which can be found in the viewpoints across different domains of everyday life (e.g. work, leisure, household).

The developed thematic structure also serves for comparing cases and groups, i.e. for elaborating correspondences and differences between the various groups in the study. Thus, the social distribution of perspectives on the issue under study are analysed and assessed. After the case analyses have shown, for example, that the subjective definition of technology is an essential thematic domain for understanding technological change, it is then possible to compare the definitions of technology and the related coding from all cases. From this comparison, it is possible to link the data analysis more closely to the concept of social representation, not only to study the contents of representations, but also their differences and distribution across social groups and contexts.

This analytic attitude should be taken into account when importing analytic techniques from other approaches, and it should lead to modifications if necessary. Of course, the modification discussed here as an example should only be seen as that: other modifications may be more useful depending on the research question.

The Role of the Researcher

Although it has not always been the case, the role of the researcher can, and should, also be acknowledged and explored within social representations theory (Howarth et al., 2004). Given the multiplicity of perspectives within society, and the way that our representations shape our identities (Duveen, 2001), it is impossible for the researcher to step outside his or her own representations when engaging in any research. Instead, these representations must be acknowledged and examined in an attempt to ensure that differences between researcher and participant representations are openly recognized (Howarth, 2002). Indeed, from a social representations perspective, such divergence between researcher and participant perspective can in itself become an important research tool, in that it brings taken-for-granted knowledge to the fore, and challenges assumptions and accepted definitions on all sides. Moscovici (1988) discusses the way that certain representations can become more obvious when they come into contact with one another. In keeping with many ethnographic approaches, then, it is useful for the researcher to present him or herself as a learner in the research situation (Howarth et al., 2004), interested in the perspective of the Other, but also capable of bringing novel interpretations to the situation, to be openly and fully discussed with participants. This reflexivity is an important part of ensuring the quality of qualitative analysis in social representations research. Indeed, triangulation of researchers is another way in which this issue can be approached (Flick, 2007): multiple researchers bring different perspectives on research questions, data collection and analysis, and this may also help to challenge the researcher's own representations more critically.

Using Qualitative Methods for Studying Social Representations Step-By-Step

In summarizing the points discussed above, we can identify several steps to using qualitative methods in studying social representations as in Box 20.1.

THE USE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN STUDYING SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS: SOME EXAMPLES

At this point, it is perhaps most instructive to discuss some concrete examples of qualitative work that has employed the theory of social representations as its theoretical and methodological perspective in order to illustrate some of the points made above. Given our own interests, many of these examples pertain to representations of health and illness, and an attempt has been made to include a variety of studies from the past few decades of social representations research in order to allow comparison.

Social Representations of Health and Illness

Health and illness have been a focus in the field of social representations research right from the

Box 20.1 Using qualitative methods for studying social representations step-by-step (Flick, 2014; Foster, 2007)

1 Identify an issue for your study.
2 Develop a research question for your study.
3 Define the issue the social representations of which you want to study.
4 Consider who or what are expected to be the carriers of the social representations?

   a) Mostly: which groups are to be expected to hold potentially different representations of that issue?
   b) Sometimes: which objects (documents, cultural products) represent that issue?

5 Create a research design which adopts a comparative perspective (on different groups for example).
6 Choose a sampling strategy, which should aim to find members of the groups mentioned above.
7 Select a method, or a combination of methods, for data collection which is able to address the parts of a social representation to be studied: forms of knowledge in a (for example episodic) interview; practices in participant observation; interactions in focus groups, etc.
8 Choose a method for analysing the data which is able to encompass the analytic attitude of social representations, or modify an existing technique for that purpose.
9 Write up your analysis with the focus on showing the differences in the representations among the groups.
10 Reflect on your own role in studying this issue and in relation to the people and fields you have studied.

beginning, as the study of Herzlich (1968/1973) shows. Herzlich interviewed 80 people from social groups differing in education and profession about their ideas of health and illness. Any claim about the representativeness of this sample was given up in favour of more flexibility and depth in collecting the data through open-ended interviews. Different from Moscovici (2008), the aim of following the passage of one specific theory through society was abandoned. In fact, no one theory is used as a starting point, nor is the passage of parts of the theory reconstructed through media analyses. Instead, the study focused on the subjective aspects of the genesis and meaning of social representations.

The most impressive results this study produced are comprised in two typologies, one of everyday conceptions of health and one of such concepts of illness (see Table 20.1).

Table 20.1 Typology of health and illness representations

Health conceptions	*Illness conceptions*
Health-in-a-vacuum	Illness as destructive
Reserve of health	Illness as liberator
Equilibrium	Illness as occupation

Source: Herzlich, 1973

There has been a considerable amount of research in the tradition of this study, in which similar types of health and illness representations have been found. Much of the research in this field focuses on the 'normal population': what are the representations of health and illness of different groups in the normal population; how are they distributed across these groups? A different approach is to study social representations from the edges: to identify specific groups and to study the representations of health and illness held by them. Two examples of this will be considered.

Flick et al. (2002, 2003), and Flick, Walter, Fischer, Neuber and Schwartz (2004) interviewed health professionals to examine their representations of health and of ageing. The background of this study was a shift in the theoretical orientation at the level of sciences and health politics. This shift went from illness and curing to health and health promotion, and especially to prevention. The research question of this study was: how far did health professionals in their day-to-day practice and in their knowledge adopt this shift; how did they represent health and health promotion as a part or orientation of their professional work? A general representation of these issues could be found and many statements were made about how these concepts orient the practical work of health professionals. Analysing the obstacles preventing these professionals from making health orientation, prevention and health promotion a focus within their work – at all or to a greater extent – was

a second step. These obstacles were located in professionals' training, in the framework of the health system and so on. It was therefore possible to analyse representations of possible (and impossible) changes in the health services in the context of a wider orientation of (New) Public Health.

Flick and Röhnsch (2006, 2007, 2008), studied health concepts and practices of homeless adolescents. Here, we applied our theoretical framework and methodological approach to a group of people on the fringes of our society and analysed how they are concerned with health as an issue and a problem and how they use the resources of the health system when they face health problems. We also examined the barriers that confront them when searching for support in the health system and the informal and formal networks they use instead or in addition. Again, we found that the discourse about health, health promotion and prevention was represented in a specific group – somehow at the other end of a range in terms of privilege and status compared to the participants in our former study. Such studies stand in the tradition of Herzlich who in her research demonstrated the way that concepts like health and illness are used by the interviewees to interpret their own relations to society and the environment: 'Health and illness thus appear as a mode of interpretation of society by the individual, and as a mode of relation of the individual to society' (Herzlich, 1973: 139).

Social Representations of Mental Ill Health

Foster (2001, 2003a, 2007) examined the way that clients of the mental health services understand mental health and illness, a topic somewhat overlooked until relatively recently (Rogers et al., 1993). The theory of social representations provided a useful way of framing the study for a number of reasons.

First, as already highlighted, it is a theory that does not seek to denigrate common-sense understanding, but rather seeks to understand it in context, and to consider the purposes that it serves for those who subscribe to it. It does not start from the notion that some forms of knowledge are more valuable than others, or seek to organize forms of knowledge in any kind of hierarchy. This is a particularly useful point when considering knowledge held by groups who have traditionally been stigmatized and devalued in society, as holders of what Foucault (1980) terms 'subjugated knowledge'. This is perhaps especially the case in issues of mental health, but it has also been argued that within issues of health in general, with their focus on the biomedical, and its preference for professional interpretations, there is little room for patient narratives (Kleinman, 1980). Social representations theory, however, reverses this trend.

Second, the 'social' nature of social representations theory lends itself to this kind of study. Representations are produced, reiterated, negotiated and employed by social groups, within their social contexts. As Flick (1998) has maintained, health is not an individual issue, but rather involves elements of the individual, the institutional, the community, the societal and of professionalization. Social representations theory acknowledges, and allows for this: it provides a framework for considering the way in which people make sense of their own health and illness, and the socially shared stocks of knowledge that they draw on in order to do this, changing and developing their ideas as their experiences and interactions with others change and develop.

Foster (2001, 2003a, 2007) drew on these aspects of social representations theory in a qualitative, multi-method study of client understanding, designed to examine representations in context. She used ethnographic work and narrative-style interviewing in three different mental health services (two day centres and one acute ward) and also content analysis of material produced by clients or former clients in four newsletters produced by national mental health organizations, thereby seeking to access representations at both the microgenetic and sociogenetic levels.

The data that were collected (interviews, ethnographic notes, newsletter articles) were then analysed with the aid of the Atlas.ti (www.atlasti.de) computer-aided qualitative data analysis program. Foster's preference for this stemmed from the fact that it does not impose any structure onto the data a priori (Kelle, 2000), and therefore could be said to be of particular use when a researcher is interested in studying social representations openly whilst maintaining an awareness of how our own preconceptions affect the analysis of data. However, one of the aims of this study was to examine the similarities and differences that exist between client understanding of mental ill health and representations held by the public and by professionals. While at the time of this study there was a relative paucity of studies within academia examining client understanding (Rogers et al., 1993; Foster, 2003a), there have been numerous studies examining the beliefs about mental illness held by the public and professionals (see Foster, 2007, for a more detailed discussion). Consequently, it made substantive sense to develop a coding frame that allowed

for a comparison with these studies: a coding frame was therefore developed that was partially deductive, thereby looking for certain themes that have proved important in public or professional understanding (such as violence to others), and partially inductive, thereby allowing alternative or additional representations to emerge from the data during the analysis (control within mental health problems was an interesting example of this kind of theme). All the data was coded twice by the same author at different points to ensure that the coding frame had been used consistently, and to allow for the fact that the analysis of qualitative data is very much a cyclical process (Bauer, 2000). Once all the data had been coded twice, the relationships between the themes that emerged from the data was then examined in greater depth, as were the similarities and differences between the different kinds of data.

To some extent, the theoretical, practical and ethical concerns governing the choice of the multiple qualitative methods in this study overlapped. Undertaking ethnographic work in each location allowed researcher and participants to get to know each other better, facilitating interviewing, or providing a different forum for participants who find the idea of an interview too threatening: again, within a mental health context, this was important, as for many participants interviews carried negative connotations of interaction with psychiatrists.

Taking these approaches, and the perspective of social representations theory, highlighted some interesting issues. Using ethnography did indeed allow access to wider representations within the mental health services. In particular, it became clear that clients engaged in their own projects (Bauer and Gaskell, 1999) in relation to their mental ill health, and often struggled to assert these in the face of professional ideas and institutional barriers to them taking further control. The ethnographic observation of the organization of the weekly ward round – a meeting between each patient and the professionals involved in his or her care – at the inpatient ward provides an informative example of this. Observing this situation allowed the researcher to see how institutional routine contributed to the patients' tension and sense of powerlessness, as they waited their turn, not knowing when, or even if, they would be seen. The patients also confirmed this in what was said informally during these waits: some likened the encounters to being sent to see the headmaster at school, or talked about how they worried about where to sit and so on. The subtleties of these power relations and their role in clients' representations would have been hard to grasp using any other method.

Interviews allowed the researcher to supplement, check and challenge observational data, once again acknowledging the multiplicity of perspectives inherent in social representations theory. Interviews were broadly narrative in style, inviting clients to tell the story of how they had come to be at a particular service, thus allowing them the freedom to tell their story: narratives and social representations have an important, albeit complicated, reciprocal relationship (Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000). Through the stories that clients told about their experiences and developing interpretations of these, they further demonstrated their engagement in projects with regard to their mental health. As such, clients were working to make sense of their experiences, and to draw on this and the experience and interpretations of others, especially other clients, to engage with their mental ill health. Consequently clients had very firm ideas about what helped and did not help in their projects, and their representations of mental ill health were meaningful practically: rather than holding them in the abstract, they employed and developed them in their everyday lives and interactions with professionals, other clients, family and friends and members of the public.

Representational projects were also in evidence in the mental health service user literature that was analysed in the project. First, drawing on this literature allowed an appreciation of how far clients of the mental health services share their experiences, and develop representations about mental ill health not only in the smoking rooms and lounges of mental health services and user groups, but also in a more community-wide, even national, context. This suggests that, contrary to some suggestions (Wagner, 1995), mental health service users draw on socially shared knowledge to understand their experiences, constructing new representations of mental ill health in the process, rather than relying on idiosyncratic explanations or on the ideas of mental ill health subscribed to by the general public or by mental health professionals. Second, it reinforces the importance of the developing mental health service user movement as a forum for sharing, promoting and challenging ideas about mental health and illness.

Other Examples

Given the increasingly long history of social representations theory, the list of qualitative methods employed is lengthening. Many interesting examples involve the application of social

representations theory to social issues and societal problems. Three examples of this will be considered: Howarth's work on representations and racism, Jovchelovitch's work on favela communities in Brazil, and Joffe's work on representations of risk in earthquake zones.

Howarth's work has centred upon representations of race and culture for some time, and several of her projects have considered the way that race is constructed and contested by children, young people and schools (see, for example, Howarth, 2006, 2007). Most recently, she has worked with community arts organizations who run workshops for children and young people from black and mixed heritage backgrounds. Howarth (2011) uses her experiences as a participant observer in these workshops and draws on a wealth of material, including interviews, observations and artefacts such as photographs and weaving produced in the workshop to examine how the participants view themselves, but also (and perhaps most significantly) how they believe they are viewed by others. Howarth et al. (2014) argue that such innovative methods allow for a more in-depth consideration of the dynamic process of acculturation.

Similarly, Jovchelovitch's project in the Brazilian favelas draws on social representations theory and employs a variety of methods within a community context. Jovchelovitch and Priego-Hernández (2013) detail a lengthy and complex project which involved multiple partners, including two grass-roots organizations within the favelas themselves, AfroReggae and CUFA (Central Única das Favelas). Through interviews, a survey, observation, construction of life stories and analysis of particular projects, the study examined the representations that people living in the favelas have of themselves and of the lifeworld of the favelas, whilst also examining the way that AfroReggae and CUFA were resisting and challenging dominant representations found elsewhere centred on the violence and drugs found in the favelas. In conjunction with this, interviews were carried out with important external observers, including politicians and the police. Again, the importance of representations in the construction and maintenance of identity is a central part of the study, as is the notion that communities can communally resist negative representations that are imposed on them externally.

Joffe has collaborated with academics from other disciplines in examining the approaches taken to earthquake risk in different communities (Joffe et al., 2013). While not methodologically unusual in employing interviews and questionnaires in three different settings (Seattle, Osaka and Izmir), the study is notable for its use of social representations theory in a highly applied real-world setting. Joffe's analysis showed that, contrary to some assumptions, adjustment was not related to awareness of the risk of earthquakes. Instead, other factors such as fatalistic beliefs explained the different approaches taken by individuals living in different cultures. The centrality of the multiplicity of understandings that are possible, and how these relate to social and cultural backgrounds, is reinforced by this study.

CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

The Current Situation

A wide variety of research is now going on which uses social representations theory in combination with qualitative research. This can be found not only in the contexts mentioned in this chapter (social psychology in the UK, the USA, Germany and France) but perhaps even more so beyond these traditional fields of social representations research. On the one hand we find great enthusiasm for this concept in research in Latin American social psychology (e.g. Krause, 2003), with numerous publications in Spanish and Portuguese. On the other hand, we can also see a wider spread of the approach of using qualitative research to study social representations into fields beyond social psychology. Here we find research in developmental psychology (following Duveen and Lloyd, 1990) extending into cultural psychology (see many contributions to the journal *Culture & Psychology*). There is also considerable research activity going on in areas of health psychology (see the contributions of Joffe, 2002; Murray and Flick, 2002; Flick, 2003). In particular, Claudine Herzlich's (1968/1973) study is still a cornerstone in research interested in lay concepts of health and illness in fields like medical sociology, public health and nursing – even if the link to the theory is not made explicit or in some cases quantitative methods are used. Social representations theory, in the combination with qualitative research, has therefore had a major impact on a variety of fields and contexts. This combination is still not oriented towards a specific method. Interviews, the use of focus groups or participant observation and the analysis of documents are all still common in these fields.

What Next?

Inevitably, there are still questions left unanswered when we consider not only how we should do qualitative work using the theory of social representations, but also what we should then do with that research. Much of the recent work discussed in the latter part of this chapter has taken a community-based, collaborative or participatory approach to research, drawing on arguments that were made a few years ago calling for more of this approach within social representations research (Campbell and Jovchelovitch, 2000; Howarth et al., 2004). Similarly, they are grounded in real-world societal issues (Howarth et al., 2004), perhaps mindful of Moscovici's (1972) criticism that social psychology needed to emerge from the academic ghetto and address social problems that were relevant in a manner which was also relevant. However, this is not without its challenges. Firstly, it stands in contrast to other social representations studies that have aimed to take something of a 'disinterested attitude', expressly recommended by Bauer and Gaskell (1999: 179), who maintain that representations should be understood without intervention. In some ways, given social representations theory's commitment to seeing all forms of knowledge as equal and relevant, this is not surprising: to imply that representations might be changed as a result of research, risks subscribing once again to the idea of a hierarchy of knowledge, with some forms of understanding as incorrect and in need of alteration by more knowledgeable and superior others. This position is clearly troubling, but it is not the same as admitting that representations can be harmful, detrimental to those that subscribe to them, or serve to keep others in a subjugated position (Jovchelovitch, 2001; Howarth et al., 2004). However, as this chapter has demonstrated, the theory of social representations has much more potential for projects such as this, although it remains to be seen how far they might be actualized.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Social representations can be seen as a genuinely psychological framework for studying phenomena and issues which are addressed by qualitative research. Mostly qualitative research uses methods and relies on theoretical assumptions and theories that stem from other disciplines such as sociology or cultural anthropology. Social representations theory and the research done in this field outline a specifically psychological approach to using ethnographic methods, analysing everyday knowledge and processes of social construction of reality. This is not only relevant for social psychology but other areas of psychological research, which are not (only) interested in laboratory studies of abstract phenomena, but practically relevant issues of social problems. As the last part of this chapter has shown, a social representations approach can also offer a fruitful access to changing fields under study and to making practically relevant contributions.

Notes

1 Moscovici's study of psychoanalysis was first published in France in 1961. However, the first full translation in English was not published until 2008.

2 The issue of whether any collective representations continue to exist is still debated. For example, it has been argued that individualism in Western society is a collective representation in the Durkheimian sense (Farr, 1996).

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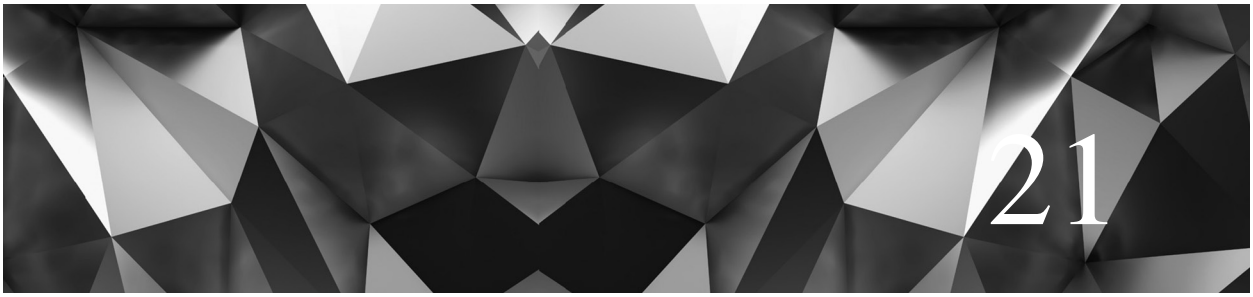


Visual Approaches: Using and Interpreting Images

Paula Reavey and Katherine Johnson

INTRODUCTION

The visual has always had a place in psychology and has been used in a range of theoretical approaches as diverse as social cognition, psychodynamics and neuropsychology. Visual images have also been used as a trigger to elicit certain responses, for example, in the use of photographs to understand physical attraction, or the use of inkblot images in the Rorschach test. Furthermore, in line with rapidly developing technology, visual images of the brain have represented attempts to pinpoint mental and physical processing. Elsewhere, in social theory and psychotherapeutic approaches, the visual occupies a significant role in meaning-making and interactional exchange; in particular, the *interpretative* capabilities of the individual and society, through a variety of media and multitudes of signs. In a similar sense, in art therapy, the use of painting and drawing can provide the means for 'vulnerable' people to tell stories about their experiences which may not otherwise be linguistically accessible, allowing therapists and clients access to new forms of understanding and interpretation (e.g. Linesch, 1994). Psychological research and practice has evidently made use of visual images in a variety of ways, yet visual methodologies have until relatively recently remained on the margins of qualitative research (Frith et al., 2005; Reavey, 2011).

One reason perhaps, for the dominance of linguistic epistemologies in qualitative psychology is the adoption of poststructuralist and post-modern theory, justified in particular readings of the work of Michel Foucault, where 'discourse' is read as the spoken or written word. Foucault (1969: 49) defines discourse as the 'practices that systematically form the objects of which we speak' and Parker and the Bolton Discourse Network (1999) suggest this entails an attention to 'wherever there is meaning'. Thus qualitative data might well include cities, gardens, non-verbal behaviour, films, photographs and paintings, and other sensory modalities including taste and smell, as well as the written and spoken word. Yet, since the 'discursive turn' in the 1970s, qualitative psychology has tended to prioritise spoken-word data and a variety of interpretive techniques used to analyse it. Most of the published qualitative research in psychology uses data based on naturalistic conversation, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, diaries, case studies, focus groups and computer-based text analysis. What these methods share in common is a focus on speech or written text, or what some linguists are now referring to as 'mono-modal' forms of discourse (Iedema, 2003; Jones, 2005). A key reason cited for the dominance

of mono-modal discourses in qualitative psychology is that visual data can be more 'ambiguous' or polysemic than sequential texts (Penn, 2000; Frith et al., 2005). In particular this raises questions regarding the validity of the researcher's interpretation of visual material, as the interpretation of it cannot always be exactly matched to the participant's verbal account (Lynn and Lea, 2005a). Qualitative psychology has always fought to be recognised as a credible approach to research within the methodological fetishism of the positivistic mainstream and this might explain an initial reluctance to embrace visual methodologies. Using visual data does require its own specific attention to issues of validity, interpretation, ethics and the relationship between the research and the researched, but it also permits a greater engagement with 'multi-modal' forms of communication in order to enrich understandings of social and psychological phenomena.

In the following sections we explore these points in detail, offering some practical and procedural guidelines for conducting visual research and discuss some of the challenges involved in interpretation, presentation, and salient ethical considerations. In the final section we present examples of how visual images have been used and interpreted in two distinct research topics. The visual images in these examples are restricted to painting and photography and are used to demonstrate the benefits and limitations of visual methodologies.

SPEECH AND WRITTEN TEXT: THE LIMITATIONS OF MONO-MODAL DISCOURSE

Unlike more mainstream (positivist) psychology's pursuit of generalisable laws, linking cause and effect and relationships between variables, qualitative researchers have tended to focus on people's meaning-making activities. As Willig (2013: 8) notes, qualitative researchers 'are interested in how people make sense of the world and how they experience events. They aim to understand what "it is like" to experience particular conditions … the quality and texture of experience, rather than the identification of cause–effect relationships'. Rather than defining research questions according to the researcher's preformed agenda, the participant occupies centre stage when it comes to the generation of meaning (though the researcher's role in this process should be fully acknowledged, in conjunction with this). However, what is understood as meaning-making is often assumed to be what we can 'hear' or 'read' (Silverman, 2015). Inviting participants to 'speak in their own voice' is common to this methodology as a way of gaining access to their thoughts, experiences or modes of accounting. We would argue that there are several reasons for this 'mono-modal' practice, including the conviction that words carry greater clarity and objectivity (Lynn and Lea, 2005a) because of their immediate recognition by other language users (shared communities of meaning), making interpretation more systematic and transparent. Another reason is the cultural prominence and value given to language in personal storytelling and personalised narratives in how people represent subjectivity and experience (Plummer, 1995, Andrews et al., 2013). There is both a cultural and professional onus on participants to capture their experience using words and for the psychologist to represent this experience in professional language, embedded as it is in its own orthodoxies (Billig, 2000).

However, it is not only methodological issues that define the centrality of the spoken and written (talk and text) word in qualitative psychology, as words can be interpreted in many different ways depending on the theoretical discipline drawn upon and its epistemological assumptions. The 'turn to language' in social psychology, for example, in the 1970s challenged mainstream psychology's treatment of language as reflective of inner mental states by emphasising the performative quality of language in the context of social relations. In other words, rather than viewing language as merely subsidiary to cognition, language is argued to be *productive* of cognition, emotion and experience more generally (Gergen, 1973; Edwards, 1997). This 'discursive turn', represented via discursive psychology (Edwards and Potter, 1992), social constructionism and some but not all versions of critical psychology more generally (Fox et al., 2009), views the central business of psychology as embedded in the language people use and the acts they perform in constructing reality. It is unsurprising, then, that language has become the dominant interpretive resource within approaches such as these, as it is positioned at the centre of human meaning-making activities and modes of interaction.

Despite this proliferation of ways of interpreting what people 'say', speech is not the only way in which people engage with and experience their world. Semiotics, the study of signs that circulate through visual images such as drawings, photographs and paintings, as well as in spoken and written language itself, is concerned with the relationship between signifiers and the signified. Structuralist writers, such as Barthes (1973, 1995), studied a range of cultural values by interrogating

visual (and linguistic) signs (e.g. a bottle of wine) and suggested that cultural ideas, such as the bourgeois construction of the relationship between wine, health, and relaxation, were communicated via the relationship between these signifiers (the particular image of the bottle) and the signified (the wine itself). For Barthes, in his earlier work at least, signs draw concepts and images together and these can serve to produce and reproduce 'myths' in society. Furthermore, signs only derive their meaning from their relationship to and difference from other signs. Accordingly, their meanings are never fixed and they can only be understood in the context of their use. Thus, in Barthes' analysis of wine, he demonstrated how the bourgeois appropriation of wine drinking altered the connotations surrounding this activity.

Linguistics, and more broadly cultural studies, have built substantially on this semiotic tradition. However, the relationship between the study of signs and people's subjective experiences has the potential to be more fully explored. In particular, Beloff (1997) points out that exploration of the visual opens up a whole range of questions and topics that would improve our psychological understanding of everyday social life. This would seem even more important as rapid advances in technology change the modes of communications we use to interact with one another. These have become increasingly influenced by digital technologies and social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, that can create and distribute visual images in rapidly decreasing timeframes.

EXPERIENCE AND MULTI-MODAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS: AFFECT, EMOTION AND SPACE

Disciplines such as human geography, social anthropology and sociology, where the 'aesthetic' is acknowledged for the fundamental part it plays in speaking to 'who we are' – our identities and the spaces we inhabit – have made good use of visual methods (Emmison and Smith, 2000; Banks and Zeitlyn, 2015; Pink, 2013). This 'multimodal' (visual and textual) orientation steers us towards analytically acknowledging that human experience is space (visual), as well as time (words) contingent. This relates both to the use of the visual in 'real-time space', through the examination of how people use the visual in 'live' social interactions; or in the context of 'finished and finite' images that can be used as an anchor for present discussions (Iedema, 2003: 30). Many researchers now recognise how visual media intercedes experience; of self, other people and the world (physical and virtual space); including our knowledge consumption, health (both mental and physical) and illness (Radley and Taylor, 2003a, 2003b; Frith and Harcourt, 2005; Mitchell et al., 2005; Silver and Reavey, 2010; Johnson, 2011), war, body-image awareness and embodiment (Burr, 2000; Nightingale and Cromby, 2000; Gillies et al., 2005), sexual activity (Jones, 2005), memory (Radley and Taylor, 2003b; Middleton and Brown, 2005; Brown and Reavey, 2015) and identity (Gleeson and Frith, 2006). Projects emerging from within psychology and allied disciplines form part of a wider objective of developing an understanding of experience and subjectivity that explicitly attends to the material/virtual spaces in which human experiences flow (Ingold, 1996; Brown and Reavey, 2015). Furthermore, the perceived failures of wholly linguistic epistemologies, to analytically attend to what many consider to be central tenets of our experience, namely how we feel our way *in the world*, have led to a renewed interest in analytical pluralism, including visual methods (Cromby, 2015).

The Rise of Affect and Emotion in Qualitative Research: Being 'Seized'

Over the past decade, the surge of interest in experiential modalities other than language alone has altered the terrain of qualitative research in psychology. Central to the criticism towards existing qualitative methods is the presumption of a wholly linguistic epistemology, which many have argued fails to capture vital aspects of our experiential landscape; namely affect, feeling and emotion (see Cromby, 2015, for an extended discussion of this problem). This 'turn to affect, emotion and feeling' as central analytical nodes of our experience of the world has necessitated a rethink of methodologies more generally. Before outlining some of the work conducted in this area, it is necessary to pause and briefly outline its theoretical foundations.

The term 'affect' has several meanings, commonly tied to specific disciplinary frameworks. Drawing on neuroscience, ecological psychology, feminist and queer theory, certain qualitative researchers are now oriented towards analyzing more of the experiential landscape – including affect and emotion. This includes attending to affect and emotion in relation to embodiment (how one feels in one's body), the physical space or setting (which may of course include virtual space – social media etc.) and the interdependency

between ourselves and other bodies and environments. Affect is not structured, but felt as an intensity and unstructured *potential* for action. Affect in Spinozist terms, is the term for the 'actions and passions' our body experiences in relation to other bodies[1]. A 'body' can be defined here as an organic or inorganic thing which acts upon us and on which we can act. To put it in James J. Gibson's terms[2], we might say that affect is the 'feeling' of affordance – our sense of the ways in which we might engage with some other body, what it offers, what we can do with it and through it, and what it might do to us (Brown and Reavey, 2015: 12). If affect is the entirety of this assemblage, then feeling is the sensation that we ourselves encounter (the *personal* sensation), which we then check against previous sensations we have encountered over time. Emotion[3] on the other hand is considered to be the cognised and sociocultural rationalisation of affect and feeling, wherein we organise and *make sense* of feeling, in the context of culturally constructed meanings, signs and *expectations* (Stenner, 2015). Though used often interchangeably, concerns about how we feel our way in the world, and how the world offers us sensations to feel, are growing amongst qualitative researchers. One argument for using visual images is the potential for the visual to *seize* or *prick* us (Barthes describes this as a 'punctum' – which can literally mean 'to wound'), as it usefully steers participants away from too generic or ready-made narratives of experience, thus providing access to a more specific and intense moment or feeling. Roland Barthes discussed this potential of the image in describing how he came to be emotionally seized by a particular photograph of his mother, which formed part of a deep visual memory. This emotional seizure provided access to memories of his mother, which were not otherwise accessible or narratable.

Emotions Evoked and Engaged Through the Visual

Researchers in psychology have observed how images might *afford* the possibility of accessing the un/speakable and to evoke emotions that are otherwise put to one side, or reconfigured to fit with a well-rehearsed narrative (Reavey, 2011; Cromby, 2015).

Charity campaigns use powerful visual cues to incite emotional reactions, and incite people to dig deep into their pockets. Without visual cues, it is difficult to see how many charities would survive, as potential donators must *witness* and emotionally respond to the difficulties their benefactors endure (Radley, 2011). Literally, they must enter into and momentarily share their experience of pain and suffering, otherwise the benefactors remain more of a distant 'other' and their story easily overlooked in a sea of other text. In visual research, images are used also to *remind* participants of feelings associated with a particular event, because they have perhaps chosen to move on from, or have actively forgotten a difficult or traumatic experience (Frith, 2011; Brown and Reavey, 2015). Given that the majority of qualitative researchers are dealing with participant *memories* when they conduct research, it is worth noting how emotions can be examined for their complexity and multiplicity when more aspects of the experiential field (visual, sound, tactile) are incorporated.

In everyday life of course, individuals can use the visual to *willfully* engage with emotions, as opposed to avoiding or forgetting them. A video of a wedding, or a child's first steps may be played over to activate distant or emotionally intense memories, which serve a particular purpose in the present – to reignite a bond, or sense of duty. It is unsurprising that photographic and video footage of this kind is part of the domestic assemblage in industrialised societies, where the impetus to *remember* how things *feel* can be intrinsic to the sustaining of collective memory and familial identity (Middleton and Brown, 2005; Brown and Reavey, 2015).

Visual researchers in psychology have embraced the power of the visual to incite emotion and bring feeling to the conversational fore in an interview or focus group. Part of this project has been to directly involve the setting in which affect and emotions emerge, following a Spinozist and/or process tradition of affect theory (see McGrath, 2012; Brown and Reavey, 2015). In recent work on affect and atmosphere in psychiatric settings, researchers have used photographs produced by staff and service users in hospital, and observation of sounds on the ward, to explore with participants how feelings and thoughts emerge and move through the spaces they and others occupy across time; and how such environments *afford* (make possible) particular thoughts and feelings at given moments (Kanyeredzi et al., forthcoming; Reavey et al., forthcoming). We argue that this enables a more situated reading of how distress is interactionally and spatially interdependent with the spatial affordances of the hospital itself. This rich and multi-layered analysis of the service users' experience is only possible, we would argue, once we attend to the multiple experiential modalities that include the visual, verbal and sonic, as an interdependent nexus.

A powerful example of how the visual can bring to the fore difficult to reach emotions can

be found in Radley and Taylor's *photo-production* study of hospital patients' recovery on a hospital ward (Radley and Taylor, 2003a, 2003b). The study involved participants taking pictures of the hospital spaces where they were recovering, as well as an interview one month after they had left hospital. Radley and Taylor facilitated participants in using the photographs to manoeuvre the interview discussion, and found that an image itself rouses the participant towards addressing inaccessible feelings, such as fear, frustration and anger. Other studies have used visual cues to move from overly generic narratives to more specific and detailed emotional narratives that are complex and multi-layered.

A *photo-narrative* study with Japanese-Canadians interned during the Second World War revealed how different kinds of memories and emotions to the ones initially spoken could be invoked using visual cues. Kunimoto (2004) notes how photographs were able to elicit accounts that were far more emotional, specific and rich; accounts which contrasted significantly with the 'dry' narratives offered in their absence. In this study, the visual brought to mind deeply concealed feelings of pain, betrayal and shame, even though the images both betrayed and captured participants' experience. According to Kunimoto, however, the image does not *contain* the emotion; rather the mutual intertwining of the visual and verbal narrative serves as an aperture, enabling the participant and researcher to explore the often contradictory and taut movement of emotions, as they flow through autobiographical and collective memory.

It is now well established that autobiographical memory is heavily shaped by our sense of self and emotion in the present. Images can be useful ways in which to examine the interrelationship between the past and the present, and the emotional fluctuations and changes, as well as the similarities that continue through time. A more direct exposure to a past (a photograph, for example) can facilitate a discussion on how certain feelings might be both connected *and* disconnected to how I am feeling now (Brown and Reavey, 2014), allowing the researcher and participant to explore a richer and more diverse engagement with feeling and emotion through time.

The possibility for exploring emotions and feelings across different developmental time periods was explored by Silver and Reavey, in a study of selfhood with individuals diagnosed[4] with Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD)[5]. Silver and Reavey (2010) adopted a visual narrative approach, using both drawing and photo-elicitation to explore with participants, aspects of their appearance across different developmental time periods. What Silver and Reavey found particularly interesting was the way in which participants moved away from accounting for their distress in the present and brought an intensely emotional account of their idealisation of their childhood self, on which present judgements about facial disfigurement were grounded (Silver and Reavey, 2010). The emotional connection between past and present had been absent up until this point in the clinical literature. Silver and Reavey argue that visual methods were particularly apposite to examine the emotional connection between past and present, as participants directly accessed a visible portrait of the self physically (and thus emotionally) changing over time, enabling greater opportunity for emotional seizure.

Critics of purely discursive approaches have also highlighted the importance of 'visual languages' in stitching together the sociocultural fabric of social-psychological experiences and *embodied* ways of being (Banks and Zeitlyn, 2015). An example of this is the significance of aesthetic dress in the creation and maintenance of gendered bodies and identities (Adkins, 2002). The visual, in this context, has furthermore, changed the ways in which people not only interact and experience their bodies; altering the whole dynamic and sequence of social actions, including how individuals exercise control over the presentation of themselves, with others (Iedema, 2003). The presentation of the body for visual display, via a still photo image on an online dating website, foregrounds or backgrounds different conversational actions such as 'who shows first'. It also demonstrates variation in power relationships through the practice of immediate rejection or acceptance of a potential date via the exchange of images (Jones, 2005). In studying 'multimodality', which requires shifting back and forth between visual, written or spoken text, qualitative researchers are able to examine more closely how interactants manage their bodies, relationships and identities in the context of visual spaces, as well as through speech and/or text production. In the next section we outline a range of practical and procedure tips for researchers looking to include visual data and interpretations within qualitative psychological research.

USING VISUAL MATERIAL IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: TEXT, CONTEXT AND INTERPRETATION

Using visual material can open up a range of new and exciting possibilities for qualitative researchers in psychology. There are a number of visual

images that count as qualitative data. Forms of visual data used include photography (e.g. Radley et al., 2005), documentary film-making (see Haaken and Kohn, 2006), paintings (Gillies et al., 2005), graffiti (e.g. Lynn and Lea, 2005b), and computer mediated interactions (e.g. Jones, 2005). Temple and McVittie (2005) outline three forms of visual materials qualitative psychologists have used: pre-existing visual materials, visual data and enduring visual products. They define pre-existing materials as images that exist independently of the research in the form of pieces of art or published photographs. In contrast, time-limited data and enduring visual products are produced within the research process but differ from each other in terms of their relationship to the research once the project has finished. Time-limited data, such as a collection of observations of individual actions, cease to exist as visual data as the focus shifts on to the interpretation of the observations. Visual data such as video diaries, and newly generated paintings and photographs are examples of enduring visual products as they come into being solely because of the research process, and have a continued existence after the project. Thus, the distinction between the three forms of data lies in the relationship the image has to the research process and the context in which it has been produced, but it also has implications for the process of interpretation. For instance, Temple and McVittie suggest the researcher needs to decide if the visual material is being used as a trigger for stimulating verbal discussions; as its own creative medium through which participants can generate their own meanings and experiences of a topic or event; or the visual is already part of the topic under study with the research focus on participants' use of the visual in communication.

The status of the visual data, in any of these forms, has implications for understanding, interpretation and social action in psychological research. For example, Frith et al. (2005) encapsulate three distinct ways that visual research can enhance psychological inquiry. First, researchers may find that using visual methodologies allows them to access information that is hard to reach through other forms, such as interviews. An illustration of this can be found in Malson, Marshall and Woollett's research (2002) into how adolescent girls negotiate practices of dress through the use of photo-diaries. This permitted the researchers to gain invaluable insight into teenage notions of femininity and how their participants mediated their experience of living across and between diverse cultural expectations of womanhood and appearance. Second, Frith et al. (2005: 189) suggest visual methods can 'change the voice of the research'. This points to the potential for personal and social transformation that can be produced by using the principles of participatory action research (PAR) and communication styles that incorporate the visual. This has been demonstrated in critical health psychology research that promoted the use of a 'photo-voice' method where participants used photography to reflect their health care needs (e.g. Wang et al., 1996) and increasingly in community psychology research to conceptualise the needs of marginalised groups as well as reconfigure entrenched representations (e.g. Hodgetts et al., 2011; Johnson and Martínez Guzmán, 2012). Third and finally, Frith et al. (2005) suggest the presentation of research findings in both a visual and verbal form can permit a wider engagement with the experience and understanding of a particular topic. This is a less familiar process in qualitative psychological research but offers the opportunity for use of creative methods of engagement and dissemination. For example, a queer theatre group presented an 'ethnodrama' account of the psychomedical construction of 'transsexualism' and the experience of being transgender. Here, gender variant experiences are reflected in dramatic form and acted out for a variety of audiences. This can include health care professionals, in order to inform them about their clients' perspectives, college students to address areas of discrimination and a wider, general audience that attend theatre events (e.g. Hateley, 2004). Similarly, the rapid democratisation in access to visual technologies has seen an increase in the number of films and art exhibitions being created via researcher-participant collaboration (e.g. Johnson, 2011).

The Politics of Interpretation: Reflexivity, Meaning and Social Action

For the visual researcher 'an exposition of text *and* context is integral to understanding the social phenomenon of interest' (Lynn and Lea, 2005a: 219; italics in original). This requires particular attention to the interpretation of the context in which an image is produced, as well as the interpretation of the image itself; the boundaries between what is created, presented and (re)presented; and the influence of the researchers and audience in the process. Thus, Lynn and Lea (2005a) suggest that reflexivity needs to be at the forefront of the entire research process. This is something that should ideally happen in all qualitative research, but as qualitative research methods become more normative, rather than being used as an analytic tool, reflexivity is often presented as an afterthought. Given the multi-modal

nature of all visual data and its potential for multiple interpretations the first step in interpretation is to reflect on how the image may demonstrate competing interpretations. Lynn and Lea (2005b) propose that researchers draw on the work of Banks (2001). Banks distinguishes between an 'internal' content-driven narrative, where the image may be interpreted in multiple ways and not necessarily in the way it was intended, and an 'external' context-driven narrative which needs to reflect upon the context in which the image is situated and not situated. This process of reflexivity was important for their research on the impact of graffiti (Lynn and Lea, 2005b). It is also crucial if the reason for including visual methods is to enhance the agency of the participants in the research process as part of a social action research agenda.

Participant generated photography, and subsequent discussions between the participants and the researchers of the meaning of the photographs they have taken, is one way in which researchers have engaged with an action research agenda. Mitchell et al. (2005), collaborating with educators and health professionals working with young people with HIV and AIDS in South Africa, argued that the use of 'photo-voice' permitted groups to 'see for themselves' key issues related to understandings of sexual health and illness. This occurred through the process of participants visualising (taking photos of) the spaces which young people affected by HIV and AIDS occupied. What was of interest to the writers of this study was the way in which the images themselves 'spoke to' the difficult relationship that sometimes existed between these groups of adults and the young people they were aiming to help 'educate' about sexual protection. Pictures of empty classrooms, empty beds and school buses being used for transport to daily funerals all evoked discussion of the despair and alienation that professionals felt towards these young people and the tendency for adults (including the professionals themselves) to demonise young people's activity. What was missing from the images spoke to some of the ways in which the participants viewed their roles as well as their reluctance at times to listen. The photos proved to be a very useful means of engaging the workers with issues they did not initially consider problematic, even though many verbal discussions on the topic had taken place. Thus, researchers using visual material need to expect to find areas of interpretation that may be problematic or challenging for themselves and their participants.

Despite such challenges, positive interventions can be made by allowing participants to be involved in the production and interpretation of their own visual material which and in turn can democratise the research space (Mitchell et al., 2005). Conducting research where participants are given a greater degree of control over the research process also fits more readily with some of the aims of critical community psychology and its grounding in a model of social justice and transformative research, encouraging a dismantling of power relationships between researcher and participant and a greater fairness and agency to the people 'studied' (Rappaport and Stewart, 1997).

Methods such as photovoice, visual ethnographies and participatory film-making have in recent years found increasing favour with psychologists working with marginalised groups within participatory action research (PAR) frameworks. As Hodgetts, Chamberlain and Groot (2011: 312) propose in a reflection on their research with homeless people in New Zealand:

> in using photovoice methodology, psychologists are doing more than simply acting as conduits for the experiences of others. We are developing theoretical interpretations of social processes that are central to the lives of homeless people, and which inform our efforts to address the needs of marginalised people.

However, the relationship between participant interpretation and researcher interpretation when using photovoice looms large. Hodgetts et al. raise concern that some community-based action research projects that use photovoice place too much emphasis on the notion of 'giving voice', romanticising notions of marginalised people and their expertise, while downplaying the role of academic interpretation. They agree that participant perspectives are 'essential' but argue that the expertise that academics bring to such projects is crucial in the process of a co-production of knowledge and its facilitation of social action that might improve outcomes for marginalised groups. As they state:

> We cannot simply locate responsibility for action with 'the homeless' because they are not necessarily in control of their homelessness. Many decisions shaping their situations are made beyond their lifeworlds and it is up to us, as critical scholars working with community groups, to help bridge this divide through advocacy and joint action. (Hodgetts et al.: 304–305)

Similar reflections on the politics of 'interpretation' and the relationship between voice, meaning and social action are outlined in a series of accounts of an LGBT mental health project that utilised photographic methods in Brighton, UK (Johnson, 2011; Johnson and Martínez Guzmán,

2012). A key aim of the project was to 'provide voice' to more marginalised LGBT lives within the annual Pride Festival via a photographic exhibition as well as foster connections across identity difference. For the purpose of the exhibition, images were not disentangled from the textual interpretations offered by participants, as grounding the images with the photographers' words about what they were trying to communicate was seen to be central to *feeling* represented. Nevertheless, the research output, a photo exhibition, and subsequent publications must be considered as 'hybrid products' or 'co-produced artifacts where participants' (including the researcher's) heterogenous interests, skills, knowledge and desires are combined in a collective goal that seeks to contribute to social transformation' (Johnson and Martínez Guzmán, 2012: 415). The term 'artifact' is utilised to highlight the combination of art and fact within PAR projects to acknowledging that outputs are 'artificially made' and relevant to the social context in which they are produced. As they state:

> These artifacts cannot be entirely understood as outcomes of a methodological program, as the unveiling of the truth of participants' underlying primal needs, or as the empowerment of the oppressed towards self-knowledge, although they may contribute to all of these. Rather, they are the result of a particular creative relationship, the effect of a more or less undetermined conjunction developed within the methodological space of PAR. This relationship combines the expected and unexpected, the explicit design and the contingent arrangements, affects and technical resources, alliances, and resistances. (Johnson and Martínez Guzmán, 2012: 415)

Researchers also need to reflect on pre-existing narratives for representing images and the way these may inform participants' decisions in how to frame issues within a research context. For example, in video diary research 'piece to camera' shots are used to create a sense of intimacy, or air of urgency for the phenomena they are discussing and this often precludes background context. These are strategies found in cinematography and news reporting and are replicated in visual data produced as part of a wider process of research. For example, Tony Dowmunt (2005) retraces his grandfather's journey as a colonial army officer in Africa. Using his grandfather's original diary he embarked on the same journey but this time he uses a video camera to record and document the journey. In one instance, awaking during the night after a bad dream he recorded his memory of the dream. Of interest in this scene is less the fear he expresses, but the way the image has been posed to heighten the viewer's sense of it. His clammy, white face shines out of a glowing, green screen as he narrates the event. If we reflect on the way he as author, as well as participant, has constructed the image, the camera angle films him so that his face is close to the screen and lit from below in the green glow of a night-view light. Familiarity with how visual images can be stylised to project meaning adds another layer of analysis and interpretation for the qualitative researcher. If you use visual documentation yourself, or present participants with visual recording material, it does not, in the realist sense, open up a means to authentically capture the way in which people experience themselves, rather it provides another way of narrating the experience in line with existing visual practices found in, for example, documentary film-making. More than that, it also leads to new ways of relating to, and living the experience. In this example, if Dowmunt had not been filming his research project he might have woken from the dream and turned the light on in the room. Alternatively he might have fallen back to sleep quickly and have no clear memory of the dream. Thus, reflexivity is crucial to the visual researcher in documenting the layers of interpretation that acknowledge both the content and context in which an image is produced and explained (see also Haaken and Kohn, 2006).

PRESENTING THE VISUAL: ETHICAL AND PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The growth of qualitative research in psychology has required a greater focus on the ethical procedures of gaining informed consent and providing anonymity to research participants (Chapter 15). These issues relate to the research process and presentation of the research findings. First, those who provide in-depth, personal accounts might be negatively affected by the research process and need to be aware of this and their right to withdraw, and second, the presentation of qualitative data increases the likelihood that participants could be unwittingly identified if there is insufficient attention to changing or omitting any distinguishing details. But, while ethical considerations are part of any research approach, they raise particular questions for psychologists using visual approaches. Here, informed consent and anonymity have to be negotiated in relation to key elements of visual research: presentation of the findings that might be in pictorial form and ownership of the image. Both of these vary in level of

concern depending upon the context in which the data are produced. Thus, the status of the image (whether it is pre-existing, time-limited or enduring) also raises a variety of ethical and presentational concerns (Temple and McVittie, 2005). There are no specific guidelines within the latest version of the British Psychological Society *Code of Conduct* (2009) or the *Code of Human Research Ethics* (2014) for researchers working specifically with visual data. However, the advice set out in the *Ethics Guidelines for Internet-mediated Research* (BPS, 2013) is pertinent to some discussions of consent and ownership of data in visual research more generally, but to make these links more explicit some potential flash-points are laid out in this section and suggestions for good practice are made in light of outstanding ethical dilemmas.

Who's/What's in the Picture?

The content of the image requires the researcher to reflect ethically on what should be presented within the dissemination process. If the image is a form of pre-existing data the researcher needs to consider whether re-presenting that image has any negative impact. For example, it was necessary that Lynn and Lea (2005a: 222) gave careful consideration to the 'ethical and moral implications of giving "voice" to "racist" graffiti writers' whilst they were presenting an analysis of racist graffiti. When participants are involved in generating the data the researcher also needs to attend to issues of informed consent and anonymity in line with the medium that is used. For example, if the work takes the form of a painting (e.g. Gillies et al., 2005) and it has been produced by the researchers-as-participants it presents fewer concerns in terms of informed consent or anonymity compared with data that videos or photographs participants. In the painting case, readers might try to guess which researcher produced which painting but the main route to identifying the researcher is through lack of confidentiality amongst other group members. This contrasts dramatically with a research project that encourages participants' use of photography to document their everyday experiences. In this situation the researcher has a responsibility to both the participant and other people who may unwittingly become part of the research project when they are captured in the picture without necessarily providing informed consent. Here researchers need to think very carefully about how these images will be used and in what contexts they will be re-presented. This was a crucial issue for Mitchell et al. (2005) in their 'photo-voice' community research project. As a partial form of address they established from the beginning of the project that participants should mark with an X any photograph they did not want displayed, while the full collection of negatives and photographs created during the project is archived at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Anonymity is also an issue in research working with 'vulnerable' groups. We have already seen how visual methods can be useful in research with, for example, children. However, the researcher has a responsibility to protect the identity of that child by not publishing images that might lead to identification (Sparrman, 2005). Similarly, in Johnson's (2011) community research project with LGBT people with mental health issues, a detailed discussion took place within the group in relation to who could be in their photos and whether they needed to consent to being part of the research. On this occasion it was agreed that if people occurred in their photos incidentally, for example because they were taking pictures of the beach, or the bus stop, it was not necessary to seek their consent. However, if a person such as a friend, family member or mental health profession was photographed because their relationship was key to the narrative it was important to seek their consent to have the image reproduced. Thus, in the context of data produced during the research with participants, the researcher needs to negotiate with the participants what can be shown whilst also protecting the identities of those who may not have been able to provide informed consent. However, there are also dilemmas about the status of the data after the project has ended in terms of who has ownership of the images.

Who Owns the Picture?

Visual research that uses pre-existing images, such as billboard campaigns, tends to offer fewer ethical dilemmas to the researcher. The researcher needs to seek copyright guidance if they are reproducing a sourced image and gain the permission of the author if they are known. Yet, because the image is owned or exists independently from the research process there is no debate about responsibility for and ownership of the image after the research has ended. In an exploration of the legacy of enduring images from visual research, Temple and McVittie (2005: 237) suggest 'practical issues become closely intertwined with ethical concerns. Questions of storage of visual products, right of disposal, timing of disposal and retention of large items become all the more pertinent in relation to items of

uncertain ownership'. Thus the researcher needs to give careful consideration to these issues. Who 'owns' the image? In what contexts do participants agree for it to be used? Is there a time frame for this? For example, Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody (2001) used visual methodologies to research differences between working-class and middle-class girls' accounts of growing up. Here, video diaries were used as 'auto-ethnographies' to understand the interrelationship between notions of gender and class. The video data provided a rich source of the variety of accounts constructed by young women, but shown on Channel 4 in the UK in the form of the film *Girls, Girls, Girls* these video diaries reached a much wider audience than one for academic purposes. Whilst widespread dissemination should be applauded these video diaries have a 'different life' from other forms of research data, as once television directors and producers were involved, it created a different format from one that sought to give the participants agency (Dowmunt, 2001). As an enduring product (Temple and McVittie, 2005) the film clearly identifies a range of young women at a particular stage in their life, and like those who agreed to take part in the original sociological drama *7 Up*[6] (ITV), and the subsequent follow-ups, it is possible the participants might later feel restricted and even embarrassed by earlier representations of themselves. Thus, when visual methods are used, researchers need to reflect carefully on the life of the visual data and whether it should continue to be used in the public domain long after the end of the project. Equally, Temple and McVittie (2005) point out that disposal of the data can raise feelings of loss for the researcher and participants, yet this might be the agreed outcome if there are outstanding issues over ownership and access to the data after the project. Finally, a co-ownership agreement at the beginning of the research might seem one way of dealing with some of these questions. However, other practical issues impact when the method is seen to be particularly useful for generating meaning with more 'vulnerable' research populations, such as children.

PRESENTING THE VISUAL RESEARCH

There are several practical concerns that presenting the data entails. As we have noted it can be of ethical concern to present an image that clearly identifies research participants and bystanders if informed consent for the presentation of that data has not been granted. A number of practices can be used to overcome this. First, the researcher might choose not to present any of the visual data, but instead describe the content of the image. Whilst this avoids issues of identification, the scaling down of meaning from a polysemic image to a mono-modal account sells short the reader in terms of the richness of the data and level of interpretation. Second, the researcher can use a range of digital media techniques to disguise the participants. Sparrman (2005) demonstrates several of these, including blurring the face, preparing a contour drawing in Photoshop, creating your own pencil drawing from the image, or zooming in on one aspect of the image such as an 'object'. She points out several problems with the first approach that would be guided by the topic of research. Blurring faces is a common tactic used in the media to represent criminals, or protect the identity of those deemed as vulnerable, particularly if they are acting as either an informant or they are the child of a celebrity. Drawings or sketches are also a familiar way of presenting courtroom cases and these connotations might be drawn on when the audience is interpreting the research images. This can impose on the type of interpretation being presented. Thus there is a careful line for psychologists to tread between attempting to guarantee anonymity, maintaining the polysemic value of the research data whilst not taking away a sense of agency from participants (some of whom may *wish* to be identified within the research).

Visual researchers face other practical dilemmas in terms of publishing visual data. Not all journals welcome the additional expense of publishing images, particularly if they are in colour. The development of online journals encourages greater use of a range of new media technologies and might provide a means to transport visual data into the public domain whilst overcoming financial concerns. If this happens, researchers will need to be even more vigilant about ethical and ownership issues as the audience the data could potentially reach magnifies exponentially.

In the next section we (re)present two pieces of research that have included visual data. We have chosen these two studies because they deal with two distinct visual approaches (painting and photography) and all the researchers involved have concerned themselves with theoretical as well as empirical multi-modal approaches to the social psychology of experience and embodiment in general. In both examples attention is drawn to how visual images (a) can be used as a way of accessing the multi-modal or polysemic layers of experience and (b) how inviting participants to generate visual images can encourage greater agency in the research process through an invitation to engage more freely in self-reflexive practices (Mitchell et al., 2005). Therefore, in using these examples, our aim is to demonstrate how researchers might

engage with issues surrounding the social psychology of experience via visual methodologies. Each is considered in terms of notions highlighted throughout this chapter: status of the data, context, reflexivity, participant involvement and ethical and presentational dilemmas.

EXAMPLE 1: USING VISUAL METHODS IN PAINTING EXPERIENCES OF EMBODIMENT

The first example we draw on is from our own work (Gillies et al., 2004, 2005) within a researcher-participant group who have a shared interest in understanding embodied experiences (what certain physical experiences feel like, and what they mean in relation to selfhood, identity and so on) within a broadly constructionist/post-structuralist framework. After using a variety of qualitative approaches (e.g. memory work, discourse analysis) that relied on written or spoken accounts, the group felt that such approaches were unable to fully embrace the non-verbal, sensory and symbolic reactions and recollections we might have of our experiences[7]. Thus, we made an active decision in a study on experiences of ageing to begin with visual information which would act as the initial (but not the final) experiential expression of embodied experience, that would subsequently be developed via verbal discussion of the image and our verbal articulation of the image and associated experiences. Thus, the visual and discursive layers would conjointly be used to make sense of embodied experience as the image would be part of the ongoing discussion. The example we provide here are the images we produced via painting of our experiences of the ageing process (Gillies et al., 2005).

Contexts of Production and Interpretation: Producing the Visual Through Painting Embodied Experience

Our use of paintings involved two phases of production and a third phase of interpretative involvement by the researchers-participants. In procedural order, these were (1) identifying a trigger, (2) painting an image that represented our experiences and feelings towards ageing and (3) the analysis of the paintings and discussions about ageing more generally[8].

Identifying a trigger

The first phase of this research process involved the creation of a 'trigger' (which we defined as any word associated with embodiment) as a way of generating subjective material. We chose 'ageing' because in previous meetings, where we discussed embodiment more generally, ageing emerged as an issue of concern to some members.

Painting an image that represents feelings, thoughts and experiences of ageing

Immediately following the identification of a trigger, without allowing ourselves time to think about it, we set about painting an image that represented our feelings, thoughts and experiences of it. We sat around a large table and silently painted our images of ageing using a range of materials (paints, glitter, charcoals, crayons and pencils). There were no guidelines for doing this, as we wanted to keep this process as flexible as possible. There was no prior discussion and we did not consult with each other during the production of the painting. Once the paintings were dry, they were collected and put away until the next meeting (see Figures 21.1 and 21.2 for examples of paintings produced during this process).

Analysis of the paintings and joint constructions of meanings of ageing and embodiment

At the beginning of the next meeting we allowed ourselves time to reflect on the content of each painting and the feelings evoked by the image. This included paying attention to the colours, textures and symbolism in the painting. Each

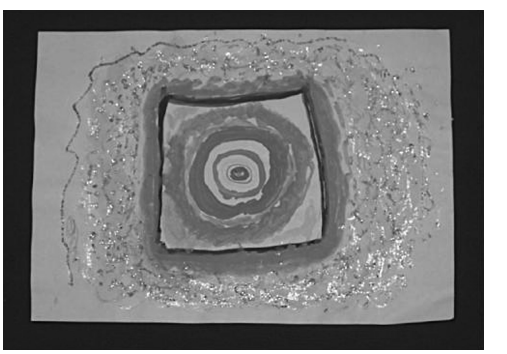


Figure 21.1 Image produced by researcher-participant no. 4

Figure 21.2 Image produced by researcher-participant no. 2

painting was discussed in turn, first of all, by all members of the group and then by its author. Each member offered their interpretation of the painting and the author then discussed the group's interpretation in relation to her own. These discussions were recorded and then transcribed and circulated. The objective of the transcript was to serve as a memory aid to allow for the extraction of analytic themes, rather than acting as the only 'text' for analysis. Thus, our recorded discussions explored the symbolism contained in the paintings; the colours, the mood(s) and each person's feelings about their own painting and ageing more generally.

The transcripts of the first stage in the analysis were then further analysed individually, by each group member, who noted down and wrote about key themes arising in the discussion, as well as any similarities and differences and/or common patterns across the paintings themselves. Each individual analysis was then circulated before the next meeting. In the third stage of the analysis, we discussed our interpretations and held further conversations about issues arising. However, what was particularly interesting in this phase was the emerging connection we each felt with our images (to be discussed below). This latter phase involved meeting on a number of occasions as there was a great deal of debate about taken-for-granted meanings associated with ageing and our varying experiences of it. In order to analyse the material in depth, and represent multiple perspectives, we had to ensure that variation in interpretation was captured and conflict acknowledged.

This was a long and, at times, difficult process but we believe one that increased the subtlety of the analysis. However, these interpretations remain open to the audience and they were presented with the images to view.

Reflections on the Process, Interpretations and Participant Involvement

When conducting other forms of mono-modal analyses, there is considerable opportunity to continue reworking and rewriting analytic observations in line with current thinking and theoretical insights. The layers formed are, therefore, much more malleable and able to be reoriented in line with new theoretical or empirical insights. However, our observations of using visual texts led us to note their role in personalising and subsequently 'fixing' the interpretation more readily, though not exclusively, as flexibility was still afforded in the discussions. This was interesting in that some of the paintings were, in themselves, very abstract, and only became meaningful when the participant described, in verbal form, the association and feelings emerging via the image. Despite this, our attachments to these images were strong because they were felt to capture emotions in a way that was not readily speakable in our verbal discussions. Some of us argued how important it was that other members of the group understood our paintings in just the way that we had intended. In other words, it became clear that we were more personally 'attached' to these texts, in contrast to the words we spoke regarding their meaning and cultural relevance. For example, when alternative interpretations were offered by other group members, the author of a painting would often try very hard and with considerable passion to communicate their own view of what her painting was about and what it meant. This desire to 'own' the paintings and to be the arbiter was a considerable surprise to all of us who carried a strong suspicion of practices in psychology that fixed meaning. In short, the image as text was more 'sticky' than verbal discussion.

Findings and Insights

The findings of the study revealed a number of related issues with regard to embodied experiences of ageing. The paintings and discussions revealed general concerns and anxieties over the ageing process, as well as some positive feelings about the progression through life. The major themes arising from our paintings and discussions were: (1) the relationship between self and others, in particular, concerns with the separation of self from others, (2) an incongruence between mind and body as ageing progresses, (3) the growing presence of death in life that significantly impacts on life itself; and (4) ageing as a transformation of the self. The general group consensus was that

some of the findings may have arisen through discussion alone, but many of them would have been greatly resisted at a verbal level due to anxiety and fear over ageing.

The Status of the Text: Where does the Visual Stand in Relation to the Linguistic?

During the interpretive process, we identified four different ways in which our paintings could be read (that only became apparent once the interpretive process was underway):

1 As telling us something about the nature of the phenomenon (i.e. ageing)
2 As telling us something about the person who painted the image
3 As telling us something about the cultural resources/meanings that are available to us as authors in relation to the topic
4 As a stimulus to encourage further talk about the phenomenon.

When we began discussing the images that we had produced, it soon became clear that we were moving between the four conceptualisations of the status of the images, with some disagreement along the way. For example, one member of the group was very unhappy about the idea that a painting might be read as an expression of inner emotions, which she did not feel was a legitimate interpretation of the image. Others spent a great deal of time conveying the meaning 'behind' the image which they argued other members of the group did not have access to. Faced with a mass of visual and linguistic data, we found it difficult to produce a collective analysis of this data at times. It was not until we had spent considerable amounts of time discussing methodological, theoretical and personal concerns, that we were able to move forward and eventually come to accept that a range of interpretations were valid for the group, yet partial for individual subjectivity.

EXAMPLE 2: USING PHOTOGRAPHY TO EXPLORE HOW PEOPLE EXPERIENCE RECOVERY FROM ILLNESS

The second example we describe is an ethnographic study by Alan Radley and Diane Taylor (2003a, 2003b) that explored medical and surgical patients' experiences of recovery in a general hospital. Similar to our work, Radley and Taylor are interested not only in the 'discourses' produced by participants, but their embodied feelings that are *situated* in the spaces and objects that surround such experiences. Thus, these authors acknowledge the coupling of the visual and discursive, the qualities and power of the 'material' realised in the spaces, places and objects that contribute to the framing of experiences. Such an acknowledgement in Radley and Taylor's (2003a: 93) work allows for a different way of looking at experience, a 'turning on of the environment', where the material setting of the hospital is made explicit when discussing the experiences and meanings of recovery.

Contexts of Production and Interpretation: Using Photographs to Capture Real and Imagined Spaces

Radley and Taylor use the photo-elicitation approach (see above for definition) to explore patients' experiences of their time on a hospital ward. In line with other forms of participatory research the participants were involved at each phase of the (a) production, (b) sorting and (c) interpretation of the images. However, the researchers' use of photography is not intended to appeal to some 'real' meaning that emerges from the surface of the photograph (see Radley et al., 2005). Instead, the focus is on how the photos are made to signify the feelings and associations that were subsequently described by the participants. Here we will begin by outlining their approach to photo-elicitation which involves three stages of production:

1 Identifying participants to take the photographs
2 Interviewing the participants either immediately or one day after the photographs had been taken, using the photographs as source material
3 Interviewing the participants one month after discharge using the photographs as source material.

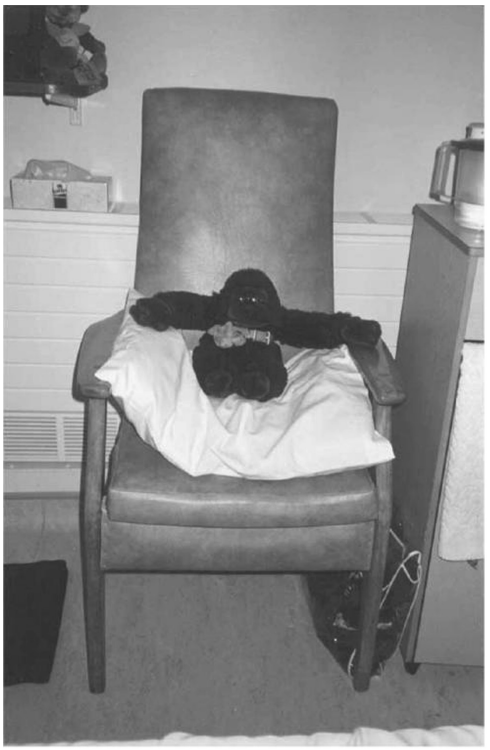
Both the second and third phases involved the participants in a discussion of the photograph's meaning, focus and significance. In other words, the participant is fully engaged in a process of interpretation of the images in relation to their lived experience.

Contexts of Production: Photography Procedure

Six participants from the surgical ward and three medical ward patients gave consent to take part in

this study, although two eventually withdrew. The patients were contacted via the nurse in charge and had to be in hospital for more than one week. Once the selected medical and surgical patients were well enough (see Radley and Taylor, 2003a), verbal consent was obtained and information sheets about the use of photographs were made available and written consent then gathered.

Radley and Taylor explained to the participants that the focus of the study was their experience of recovery and that they would like them to take up to twelve photographs of any objects and spaces that were significant features of this experience[9]. These could be from the ward itself or other objects, such as personal items that they had brought in with them. Patients were given complete freedom of choice over the images produced and written guidelines were left with them. They were given a fixed-focus 35-mm camera containing 24 exposures so they could take the same picture twice to ensure it had been captured. The hospital made it clear that they wanted the researcher to stay with the patient while they took the photographs; an enforced rule that actually turned to the researchers' advantage because it afforded them the opportunity to make detailed field notes of the patients' descriptions of the reasons they were taking the pictures and the feelings they experienced at the time. In six cases, Polaroid cameras were used because there was a risk that the patient would be discharged before viewing the images they had taken and providing comments (see Figures 21.3 and 21.4 for examples of photographs produced by participants).



Gorilla No.2

Figure 21.3 Image produced by researcher-participant: 'Gorilla'

Contexts of Production: Interview Procedure and Participant Involvement

Open-ended immediate and follow-up (one month post-discharge) interviews were carried out with the patients, where the focus of the interview was solely on the images they had produced. The conversations were tape-recorded with the patient's permission and were approximately one hour in duration.

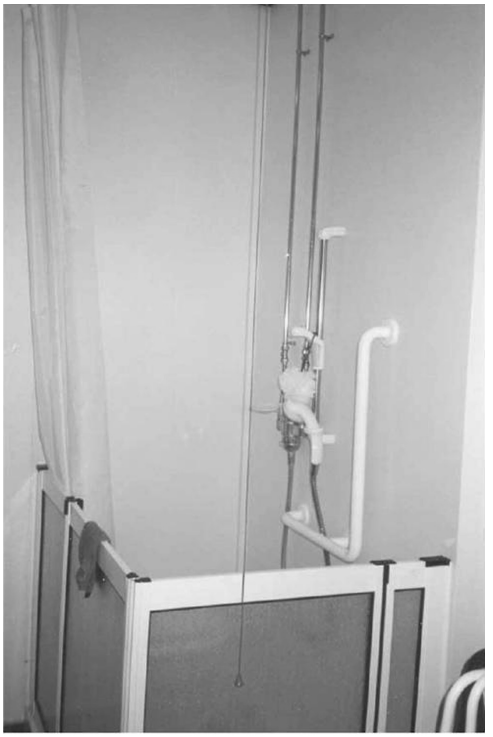
First stage: Hospital interview

In the hospital interview, each of the images was presented to the participant in the order in which they were taken. Some of the participants had given titles to their images and they were also invited to speak about the relevance of the title. They were then asked to talk about and explain five aspects[10] of the photography procedure.

1. What the picture showed
2. What the focus of the image was
3. Their response to the objects and places in the photograph
4. The most significant image that captured the experience of their hospital stay
5. Reflections on the choice of images, the act of taking pictures and whether they had taken the pictures they would have liked to (i.e. potential limitations).

Second stage: Follow-up interview at patient's home

The follow-up interview carried a slightly different focus and procedure. After being asked to describe their recovery and memories of their stay in hospital (see Radley and Taylor, 2003a), their photographs were laid out in front of them and they were subsequently asked to choose which one best represented their experience of being in



Bathroom No.10

Figure 21.4 Image produced by researcher-participant: 'Bathroom'

hospital. A further five aspects were then considered, wherein they were asked to:

1 Describe the picture
2 Explain its focus
3 Describe any emerging memories
4 Explain the feelings the picture evoked
5 Comment on the act of taking the picture
6 Describe which pictures they would have taken, given the opportunity.

Eighty-two photographs in all were taken by participants in the medical and surgical wards.

Analysing the Images and Interview Data

The analysis involved examining both the images and the interview data, both with and without the participants (where participants had discussed the meanings of the images and their feelings about them). Thus, there were two key aspects of Radley and Taylor's analysis, these being (1) the analysis by the participants of their images in the context of the hospital and follow-up interviews and (2) the analysis of the interview data and images *by the researchers.*

Once the participants had been invited in both of the interviews to consider the five aspects, including the content of the image as well as the reasons for taking the picture, the researchers had the task of making sense of both the images as well as what the participants had said about them. The first step was to lay out all 82 photographs in order to examine the types of images selected. The researchers then listened to the interview tapes with the photographs there before them. Detailed notes about what was being said about the images were made which were then related to the notes made at the time the photograph was taken, as well as the notes taken after the follow-up interview. Rather than transcribing the interviews and using these data as a primary source, the images and accompanying notes were used, as the images were viewed as just as indicative of the participants' experience.

The researchers identified a number of issues raised by the participants during the interviews including the kinds of objects and spaces that appeared a number of times, the view from which the photograph was taken and the spaces that participants claimed as their own during their hospital stay and the reasons given for this claim. The images also allowed the researchers to make comparisons between the two groups of patients by cross-examining the images from all of the participants simultaneously.

Findings and Insights

Radley and Taylor (2003b) found that what is important in making sense of a person's experiences of recovery from illness is an understanding of what they try hard to forget, as well as what they remember from their stay in hospital. Displacing the time spent in hospital, for example, enables one to project forward into a time when wellbeing can be realised. Integral to this experience are the setting and objects that situate that experience (see also Middleton and Brown, 2005; Reavey and Brown, 2006a). The authors, for example, argue that 'remembering and forgetting are facilitated by the movement of material objects and the re-representation of both objects and people' (Radley and Taylor, 2003b: 155). Thus, the photos taken bring to the fore the setting in which recovery took place for the participants and

were viewed as a way of distancing the past from the present.

The Status of the Text: Where does the Visual Stand in Relation to the Linguistic?

Radley and Taylor make clear that the photographs are not considered to be more 'real' than words. They also state that the status of the image is never concrete and cannot stand alone, outside of the meanings and reasons given by participants as to why this image has been made visible in the first place. In short, the ways in which the participants responded to images at the moment of taking the picture, as well as their subsequent descriptions and memories emerging from discussion of the captured images, were argued to be indicative of feelings or tendencies towards their world (Radley and Taylor, 2003a). The final images, therefore, represent patients' prior engagements with the objects and spaces captured, their act of selecting significant features of the space, and a comment on their experiences of their stay. This approach calls for a continued reflexive process by participants, who are invited to comment on all aspects of the production of images as well as the associated meanings discussed in relation to the final photographic image. During this process, the researchers comment that many of the images in themselves are not interesting or aesthetically pleasing, but fairly banal.

Another noteworthy feature of using images was their ability to speak to the often unspeakable. For example, the image itself provoked the participants to try to explain aspects of their experience that were not immediately accessible to them: a challenge that the visual also brought to bear in the painting-based approach that our embodiment group used. For example, the images presented to the participants in the interviews put them in the position of having to examine issues that they may not have *chosen* to, or did not wish to explore in the first instance. Radley and Taylor thus argue that the images were successful in nudging participants towards alluding to difficult and traumatic aspects of their experience of being in hospital. Another feature of the image's status was in its ability to often bring to the surface forgotten emotional feelings associated with certain objects and spaces in the hospital. The status of the image, therefore, was not so much in its ability to 'stand for' a time spent in hospital but instead served to evoke feelings such that an experience of 'being felt (again)' (Radley and Taylor, 2003a: 93) that was invoked in the context of being shown the image in the interview(s). Thus, Radley and Taylor (2003a, 2003b) argue that the images produced by their participants should not stand alone or simply be treated as appendages to the words spoken about them.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In a rapidly emerging digital environment, images have come to play an increasingly vital part in the way in which we present ourselves, and interact with others. Our bodies and minds are literally being transformed by our engagement with various forms of media (just think about the amount of time you spend in front of a screen, and the sheer volume of swiping and tapping you may well now perform in one day – an embodied experience vastly different from that of even five years ago), which make heavy use of imagery. Apps on our phones now also make it possible for researchers to measure and record people's moment-by-moment thoughts and feelings, which can include real-time visual recordings in movement: taking a walk, for example, where people move through different spaces and talk about their feelings changing across various spaces, is one use of digital media, which was not available a short time ago.

Our memories are also now flooded and reconstructed using images and other mnemonic devices, such that the manner in which we relate to our past is heavily mediated by the visual, a point qualitative researchers must take heed of, and move with, in order to understand the contexts in which remembering occurs (see Brown and Reavey, 2014). Psychologically speaking, still and moving images have become integral to how we make sense of ourselves, our relationships, our local and wider culture practices, and global events. Cameras on phones are now the norm, such that recordings of daily life are instantly available: of course, then immediately uploading such images to social media sites like Facebook and Instagram make the memories of these events further mediated through the responses of others to the image, and the amount of digital 'likes' one can hope to gain. 'Showing' ourselves (even presenting our meals and drinks on social media) has become much more salient. Of course, there may always be a backlash.

These shifts in social life have happened within a relatively short period of time, and rapid-fire media images have fundamentally altered our sense of connection to the broader cultural landscape, such that 'the world out there' no longer appears as remote or distant as it once did.

We hope that qualitative researchers will engage with these important changes to the way in which we experience ourselves and others, and make use of the existing digital media that individuals are already using in everyday life – even if it morphs and transforms in the years to come. The field of visual methods must stretch beyond photographs, videos and drawings to embrace these more contemporary visual practices, such that the theorisation of social and personal life matches the visually flooded experiential realities, which now exist in most industrial and non-industrial societies[11].

CONCLUSION

We have argued here that experience is made up of more than written texts and spoken words (see also Middleton and Brown, 2005) and that visual methodologies are a useful way of accessing meaning, as well as expressing and transforming experience in psychological research. By presenting examples of how visual images have been used and interpreted in two different visual modalities we hope to have documented some practical and procedural guidelines on how to carry out visual research, while making clear some of the dilemmas and difficulties of employing these approaches particularly in relation to context, production, ethics, interpretation, reflexivity and presentation.

Like Radley and Taylor (2003a), we would argue that the interpretive layers involved in visual research must be multiply viewed because interpretations are more explicitly built upon reflections on the production (feelings, thoughts, intentions, personal meanings) of the images, as well as subsequent interpretations of them as cultural resources for meaning-making. This does not afford a straightforward reading of the images as 'texts' and calls for reflexivity by researcher and participant. Despite such challenges, we would argue that visual approaches are an extremely useful way in which to gain access to experiences, that, in our view, are never just discursive but made up of the associations and assemblies between spaces, objects, senses, symbols and signs (Latour, 2005) that we are variously aware of drawing on and producing ourselves in everyday life.

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We are indebted to Alan Radley and Diane Taylor for permission to reproduce the images 'Gorilla' (Figure 21.3) and 'Bathroom' (Figure 21.4).

Notes

1 Note that the terms 'affect', 'feelings' and 'emotion', and the stated differences between them can be highly varied, depending on one's theoretical orientation. Here we provide a circumscribed reading of the terms, taken mainly from writers working within poststructuralist theory, who draw on the works of Spinoza and Deleuze.

2 James and Eleanor Gibson were ecological psychologists who argued that experience was only comprehensible by studying how environments *afforded* particular modes of perception and experience.

3 See Darren Ellis and Ian Tucker's (2014) excellent overview of differing theories of emotions, *Social Psychology of Emotion*.

4 Silver and Reavey use the term 'diagnosed with BDD' to emphasise that BDD is a term used in clinical literature, not a term the authors consider to be an unproblematic or 'true' disorder/illness (see Cromby, Harper and Reavey, 2013).

5 BDD is a psychiatric diagnosis, described as a distressing preoccupation with an imaginary or minor defect in a facial feature or a localised part of the body.

6 Informed by the ideas of socialisation theory *7 Up* began in the UK in 1964. The television programme took a group of girls and boys from different socioeconomic backgrounds and set out to trace their development from age 7. The programme is updated every 7 years with the most recent programme shown in the UK in 2005 when the participants had reached 56. Some of the participants have struggled with the impact the television programme has had on their lives and the way it revisits previous versions of self in such a public manner.

7 We have used a range of visual techniques in the group. As well as a range of painting studies, we have analysed photography and film and are aiming to experiment with other visual approaches in our continued studies of embodiment.

8 Part of this explanation of our methodological approach has been taken from a previous paper (Gillies et al., 2005).

9 Due to ethical reasons put forward by the hospital staff, participants were not permitted to photograph other people. The participants, however, did talk about other people when describing the content and purpose of the image.

10 Radley and Taylor do not refer to 'five aspects' to be considered by participants. We have simply used a number sequence for greater clarity.

11 We are mindful of the political arguments surrounding the mass marketing of visual media, and the promotion of always needing to be in touch and 'connected', which some have argued blind us all to the pernicious and financially-motivated cynical manoeuvres adopted by service providers.

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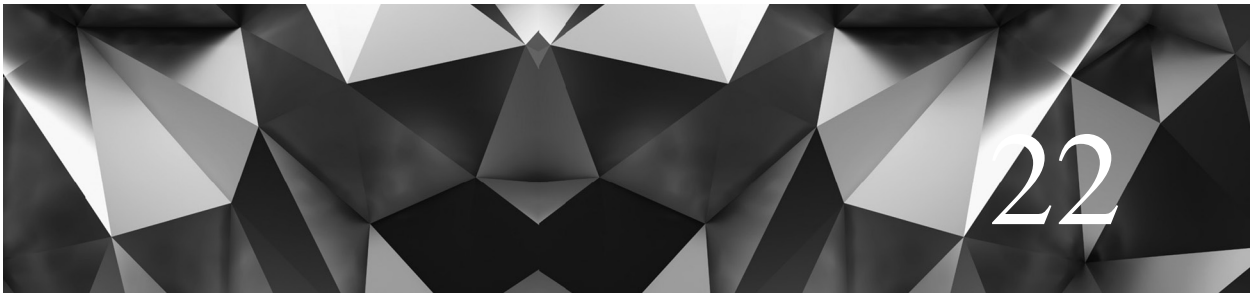

Netnography: Radical Participative Understanding for a Networked Communications Society

Robert Kozinets

The great American psychologist William James (1976, p. 22) wrote that 'To be radical, an empiricism must neither admit into its constructions any element that is not directly experienced, nor exclude from them any element that is directly experienced'. In this chapter, I explore the contention that netnography, a form of participatory online research, is a radical empiricist technique for the conduct of psychological research in James's sense that it includes the direct experience of the researcher. In addition, netnography is a participative technique in the same sense that Rogerian humanistic psychology is participative. That is, it allows and encourages the researcher to gradually join the expansive encounter group that is contemporary social or communicative media, moving from non-participation to full participation for the purpose of gaining understanding, as well as personal and social transformation and betterment.

Netnography is a specific set of related data collection, analysis, ethical, and representational research practices where a significant amount of the data is collected from networked digital communication through a participant-observational research stance that originates in the ethnographic research stance of anthropology (Belk et al. 2013; Kozinets 2015). Attention to the detail and context as well as the elevation of human stories and human understanding are other hallmarks of genuine ethnography. These requirements are the same in netnography, although the type of data and the manner in which it is collected are radically different.

Performing a netnography therefore means that we must maintain an anthropological preoccupation with the human level of social experience. It means conducting a study that moves between self and other in a digital world, viewing this movement in a comparative, critical, and complex manner. Netnography seeks to recognize changes in contemporary human relations and modes of being (Kozinets 2013). As with Rogerian humanist psychology, netnography associates itself very closely with the idea that the researcher's own reflective understandings are often the best instrument through which to gain cultural understanding. Netnography also embraces and adapts anthropology's fascination with questions of history, tradition, human nature, primitivism and what it means to be human in a world of near constant change.

Netnography is a specific type of ethnography and a particular type of online ethnography (Kozinets 2015). Online ethnography is a broad category that encompasses a major range of different research practices which can usefully be applied to psychological research. The foundation of netnographic practice is researcher participation

in online interaction and experience through prolonged and immersive researcher engagement and conversation. All individual netnographies are unique in their approach to studying particular groups, meanings, sites, and topics. Their approach to individual research questions, sites, and forms of understanding is idiosyncratic. However, each individual netnography is an ethnography because it is guided by and draws upon the same specified set of research practices, beliefs, motivations, framings, concerns, and traditions (see Kozinets 2015 for details).

This chapter proceeds to develop these ideas of a radical empiricist technique. First, three examples of published netnographic research are overviewed and analyzed, with emphasis upon the role of participation and examination of the researcher's role as a participant. Next, one of these published examples is used to explore the type and role of netnographic data. A discussion follows about how data and the researcher are co-constitutive in netnography. Different types of data are discussed after this, ranging from small to big data, mass to niche data, commercial to scholarly focused, and visual to textual. These differences direct us to different relationships to collected and created data which depend upon assuming different participative and empiricist perspectives. The final section of the chapter briefly explores the emotionality of the human experience of netnography by including the role of desire.

PARTICIPATION IN THREE EXAMPLES OF NETNOGRAPHY

In this section, I will develop understanding of the netnographic method with a series of contemporary examples. In particular, I will emphasize the participative elements of netnography through engaging with these examples. Symbolic netnographies are an important type of netnography. They are based within interesting sites, among defined cultures, groups, and people. The objective of a symbolic netnography is to consider the meaning system of a particular online group, such as their values, practices, and online social rituals, and to translate or explain them. In this translation exercise, discourse is obviously a key construct. Symbolic netnographies present and explain the online social experience and interaction of particular groups. They draw upon the traditional use of ethnography and application of related qualitative research techniques in attempting to further the understanding of particular online groups and their collective thoughts and behaviors (for more detail, please see Kozinets 2015, pp. 246–249).

Consider as an initial example one where the researchers were deeply embedded and participating in various aspects of their online field site. Ercilia García-Álvarez, Jordi López-Sintas, and Alexandra Samper-Martínez, in their 2015 article about social network gamers playing *Restaurant City*, a game hosted on Facebook, provide a detailed description of their netnography.

> The fieldwork, conducted over 3 years, was undertaken in three stages. In the first stage, very soon after RC [Facebook's *Restaurant City* game] was launched in 2009, the researchers enrolled as participants via Facebook, thereby becoming part of the gaming community who managed restaurants in a 'street' with (at the high point of the game) 38 neighbors. (García-Álvarez et al. 2015, pp. 5–6)

In the first phase of their netnography, the researchers spent a full 18 months familiarizing themselves with the social and technical aspects of the game. This is an impressive investment of time. First, they created an 'American rocker style' restaurant on the Facebook Restaurant site with correctly themed furniture, décor, clothing, and food. In the second phase, they captured data through screen capture, written fieldnotes, and recording of off-line interactions. Demonstrating good ethical practice, they revealed their identities as researchers, explained the purpose of their research, and guaranteed anonymity to those with whom they interacted. Besides participant observation, their netnography involved the use of interview style questioning. They were thus able to delve into interesting individual perspectives and reactions which might not have revealed themselves without some interactive prompting and elicitation. Yet they were also careful to continue observing in situ, with minimal disruptions of the dynamics of interactive participation.

The researchers state that they repeatedly came back to their research field for a further two years in an example of prolonged netnographic engagement. During these visits they continued playing the game, conversing with other players, and observing and noting the many changes in the game's form, structure, and dynamics. In 2012, when Facebook announced the end of the game, they recorded players' reactions and attitudes as they were contained in a variety of other sources, such as fan pages, blogs, and different forums. Always they emphasized their own identity as researchers and the objectives of their research. Alongside these interactions, they collected archival type data from press releases, news reports, and other articles about the games and related corporate events and discourses. The result is impressive. The researchers conducted a long-term

immersion that constituted deep engagement in an online field site over almost all of its life span. They were present as digital natives, equal and active participants in the game. Yet they maintained and emphasized their own unique role as researchers, actively identifying themselves as different in this way, yet comfortable and accepted in this dual role as participant and researcher.

Moreover, their data collection did not stop at the one Facebook game site, but followed its digital trails where they naturalistically led – to other sites, to forums, to blogs, fan pages, corporate press releases, and so on. It even led them to engage with people in other contexts, such as 'off-line' contexts. The authors consider their research to be 'configured by the online and off-line interactions of players' in a gradual blending of techniques that 'rendered meaningless the distinction between an online world and another off-line world' (pp. 4–5). The netnography was ethical, multidimensional, immersive, prolonged, and extensive. It took three years to follow this online game field site from very close to its beginning to its demise. The netnographers exhibit full participation in the game. Visual information on the screen is captured, fieldnotes are written, 'off-line interactions' are recorded, participants are recruited and interviewed, ethical standards are followed.

Consider next Ashleigh Logan's (2015) nine-month long online fan culture investigation published in the journal *Celebrity Studies*. This article, which studies the activities of online fans of Kate Middleton, is a good recent example of a netnography with strong psychological implications. The emphasis in symbolic netnography is on researcher participation in the field, and Logan's work describes her participation in online culture in the following way: 'From February 2014 to October 2014 I observed, interacted and engaged with these bloggers and their followers as a participant observer. Observations, interactions and reflections were recorded in field notes. Data were captured visually via screenshots and the copy and paste method' (Logan 2015, pp. 378–379). However, perhaps because of the short length of the article, we gain little sense of the participation of Ashleigh as an active online fan of Kate Middleton. How did she, for instance 'replikate' – her intriguing term for the mass mimicry of Kate Middleton's fashion, looks, and behaviors? A more reflective and participative netnography would offer some postings of the researcher in Kate Middleton fashion, discuss the responses, share self-reflections from reflexive fieldnotes, and then reflect upon those reflexive reflections in deep data analysis that begins to penetrate not only the cultural codes surrounding the online fan experience, but also its phenomenology.

García-Álvarez et al. (2015) clearly played the same (literal) games as their online Facebook research participants. They moved through the same online social spaces. Logan (2015) says that she 'interacted and engaged' but does not share much of her potentially valuable phenomenological and personal experience – psychological reflection upon the experience of being a Middleton fan.

Finally, we can consider the work of researchers who are more indirectly involved in netnographic research practices. Laura Orsolini, MD, along with three other MDs, published an article in the journal *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, in which they examined the behavior of 'psychonauts', modern shamans in pursuit of psychedelic experiences, in online drug forums. Despite its claims to be observational and non-participative, Orsolini et al. (2015) provide a good example of a netnography that yields useful cultural results. Rather than engage in psychedelic practices themselves and share them online (something that might not be feasible, or at least may not be advisable – however, see Page and Singer 2010), Orsolini et al. (2015, p. 297) conducted a 'nonparticipant netnographic qualitative study of a list of cyber drug communities (blogs, fora, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter pages)'. As they tell, us, inviting us to read critically between the lines, they were able to complete their netnography in two months, rather than the three years of García-Álvarez et al. (2015). They scanned 102 pro-drug websites, and screened 13,770 forum threads authored by 2,076 users. They further state: 'In line with best practice protocols for online research and in compliance with unobtrusive and naturalistic features of netnographic research, no posts or other contributions to private or public forum discussions were made' (p. 297). The terms unobtrusive and naturalistic are emphasized. However, there are clear tradeoffs. In this case, with the subject being highly stigmatic and the netnographic methodology's unobtrusive aspects being crucial to its ability to yield insight, as well as the legal, moral, ethical, and health risks of actual participation in drug use culture, there is a strong rationale for pulling back on the participative and interactive elements. Nonetheless, it seems that their netnography is informed by a deep understanding both of drugs' pharmacological properties and of drug users' complex culture. With a grounding in these areas, Orsolini et al. (2015) are able to extend the knowledge of drug use culture to one that includes online culture.

Kozinets (2010) asserts that participation, including reading through and interacting with (by clicking through, making notes upon, and so on) posted online material in a 'real time' human

fashion, can be considered a viable form of netnographic participation. The results of Orsolini et al. (2015) demonstrate solid insights into the shared discourses, described behaviors and advice of the psychonauts. Yet adding interviews and other more interactive forms of engagement would likely lead to different and deeper insights into the expansive worlds of intertwined identities, rituals, and practices behind them. As we can see from the three examples, the amount of time spent on the netnography and participative depth of researcher involvement seem to be directly related. Yet there is a useful range of participative positions that can be effectively deployed in order to enact this radical empiricist technique. In the next section, we will explore how data is created by the netnographic researcher as it is collected, and how data and the researcher both, to some extent, define one another in and through the empirical act of research.

NETNOGRAPHIC DATA AND THE RESEARCHER

Netnographic data is crucial to the definition of netnography, and the elaborations of types of data, relation to data, and even the social construction of the category of data itself are important for an understanding of the methodology as well as the psychology behind the approach. Researchers are constantly engaging with netnography, broadening the method, customizing it so that it is adapted to ever-changing social and technological contexts, and expanding the method. There are, generally speaking, no hard-and-fast restrictions about what type of online information can be used as data in a netnography. Visual images, podcasts, Skype interviews, forum text, YouTube videos and many more are all usefully employed. The amount and type of data collected varies and is largely dependent on the nature of the phenomenon of interest. Logan (2015, p. 379), for instance, states that her netnography 'contained 831 Facebook posts and 431 tweets and included both pictorial and textual data. These data were analysed in the same way as traditional ethnographic data' (Logan 2015, p. 379).

This data included photo collages of fans in outfits and poses that Kate Middleton has worn and posed. These data were shared using popular platforms like Facebook and Twitter. In the shared photo collages, or attached to them, there are usually textual posts with fashion information, often explanation of the brands, the type of clothing, its price, and where varieties of it can be purchased, most commonly online, but also in brick-and-mortar stores. Unlike traditional ethnographies of forums, where a celebrity forum may have existed a decade ago around which fans of a celebrity such as Kate Middleton might congregate, today we have these interactions occurring on the mass sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, YouTube, and others, as well as on blogs and some forums. What this means is that studies of online social groups do not need to be site-specific. The movement between sites is liquid and simple. No loyalty is owed or given to any particular platform. The presence of people, topics, and resources draws people to communicate through particular communication channels. When a better one comes along, they move. Thus, determining the motivations and orientation of these particular groups is important to understanding their interactions and communications.

Here, Logan's exact wording becomes important: 'These photo collages were used by participants not only to explain the "how to" or the instruction of "replikating," but also to boost their popularity as "micro-celebrities" who "piggyback" off of Kate Middleton's recognisability as a fashion icon' (Logan 2015, p. 379). The mechanism is interesting because it offers an online medium for the transfer of subcultural and cultural capital, and also gives important insights into the psychology of fan culture and online exchange. Clearly, recognition is a major motivation, and the feedback loops of social networking sites such as Facebook allow a professionalization of the fame-piggybacking process that was heretofore unavailable to ordinary people. These forms of capital transfer through contemporary media communication by being embraced by individuals and groups. A type of cultural capital, they gain value in an online attention-based economy whose currencies are recognition and attention. As the community works at developing 'replikates', it adds value to shared motivational states, creating demand for likenesses and particular pieces of clothing. By so doing, it oils the wheels of a global fashion industry that works through mass adoration and lemming-like emulation of alpha females such as the powerfully iconic Royal. Media were used to provide 'short bursts of information about the quality of "replikate" and "copykate" items' (p. 379), as well as to provide attention and recognition from the others who would follow them and their advice.

Building the conceptual status of her netnography, Logan works through the terminology and makes it her own:

> Alteration is essentially the familiarisation with the codes and norms of online behaviour. For example, in the online Kate [Middleton] community it was

> important to understand the ways in which different bloggers alternated between the terms 'replikate' and 'copykate'. This was important for understanding the hierarchy of these bloggers within the community, because the power of 'micro-celebrity' was higher for those who 'replikate'. (Logan 2015, p. 379)

Here, we see decoding of the language of the crowd, the place, a local dialect, sets of practices, goals, and rituals. These meanings – in particular, the power and prestige-laden subtleties of differences between the terms 'replikate' and 'copykate' – require the keen human insight of an engaged and embedded cultural analyst.

The ultimate arbiter of the analysis is the researcher, and the researcher's experience of the data. The data, in whatever form it is collected, is created by the psychological frame of the netnographer as she makes decisions about what to include and what to exclude. A screenshot, for example, seems objective, and can be coded and analyzed as an objective social fact. Yet the screenshot leaves out much more than it includes. Visually, the boundaries of the screenshot are an artefact of the perceptual and conceptual constitution of the researcher. Contextually, the screenshot is a manifestation of a particular time and location, as well as a motivational state that is a combination of conscious and unconscious factors working in the world of the participant observer.

Concordant with the acts and practices of an embodied anthropologist in a physical site, the participant-observational stance of netnography necessitates a type of private and public performance which we might consider to be the performance of the anthropologist online (Kozinets 2013). Although this performance is conducted over wires and optical cables, it originates in and manifests through the history of scholarship and research, the social scientist is charged through her or his position to explain what is going on in social media and their networks on the Internet and the other digital data networks, including those which link up mobile applications, owned by social media companies such as Apple and Facebook, continuously monitored by many agencies, both commercial and governmental. All of these topics are important for us to study, in order to understand the fully enmeshed nature and power structure of this multifaceted, divergent and rich set of communications possibilities we currently call media, including the social – although they are all social (Kozinets 2015).

Like ethnography, particularly postcrisis of representation ethnography, netnographic methodology engages with the interface between the researcher and the world (Belk et al. 2013). This technologically-mediated interface is the juncture of the psychological set of acts and performances we choose to term participation. Moreover, it is the crucial point where the netnography is initially spawned through the creation/collection of data and ultimately presented through research re-presentation as a scientific accomplishment. It is the focus on this interface that draws netnography not only to research representation, but to researcher representation. We ask not only how will the netnography be represented, but how will the netnographic researcher represent herself in her dealings with the social world. This section details several ways that are in keeping with James's radical empiricist stance in which the representational and active research practices of data creation-collection interact to manifest as particular netnographic data or facts. In the next section, we consider how these data analytic moves by the researcher form representations of different types.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF NETNOGRAPHY

The constructed and collected data we examine in the prior section can be deployed for different research purposes. Kozinets (2015) divided these representational forms into four different more-or-less distinct types of netnography: symbolic, auto-, digital, and humanist. As we have already discussed in a section above, there are symbolic netnographies that seek to explore and explain meaning systems and practices relating to particular groups. There are also auto-netnographies, which are attuned to the inner, phenomenological experience of the researcher while they conduct the (usually symbolic) netnography. Digital netnographies incorporate any and all methods of data analysis, including those using software for automated word and language recognition and for the calculation and representation of social relationships. Humanist netnographies focus on social and individual issues, seeking self- and social betterment and aiming for public accessibility, activism, and action. Digital and symbolic netnographies tend to suppress the reflexive and subjectivist stance of the researcher in favor of the objective-seeming nature of online data as social facts. In these netnographies, reporting of observation is often favored over that of participation. Auto- and humanist netnographies explicitly valorize and develop the introspective, reflexive, and subjectivist stance of the researcher. In these studies, participation assumes a more important role.

The nature of data can vary in many other ways as well, altering the nature of netnographic

representation and understanding. We can think of a spectrum of netnographic representation, where netnographic variance can manifest its deviations in the following ways:

1 *Small data to big data ratio.* Small data are qualitatively rich and contextually nuanced. Big data are quantitatively plenty and decontextualized. Data can also be considered 'small' if the sample sizes are smaller.
2 *Mass to niche data ratio.* In netnography, context is king. It is critically important to maintain a sense of where a trace came from, who provided it, under what circumstances—whether it was shared by many, or only by a vocal few.
3 *Commercial to scholarly data ratio.* Some netnographies are intended for industrial application, while others are conducted in pursuit of more general types of human understanding.
4 *Visual to textual data ratio.* Some netnographies (many, thus far) focus upon textual forms of data and provide outputs in the form of text. Other possibilities exist in the form of the visual, the audiovisual and, the auditory.

We can conceptualize a range of different relationships to collected and created data which depend upon different perspectives. The ratio of small to big data would determine the level of detail, and lead to descriptive particularities and an emphasis on 'conjunctive relations' and 'the connexions of things' (James 1976, p. 22–23) – James' prescient way of discussing networked relations. We must, as contemporary scientists, also engage with a range of pragmatic possibilities which lead from the commercial to the scholarly and back again; the choices of these types of understandings and data sources will determine the shape and utilization of our research. We can think about them in the following ways.

First, although numbers seem to have far fewer interpretations to them than words, and likely far less cultural charge, this assumption does not hold up to scrutiny. Often a significant array of divergent cultural interpretation can be applied to them. There are spectra of small to large data, just as there are spectra regarding qualitative and quantitative modes of data collection, understanding, and analysis.

Second, digital netnographies use algorithmic tools to analyze word counts, sentiment, and natural language similarities to known routines. However, this is not human understanding. Human understanding must be applied at a human level, as deep analysis comes into even deeper contact with human context. Cultural understanding – the purpose of netnography – is built up through an addition or reintroduction of context. Moments of realization are constructed from contextual recognition.

Netnographies can be created to help corporations understand target consumers in order to communicate and empathize with them enough so that they buy more product. General understandings in netnography can take the form of academic portrayal of the languages and meaningful stories of groups of people – knowledge of the Other. This sort of understanding can contribute to wider social goals that may be difficult to monetize, but are ultimately far more important than profit.

Finally, much of human experience is visual; netnographic understandings should be as well. The types of data, in terms of its visual, textual, or other format, and the presence of these forms in the final representation will alter the type of information that the netnography can convey and also the audience to whom it might be communicated.

These concerns over the nature of data interrelate with netnography's emphasis upon the participative role of the researcher by suggesting the linkage between the reflexive enactment of research and the subjective nature of data creation/collection. With this in mind, we can turn to a brief concluding section that considers how netnography might begin to chart a radical empiricist path for some psychology researchers who are interested in engaging participatively with the world of online sociality.

CONTEMPLATING THE FUTURE OF NETNOGRAPHY

In this chapter, I suggest that netnography, a form of participatory online research, is a radical empiricist technique for the conduct of psychological research in James's sense in that it includes the direct experience of the researcher. Following on Rogerian humanistic psychology, I emphasize researcher participation in contemporary social or communications media as a process that has the potential for social and self-transformation. Drawing upon empirical examples, we explored three particular examples of published netnography, and emphasized the different stances each of them assumed towards researcher participation. The next section of the chapter offers an empirical example that is used to explore how data is created by the netnographic researcher as it is collected. This section then proceeds in a somewhat philosophical vein to discuss how data and the researcher are co-constitutive. Both, to some

extent, define one another in and through the empirical act of research. Varying the ratio of small to big data, of mass to niche data, of the commercial to scholarly focused, and of the visual to textual, leads us to conceptualize a range of different relationships to collected and created data which depend upon assuming different participative and empiricist perspectives. What may be missing from all of this talk of empiricism is an emotional grounding. It is in this short final section that I now attempt to blend in some sense of the emotionality of human experience by briefly speculating upon the role in netnography of desire.

Our technological media have become the complicated throughput devices for the mutual creation and satisfaction of desires. Netnography links to a human consciousness project most closely aligned with gestalt psychology, cyberpsychology, and the anthropology of consciousness on the academic side, but also tightly aligned with the core expressive notions of the arts and the humanities, the human sciences of artistic representation (rather than scientific presentation). It is for this reason that netnography aligns itself within an expansive, expressive tradition seeking to unite politics, science, and spirituality – not to mention the consumer cultural world of the commercial realm: the socio-economic spheres, with all their classes, projects, and identities – as well as all of their attendant desires. Desires, in a Lacanian sense. We desire the things that we must have in order to sustain the desire itself – the minimum choice, as Deleuze and Guattari (1982) remind us, between satisfaction and schizophrenia. Netnography is one way, and only one, to begin to examine those desires in our own lives, individually and collectively.

It is in these heady final moments, at the very end of the chapter of this book where we can expand our headspace to contemplate the future of netnography. Maintaining trust, authenticity, and a sense of meaning remain critically important to the representational aims of netnography. Netnography enters a world in which, for most scientists, beliefs and preconceptions are still a very large yet unexamined, and thus largely unconscious, part of the ideology of scientific practice. Like existential psychology, like psychology at its roots, before quantification and neuroscience overwhelmed its philosophical bases, netnography is about reflexivity. It asks the researcher to be aware of what she is assuming, thinking, doing, and perhaps most importantly of all feeling, and to reflect upon it as a part of her research endeavor. Netnography assumes that each of us can live a more examined existence through the practices of research, and that this practice can take place against an axiology of social and self-improvement. Practice in this sense includes participation. It includes being fully present in the data stream, as well as being fully considered a member of a particular cultural configuration. This is a radical prospect. Introspective self-realization, grounding our academic work, our work as researchers, our life in the world of questions and quests, is one of the promises of netnography. The other is being present socially, in that public data stream, as a voice, as social scientist who interacts with the world, as an academic micro-celebrity, a relevant and publicly engaged psychological researcher.

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23

Using Computer Packages in Qualitative Research: Exemplars, Developments and Challenges

Sarah L. Bulloch, Christina Silver and Nigel Fielding

INTRODUCTION

Computers have gained a substantial presence in qualitative research. As Weitzman and Miles (1995) observed, they are routinely used during each phase of qualitative projects, from data collection through analysis to presentation. In this chapter, we provide an overview of some of the ways in which software designed to facilitate the management and analysis of qualitative and mixed methods data is currently being used, specifically in the context of psychological methods. We begin by setting the scene with regards to the origins of qualitative software, collectively known as Computer Assisted Qualitative Data AnalysiS (CAQDAS) packages, before moving on to a broad discussion of the opportunities and boundaries of the role that such software can play within research projects. The bulk of the chapter is then dedicated to three examples of what these software can bring to common analytic activities in psychology; namely, to inductive coding strategies in a grounded theory approach; to annotation, memoing and word searching in the context of analysing discourse; and to hyperlinking and mapping in the context of tracking associations through data. The purpose of these three examples is to provide an illustration of the potential uses of selected CAQDAS features, rather than to provide a complete list of the tools available[1]. The chapter closes with some discussion around recent developments in the field of software use and key considerations that emerge from these, including the ever-increasing amount of data available to researchers via the internet and the possibilities regarding mixing methods that this brings; the trend towards developers providing opportunities to work across different platforms and the opportunities and ethical dimensions brought about by increased prominence of cloud computing.

THE EMERGENCE OF QUALITATIVE SOFTWARE

The first CAQDAS programs emerged on mainframe computers in the early 1980s. Roughly 25 to 30 programs eventually became available for personal computers, many of which remain, despite increasing market dominance by four or five. This software field is somewhat distinctive in that, from the outset, development has generally been driven by academic social scientists, aided by programmers and feedback from researchers using the technologies. Much of this development was directed to satisfying analytic requirements

associated with specific research projects, and, while the disciplinary context in which CAQDAS originally developed was skewed somewhat to sociology, psychologists have contributed to their development, in particular some key projects based in psychology, particularly environmental psychology, and the psychology of consumer preference. Indeed, two leading CAQDAS packages (MAXQDA and ATLAS.ti) emerged from primarily psychology-based research teams, both in Germany, suggesting that development partly reflects the standing of particular methods and analytic approaches in national research communities. Whilst commercial realities now inevitably shape the field, academics remain senior partners in many of the teams developing CAQDAS packages, thus contributing to the fashioning of tools, closely informed by researchers' working practices. Therefore, the support that information technology offers for social and behavioural science research does not simply depend on the development of computer science but on the methodological requirements and analytic practices of given disciplines.

CAQDAS initially developed around the needs of analysing textual data but qualitative research often draws on an eclectic range of information sources. Dependent on research design, it may seek to collate, manipulate and analyse documents collected in, or about field settings, notes of observations and informal interviews made in the field, transcripts of formal interviews, audio and visual records of interaction, symbolic representations of data or conceptual schema, such as those expressed graphically, and numerical/statistical information, such as proportions of a sample associated with a given view, or psychometric and demographic information about participants. Thus, not all data are textual, and they vary in how 'raw' or constructed they may be. The ever-developing ability to directly incorporate and analyse multimedia data in software is especially relevant to psychology where communicative interaction is often of interest.

Whilst at the time of writing, CAQDAS use is not ubiquitous, with many researchers choosing to engage in qualitative data analysis manually, current trends in computer use mean that a new generation of researcher expects to find ways of accomplishing research within an information technology setting. Personal preference in relation to working style, as well as the specific needs of a project most frequently lie behind the choice to either work with or without CAQDAS. Yet we are also seeing a rise in the use of non-bespoke software tools, such as Microsoft's OneNote and Evernote (Silver and Bulloch, 2017) being used in relation to qualitative data analysis. As well as challenging the dominance of 'traditional' CAQDAS packages in the world of software use in qualitative data analysis, and thereby encouraging constant evolution to tools, this trend may well be 'opening up' qualitative data analysis to new audiences outside the academic sphere (Silver and Bulloch, 2017).

TYPOLOGIES OF SOFTWARE AND THE ROLE OF CAQDAS IN QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Over the years, several standard typologies in the qualitative software field have emerged. For example, Weitzman and Miles (1995) identified three basic types of qualitative software: *text retrievers*, *code-and-retrieve* packages, and *theory-building* software. Kelle (1995) regarded the threefold typology of qualitative software as successive generations. For Mangabeira (1995) the distinctive third generation feature was its model-building capabilities. Today most of the leading packages provide features of all three of these types. Silver and Lewins's approach underlines this, discussing packages in terms of how they allow the researcher to engage in common analytic activities, from data integration, organization, exploration and reflections through to interrogation (2014). Setting out a little more about each type, here we highlight some of the key features available in CAQDAS packages today, before turning to the broader question of what role they can play in the research process.

Weitzman and Miles's (1995) focus on *text retrieving* involves recovering material where specified keywords appear in the data. For example, when you search for 'hyperactivity', wherever this word appears in the text the software will extract it. Words, other character strings, and combinations of these, can be retrieved from selected or all data files, plus things that are considered by the user to mean the same, or contain patterns, such as the alpha-numerical sequences in social security records. The speciality of text retrieving functions is the very rapid retrieval of content held in large numbers of documents, e.g. finding occurrences of a term of interest in a large number of transcribed therapeutic sessions and so on. These features are discussed in more depth in Example 2, below.

Code-and-retrieval focuses particularly on dividing text into segments, attaching codes (conceptual labels) to the segments, and retrieving segments by code (or combinations of codes). The coding element of this process can take place

manually, or can be generated as a result of *text retrieval* functions, as discussed above. Coded data can be retrieved based on an individual or group of codes, or retrieved based on how codes relate to one another, e.g. where data coded to the concept 'frustration' coincides with data coded at the concept 'depressive illness'. Organizing data to known characteristics (such as socio-demographic variables) allows retrieval based on the combination of conceptual codes and organizational features; for example, enabling a search to recover only data where two particular characteristics apply but not a third; for instance, data from MALE respondents with DEPRESSION who are NOT married. Example 1 in this chapter discusses the coding process in more depth, whilst the 'mixed methods' part of the 'recent developments and key considerations' section touches on ways in which CAQDAS packages now allow for the integration of information that enables code retrieval based on factual, quantitative information.

Theory-building features of CAQDAS packages emphasize relationships between the categories, often based on work done at the code-and-retrieve stage. Theory-building tasks can also facilitate users to identify and develop higher-order categories, analytic typologies and data representations other than those derived directly from data, such as formulating propositions that fit the data and testing their applicability using hypothesis-testing features. They can also facilitate the visual representation of connections between categories as an aid to conceptualization, e.g. showing code names (or other objects, like memos) as nodes in a graphic display so users can link them to other nodes by specified relationships like 'leads to', 'is a kind of', and so on. Example 3 in this chapter explores these possibilities by discussing options around mapping and hyperlinking within CAQDAS packages.

A key proposition, offered by Tesch (1990), related the software then available to the kinds of analytic work that qualitative researchers do. This established a principle that remains crucial, that choosing the 'right' package and harnessing the tools within them in the service of particular analytic tasks, is a question of being clear about one's analytic purposes (Silver and Woolf, 2015). To answer the question 'what is the right tool for the job' one has to translate one's strategies to available software tools (Silver and Woolf, 2015). In addition, Weitzman and Miles (1995: 9) observe:

> Choosing the right software for you depends on your own level of work with computers, on your time perspective, on the particular project you have in mind, and on the type of analysis you are expecting to do.

Notwithstanding the diversity in the analytic needs of individual projects, Silver and Lewins (2014) discuss how CAQDAS packages support key analytic activities that cut across qualitative methodologies, specifically the activities of integrating, organizing, exploring, reflecting upon, and interrogating qualitative data. Figure 23.1 provides a visual of these analytic activities.

Silver and Lewins take forward and build upon Tesch's principle. Their discussion of analytic activities and software tools is firmly grounded within a discussion of the primacy of the role of the researcher in responsible and effective CAQDAS use. Neither the choice of software tools nor the order in which they are used is determined by the software, they argue: all the decisions are driven by the researcher, in line with their analytic strategy (2014: 44). This means that whilst many CAQDAS packages provide the tools to engage in key analytic activities, the extent to which and the way in which these tools are used necessarily vary from project to project, depending on the specifics of the analytic strategies that are driving the work. Thus, because packages are used in a multitude of ways for a multitude of analytic purposes, it is not meaningful to talk about a 'best' overall CAQDAS package. The features of particular packages may appeal more or less to different researchers at different times. The critical point is that rather than being led by the tools that are available in a given package, the researcher must be driven by their research strategy or methodology in order to harness software features powerfully (Silver and Woolf, 2015). Therefore, the role of the software is to provide a set of tools that can be harnessed in a variety of ways to support the operationalization of different analytic strategies.

Silver and Lewins's view of CAQDAS packages adds to the existing typologies by explicitly creating a space for the analytic activity of reflection (2014: 53). Key to this is the recognition that many projects progress iteratively and that tools for reflection encourage researchers to be clear about their reasoning as they proceed. It is invaluable to be able to re-trace one's steps by means of an 'audit trail', facilitating the identification of how particular lines of inquiry have been pursued and interpretations developed. This contributes to more transparency around process, and therefore enables researchers to be explicitly accountable to others, which is particularly important in fields whose legitimacy is contested. Being able to demonstrate precisely how an analytic point was derived is to make apparent the rationale for analytic work, and that can be important in meeting criticisms, both of specific analyses and more general criticisms based on scepticism about particular approaches to research methodology. There is considerable testimony in disciplines like anthropology and sociology of the

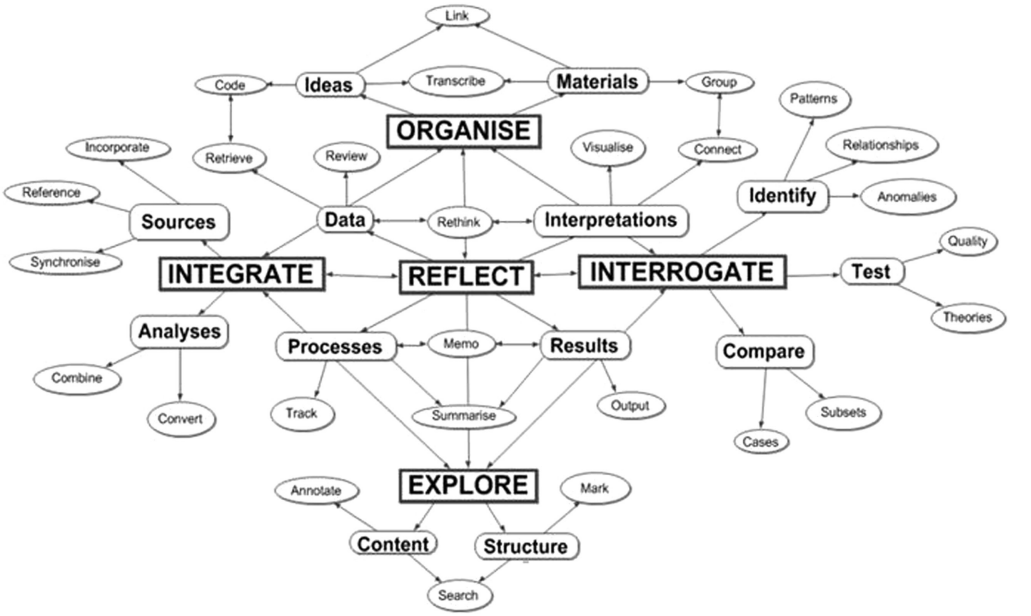

Figure 23.1 Analytic activities and CAQDAS tools

Source: Silver and Lewins (2014)

gain in credibility and perceived legitimacy associated with the use of software to support qualitative work. It is largely the use of tools that promote and capture the researcher's reflections over time that allow for this.

EXEMPLAR APPLICATIONS OF CAQDAS

CAQDAS packages are used across a wide range of academic and applied settings, in disciplines including psychology and sociology, education research, business and management, government research, health studies, geography and art history. Here we take three analytic approaches commonly used in psychology and illustrate how software can facilitate their processes and tasks: Grounded Theory, Discourse Analysis and Hyperlinking. Rather than following or promoting a prescribed process, or suggesting that these are the only approaches undertaken in psychology, we aim to illustrate the flexibility software provides for supporting varied approaches to qualitative data. We discuss some generic possibilities rather than suggesting necessary phases or analytic tasks. Given the variability between and within these approaches, we focus on selected aspects of each rather than providing an exhaustive account of how to conduct an analysis when applying one of them. As mentioned previously, we encourage critical evaluation of software tools and their flexible use throughout the research process by individual users and teams. Just as a software package should be chosen according to the needs of the researcher and the data, so the tools within individual packages will be more or less useful for analytic tasks undertaken in specific methods.

Example 1: Inductive Strategies in Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory is an inductive method of conducting qualitative research in which data collection and analysis occur interactively over time in a process Becker (1971) termed 'sequential analysis'. The aim is to develop theory from the data level which requires close contact with source data in order to verify developing interpretations (see Chapter 14, this Volume).

Grounded coding strategies

Core to grounded theory is the idea that the generation of concepts that capture meaning in data (typically termed 'codes' and 'categories') should

be generated from the data itself rather than be derived from pre-existing ideas, hypotheses or theories. Strauss and Corbin (1998) distinguish between three kinds of coding which they suggest occur in sequence and lead to the development of theories which explain processes identified in the data. These are 'open coding', 'axial coding' and 'selective coding'. We illustrate how these and their accompanying analytic tasks can be supported by CAQDAS packages.

The first phase is referred to as 'open coding' and requires the researcher to carefully read through data in sequence, to generate and apply as many codes as are needed to catalogue what is seen to be 'going on' in the data. All CAQDAS packages support the generation of codes as interesting aspects within data are identified. Codes can be created and linked to the data which prompted the ideas that underlie the concepts that are captured by the code label in a quick and straightforward process. Any number of codes can be generated in order to capture the variety of ways the data can be read. The size of the data segment to be coded is defined by the researcher and the same data segment (or overlapping segments) can be assigned as many codes as relevant. Line-by-line analysis is therefore facilitated. Codes can also easily be created directly from language or terminology used in the data (termed *in vivo* coding in grounded theory), which allows researchers to avoid abstraction from the data at this early stage. It is usually very easy to define codes as they are generated, and to add to those definitions as the meaning and application of codes changes throughout a project. These definitions can be accessed at any point within CAQDAS programs, and outputted to a word processing application or printed in hard copy.

Constant comparison is a key aspect of this stage of grounded theory. Data segments are compared with one another in order to ensure all relevant codes are assigned to all relevant data. In most CAQDAS packages the responsibility for doing so remains solely with the researcher. However, a key feature of the package Qualrus is its 'suggestive coding' machine learning feature. The software will suggest codes to the researcher based on a number of computational strategies, one of which is the theory of constant comparison. On selecting a text segment for coding, the researcher is reminded of the codes applied to the previous coded segment in order to assess whether this segment is also relevant to those codes. The researcher remains in control of which codes are applied, but features such as Qualrus' 'suggestive coding' may help ensure coding is rigorous. It does not, however, negate the need to return to previously considered data when a new code is identified.

The next coding stage, 'axial coding', involves returning to previously created codes and the data to which they have been applied to rethink, revise and develop higher order categories. The basic functionality of code-and-retrieve as discussed above is key in facilitating this aspect of work. All CAQDAS packages provide very quick ways to retrieve all data so far coded at one code. Some packages (e.g. NVivo) initially lift coded data out of its original source context, whereas others (e.g. ATLAS.ti) always locate coded data within the source context. Others (e.g. MAXQDA) provide both options simultaneously.

Work with codes often leads to a need to revise codes, either globally or as they apply to particular segments. Examples include: to increase or decrease the amount of data coded to a particular point, to uncode a data segment where the applied code it is now deemed not to be relevant, to merge two codes where they are deemed to be doing similar work, and to rename codes to more adequately represent the nature of the data coded at them. All of these tasks are part of the axial coding process and are simple to execute within CAQDAS packages. As illustrated in Figure 23.2 such analytic tasks are facilitated by flexible retrieval options.

The process of open coding often yields large numbers of codes, some of which are similar in various ways. The need to group codes according to these similarities, and to thereby isolate them from other concepts is a key aspect of the axial coding process. This may be achieved by grouping codes into hierarchies, or looser collections. This allows all the data coded at any of the grouped codes to be retrieved together within the software, or outputted from it. Such processes facilitate interpretation at a higher level of abstraction while maintaining seamless access to source data and supports the establishment of higher order categories.

Codes can also be linked to one another in a more abstract way, perhaps by generating a map, model or network. Links created between codes are defined by the researcher. There is usually a stock of commonly used relationships to draw from, but also the ability to create and define relations according to specific analytic needs. Linking and mapping devices provided by CAQDAS packages are discussed in relation to Hyperlinking below.

The third stage of coding in grounded theory, 'selective coding', focuses on verifying the patterns and relationships identified. This may require comparing data coded at particular themes or concepts across different subsets of data in order to validate conclusions and further illustrate the developing theories. At any stage, different data sources can be organized by known characteristics,

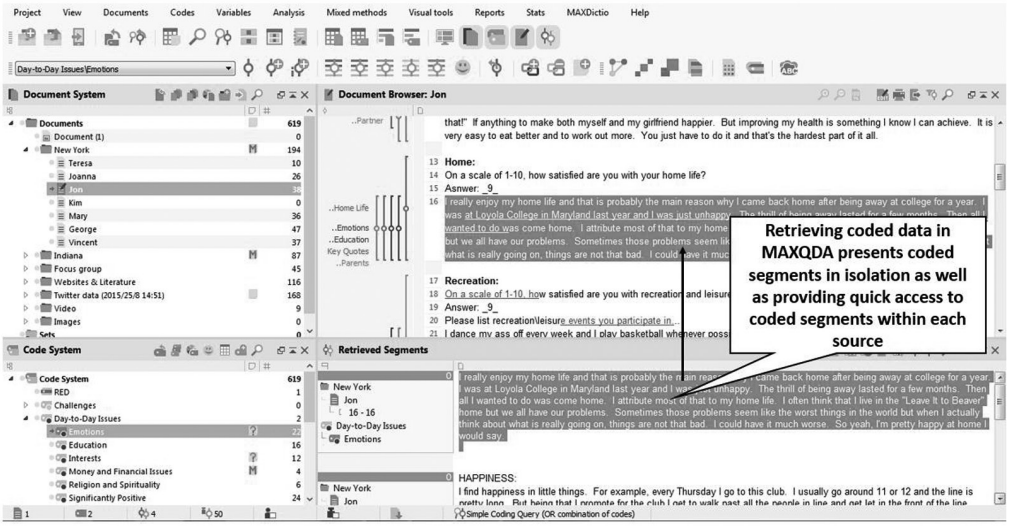

Figure 23.2 Basic retrieval in MAXQDA

such as socio-demographic variables, contexts, etc. Query tools provided by CAQDAS packages can be utilized to compare instances of similarity and difference which can be outputted for the purposes of illustration in the final written product. Search operators differ between packages, but the Boolean operators AND, OR, NOT and XOR and proximity operators such as NEAR and CO-OCCUR are usually provided. The whole database – or parts of it – can therefore be queried for the position of two or more codes in the data, or for example, where certain code(s) occur within certain types of data (e.g. amongst respondents with particular socio-demographic characteristics, or data derived from various empirical contexts). In addition, frequency information concerning, for example, the application of (selected) codes across (parts of) the dataset can help visualize which categories are more or less prevalent in certain contexts. Any such information can be outputted to file or printed for consideration away from the computer, or incorporated into the final written research report.

It is worth noting that recent trends in the CAQDAS field have broadened the researcher's toolkit with respect to working with non-textual materials. A project that seeks to take a grounded approach to the analysis of images, audio or video data is now able to do so in most CAQDAS packages (for a full discussion of developments in the analysis of different data types, see Silver and Bulloch (2017)). Coding can take place directly on the image or the audio data, thereby facilitating a grounded approach, or on a researcher-generated transcript of the material which is synchronized with the original audio or video file.

Alongside these coding tasks it will be important to note insights, thoughts, questions and interpretations as a crucial part of the analytic process. Software tools support writing in different ways and whilst this activity is further discussed in relation to analysing discourse and creating hypertext environments below, it may be just as relevant to undertaking grounded theory projects.

Example 2: Annotation, Memoing and Word Searching in Analysing Discourse

Discourse analysis refers to the study of how language and discourse produce versions of social phenomena. Like grounded theory, it is an approach to conducting research rather than simply an analytic strategy. Narrative analysis, conversation analysis, critical discourse analysis and semiotics have shared features with, but also distinct features from, discourse analysis. In psychology two frequently used variations are 'discursive psychology' (Chapter 6) and 'Foucauldian discourse analysis' (Chapter 7). The former focuses on talk, or discourse as *action* and is concerned with interpersonal communication, the latter on the role of language in constructing social and psychological life, with an emphasis on the role of discourse in legitimation and power.

Whatever the specific form of discourse analysis conducted, language, terminology, discourse, narrative and communication are the foci. Historically discourse analysts have been relatively reluctant to use CAQDAS, generally because of a perception that it relies too heavily on code-and-retrieve functionality. However, more recently widespread features such as increased power and flexibility of text-searching tools, more flexible annotation and memo tools, and increasing ability to integrate multiple data types within one software project, mean that researchers embarking on the analysis of discourse now have real choice beyond code-and-retrieve functionality. Here we focus on textual exploration, searching and annotation tools to illustrate how CAQDAS packages may support analytic tasks undertaken during discourse analysis (see also section on Hyperlinking below).

Early exploration: Reading, marking and annotating data

Close reading of primary data sources and annotation of data segments is a key task of discourse analysis. Indeed, the process of writing about what is seen in data often constitutes the analysis itself. For example, writing in reference to discursive psychology, Willig (2003: 170) states that 'analysis is really a deconstruction (through the identification of interpretive repertoires and discursive constructions that make up the text) followed by a reconstruction (through writing about and thus re-creating the constructions and functions that characterize the text) of discourse, and writing itself is an essential part of this process'. There is a clear need to remain located in the whole source context of the text at the same time as commenting on particular instances and constructing detailed interpretations through writing. Many CAQDAS packages provide flexible tools with which these analytic tasks can be accomplished, but packages do so in different ways. The discourse analyst, in evaluating the utility of software, must consider their appropriateness for particular methodological approaches and styles of working.

When working without the support of a customized software program the process can be messy in terms of the management and organization of annotations. Whether working with paper or using a word processing application, it becomes visually messy when additional comments are made and there is a need to flesh out the analysis in lengthy written commentaries. In particular, however, linking together relevant aspects of work, for the purposes of subsequently re-constructing discourse, is difficult to manage. CAQDAS packages include tools which can be potentially invaluable to the discourse analyst in these respects.

Annotation can take different forms. Marking text through sophisticated transcription protocols, for example the Jeffersonian system widely used in Conversation Analysis (Chapter 5), is just one. Qualitative researchers engaged in manual coding often mark data using different-coloured highlighter pens, and annotate text in the margin of printed transcripts. CAQDAS packages allow text editing provided material is not in PDF form. This can be a useful task whatever the methodology, although it may also be seen as obscuring the 'natural' flow of the narrative. MAXQDA, however, provides a functional early marking and sorting method. Using five colour codes the user can mark text for different reasons with a colour code which is later retrievable. This allows 'interesting' text segments to be visually marked and subsequently retrieved without the researcher being required to create or define a code label, or comment on the data immediately.

Deconstruction can be facilitated by annotating individual passages of text where they are seen to represent an instance of, for example, a particular discursive construction. Similar examples may be linked by means of coding, but this is not always desirable or necessary. ATLAS.ti for example, allows quotations identified by the researcher to be treated in isolation, and viewed together with their annotations without codes being assigned. Central to discourse analysis is that what is *not* said can be as important as the actual content of the text. Annotation tools provide places to write about such absences and to consider their implications, with the facility to return to the whole, unaltered data source at any point. In addition, in ATLAS.ti, these quotations can be linked together by means of hyperlinking (see Figure 23.3), and broader memos where commonalties and differences are explored through writing can be retrieved in flexible ways.

Another analytic activity that can be used to facilitate the analysis of discourse, as well as used in a multitude of other ways, is the activity of memoing. Memos are available in most CAQDAS packages and function as spaces for writing and reflection. Their 'status' within the architecture of the software and the extent to which parts of, or the whole of memos can be linked to other elements within a project (such as codes, sources, other memos, etc.) does vary from package to package. For example, in MAXQDA, memos can be scattered around a project, with a whole memo potentially linked to whole documents, parts of documents and codes. But they are also centrally stored within an 'overview of memos' list. In ATLAS.ti memos can be linked to other items and these connections visualized within the Network view. One notable feature of NVivo is that a part of

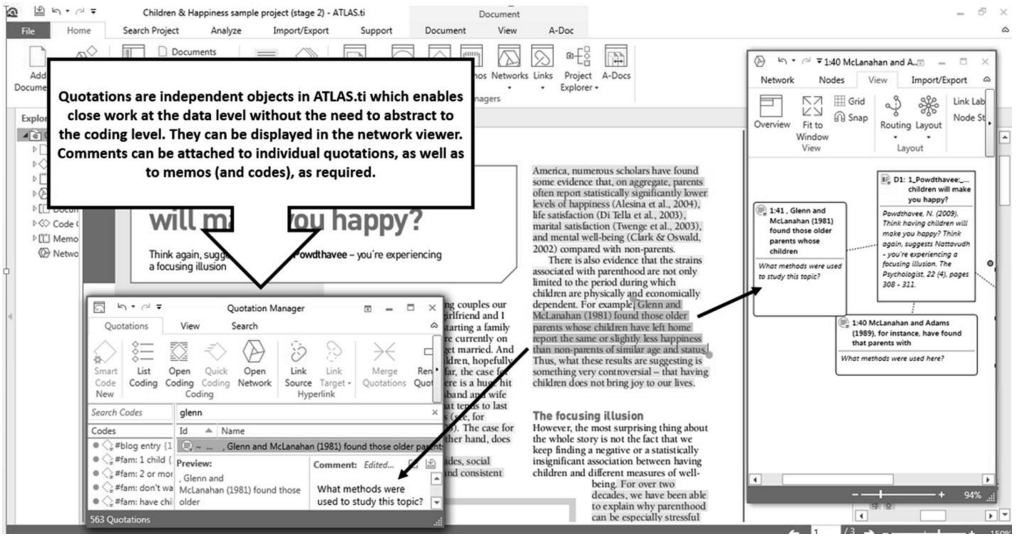

Figure 23.3 Working with and annotating quotations in ATLAS.ti

a memo can be linked to one or more codes, such that the researcher's own writing can be coded.

Early exploration: Word frequencies and word searching

Depending on the focus of the study there may be an interest in elements of text or talk such as the context, stylistic and grammatical features, metaphors, variability and construction of interaction, conversation, etc. Identifying the presence of such structures and interpreting how they are organized and used to construct discursive features clearly requires close and repeated consideration of the inherent nature of the text. CAQDAS packages offer deductive word searching, indexing and categorizing tools which can provide an additional dimension to analytic work on discourse. It is important to reflect upon the interpretive value of these tools within the contexts in which they are used and in relation to the analytic tasks they are used to fulfil. In some situations their use can be invaluable, at other times reliance on the 'results' they produce may be misleading. However, often their use can help identify occurrences of word usage which can be useful indicators of structures and concepts that warrant further investigation.

Word frequency tools count all the words present in a given set of texts and are, therefore, very exploratory in nature, for example, allowing analysts to examine textual content without having any prior knowledge of it. These types of tools exist across most CAQDAS packages, although they differ in their sophistication. Nevertheless, lists of the most commonly occurring words within materials can usually be generated, and packages including ATLAS.ti and NVivo can generate a file readable by external applications counting every word by (groups of) document. However, whilst these packages allow the identification of common words, they do not 'unearth' common *phrases* in the materials. Such functions are found in software that have dedicated more attention to deductive, quantitative content analysis and text mining features. QDA Miner, with the add-on module WordStat, for example, allows for lemmatization, stemming, stop lists, hierarchical categorization of words, word patterns and phrases, Key Word in Context (KWIC) lists, links to lexical databases, vocabulary and phrase extractors (Silver, 2014). MAXQDA has also recently operationalised many of these features via its 'Word combinations' feature. Qualrus allows codes to be assigned synonyms, one of the bases upon which its suggestive coding facility operates. A notable consideration is that texts must be machine readable in order for word frequency tools to work. The most commonly experienced challenge here is where a project uses older PDF documents which function as images rather than as text, or where handwritten texts are scanned. Should word frequency tools be central to operationalizing the given analytical strategy at hand, it may be necessary to convert the data into a machine readable format, which can be accomplished using Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology.

Text search tools differ from word frequency tools in that they retrieve instances of particular words or phrases that are identified a priori by the analyst, and most CAQDAS packages now incorporated these tools. Some use internal thesauri to widen searches beyond a given word or phrase, although these tools can have significant limitations if they are not amendable by the researcher, since working with synonyms is always context specific.

Word frequency and text searching tools are arguably gaining credence in interpretive qualitative analysis given the ever-increasing access to large volumes of digitized data about people's behaviours and attitudes. Researchers can now easily harvest online materials about people's lives, in unprecedented quantities. This potentially increases demand for automated processes that allow for harvesting or rapid identification of pertinent material online (Silver and Bulloch, 2017). Word frequency and text searching tools are therefore likely to increase in prominence and sophistication in CAQDAS packages, as are methods by which online materials can be identified, harvested and imported into them (Silver and Bulloch, 2017).

This example illustrates that when focusing on the role of language and talk in constructing social reality, annotation, memoing, word frequency and searching tools represent important ways in which CAQDAS packages can add to the kind of work discourse analysts undertake. All CAQDAS packages enable work exclusively at the level of texts, without abstracting to coding levels, although they vary in the ways they enable this. Discourse analysts can manipulate software to suit their particular needs, selecting and constructing features to create tools that enable them to fulfil their analytic needs (Silver and Woolf, 2015).

Example 3: Hyperlinking and Mapping in Creating and Tracking Associative Trails

Some approaches to qualitative data analysis view coding as limiting because it is perceived to fragment and reduce data to an extent that obscures the dialectic relationship between reading text (or viewing multimedia data) and reflection. As discussed in relation to discourse analysis above, but equally pertinent for all approaches to qualitative data analysis, interpretation via reflection, of which writing is an important part, is the essence of working qualitatively (Gibbs, 2002; Silver and Lewins, 2014). Hypertexts are electronic multidimensional documents in which several writing spaces are viewable simultaneously, and multiple paths through data are offered. Their emphasis is on non-linear sequencing whereby points of reference and the links created between them are the means of organizing data rather than coding procedures such as those discussed above. Such approaches have their roots in ethnography and creating hypertexts is often deemed to be as much about displaying data to the reader as it is about the analysis of qualitative data.

A key focus of such approaches is on the creation of associative trails through data, rather than on collecting similar segments assigned to thematic or conceptual codes. Coding and subsequent querying about the distribution of codes across (subsets of) data is seen as rooted in a quantitative rather than qualitative paradigm (see Weaver and Atkinson, 1994). In these approaches the analytic focus is on the relationships between topics or objects rather than codes or concepts, and how well represented they are across data. Proponents often equate the processes of qualitative data analysis with those of human cognition, viewing the creation of hypertexts as emulating human mental processes. Construed as 'brainstorming' procedures, such work is best supported by hyperlinking and annotation tools. Hyperlinking is a 'free association' approach to building up an analytic chain of reasoning which forms the hypertext. It facilitates an unstructured, non-linear approach to identifying, writing about and linking ideas, whereby multidirectional associative trails can be created, for example tracking content, themes, ideas and concepts horizontally and vertically (Silver and Lewins, 2014) across data as well as sequentially through them. These conceptual relations are seen as part of the process of theory building and developing thick contextual description (Geertz, 1973), and some commentators therefore see the creation of hypertexts through hyperlinking as more akin to the nature of qualitative work than coding (Weaver and Atkinson, 1994: 145–146). Hyperlinking tools may be used to track processes as diverse as narrative, sequence, structure, time and interaction.

Just like grounded theory or discourse analysis the need to remain 'close' to data and view the whole context of texts is paramount. The non-linear and associative character of hyperlinking readily permits the recovery of context, although as seen above, other analytic affordances provided by CAQDAS packages also provide flexible in-context retrieval. The need is to integrate qualitative understandings of relations between ideas into the process of marking text and representing data. In this sense many of the elements discussed above in relation to annotating data in CAQDAS packages are relevant.

Many CAQDAS packages now provide ways to hyperlink data segments to one another, although in most cases these are features that do not provide

the visually dynamic environment required in creating hypermedia. Indeed, there is still a lack of flexibility in transforming the results of analytic work undertaken in CAQDAS packages into completely dynamic and accessible formats, in particular for generating non-linear representations, such as visual narratives, hypertexts or reportage (Silver and Patashnick, 2011). For example, NVivo, allows the creation of 'See Also links' which can be used to track onward processes, but they only allow pairs of connections to be created, rather than for chains of associations. The same is true in MAXQDA. ATLAS.ti however, provides flexible and manageable multidirectional hyperlinking through qualitative data. The main benefits are that segments of multimedia data can be marked and linked in the same ways as text and that hyperlinking can occur in isolation from coding tasks, or be fully integrated with them. Figure 23.4 illustrates this.

The ways in which CAQDAS packages allow the visualization of hyperlinks affects their utility for moving around the database. ATLAS.ti shows where hyperlinks are embedded in the data in the margin view (in the same way as codes, memos or annotations are displayed). The data itself remains unchanged when inserting hyperlinks and the margin can be removed from view when these linkages are not the focus of work. This enables the whole text to be viewed in full at any time without being obscured by the various trails that exist within it. When following a hyperlink trail, segments are always located within their source context, although they can also be visualized within a network view, or outputted to a text file when there is a need to isolate them or think about them away from the software. These different aspects of work, however, are fully integrated in that it is always easy to flick between source data and the different representations of it. At any point an individual segment which comprises part of a particular associative trail can be annotated in full view of its source context, as well as in relation to the other segments to which it is linked. As illustrated above, memos can also be linked to individual quotations, or to particular points in a hyperlink trail. The ability to link quotations and codes to one another and themselves, and particularly, to view these relationships together, offers a holistic approach to analysis and representation. For those seeking hyperlinking abilities and coding processes within the same software, ATLAS.ti provides a good choice because these features have a similar *status* within the software and can therefore be harnessed as equivalent tools. Being able to undertake analytic tasks in isolation or to integrate them at any point, offers a high degree of choice in tools and convergence of approaches (Silver and Lewins, 2014; Silver and Woolf, 2015).

Integrated mapping tools are now a common feature of CAQDAS packages. When used in tandem with either or both coding and hyperlinking tools, they can reflect and facilitate the dynamic and interconnected processes of qualitative data analysis. Most CAQDAS packages provide graphical mapping or networking 'spaces' where representations of the concepts comprising an analysis can be represented and connected.

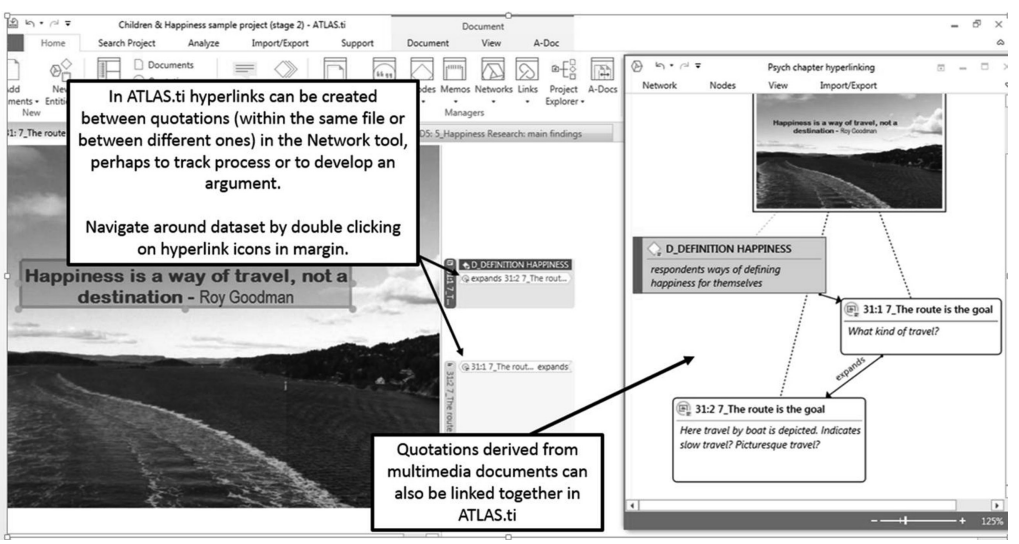

Figure 23.4 Hyperlinking between quotations in ATLAS.ti

Linking concepts facilitates reflecting about how they are related. Recent developments in several packages mean that in most software, links seen in maps are more than simply visual representations. Where this is the case the links seen in the map are also synchronized with the underlying project structure. In fact ATLAS.ti's *network view*, only allows for the representation of functional elements of the project. In contrast, in MAXQDA the researcher can choose whether or not to synchronize the elements of a MAXMap with the elements of the project. In a relatively new CAQDAS package, Quirkos, visual representation is at the heart of the software: the default primary user interface is a visual representation of codes (termed 'quirks'), and their relationships, with the most frequently used quirks growing in size relative to the less frequently used quirks (seen in Figure 23.5).

The 'hypothesis test' feature in HyperRESEARCH allows users to create and interrogate relationships based on the occurrence of two or more entities in the data (*if* 'this' *then* 'that'). When the two entities co-occur this can be made part of another hypothetical relationship. To construct testable hypotheses, users may need several 'if' and 'then' rules, each using code-words assigned to the data. The hypothesis test searches for cases where the codes occur in the combinations the proposition requires. If they do, that case supports the proposition. To support such an approach users have to satisfy themselves that the data supporting the hypothetical relationships are comparable and that coding has been done in a commensurate fashion.

Relationship nodes in NVivo provide an alternative means by which to link categories through user-defined relationships, at which evidence found in data that substantiates the relationship can be coded. This facility is different from the creation of hypertexts through hyperlinking, but may offer an alternative route through the data from that provided by traditional code-and-retrieve processes (see Figure 23.6). In contrast to packages including ATLAS.ti, this form of linking in NVivo is based on coding, with the relationship itself acting as a code. The value is in keeping track of evidence for the statements embodied in and coded at the relationships, in order to easily check for the validity of interpretations.

Summary

We have used elements of three different approaches to analysing qualitative data to illustrate some of the ways CAQDAS packages can support the different methods and applications used in psychology. Rather than presenting an exhaustive illustration of how to 'do' any form of

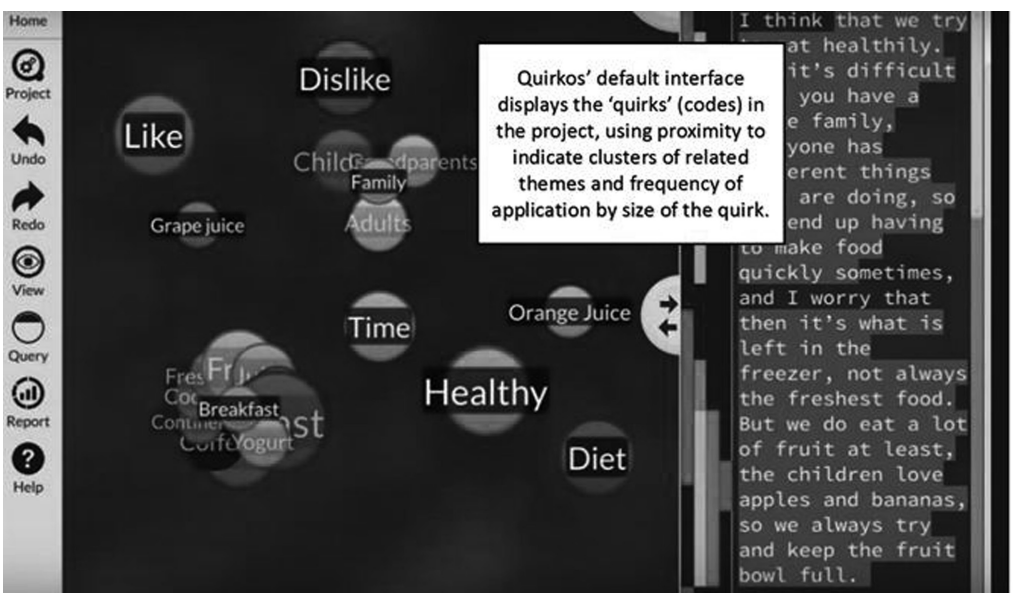

Figure 23.5 Default primary user interface of Quirkos shows visual representation of 'quirks' (codes), and the associations between them

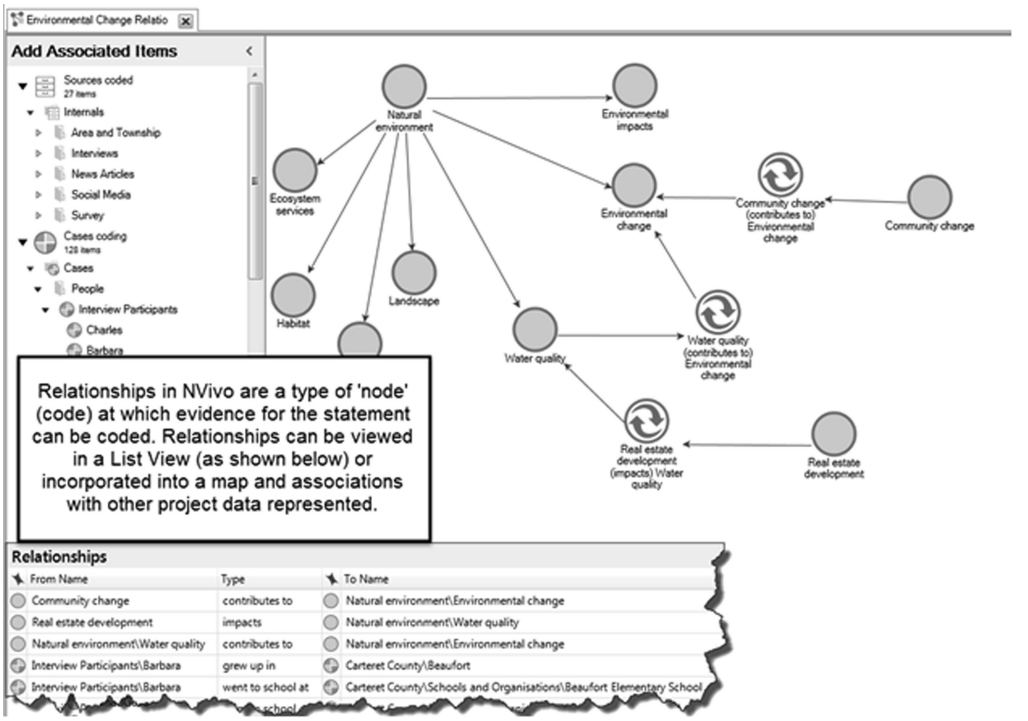

Figure 23.6 Relationships between codes in NVivo illustrated in a model

qualitative analysis, or describing any software package in its entirety, we have demonstrated that CAQDAS packages provide flexible tools which may be usefully applied in different methodological circumstances. It is important to recall that there is no 'right' way of using a set of CAQDAS tools, rather that they ought always to be used according to each project's specific objectives (Silver and Woolf, 2015). Example 1 illustrated aspects of the common activity of coding and Examples 2 and 3 demonstrated ways in which software can be used to manage the data-level work that characterizes approaches to discourse analysis and hypertext. Such illustrations emphasize that the researcher need not abstract to the level of coding. Nevertheless, CAQDAS coding tools can be used to perform tasks which are not limited to the thematic fragmentation of data for the purposes of identifying patterns and relationships or building theory. CAQDAS has been perceived as being dominated by code and retrieval, a task criticized for over-fragmenting data. However, codes in CAQDAS packages are merely containers for linking data segments. The interpretive meaning to which they are put is up to the researcher and how they, or indeed any other software tools, are used is not pre-defined by the software, but rather always driven by the individual analytic task at hand (Silver and Woolf, 2015).

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Having explored three examples of how CAQDAS packages and their tools can be flexibly employed specifically for analysis of qualitative materials, we now consider a few recent developments in the field and the implications they present. Firstly, we touch on the trend towards bigger data and the increasing functionality found in many packages in relation to going beyond the provision of tools for facilitating qualitative approaches to qualitative data. This involves a discussion of how current developments are presenting opportunities for CAQDAS packages to be usefully manipulated in projects that seek to mix methods. Secondly, we consider how recent developments have affected researchers' access to CAQDAS packages, including cross-platform working possibilities, modular software

design to fit a variety of needs, including a possible trend towards providing for non-academic audiences and a generally widening user-base.

Bigger Data and Mixing Methods

As more of the social world is lived online, researchers across the human sciences find themselves with more naturally occurring data at their fingertips. Tapping into these databases is becoming easier. Not only are there a range of web-scraping and content curation tools and for options for converting html into electronically-readable PDF downloads, some CAQDAS packages are moving towards providing bespoke web-content harvesting tools. This means researchers are potentially handling much larger volumes of material about people's attitudes and behaviours. With the possibility of bigger samples comes the ever-increasing push to explore both qualitative and quantitative materials, and to apply both qualitative and quantitative approaches to analysis.

Harvesting online material is facilitated by a host of commonly-used software. Most web-browsers provide an option for pdf downloads at least. These are largely machine-readable and often capture material whilst seeking to stay true to the layout of a given webpage by containing a wide range of content, including images that may surround textual data. A limitation is still that many PDF-harvesting operations truncate the material, providing only the first few posts of a Facebook page, for example.

In addition to having access to non-CAQDAS solutions for harvesting quantities of online materials, researchers are now presented with a growing number of bespoke CAQDAS add-ons. Examples include ATLAS.ti's Mobile App, MAXQDA's Web Collector' and NVivo's NCapture (for a full discussion of the emerging functionality of these, please see Silver and Bulloch (2017)). ATLAS.ti's Mobile App, available for Android and iPad, is designed for data collection 'on the move'. Material, including audio and images, can be captured, a selection of general analytic tasks can be undertaken within the App, and the resulting contribution can be uploaded to the main Hermeneutic Unit (ATLAS.ti project). NVivo's NCapture, on the other hand, provides researchers with flexible ways of harvesting online material, such as Twitter feeds and Facebook posts. It provides a range of output options, allowing the researcher to manipulate the form in which the data are imported into NVivo, depending on whether the intention is to work with qualitative or quantitative information and whether to apply a qualitative or quantitative approach to analysing the material.

These emerging data harvesting solutions potentially enable larger datasets to be analysed than has previously been practical, they can be used, for instance, to analyse open-ended questions from social psychological attitude surveys. One response to this is that the CAQDAS developer community has continued to invest resources into the mixed methods functionality of their software, building on existing quantification routines within CAQDAS (Lee and Fielding, 1991). Most qualitative software counts 'hits' from specified retrievals (e.g. all single female interviewees who commented on divorce), and enables triangulation by offering a port to export data to SPSS and import quantitative data tables. Some argue that such facilities represent a hybrid methodology transcending the quantitative/qualitative distinction. Bazeley (2006) suggests a 'fusion' of quantitative and qualitative data, Richards (2000) a 'dialectic' of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and Bourdon (2000) refers to a new, 'quantilative', form of method.

Many CAQDAS packages now allow for sophisticated import, data management and querying routines that integrate data from closed survey questions (often thought of as 'quantitative', but which may be either nominal, ordinal or interval/ratio in nature) with qualitative material, for example from open-ended survey questions. This integration allows researchers to order, analyse, query their qualitative material in a project according to the more quantitative 'facts' (see Silver and Bulloch (2017) for more detail). For example, it might allow a researcher to identify and compare the qualitative material from patients who have an IQ score above a certain threshold with those who have an IQ score below a certain level.

In addition to developments with regards to importing a mix of qualitative and quantitative material, some CAQDAS packages are providing more and more flexible ways of *converting* qualitative analyses to quantitative analyses. MAXQDA, for example, allows researchers to transform codes into variables, facilitating the process of categorization from qualitative materials. Variables can then be used in a range of analyses to visualize qualitative materials according to given categories (see Figure 23.7). Categorized response sets exported to a statistics package for analysis are still linked to the qualitative data from which they were developed. For example, matrix intersection tables in NVivo and MAXQDA provide access to qualitative data from each cell of the matrix produced when a cross tabulation-type search is performed across data files. This enables users to show, for example, socio-demographic characteristics against any number of selected codes.

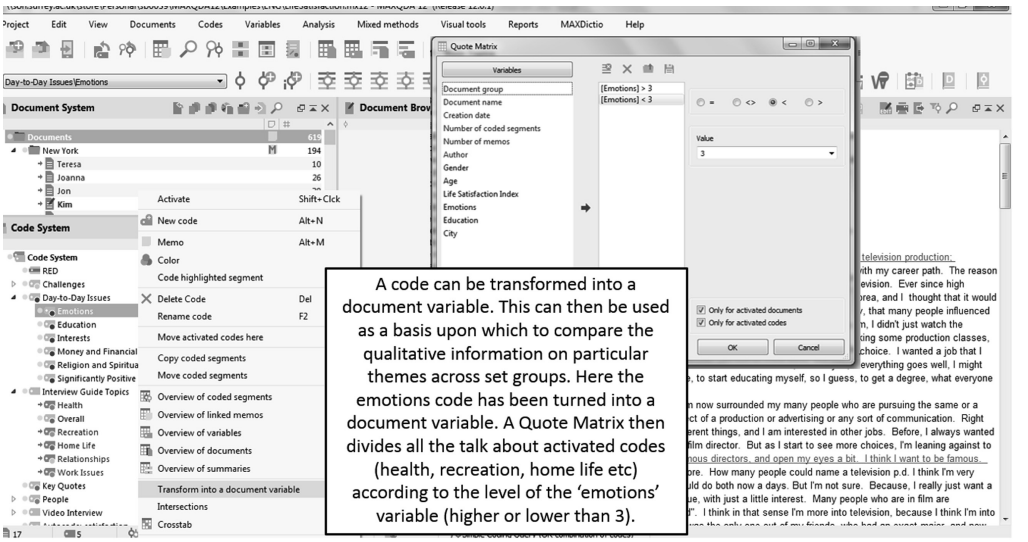

Figure 23.7 Converting codes into variables and using these in visual displays of analyses in MAXQDA

Despite a range of developments across the main CAQDAS packages with regards to their ability to integrate, manage and make use of quantitative information, it is worth noting that only select packages enable quantitative analyses that extend beyond descriptive statistics. QDA Miner, with its SimStat module, and MAXQDA with its MAX Stats module, stand out in this regard as they enable both grounded qualitative working and some inferential statistics. In the absence of statistical analysis functions held within most CAQDAS packages, some allow for the exporting of quantified information. For example, qualitative information that has been converted into quantitative information by transforming codes into variables can also be exported from MAXQDA and imported back into a statistical analysis package, such as IBM's SPSS or STATA.

A good example of this sort of working can be found in a study of compliance with vaccination programmes discussed in Bazeley (1999), where parents were asked to describe their thought process about immunization of their children. The narratives were qualitatively analysed to develop a model of decision making. Coding related to features in the narratives was then used in a logistic regression, with 'immunization compliance' the dependent variable. This provided an evaluation of the (log) odds of compliance for each feature considered by the parent, controlling for the effect of other features. An alternative procedure here might be to use the dichotomous codes to construct truth tables following the technique of 'Qualitative Comparative Analysis' (Ragin, 1987), which produces one or more logically minimized sets of response configurations of causal variables associated with an outcome, and can be used with smaller datasets than are needed for multivariate statistical analysis (Fielding and Warnes, 2008).

Accessing CAQDAS: Working Across Platforms, a Widening User-Base and Modular Designs

In addition to responding to the availability of bigger data by developing tools that facilitate mixing methods, many CAQDAS developers have invested considerable resources into making products available to wider audiences. Two main trends demonstrate this.

First, many of the main CAQDAS packages are now available beyond the PC platform. NVivo, MAXQDA and ATLAS.ti for, example, now all have Mac-compatible versions, although it is notable that differences between the PC and Mac versions do remain. The developers of MAXQDA have successfully tackled this issue and now have the software running identically across platforms. Transana, HyperRESEARCH and Quirkos have been multi-platform from the start, with the latter running on PC, Mac, Linux and, soon, Android platforms.

The second trend that indicates a move to improve general access to CAQDAS software on the part of

the developers is the effort that is being made with regards to widening the user-base beyond academic audiences, for example to support trends in citizen research (Fielding, 2014). Evidence of this taking place includes the aforementioned Mobile Apps, which encourage researchers to involve research participants in direct data collection. In addition, NVivo has just launched a modular upgrade of its software, allowing users to choose between 'Starter', 'Pro' and 'Plus' versions of the software. QDA Miner has long operated a modular structure, yet modules bring specific method functionality (such as statistical analyses options in SimStat, and content analysis functions in WordStat), rather than being organized according to levels of user needs, as is the case with NVivo. The 'Starter' version of NVivo, therefore, is very much geared at non-academic audiences who may have less time for analysis but also less complex needs, as indicated by the strapline 'spend your time finding insights, not learning software' (QSR International (2015): NVivo website, accessed 06.11.2015). Quirkos, launched in 2014, has had accessibility and a wide user-base at its heart from the start. The software aims to fill a market gap by providing an easy-to-learn, affordable and participatory solution, as indicated by the strapline 'Qualitative analysis software for everyone' (Quirkos website, accessed 06.11.2015).

Non-Local Working, Multimedia Data and Resulting Ethical Considerations

A shifting landscape in terms of technological functionality often gives rise to new ethical considerations in research practice. In addition to responding to bigger data availability, expanding the mixed methods offer an increasing access to products by providing multi-platform, modular or participatory versions of software, CAQDAS developers have also made significant headway with regards to facilitating non-local working. Such solutions include server-based and cloud-based versions of software (see Silver and Bulloch, 2017). This trend, and the previously mentioned move towards facilitating working with multimedia material, are particularly notable with regards to their potential ethical ramifications.

While the use of qualitative software imposes few ethical considerations beyond those generally associated with qualitative research (Chapter 15), with moves towards server or cloud-based CAQDAS working, and general increases in shared/multi-user projects, there may be growing concerns about anonymity and general data security. However, such concerns apply also to non-CAQDAS working, where the trend towards such non-local solutions is also apparent (note the rise in Dropbox and Google+, for example). What it now means to practice forms of 'good electronic housekeeping' has changed accordingly and has meant that where projects involve transmitting data amongst team members across networks, thought should be given to measures such as encryption of any files containing real names and early anonymizing protocols. Additionally, consent brokering can usefully highlight the intended means by which data will be stored and shared, in order to give participants a fuller understanding of the future of the narratives they provide.

Similarly, affordances provided by the fact that researchers can work with multimedia data directly raise ethical issues regarding the subsequent representation of not only respondents' words but also their image and/or voice. Whilst the academic world still relies heavily on printed media, there are increasing numbers of journals operating exclusively online. With this comes the possibility of embedding video data into journal articles. Additionally, pressure within the academic sphere to disseminate research findings in non-traditional ways that aim to reach a wider public, means researchers are encouraged to make use of a host of online platforms and social media, including YouTube and blogs. These channels also provide opportunities to disseminate clips of multimedia material directly. Again, consent brokering protocols must be adjusted accordingly and must anticipate this potential use of participants' images.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has sought to provide a general overview of some of the ways in which CAQDAS software can helpfully be employed within the context of qualitative research in psychology.

Discussion of the emergence of these software packages highlights that their development has its roots in methodological trends in the fields of social science research, as well as being driven by new possibilities in information technology and programming. New generations of digitally native users are demanding and shaping software solutions, and the ever-increasing offer of non-bespoke software tools whose features can be usefully harnessed to aid the process of qualitative data analysis is challenging CAQDAS packages to keep up.

In the context of this rapidly-evolving field, we argue that rather than being led by the tools that are available in a given package, the researcher ought always to be led by their given research

strategy or methodology. In addition to being clear that the role of CAQDAS software, therefore, is to facilitate rather than dictate the operationalization of analytic strategies, the authors underline that we do not take the view that 'good' research must necessarily take place within a CAQDAS package, either in part or in its entirety.

The bulk of the chapter was dedicated to illustrating the flexibility software provides for supporting varied approaches to qualitative data. Three exemplar applications, focusing generally on the analytic approaches of grounded theory, discourse analysis and hyperlinking, were used to highlight the breadth of current software functionality, whilst not being prescriptive about which tools to use and how.

The final section of the chapter explored several recent developments in the CAQDAS field and drew out some key considerations that these raised. While a single chapter cannot aim to provide an exhaustive list of developments across the various packages, we have endeavoured to provide a balanced overview of the state of the CAQDAS field at the time of writing with a view to equipping researchers in psychology with the necessary context to understand tools and make informed choices about potential CAQDAS use. We would recommend following up the information provided here by visiting the various software websites and by reading the independent software reviews provided by the CAQDAS Networking Project[2].

Notes

1 For an overview of features provided by individual CAQDAS packages, see the CAQDAS Networking Project website which provides up-to-date reviews of the leading options http://www.surrey.ac.uk/sociology/research/researchcentres/caqdas/support/choosing/index.htm or visit the individual software developer websites.

2 The CAQDAS Networking Project at the University of Surrey provides independent training, resources and support to users of CAQDAS packages. The independent software reviews can be found here: http://www.surrey.ac.uk/sociology/research/researchcentres/caqdas/support/choosing/index.htm

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24

Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: A Pragmatic Approach

Lucy Yardley and Felicity L. Bishop

INTRODUCTION: THE PERILS OF COMBINING QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE METHODS

As qualitative methods have become more widely accepted and used in psychological research, interest has naturally grown in combining the use of these methods with the quantitative methods more commonly used in psychology over the past century. If both qualitative and quantitative methods are acknowledged as valid and valuable, it is not immediately obvious why combining them should pose any problems, or indeed should merit a chapter devoted to the topic. Ostensibly, it should be a simple matter of selecting and implementing whatever method can best address a particular research question. No books on quantitative research methods find it necessary to include a chapter on the problems associated with combining descriptive statistics and hypothesis testing in a single study, or an experimental design with questionnaire measurement! Moreover, it could be argued that there is at least as much diversity *within* the categories quantitative and qualitative methods as between them (Hammersley, 1996). A realist interview-based description of the beliefs of a particular group of people has more in common with a survey of their beliefs than it has with a discourse analysis of the socio-political functions of the discourses and concepts reproduced in the interviews or survey.

So why is combining qualitative and quantitative methods potentially difficult and contentious? The reason is that the differences between qualitative and quantitative researchers do not, fundamentally, centre on whether the interview or questionnaire is the best method of eliciting views, or whether thematic coding or numeric scoring is the best way to summarize data. The methodological disagreements that historically have led to a rift between qualitative and quantitative research emanate from more profound differences in the theoretical perspectives and paradigms on which each type of research is typically based. Whereas qualitative research is typically associated with 'interpretive' or 'constructivist' paradigms, quantitative research is generally associated with 'scientific' or 'positivist' paradigms. Although this chapter will make the case that the differences between these approaches have been greatly exaggerated, and can be overcome, it is nevertheless vital to be aware of them. If the different assumptions and aims of qualitative and quantitative research are not acknowledged, research that mixes these methods is likely to inadvertently violate the assumptions or fail to realize the aims of one or other of these approaches.

Because the scientific/positivist approach is dominant within psychology, when the potential problems posed by mixing methods are overlooked this is often because the scientific/positivist approach is simply adopted by default, in ignorance of the significance of alternative paradigms for qualitative research (Rabinowitz and Weseen, 2001; Sale et al., 2002). Lack of awareness of interpretive and constructivist approaches to qualitative research can result in a variety of problems and deficiencies in the use of qualitative methods. The researcher may apply irrelevant and inappropriate criteria for validity to the qualitative part of the research, such as reliability, objectivity, or the use of a large, random sample. Alternatively, even where more appropriate forms of validation are employed, such as purposive sampling and triangulation, these may be applied in a formulaic manner in order to 'establish' validity, rather than being used as a means of explaining and interrogating the research process (Barbour, 2003). When analysing the data, a researcher who has an implicit realist approach may fail to fully realize the interpretive potential of qualitative methods, taking statements at face value rather than considering their contextual and symbolic meanings and functions. Most seriously of all, conclusions may be drawn that cannot be justified using qualitative methods – for example, that causal relationships or differences between populations have been demonstrated. Although less common in psychology, lack of awareness of the assumptions of quantitative research is of course equally problematic if it leads to a failure to meet the requirements of the quantitative part of the research (such as a sufficiently large and representative sample, reliable measures, and appropriate statistical tests).

Even if the researchers are sufficiently expert in both methods to avoid these pitfalls, the lack of an explicit theoretical framework that can embrace both approaches equally may lead to problems in integrating the findings of each method. If an implicit quantitative/positivist perspective dominates the research, then qualitative research may be viewed as having only a supporting role (Foss and Ellefsen, 2002). Qualitative methods may be restricted to preliminary stages of the research – for example, to develop questionnaire items to use in quantitative surveys, or to suggest hypotheses that are then tested quantitatively. When qualitative research is carried out in parallel with the quantitative research, it may be employed merely to elaborate and illustrate quantitative findings. While these approaches to mixing methods can actually work well as long as the findings from both methods are congruent, difficulties may arise if the qualitative and quantitative findings appear to contradict each other. If the quantitative/positivist paradigm is dominant then when conflicting results emerge the qualitative evidence is likely to be discounted or discarded as less rigorous and objective, rather than being regarded as a different kind of evidence that may reflect a different and important kind of truth. Moreover, when qualitative research is treated as merely an adjunct to quantitative research, the scope for it to challenge and therefore enrich the research process is diminished. For example, interpretive/constructivist qualitative research should be able to question the meaning and validity of the concepts and measures used in the quantitative research, rather than treating these as pre-determined objective realities.

If qualitative and quantitative methods are to be combined most productively, it may be helpful to identify or develop a theoretical framework that is able to embrace and integrate these different perspectives. The first half of this chapter paves the way for a common theoretical framework by arguing that the opposition between the interpretive/constructivist paradigms associated with qualitative research and the scientific/positivist paradigms associated with quantitative research is maintained by misleading conceptions of both 'science' and 'constructivism', often held by both the supporters and the opponents of each approach. After outlining these stereotypical conceptions of qualitative and quantitative approaches, we consider how pragmatic theory can help to deconstruct the differences between interpretive/constructivist and scientific/positivist approaches to research, and so provide a rationale and a framework for combining qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry.

In the second half of the chapter the ways in which qualitative and quantitative methods can be fruitfully combined are then considered. A variety of ways of combining and validating mixed methods research are outlined, and a 'composite analysis' approach is suggested as a means of integrating the findings from studies that utilize different methods. The final section provides a reflexive example of combining qualitative and quantitative methods, based on the shared research experience of the co-authors.

CONTRASTING THE SCIENTIFIC/ POSITIVIST AND INTERPRETIVE/ CONSTRUCTIVIST PARADIGMS

The scientific approach to knowledge creation can be traced back to the beginning of the industrial era, when rationalist, mechanistic thinking was

becoming increasingly popular and successful. At this time the philosopher Descartes suggested an epistemology (i.e. a theory of how best to gain knowledge about the world) that was compatible with a growing appreciation that many aspects of the world are amenable to rational analysis and manipulation (Yardley, 1999). His famous tenet 'Cogito ergo sum' (I think, therefore I am) expressed a belief that the only direct knowledge we can have is of our own mind, and that all other knowledge of the world must be obtained by observation. Consequently, it is vital to make observations that are as accurate as possible in order to gain a correct understanding of the world. The scientific method can be seen as a way of achieving the most accurate possible observations, by using controlled environments to eliminate the multiple sources of variability present in the world, and precise (quantitative) measures in order to avoid the inaccuracy associated with subjective impressions. This method has of course been spectacularly successful in helping us to understand and control the physical world. It is therefore not surprising that in psychology, scientific methods have been employed to try to understand the factors that influence thought and behaviour.

However, in the latter half of the twentieth century the belief in the possibility of 'objective' knowledge was increasingly challenged and replaced by a view of knowledge as a way of perceiving and relating to the world that is inevitably shaped by pre-existing concepts, shared assumptions, and habitual or 'taken-for-granted' ways of doing things. This 'constructivist' perspective argues that our awareness of the world is completely mediated by our particular subjective and socio-cultural experiences. It is therefore not possible for any humans, including scientists, to set aside the socio-cultural assumptions and values which form their identity and guide their activities; hence it is impossible to achieve 'objective' knowledge. From this viewpoint, the scientific method can still be seen as a useful tool for analysing physical processes, but is not an appropriate method of gaining some other types of understanding. In order to understand how we relate to the world we need to critically examine the normative concepts and habitual practices that shape our perceptions – including the assumptions and practices of scientific psychological research itself (Gergen, 1985; Sampson, 1993; Yardley, 1997).

It is easy to see why the aims and methods of these two approaches might be seen as fundamentally incompatible. From a constructivist perspective, controlled experimental studies of psychological behaviour are artificial environments that strip participants of the very agency, individuality and social context which gives their activities meaning. Similarly, the reliable, predetermined self-report measures used to measure attitudes and beliefs prevent respondents from expressing alternative or contradictory viewpoints, and therefore impose the researcher's conceptions on their responses. At best, scientific psychological research therefore risks simply creating unnatural situations in which behaviour can be predicted and controlled but that have minimal relevance to the processes operating in non-experimental contexts. At worst, scientific psychological research may thereby deflect attention from important socio-cultural and political influences on the ways in which humans think, talk and act (Gergen, 1992).

Conversely, positivists are concerned that when constructivists reject the ideal of objectivity, and affirm the ubiquity and importance of social values in research, they open the door to the radical relativist position that all beliefs (and therefore analyses) are equally valid – or worse still pave the way for partisan advocacy of a particular subjective viewpoint. Positivists argue that if the attempt to ground research in objective reality is abandoned then there are no grounds upon which researchers can base their claims that their analysis is relevant to others, or is superior to alternative interpretations. Consequently, constructivist research lacks any credibility as empirical investigation. From a positivist point of view, this lack of scientific validity is reflected in the failure of most qualitative research to introduce rigorous ways of identifying and excluding opinions, whether of the investigator or the participants, which may be idiosyncratic, 'biased', or incorrect.

PRAGMATISM: A BASIS FOR COMBINING QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE INQUIRY

While these viewpoints may appear diametrically and irreconcilably opposed, a philosophical basis for inquiry known as 'pragmatism' has been suggested as a framework which has the potential to embrace both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Fishman, 1999; Greene and Caracelli, 2003; Cornish and Gillespie, 2009; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010; Morgan, 2014). Pragmatism addresses the concerns of both qualitative and quantitative researchers by pointing out that *all* human inquiry involves imagination and interpretation, intentions and values but must also necessarily be grounded in empirical, embodied experience.

For pragmatists, the aim of inquiry is not to seek a truth that is independent from human experience, but to achieve a better, richer experience – whether through scientific analysis, artistic exploration, social negotiation, or any productive combination of these different approaches (Maxcy, 2003).

The early pragmatist John Dewey proposed that commonsense, scientific and moral judgements are *all* based on knowing what things are good for, and what changes need to be made (Hickman and Alexander, 1998). According to Dewey, knowledge is therefore intrinsically linked to intentions and actions, and takes its meaning from our evaluation of its effects: 'The right, the true and good, difference is that which carries out satisfactorily the specific purpose for the sake of which knowing occurs'(Hickman and Alexander, 1998: 129). This is a functional definition of knowledge and truth, which is grounded in external reality but also relativist, since truth is defined in relation to a particular goal in a particular context rather than by correspondence to an ideal of universal, objective 'truth'. All actions (including the acts of observing and interpreting, or 'knowing') are evaluated as being more or less 'right' depending upon the extent to which they achieve their goal – whether this goal is to cure cancer or to change our views of what the roles of older people in society should be. Hence, any evaluation of the 'rightness' of the actions *must* refer to the test of external consequences. However, the relevant consequences, and the best method of evaluating them, will differ greatly depending on the type of knowledge/actions concerned. Knowledge/actions intended to cure cancer should be evaluated by their effects on tumours and life expectancy. Quantitative methods such as laboratory experiments and randomized controlled trials undoubtedly lend valuable precision for establishing the effectiveness of the cure – although in the early stages of experimentation and hypothesis development there is likely to also be an element of qualitative observation and interpretation of the effects of the new process. Knowledge/actions intended to change our views of what roles older people should play in society must be evaluated by the extent to which they are found persuasive by members of that society and lead to real social change. Qualitative methods are particularly well suited to gaining an in-depth understanding of the moral reasoning, experiences and social practices of members of a society that will shape views of older people's capabilities, desires, and responsibilities – although quantitative surveys could also be used to assess changes in views and activities.

Rorty (1982: xxix) summed up the pragmatic definition of valid knowledge in the statement 'there is no pragmatic difference, no difference which makes a difference, between "it works because it's true" and "it's true because it works" … there is no pragmatic difference between the nature of truth and the test of truth'. It is easy to see that this pragmatic definition of knowledge is highly compatible with constructivist approaches. Kvale (1992: 32) writes that in a postmodern approach to psychology 'knowledge becomes the ability to perform effective actions' and is legitimated by how effectively it is communicated and the impact it has on practice. Dewey himself proposed the constructivist view that through social transactions we come to understand multiple subjective realities while seeking agreement on shared experience that can form a basis for (inter)action (Maxcy, 2003). Moreover, Dewey also took a constructivist view of the research process as a means of *creating* form and structure rather than discovering pre-existing form and structure. Hence, the scientific approach can also be understood from a pragmatic perspective as just another form of purposive, constructive activity which ultimately shares the same fundamental test of validity as any other form of human inquiry: What happens if …?

The history and philosophy of science support a reconceptualization of science as a very human enterprise characterized by uncertainty, faith and passion, rather than a neutral process of objective observation. Kuhn (cited in Fishman, 1999) noted that the fundamental assumptions about the world which provide the foundation for scientific paradigms are themselves untestable – we will simply never be able to objectively evaluate the extent to which we have unbiased knowledge that is independent of our own activities and perspective. Potter (1996) points out that positivism is actually pragmatic in its approach, since only testable hypotheses are considered able to generate reliable knowledge. Post-positivist scientific thinking has increasingly abandoned any conception of verifying absolute truth, seeking instead to try to 'falsify' or *dis*prove our current best working model of reality. Indeed, it is perfectly possible to use the technology of quantitative methods with a constructivist perspective, provided that the researcher is reflexively aware of and open about the way in which the findings of the research are influenced by the assumptions and constraints of the research methods used (Gergen et al., 1990).

The history and philosophy of science also suggest that both quantitative *and* qualitative modes of analysis are essential to scientific research. Dewey observed that:

> 'Scientific' thinking … never gets away from qualitative existence. Directly, it always has its own qualitative background; indirectly it has that of the world in which the ordinary experience of the

> common man is lived. (Hickman and Alexander, 1998: 205)

Quine (cited in Fishman, 1999) noted that when an experiment yields surprising data we must *interpret* whether these are due to error or an artefact of the method, or whether we must change our theories to account for these observations (Fishman, 1999). It is essential to use our qualitative understanding of the context of an experiment, based on prior experience, common sense and interpretation, to decide when findings are likely to be trustworthy or distorted by some spurious feature of the experimental procedure (House, 1994). Moreover, in practice, the conduct and interpretation of an experiment is not a matter of cold calculation, but is influenced by our personal knowledge and vision of reality, our aspirations and commitments, and the relationships of trust which allow us to draw on other people's research when interpreting our own (Thorpe, 2001). Experimentation can be viewed from a pragmatic perspective as a dramatic social exhibition of theory in practice (Wertz, 1999), even though by convention it must be presented as an unambiguous demonstration of objective 'facts'. Anyone who has carried out quantitative research will be aware of the numerous uncertainties, complexities, and errors that must inevitably be excluded from the short experimental report, helping to create an idealized but unrealistic impression of scientific research as an almost mechanical demonstration of rational propositions (Rabinowitz and Weseen, 2001).

In summary, from a pragmatic perspective there is no fundamental contradiction between the basic objectives and characteristics of qualitative/constructivist and scientific/positivist research, even though the methods of inquiry and validation appropriate for each approach are very different. However, while pragmatism may appear to offer a way to end the quantitative versus qualitative 'paradigm war', not everyone regards it as a convincing solution. Most quantitative researchers readily acknowledge that they can never attain an accurate knowledge of the world, but many still consider this a vital ultimate goal. Researchers who retain the ideal of seeking objective truth often reject the proposition that all human endeavours necessarily have pragmatic aims, and that knowledge is therefore fundamentally shaped by intended actions and shared evaluations. Conversely, while the relativist nature of pragmatism is more acceptable to constructivist qualitative researchers, the political dimension of pragmatist theory is not widely appreciated. Consequently, a pragmatic approach is often equated with an instrumental or utilitarian approach, i.e. a focus on practical, limited objectives that detracts from attention to the wider socio-political concerns that have shaped these objectives. However, Dewey explicitly rejected the idea that research could be isolated from such concerns, asserting that:

> The entire operation of individual experimentation and soliloquizing has been influenced at every point by reference to the social medium in which their results are to be set forth and responded to. (Hickman and Alexander, 1998: 331)

Dewey emphasized that all creative pragmatic inquiry must therefore constantly bring to light the conflicting interests and ideologies and question the contemporary social conventions that influence the aims of research and our understanding of what is 'good' and 'true'.

Even those who welcome mixing methods warn of the danger that, since the quantitative paradigm remains dominant, the distinctive contribution of a qualitative perspective could become lost if the differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches are disregarded (Rabinowitz and Weseen, 2001; Henwood, 2004). Moreover, a pluralist epistemology can create diverse forms of knowledge that are then difficult to integrate (Wertz, 1999). Consequently, while adopting a pragmatic epistemological framework, the following section considers how best to combine very different kinds of research without compromising their integrity.

USING QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE METHODS AS COMPLEMENTARY MODES OF INQUIRY

Advantages of Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Modes of Inquiry

It could be argued that it is not simply advantageous but actually *necessary* for psychologists to use both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to gain a complete understanding of humans. House and McDonald (1998: 184–5) propose that:

> A morally and politically sensitive science has to take account of the ways that descriptions of humans as physical objects or biological organisms are value-laden. Likewise, our accounts of ourselves as moral agents will have to give due account to our physical embodiment.

If we want to understand all aspects of human existence, from our brain processes to our moral

agendas, it is likely we will need to draw on a wide variety of methods in order to do so. In order to understand how qualitative and quantitative methods can offer complementary modes of inquiry, it may be helpful to consider what different approaches are particularly good for.

Quantitative methods have high levels of 'internal validity', which means that strong conclusions and often causal inferences can be drawn from them (McGrath and Johnson, 2003). This type of validity is achieved by using precise, reliable, replicable measures and samples and tightly controlled experimental conditions, to reduce variability in the data due to factors considered irrelevant to the hypothesis that is being tested. The advantage of high internal validity is that it is possible to make strong claims about what has been demonstrated, since alternative explanations have been excluded or controlled. However, increases in internal validity often come at the cost of decreases in 'external validity' – the extent to which the findings of the research correspond to conditions in everyday life. The use of artificial settings or measures such as laboratories and questionnaires, while permitting precision, control and economy, may thus affect the extent to which these strong claims can actually be extended to target 'real-world' contexts. In contrast, qualitative research typically attempts to situate data collection and interpretation of data in context, sacrificing precision and control in order to do this. Examination of phenomena in context permits identification of meanings, processes and relationships that may be crucial in real-life situations, but that the quantitative investigator may not have anticipated and therefore included in the controlled experiment. Combining the internal validity of quantitative methods with the external validity of qualitative research can thus be a very productive way of mixing methods. For example, quantitative randomized controlled trials to evaluate the efficacy of an intervention can be combined with qualitative studies of the context and process of the intervention implementation in order to gain insights into why and how the intervention may or may not work in practice for different people and in different situations (Pope and Mays, 1995; Hawe et al., 2003).

Investigation of naturally complex and changing real-world environments using qualitative methods of observation makes it impossible to isolate the effect of any particular factor and assign a definite causal status to it, and so qualitative methods are inappropriate for deductive (i.e. theory-based) hypothesis testing. However, using this approach it is possible to examine a great many factors simultaneously, and to consider holistically how they may relate to each other and change over time (Camic et al., 2003). Quantitative research in psychology is very tightly constrained by the requirements of statistical testing: only a limited number of variables can be assessed at a limited number of time-points or the number of participants and measures needed for reliable analysis rapidly becomes impractical.

Although (or rather because) qualitative research is also very resource intensive, the depth and breadth of the data gathered from any sizeable sample is typically vast, permitting multiple analyses of numerous simultaneous processes and interactions. Consequently, qualitative research is an ideal method of inductive (i.e. data-based) hypothesis generation, since it is unnecessary to identify in advance which factors will prove relevant. Qualitative research can therefore be used as a means of carrying out more systematically the qualitative theory-building process that must inevitably precede quantitative hypothesis testing.

A related way in which qualitative and quantitative methods can complement each other is that whereas quantitative research provides relatively 'thin', norm-referenced data that can be compared to data from different people and populations, qualitative research yields 'thick' data about individual experience. In order to achieve statistical reliability, quantitative research must ignore or eliminate variability and inconsistency between and within people's experiences, whereas qualitative research can explicitly explore unusual or apparently contradictory experiences. As a result, a numeric questionnaire-based rating of, say, 'anxiety' may usefully indicate how close or far a person (or more often a group of people) is from this state, but qualitative data is better able to capture the diverse, complex meanings of the subjective experiences and social situations of different anxious people. The difference in the utility of the two types of information can be likened to the difference between a map of the location of a city and a video of a visit to a city. If these were the only sources of information available then *both* would be vital to a decision as to whether to visit the city. Only the video (despite being subjective and selective) could give an impression of what the city would actually be like to visit, but without the map it would be impossible to tell how to get there and how long it would take to do so. Similarly, when developing a new intervention for anxiety, for example, case studies might provide the most useful illustration for practitioners of how the intervention works with different clients (Fishman, 1999). However, policymakers are likely to require quantitative data on the prevalence of anxiety and cost-effectiveness of the intervention in order to be convinced and to persuade others of the necessity and utility of the proposed intervention, and in order to manage

provision effectively on a large scale (Griffin and Phoenix, 1994).

The relative advantages of qualitative and quantitative methods therefore depend on the purpose and also the topic of inquiry. Qualitative methods are particularly suitable for inquiring into subjective meanings and their socio-cultural context, if these meanings are seen as malleable, negotiable interpretations which people offer themselves and others to make sense of their feelings and actions rather than as causes or mechanisms that can be scientifically proven. However, if we wish to study how these subjective experiences are linked to the biological dimension of our lives it may be necessary to use numbers (such as questionnaire scores) as an approximate index of subjective experience so that we can relate these to numeric indices of physiological functioning.

In summary, by mixing methods it is possible to arrive at a richer and more complete description of a phenomenon than by using a single approach. However, it should never be assumed that the insights derived from these different methods will necessarily converge – Reichardt and Rallis (1994) point out that one of the greatest advantages of mixing methods is that the quantitative and qualitative approaches are both particularly expert at critiquing the methods and conclusions of the other approach! The purpose of good qualitative/constructivist research is often to question taken-for-granted concepts, and to highlight and examine exceptions, inconsistencies and suppressed meanings – and as a result the findings of the quantitative component of the research may need to be questioned and qualified (Barbour, 1998). Similarly, experiences described in qualitative research may be shown by quantitative methods to be atypical, and perceived links between aspects of that experience suggested by interviewees may not be confirmed by correlational analysis or experimental testing (for an example of the valuable insights that can be generated from disparate qualitative and quantitative findings, see Lee and Rowlands, 2015).

Ways of Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Modes of Inquiry: from Mixed Methods to Composite Analysis

Given the range of qualitative and quantitative methods, and scientific and interpretive/constructivist approaches, the ways in which they can be mixed are virtually limitless. Indeed, more than 15 typologies of mixed methods research designs have been proposed, each describing various ways of combining qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Such typologies can be helpful, particularly for those who are new to mixed methods research, but over-reliance on 'off-the-shelf' designs risks a formulaic approach to mixed methods and can be overly restrictive for more complex research programmes (Guest, 2013; Bishop, 2015). Instead of relying solely on pre-specified designs, in designing mixed methods studies it is therefore helpful to consider a number of fundamental questions (see Creswell et al., 2004). The researcher should be clear about the reasons for mixing methods, and the aims to be achieved by each component of a mixed methods study. It should also be clear what paradigms are being used, how these are to be integrated, and whether priority is given to either the qualitative or quantitative component of the research. Questions about how the mixed methods research will be put into practice also need to be addressed. What types of qualitative and quantitative data will be collected? In what sequence will the qualitative and quantitative studies be conducted? At what phase of the research will the qualitative and quantitative data be related to each other? As for other forms of research, ultimately mixed methods designs should always be driven by the research question (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010).

A variety of ways of representing the designs of mixed methods studies have been suggested. An economical form of notation has been proposed (Creswell et al., 2003) whereby whichever method is given priority is represented in capital letters (using the abbreviations 'QUAL' or 'QUANT'). A plus sign indicates that both methods are employed simultaneously, while an arrow indicates a sequence of studies. For example, Casale (2015) conducted a large-scale survey that established statistical relationships among social support and mental health variables in HIV-positive and HIV-negative caregivers of children in South Africa. A qualitative interview study was subsequently carried out to explore participants' experiences and thus identify psychosocial processes that might explain the quantitative associations between social support and mental health. In this study the quantitative analysis was given priority and was carried out first, and so the design would be represented as:

QUANT → qual

In contrast, Deren and colleagues (2003) carried out an ethnographic study in parallel with a survey to examine HIV-related risk behaviour in drug users. They gave equal priority to both methods. For example, an early finding from the qualitative research that risk-taking was greater when pooling

money to buy drugs led to inclusion of additional questions in the survey concerning the prevalence of this behaviour. Conversely, ethnographic methods were used to follow up a surprising finding from the survey that living with family in Puerto Rico was associated with more risky behaviour (ethnography revealed that this was due to having no private space in which to inject at home). This study could be represented as:

QUAL + QUANT

Alternatively, diagrams can be used to represent study designs in more detail (Creswell et al., 2003). As an illustration, Figure 24.1 shows the relationship between qualitative and quantitative research questions, data collection, data analysis and interpretation in the research programme described in the following section.

While the widely used term 'mixed methods' has been employed above, it may also be valuable to consider the extent to which the quantitative and qualitative components of a research programme can and should genuinely be 'mixed'. It has been noted above that preserving the distinctive character of different qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches is the key to maintaining their integrity and thus maximizing their different contributions to knowledge. Consequently, it could be argued that research programmes that employ both quantitative and qualitative methods should seek to integrate the findings from component studies rather than mix their methods (for further discussion on mixing vs integrating see Morse and Niehaus, 2009; O'Cathain et al., 2010). Moreover, the term 'mixed methods' implicitly perpetuates the dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative research, emphasizing the distinction between numerical and non-numerical analysis while ignoring the enormous diversity present within qualitative (and quantitative) paradigms and methods. While the term 'pluralistic' recognizes diverse research methods, it is typically used in relation to qualitative approaches only (Frost et al., 2010). On a practical level, although journals are now beginning to accept and even encourage 'mixed methods' studies (Yardley and Bishop, 2015), it is extremely difficult to do justice to substantive pieces of qualitative *and* quantitative research within the space constraints of a single journal article. Consequently, when qualitative and quantitative studies are carried out as complementary pieces of research it is usually necessary to publish each separately. While the term 'mixed methods' may describe the design of research which aims to combine the insights from qualitative and quantitative studies, 'composite analysis' may be a useful way of describing how the findings from different methodological approaches can be integrated in a manner that respects their unique characteristics, and thus exploits their potential to yield complementary insights. The term 'composite analysis' recognizes that the analysis is composed of independent parts, but that the whole is greater than the sum of these parts.

The 'composite' rather than 'mixed' character of research that employs disparate methodologies becomes particularly pertinent when considering how to establish the validity of the various components of the research. It is essential to maintain coherence between the aims of the research method and the means that are employed to ensure and demonstrate that the conclusions are valid. Consequently, the *methods* of demonstrating validity will be different for the different parts of the study, consistent with their different objectives. A variety of methods of validating qualitative and quantitative research are described fully in textbooks relevant to each kind of research, but Table 24.1 illustrates some of the different ways in which quantitative and qualitative researchers may seek to validate their research. While some broad approaches to validating research can be briefly summarized, these inevitably subsume important differences between different qualitative (and quantitative) methods (for a more complete consideration of what different methods of validation are appropriate for different research methods, see Yardley, 1997, 2000, 2007). For example, when seeking to validate a researcher's interpretation of a segment of text, for a realist content analysis one might calculate inter-rater reliability; for a phenomenological analysis one might check the interpretation with the interviewee; while for a discourse analysis one might present the text so that the reader could contest the interpretation given. It is also important to appreciate that if different methods of inquiry are used, with different forms of validity, they may yield different but equally important kinds of 'truth'. For example, if a healing relationship produces a 'placebo' effect, patients' first-hand accounts of the interactive process which enhanced subjective wellbeing may be as important to effective health care as the hard quantitative evidence that physiological status remained unchanged.

Although the ways in which qualitative and quantitative researchers must seek to validate their research differ, several authors have noted that often these different methods serve a common purpose (e.g. Elliott et al., 1999) – which is not surprising if the common pragmatic goal of all research is acknowledged. Both qualitative and quantitative researchers share a belief in the fallibility of knowledge, the need to link theory and empirical observation, the obligation to carry out research rigorously and conscientiously, and the

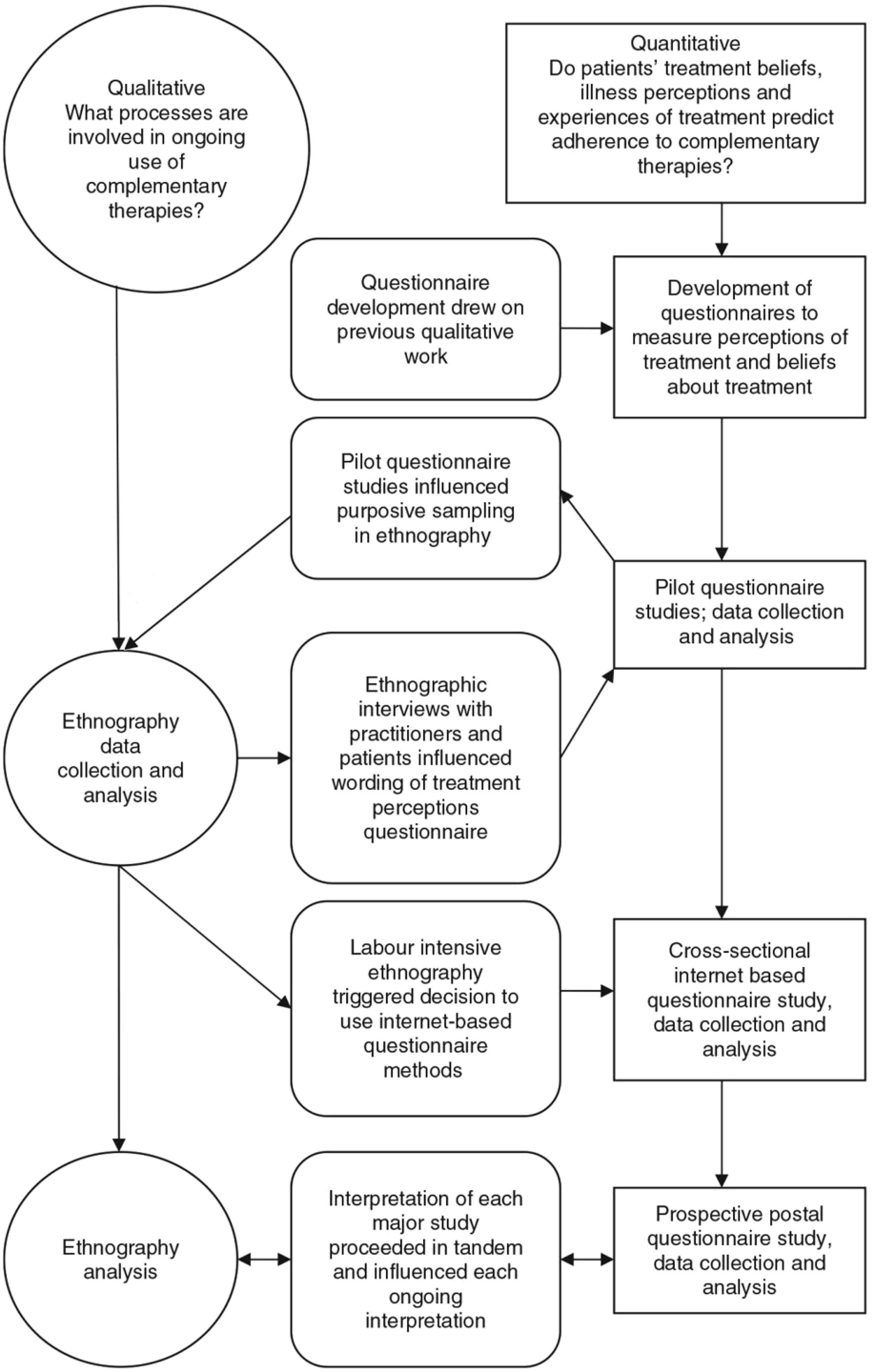

Figure 24.1 The relationship between qualitative and quantitative aspects of the mixed methods research programme

Table 24.1 Different methods of enhancing validity in qualitative and quantitative studies

Quantitative studies	*Qualitative studies*
Clear testable hypotheses specified, derived from relevant theoretical models and empirical literature	Study informed by in-depth knowledge of context (e.g. from immersion in context, socio-cultural theory, theoretically relevant qualitative research)
Sample is statistically representative of population to which researchers wish to generalize findings	Sample represents range of people whose views and experiences are important to fully understanding the phenomenon
Appropriate procedures are used to reduce systematic bias in observations (e.g. blind and/or automated data collection; standardized measures and measurement procedures)	The possible influences of the researchers on the data generated are reflexively considered and appropriately managed (e.g. setting for interviews; age, gender of interviewer relative to interviewee)
Internal validity is maximized (e.g. reliability of measures established; extraneous sources of error controlled)	External validity is maximized (e.g. interview schedule encourages unconstrained responses; real-world data collection)
Statistical analyses performed with appropriate attention to meeting assumptions (e.g. distributions of data; power of analyses; treatment of missing data and outliers)	In-depth analysis carried out using rigorous, transparent procedures (e.g. negative case analysis; comparisons between different coders; respondent validation)

necessity of critique and dissemination of research (Sale et al., 2002). Both kinds of research require a varied sample that is adequate to allow generalization to a wider group of people with specified characteristics, and strategies for attaining sufficient distance from the data to be able to abstract analytical patterns (Malterud, 2001). Common dilemmas also include how best to represent data and to reflexively consider the way in which it may have been influenced by the methods used (Henwood, 2004). In addition, both qualitative and quantitative researchers must ensure that their research can be seen to be coherent, comprehensible and convincing, sensitive to context, and above all (from a pragmatic perspective) to have real importance, whether for advancing theoretical understanding or for practical purposes (Yardley, 2000, 2007).

A REFLEXIVE ILLUSTRATION: UNDERSTANDING PERCEPTIONS OF COMPLEMENTARY THERAPY

An Overview of the Research Programme

The overall aim of the mixed methods research programme discussed here was to identify why people adhere to complementary therapy. The philosophical rationale for combining methods was based on a pragmatic standpoint (as outlined above). The initial decision to combine methods stemmed from a desire to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of why people adhere to complementary therapy than could be achieved through relying on one single method. It was necessary therefore to select methods which had complementary strengths and weaknesses and could be used to investigate complementary aspects of the research question. Two main methods were chosen, qualitative ethnographic research and quantitative questionnaire research. The relevant strengths of ethnographic methods include: ability to access habitual and non-verbal aspects of behaviour (through observation); more naturalistic; offer a means to focus on dynamic processes involved in behaviour; focus on meanings, experiences and concerns of individuals within a specific context; can situate analyses of behaviour in the broader socio-cultural context. The complementary strengths of prospective questionnaire methods include: ability to investigate which factors predict behaviour over time; can suggest the extent to which different concepts are important; permits testing of hypotheses; ability to make systematic comparisons between groups of people.

This programme of research was inspired by a previous programme of research (combining a grounded theory study with a longitudinal qualitative and quantitative study of perceptions and adherence to therapy; Yardley et al., 2001) which had generated hypotheses about how experiences of therapy might influence adherence that required further exploration and testing.

The self-regulation framework (Leventhal et al., 1992) was used to guide the research. The framework makes specific predictions about the factors and processes that influence ongoing use

of complementary therapy, and these predictions were explored empirically through qualitative and quantitative research. The ethnographic work investigated the processes involved in decisions to continue using complementary therapy among a small purposive sample of 46 participants. This resulted in the development of a process-oriented model of complementary therapy use which suggested ways in which people experience and evaluate complementary therapies, and highlighted the way in which individuals' health care decisions are embedded in the immediate context of the clinics and the wider socio-cultural context. The questionnaire work focused on the relative strength of associations between relevant attitudes and beliefs and adherence to complementary therapy. Two new questionnaire measures were developed and employed in a prospective study with 240 participants which showed that positive experiences of treatment were stronger predictors of adherence to complementary therapy than treatment and illness beliefs.

While the research programme was designed to allow (as far as possible) each part of the research to inform and be informed by the other parts of the programme, a 'composite analysis' approach was adopted to ensure that each component of the programme could be validated in its own terms and presented as an internally consistent and complete piece of research. This also made it possible to present the findings of each component study in a meaningful way to different groups with different interests. For example, the studies developing the questionnaires were presented to those (clinicians and researchers) interested primarily in measuring attitudes to complementary therapy (Bishop et al., 2005), the quantitative studies were presented to those interested mainly in testing the self-regulation framework (Bishop et al., 2006; Bishop et al., 2008b), and the qualitative studies were presented to those interested in developing and elaborating theory concerning the use of complementary therapy (Bishop et al., 2008a, 2010).

Consideration of Problems and Advantages of Combining these Methods in this Study

Having developed a rationale for combining ethnographic and questionnaire work, the first problematic issues encountered were deciding which approach, if any, should take priority and how the methods should be combined in terms of a time frame. As the ethnographic and questionnaire work were intended to examine different aspects of the same phenomenon, they were given equal status in the programme as a whole. However, it did not necessarily follow that the different strands of work should proceed in parallel or be kept apart until completed. Indeed, in order to maximize the benefits of using two methods we intended findings from each to feed into the development of the other during the evolution of the project. Figure 24.1 illustrates how this was achieved in practice over the course of the research programme.

While the precise timing of each phase of each strand of research may be planned in advance, the real world does have a tendency to alter the course of any research project. By conducting two major studies together any such alterations to one study will necessitate corresponding alterations to the planning of the other study. In this case, there was an unavoidable delay in the initiation of the ethnography, which meant that qualitative observations would not be available to inform the development of the questionnaires as had been originally planned. Instead, existing qualitative literature (including the findings from the previous research programme) was used to inform the development of the questionnaires. Having developed draft questionnaires before the ethnography started meant that qualitative feedback on these questionnaires could then be obtained from participants in the ethnographic work. A key issue in the development of the questionnaire that measured patients' perceptions of therapy was finalizing which term to use to refer to practitioners in items that asked patients to rate their perceptions of their practitioners' competence, expertise and communication. Discussions with practitioners and users of a range of complementary therapies who were participating in the ethnography contributed to the decision to use the term therapist rather than alternatives such as practitioner or provider. Certain terms were seen as more appropriate for specific complementary therapies (such as practitioner for osteopathy) and there was a general preference among the practitioners for the term practitioner. However, patients found the term therapist easier to understand and it was seen by both patients and practitioners as a descriptor which was applicable to a range of complementary therapies. Thus it was still possible, albeit to a lesser extent and in a different way than originally planned, to use the ethnographic work to inform the questionnaire development.

One researcher (FB) took the lead role in all of the data collection and analysis in this research programme. In practice this led to some difficulties in managing the interplay between the different approaches, owing to problems such as relative timing of the labour intensive aspects of each part of the research. The ethnographic fieldwork involved spending a period of three months

in two complementary therapy clinics and required immersion in the settings and the emerging data and analysis. During this period therefore it was not possible to devote any time to the questionnaire research. However, the questionnaire research needed to be taken forward at this stage of the project in order to complete the prospective study in the given timeframe. This difficulty was resolved by using the internet to collect cross-sectional questionnaire data to provide an initial test of the quantitative hypotheses (once initiated this means of data collection requires no input from the researcher). Nevertheless, there were advantages of one person leading on both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Observations from one approach are more likely to be recognized as relevant to the other approach, and may be easier to integrate given familiarity with both qualitative and quantitative approaches. For example, one of the pilot questionnaire studies showed that patients who were seeing their therapist for ongoing treatment had more positive perceptions of their therapist and therapy than patients who had only seen their therapist once. The study also alerted us to the difficulty of recruiting new patients compared to returning patients, a difficulty which was anticipated to recur in the prospective questionnaire study. This pilot study thus emphasized the need to purposively interview both new and returning patients in the ethnography both on theoretical and practical grounds. Having first-hand knowledge of both research processes can also facilitate the comparative evaluation of the findings from each process.

Part of our rationale for combining methods was that qualitative and quantitative approaches can complement each other by providing a balance across the strengths and weaknesses of different studies. This was indeed the case, in that rather different questions were addressed concerning the same phenomenon, and relating these findings provoked suggestions for future research. For example, the prospective questionnaire study included people who were new to complementary therapy and those who had used it before but could not test differences between these groups because the number of new patients recruited was too low (Bishop et al., 2008b). However, from the qualitative study it appeared that people are often unwilling to commit to evaluating their experience of treatment after only one consultation, wanting to 'wait and see' before passing judgement on a treatment (Bishop et al., 2010). Thus, an important issue for future research is to examine the role of experiences of the first consultation only and to systematically compare this to the role of subsequent consultations in decision making. Similarly, the questionnaire study was limited to testing a priori hypotheses concerning the relationship to adherence of particular aspects of patients' beliefs and experiences previously identified as potentially important to adherence to therapy in general. The qualitative study was able to balance this limitation by incorporating therapists' perspectives in addition to patients' perspectives, and by including inductive analyses of the impact of the immediate clinic setting and the wider socio-cultural context. For example, the qualitative study suggested that complementary therapies were used not only as health care in response to illness, but also as luxurious treats directed at maintaining or improving general wellbeing, a health behaviour that is more consistent with the private sector than the National Health Service (Bishop et al., 2008a). This concept of complementary therapies as luxuries was not predicted by previous research or theory and so is unlikely to have been documented in purely quantitative research.

Our mixed methods programme was also advantageous in the opportunities it afforded in relation to theory development. By using a single theoretical framework it was possible to examine the applicability of that framework in two ways: first, to test the validity of the predictions concerning the factors hypothesized to predict behaviour, and second, to examine whether and how the processes suggested by the framework worked in the specific context of interest. The prospective questionnaire study showed that, as predicted by the theoretical framework, treatment beliefs and illness perceptions predict adherence to complementary therapy (Bishop et al., 2008b). However, questionnaire studies are not well-suited to suggesting why such variables are predictors of behaviour. The self-regulation framework suggests that people attempt to achieve common-sense coherence between their representations of illness and treatment, and that this drive to coherence is a mechanism through which people decide to initiate and adhere to specific forms of treatment. By focusing on individuals' experiences and taking an inductive data-led approach the ethnographic study suggested that this drive to coherence was occurring in patients' decision making about complementary therapies. Patients selected therapies based on the degree of coherence between what they felt they needed from a therapy and what they believed a specific therapy could provide for them. They evaluated their use of therapy with reference to their ongoing needs and their beliefs about therapies, beliefs which often changed based on their own personal experience and their discussions with their therapists (Bishop et al., 2010).

An important and daunting challenge facing mixed methods researchers is the possibility that qualitative and quantitative methods elicit findings that might appear to be incompatible. In our

programme, this initially seemed to be the case. In the ethnography, when participants talked about their expectations and evaluations of complementary therapy, they often drew comparisons between complementary therapy and conventional medicine (Bishop et al., 2010). However, attitudes to general practitioners were not consistent predictors of adherence to complementary therapy in the questionnaire studies (Bishop et al., 2006). At first glance these findings might appear contradictory; however, by taking into account the context of each finding it was possible to suggest that previous experiences of, and beliefs about, conventional medicine allowed participants to develop their talk about complementary therapy, but that these experiences were not necessarily key determinants of adherence. Furthermore, the way in which the qualitative study was able to take into account the wider social context of health care suggested that complementary therapy use might be very different to conventional medicine use. Complementary therapy use was talked about as a luxury, and people talked about using it for health problems that were not deemed serious enough for conventional medicine. In this case then, the apparent incompatibility between quantitative and qualitative findings highlighted a hypothesis for future research, that people who use complementary therapy might not be dissatisfied with their experiences of conventional medicine per se, but rather might be dissatisfied with the scope of treatment available through conventional medicine.

Combining methods in a programme of research is not simple and does involve difficult decisions and careful planning. There are often eventualities such as apparently or actually conflicting findings which cannot be easily anticipated. However, we believe that by combining questionnaire and ethnographic methods and taking into account their different strengths and weaknesses we achieved our aim of generating a more comprehensive understanding of attitudes and behaviours surrounding complementary therapy use than would have been achieved by a single method design. The combination of these methods meant that it was possible to ground contextualized understanding of process in the lived experience of a small number of participants and to test the relative importance of the factors that appeared to be influencing that process in a larger sample of participants.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Interest in mixed methods research appears to be growing: the *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* has been publishing methodological discussions and examples of mixed methods research from diverse disciplines since 2007 (Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007), symposia on mixed methods have been convened at recent British Psychological Society conferences (e.g. the 2012 annual conference and the 2013 Division of Health Psychology annual conference), and the Mixed Methods International Research Association (http://mmira.org/) was launched in 2014. However, if such interest is to be translated into high quality mixed methods research then psychologists need access to training not just in qualitative and quantitative research methods (ESRC, 2009; Health Professions Council, 2010), but also in how to identify and navigate the challenges and opportunities of mixed methods research. Such training should help those new to mixed methods research to avoid the potential pitfalls and realize the full benefits of combining qualitative and quantitative approaches.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter has been to show that since every perspective and every method reveals some things and conceals others, the pragmatic question answered by mixing methods is simply 'what can we learn from each perspective?' (Eisner, 2003). Examples of good mixed methods research are not yet common in the literature. This may be due partly to many authors actually adopting a 'composite analysis' approach, reporting separately studies that were carried out as part of a programme of mixed methods research. However, it is also because, although extremely rewarding, mixed method research is not easy to do well. In order to fully realize the benefits of mixing methods, it is necessary to appreciate the different paradigms, aims, procedures and methods of validation that are appropriate to qualitative and quantitative means of inquiry. To have sufficient expertise in each method requires extensive experience of both, or a team of people with expertise in each method who can work together closely, appreciate each other's perspective, and thus communicate across the artificial but persistent qualitative–quantitative divide. Nevertheless, as increasing numbers of researchers are educated in both qualitative and quantitative methods, it is likely that there will be a growing appreciation that the ultimate pragmatic test of the value of any study is not what methods are used, but whether it exhibits the fundamental characteristics of good research: commitment and rigour in execution;

analytic sensitivity to theory and data; transparency and coherence in presentation; and importance to future human activity (Yardley, 2000).

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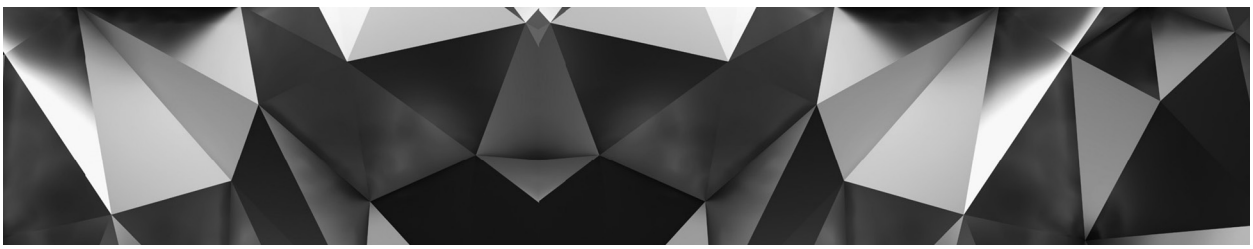
PART III

Applications



25

Social Psychology

Steven D. Brown and Abigail Locke

INTRODUCTION

Social psychology remains a diverse sub-discipline of psychology. One that in its broadest conceptualization contains feminist approaches, gender, community and political psychology, and critical approaches to the discipline, alongside more traditional social psychological approaches to group dynamics and attitude theory. The diversity of method and topic has characterized social psychology since its inception. Most traditional histories of social psychology single out two key works in the late nineteenth century as the founding moments for the discipline – Le Bon's study of crowd behaviour and Triplett's experimental research on social facilitation. Le Bon's (1895) *The Crowd* is a dense 'philosophical' treatise on the 'minds' and 'opinions' of crowds. This is illustrated by observations the author makes on the events around the fall of the Paris Commune. In stark contrast, Triplett's (1898) work is a more modest attempt to understand 'competitiveness' – how the presence of others seems to encourage individuals to apply greater efforts in the accomplishment of some task. Whilst reference is made to bicycle racing competitions, Triplett's work uses an experimental design where two children are engaged in a somewhat bizarrely staged task involving fishing reels.

What is interesting about these two works is how very different they seem. Le Bon uses 'real world' examples, but only as a way of illustrating a theory of crowd behaviour he has already worked out in advance (i.e. a 'deductive' procedure). Triplett uses experimental data, but treats this data as a window onto 'natural laws' he does not know in advance (i.e. an 'inductive procedure'). On another level, whilst Le Bon has a clear political position – 'mobs' are dangerous and need to be controlled by the state – Triplett seems to have very little sense of there being any link between the behaviour of individuals and the social and cultural milieu they live within.

The point we want to make is that from its very inception social psychology has been a wildly diverse field. In *formal terms* it has veered between a taste for grand theorizing (e.g. Self-Categorization Theory) and a preference for pointing out small regularities in human behaviour (e.g. Fritz Heider's work on errors and biases). In *methodological terms* it has embraced both large-scale observational work (e.g. Festinger et al.'s classic study *When Prophecy Fails*) and the design of highly intricate and at times controversial experimental settings (e.g. Zimbardo's notorious Stanford Prison Experiment). In *political terms* social psychologists appear torn between making explicit statements (e.g. Tajfel's work on

categorization and prejudice) and denying that the political has any relevance to their individual research programmes (see Frances Cherry's marvellous 1995 analysis of this tendency).

In this chapter we want to show how qualitative methods fit into this very confusing and contradictory field. We will evaluate the place of qualitative methods according to the three criteria mentioned earlier – formal, methodological, political. Or, put slightly differently, what do qualitative researchers claim they are doing, how do they go about doing it and what do they see as the relevancy of their work? What we hope to show is that whilst qualitative methods do in many ways differ from the quantitative and experimental techniques that have dominated social psychology (notably US social psychology) over the past 60 years, these differences also mark some points of deep similarity.

In the first part of the chapter we will put these differences and similarities in context by showing how two rival versions of 'social psychology' grew up in psychology and sociology. We will then describe how the so-called 'crisis' in European social psychology brought the two 'social psychologies' back into contact. In the main part of the chapter we outline the different qualitative methods which were developed in (psychological) social psychology as a consequence of this renewed contact, and point to recent developments since the first edition of this handbook was published. By way of conclusion, we will assess the future prospects for qualitative methods in social psychology.

THE TWO 'SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGIES'

In his historical work, Robert Farr (1995) points out that there are two distinct traditions of work that call themselves 'social psychology'. One is the well-known branch of psychology which we have been describing. But there is a second and wholly separate branch of sociology also called 'social psychology'. We will offer a brief characterization of each in turn.

The first social psychology (or 'psychological social psychology') has its origins in European psychology. Historically, psychology in Europe has experienced considerable difficulty in establishing its place in the broader divisions of knowledge and academic life. The subject matter of psychology – human activity and mental life – suggests that psychology has its place amongst the humanities as a form '*Geisteswissenschaft*' (the study of culture). But European psychologists at the turn of the nineteenth century sought to align the fledgling discipline with the more powerful disciplines and faculties of medicine and exact science as a form of '*Naturwissenschaft*' (the natural sciences).

By and large, social psychology has followed the path of its parent discipline. Whilst early European work in social psychology (e.g. McDougall, 1925; Bartlett, 1932) explicitly drew upon work in other humanities such as anthropology, by the 1950s psychological social psychology was dominated by a natural science orientation towards experimentation and quantification. At the same time, the research agenda for the discipline was set by social psychologists based in the USA (such as Allport, Asch and Festinger). This dominance of North American research was further extended in the period immediately after the end of the Second World War when US finance and expertise was brought into Europe in an attempt to unify the research community split asunder by the turmoil of war years and the flight into exile of many former leading lights (such as Kurt Lewin and Fritz Heider). It was also hoped that this would serve as part of the intellectual buttress against communism that the USA was then desperate to enable in Western Europe. Between 1950 and 1975 it is fair to say that psychological social psychology was an experimental science dominated by the overarching model and ideology of North American psychology.

In the case of the other social psychology (or 'psychological sociology'), the situation is curiously reversed. This tradition emerged in US sociology, mostly around the 'Chicago School' that flourished around George Herbert Mead and his successors. Working within a discipline that is central to the study of culture, sociologists traditionally have not suffered from the same 'identity problems' that beset psychologists. They have instead been concerned with the best means to study 'social forces'. Classically large samples of statistical data on, for example, suicide rates, household consumption patterns and voting preferences have been the mainstay. These samples are used as the basis to impute regularities in social structure, which are then 'reproduced' or 'lived out' by individuals who take on certain characteristics and viewpoints as a consequence (as in Max Weber's 'ideal–typical' forms). This kind of approach reached its height in the functionalist system theory of Talcott Parsons in the 1950s.

But a counter-trend in sociology has emphasized the importance of approaching social forces in a different direction by looking at how individuals make meaning and sense out of the social structures they inhabit. The generic term for this approach is 'micro-sociology'. Mead's work, for example, emphasized that an individual's personal understandings emerged through a kind of

dialogue with the people and broader world around them or 'symbolic interactionism'. Studying such understanding required the use of different methodologies, such as in-depth interviewing, observation and ethnography. In the post-war period, this kind of work was given additional impetus by the rediscovery of a branch of European philosophy called 'phenomenology'. Sociologists such as Alfred Schutz developed phenomenological terms such as 'lifeworld' to show that although there may be general laws of society, at a micro level what matters is how persons interpret their world by drawing on local rules and rationalities. This insight was developed further in the ethnomethodology of Harold Garfinkel (1967). Between 1950 and 1975 it is therefore more or less accurate to describe psychological sociology as a minority voice arguing against the overarching model of a quantitative structural-functionalism derived from classical European sociology.

THE 'CRISIS IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY'

During the 1970s these two versions of social psychology unexpectedly came back into dialogue with one another. The period is usually referred to as 'the crisis in social psychology'. It was sparked by the near simultaneous publication of three texts.

In the USA, Kenneth Gergen's article 'Social psychology as history' (1973) presented a blistering attack on the dominant experimental model in social psychology. He noted that the reliance on supposedly value neutral 'objective' methods led social psychologists to be blind to the cultural and historical factors that shape social behaviour. He argued that to understand social processes we need to study how they have operated and changed over history – how social actions are fluid and dynamic – and how in particular the practices of social psychology have changed and adapted over time. Gergen's attack was particularly powerful because the author had been trained in precisely those methods he attacked so virulently.

Rom Harré and Paul Secord's (1972) *The Explanation of Social Behaviour* argued against the 'mechanism' of much contemporary psychology. The authors – both philosophers – took issue with the default model of the person used in psychology (notably behaviourism). This model suggested that individual behaviour was the product of generic features of human nature that were essentially beyond the control of the person. The task of the social psychologist was then to uncover these generic features through experimental investigation (i.e. through 'positivism'). Harré and Secord argued instead for a model of persons as wholly rational, complex agents whose behaviour was a product of their own contemplation and who attempts to understand their world. They pointed to the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein and the symbolic interactionism of Mead and Erving Goffman as good examples. The task of the social psychologist would then be akin to that of an anthropologist, who would seek to discover the local rules in play in a given community and how these rules were interpreted by community members.

In Europe, Israel and Tajfel (1972) edited a series of essays on *The Context of Social Psychology*, which similarly echoed the call to engage with wider social and cultural forces and to look beyond the narrow confines of experimentalism. Tajfel's own contribution ('Experiments in a vacuum') neatly summarized the dangers that resulted from treating social psychological experiments as ends in themselves rather than as the starting point for developing propositions about social behaviour, which would then have to be refined in dialogue with other social sciences. More seriously, this edited book reflected a sense on the part of many European social psychologists that US research had achieved such a level of dominance that it was able to erroneously assume that it provided universal insights into general human nature, rather than very specific insights into North American culture. The formation of a distinctive European Association for Experimental Social Psychology (EAESP) was then an attempt to 'reclaim' a form of social psychology uniquely suited to European cultures and societies. The EAESP also opened up dialogue with social psychologists in the USSR and Eastern Bloc states, where very different kinds of psychology were being pursued that emphasized collectivity and materialism over individualism and cognitivism.

All three texts therefore echoed one another's call for a change in the formal, methodological and political basis on which social psychology was to be conducted. The 'crisis' that subsequently followed involved a great deal of public debate about the strength and weaknesses of these arguments and about what the implications might be of putting these changes into practice. It was within this context that a number of qualitative approaches became adopted. We will refer to these as the 'first wave' of qualitative methods.

THE 'FIRST WAVE': 1975–1990

The key texts of the crisis literature had all called for change in social psychology. To some extent

'experiments' became seen as emblematic of all that was wrong with the discipline. At the same time the search for new methods became shorthand for doing social psychology differently. However, the majority of the crisis literature proved to be very thin in terms of specific recommendations for appropriate methodologies. This left a generation of researchers in the unfortunate position of being 'against' experiments but with little sense of the alternatives (i.e. what they were actually 'for'). In the late 1970s the 'ethogenic' and 'hermeneutic' approaches came to fill this void, followed in the mid-1980s by Q-methodology and discourse analysis.

Ethogenics

The 'crisis' created a schism in the UK social psychology community. This was demonstrated most starkly at Oxford University in the early 1970s where two versions of social psychology were pursued in parallel. Based in the Department of Experimental Psychology, Michael Argyle worked out a programme of research in interpersonal behaviour using classic experimental paradigms. Literally up the road, at Lineacre College, Rom Harré worked out an alternative version of social psychology based around what he termed 'ethogenics'. In formal terms, ethogenics is an attempt to develop an empirical programme for social psychology along the lines of the 'philosophical anthropology' promoted by Wittgenstein. Crudely this means uncovering the local, culturally specific 'rules of production' that persons draw upon to render their world meaningful. As Parker (1989: 21) and others have noted, ethogenics has three main principles: 'the idea of an expressive order; a description of that order as drama; an understanding of social rules'.

According to Harré, social life can be divided into two very different realms – a 'practical order' that covers physical needs and the actions required to satisfy them, and an 'expressive order' that covers social needs such as self-esteem. It is this latter realm which is the proper subject matter for social psychology. Harré argues that the expressive order is best approached through the 'dramaturgical model' of social life developed by Goffman, amongst others. This model sees social behaviour as akin to a 'performance' that social actors must learn to acquire in order to successfully accomplish various activities. These performances are in turn governed by local rules that establish what can be counted as 'proper' and 'improper' acts. For example, in Marsh et al.'s (1978) study of football hooliganism, the focus is on the 'moral careers' of football fans. Here becoming a football fan is seen as a complex dramaturgical performance, where individuals have to learn the 'social rules' that govern fan behaviour (e.g. showing the 'right' amount of aggression, but also knowing the limits). The data for the study were drawn from participant observation along with interviews with fans. As a consequence the researchers faced the immediate problem that there appeared to be a gap between how fans described their behaviour at football matches, emphasizing their own violent conduct, and the actual behaviour typically seen at such events. Marsh et al. (1978) resolved this by claiming that fans improve their own standing as 'hooligans' by colluding in the pretence that football violence is disorderly when they are aware, in some sense, that actually their behaviour follows social rules. The broader and somewhat conservative political point that Marsh et al. make is that ultimately social life consists of rule-following, although it is often useful for individuals to deny this to themselves, in order to feel like free, creative agents (see Parker, 1989).

Whilst many of the core principles underpinning the ethogenic approach have been taken up across a variety of approaches – not least in discursive psychology – the term itself was not broadly adopted and Harré replaced it with the alternative general formulation 'the second cognitive revolution' in the early 1990s (see also Harré and Gillett, 1994). The historical importance of ethogenics for social psychology is that its clear formulation of the methodological importance of concepts from ordinary language philosophy and microsociology, and in no small measure through the association with formidable intellectual and professional standing of Harré himself, enabled it to serve as a 'latch lifter' into the discipline for many of the qualitative approaches that would follow.

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is a philosophical tradition concerned with the reading and interpretation of texts, typically sacred works such as the Jewish Talmud or the Christian Bible. The fundamental principle of hermeneutics is that the meaning of a text is interrelated with the historical conditions and local practices in which the text is constituted. Since these conditions and practices are not available in the same way to readers as time passes, they must be 'reconstructed' in order to uncover the layers of meaning that the text acquires (i.e. the Talmud as it is read by contemporary readers is the product of centuries of interpretative

traditions that are 'layered' on top of one another). In the late 1970s John Shotter, working as a developmental psychologist in the experimental psychology department at the University of Nottingham, saw a new way of applying hermeneutics to psychological data. Shotter worked with video recordings of mother–infant interactions. Traditionally, developmental psychologists would 'read' the behaviour of infants and mothers by drawing on existing theories, such as Piagetian structural–development theory. For Shotter, this was rather like the situation where a reader interprets a novel or a scripture in their own terms without paying any attention to the context in which the text was itself written. The hermeneutic approach would then reconstruct the context in which the behaviour of mother and infant makes sense to one another, rather than 'reading' their behaviour through an external theory. Shotter's work attempted to develop theories of 'play' and 'maternal interaction' from the bottom-up by reconstructing the context of behaviour in this hermeneutic fashion (Shotter and Gregory, 1976).

Gergen et al. (1986) extended this work by observing that social psychologists fail to appreciate how their own methods and measures may themselves be interpreted. Gergen et al. asked student participants to look at items drawn from the Rotter locus of control scale that had been randomly assigned to a variety of personality traits. Participants were able to make highly articulate claims about why each item might plausibly be seen as evidence of a particular personality, despite the fact that the associations were entirely random. Gergen et al. claimed that this demonstrated the sophisticated ways in which persons could reconstruct contexts to make these links meaningful. The political point here is that academic psychology is just one hermeneutic practice amongst others. It is a way of 'reading' behaviour, but one which fails to recognize that the particular interpretations it makes are just that – rather partial and limited readings based upon a reconstruction of context.

Much as with the ethogenic approach, the term hermeneutics did not given rise to a specific methodological toolkit. However, Shotter's strong body of conceptual work demonstrating the importance of philosophers such as Wittgenstein, Bakhtin, Vico and many others (see Shotter, 1984, 1993a, 1993b) has a continuing relevance and influence (e.g. Corcoran and Cromby, 2016). Equally important is the ongoing recognition that the central hermeneutic practice of 'intepretation' is shared across all qualitative methods, despite the tendency to overlook some of the thorny philosophical difficulties that arise from taking interpretation seriously (see Willig, 2012). Some researchers, such as Langdridge (2007), have argued that the best means of rigorously approaching issues around interpretation in qualitative data is to return to the phenomenological methods and strategies proposed by Husserl and Heidegger.

Q-methodology

As we have seen in the case of hermeneutics, many social psychologists who looked towards qualitative methods in the late 1970s and early 1980s were working in traditional departments of psychology where experimental methods were dominant. At the University of Reading Rex Stainton Rogers had also developed a hermeneutic approach to personality testing (Semin and Stainton Rogers, 1973). Stainton Rogers was similarly concerned with showing that the interpretative powers of ordinary persons far exceeded the rather limited models used by social psychologists, but was also concerned with the means by which this could be systematically demonstrated through a method capable of representing the complex structure of lay or everyday interpretations. In order to capture this, Stainton Rogers drew on the notion of 'operant subjectivity' (see Brown, 1980) originally devised by William Stephenson (see Chapter 13, this *Handbook*). Stephenson had treated 'personality' as a constellation of possible opinions and responses that a person might make, whose precise form shifted according to the context in which the person found themselves. Hence at any given moment someone's expressed (or 'operant') position on a topic represents a conscious choice (hence 'subjectivity') out of a range of possible positions. The task of the social psychologist is to map the contours of this constellation in relation to specific issues and concerns, and to demonstrate how persons shift between positions.

Stephenson had developed an unusual written statement sorting task called a 'Q-sort' as a device for capturing operant subjectivity. In collaboration with Wendy Stainton Rogers, Q-methodology was developed into a social psychological technique. Studies were conducted ranging from expressed subjectivity in relation to politics (R. Stainton Rogers and Kitzinger, 1985), health (W. Stainton Rogers, 1991) and emotions (Stenner and R. Stainton Rogers, 1998). Some of the best known work in this tradition is Celia Kitzinger's (1987) studies of lesbian identities. Kitzinger used Q-methodology as a way of sampling the diversity of possible ways in which lesbianism might be 'constructed' (that is, described and understood) ranging from sexual identity as personal

preference to radical lesbianism as a strategic political choice. Q-methodology, as developed by the Stainton Rogers, was a curious mix of the old and the very new. Q-sorts themselves resemble traditional personality techniques, and indeed are in part quantitatively analysed, but because they allow for a vast number of possible connections to be made between statements, Q-sorts are able to reveal extremely complex interpretative structures and define the differences between distinct structures. Moreover these structures are themselves interpreted as cultural and historical artefacts (see Curt, 1994). To this extent Q-methodology is seen as compatible with 'social constructionism'.

One of the obstacles to the broader adoption of Q-methodology was the widespread suspicion aroused by its quantitative aspects. To some extent the development of mixed-methods research and growing recognition of the qualitative/interpretative uses that can be made of quantitative data (as with so-called 'big data') has allowed Q-methodology to thrive (see Watts and Stenner, 2012). Although it remains a relatively under-represented approach within social psychology, it is one of the few qualitative methodologies developed with the discipline to have been adopted without substantive modification in other areas of social science (see, for example, Baker et al., 2014).

Discourse Analysis

The seminal text that brought discourse analysis into social psychology was Potter and Wetherell's (1987) *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour*, coming near the end of the first wave of qualitative methods. Discourse analysis as both a theoretical stance and a methodological perspective had a basis in sociology, in particular Gilbert and Mulkay's (1984) work in the sociology of scientific knowledge (SSK), which had originally formulated the idea of interpretative repertoires (discrete sets of rhetorical formulations and concepts organized around a core metaphor, which Potter and Wetherell put at the heart of their version of discourse analysis. The method was promoted as a way of re-interpreting the subject matter of psychology itself, beginning in this instance with attitudes, but extended in later years to topics such as motives and intentions, emotions and cognition and memory. Formally, discourse analysis shared with all the other first wave methods the ambition of treating psychological processes as flexible, sophisticated everyday practices through which persons made sense of their social worlds. Methodologically, the approach insisted (as sociologists like Garfinkel had done) that rather than search for the supposed 'causes' of behaviour, social scientists ought to look at the rational 'accounts' that persons give of their own conduct.

Potter and Wetherell claimed that because discourse analysis involved the close scrutiny of language, then any 'text' was potentially analysable in this way; however, in practice much of their data was derived from interviews (notably a study of racism in New Zealand, published as Wetherell and Potter, 1992) or from easily transcribed sources, such as television programmes or newspaper articles. Discourse analysis differed from the other first wave approaches by taking a 'hard-line' approach to language. Whilst the other approaches had prioritized language use as the public means through which meaning and understanding are organized, they had nevertheless retained a role for traditional concepts such as historical and social forces, and even for cognition itself. Potter and Wetherell claimed that it was possible to 'bracket out' all such factors – in particular mental phenomena – since they could demonstrate that social life could be analysed as it is organized through language and conversational interaction entirely without reference to any other process. This resulted in an almost immediate backlash against the approach from both psychologists and sociologists who saw discourse analysis as offering little to their respective projects. More importantly it resulted in the charge that discourse analysis was politically impotent since it could not offer analyses of large-scale social and historical processes.

As we will go on to describe, the majority of researchers within this tradition moved away from the version of Discourse Analysis articulated by Potter and Wetherell (1987). But the core methodological ideas continue to be in current use in other disciplines. For example, within management and organization studies, the 'discursive approach' is constituted almost entirely by the use of interviews that are analysed in terms of rhetoric, metaphor and interpretative repertoires (see Steyaert et al., 2016; Grant et al., 2004).

THE 'SECOND WAVE': 1990–2005

By the late 1980s, a range of qualitative techniques had begun to appear in social psychology. The common thread shared by all techniques was a commitment to a model of persons as sophisticated language users able to flexibly interpret and understand their social worlds. At the same time,

the researchers using these techniques were engaged in a wholesale rejection of experimental methods and indeed, to some extent, the discipline that went with it. By the early 1990s, however, the range of qualitative techniques in use and the growing tradition of studies made it a very real prospect to talk of a 'qualitative social psychology'. One crucial marker was the decision by the British Psychological Society to include the teaching of qualitative methods as a compulsory requirement in all UK psychology undergraduate degree programmes that it accredited. By the turn of the millennium, qualitative social psychological studies routinely featured in mainstream journals such as the *British Journal of Social Psychology* and *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* as well as specialist journals such as *Discourse & Society*. Whilst techniques such as Q methodology remained vibrant, the 'second wave' of methods mostly focused on the technical analysis of discourse, but with very different aims.

Discursive Psychology

The application of discourse analysis to the study of psychological phenomena picked up speed in the early 1990s. Much of the work in this area came from a group of researchers in and around Loughborough University in the UK, including Michael Billig, Derek Edwards, Jonathan Potter, Margaret Wetherell and Charles Antaki, who collaborated as the Discourse & Rhetoric Group (DARG). The term 'discursive psychology' was coined in a 1992 book by Edwards and Potter, who extended the hard line stance of Potter and Wetherell. Whereas *Discourse and Social Psychology* had merely suggested the bracketing of mental process, Edwards and Potter aimed to show how the entirety of social psychology (and much of psychology to boot) could be reconstructed as the study of talk-in-interaction. In doing so, Edwards and Potter were effectively repeating the similar provocation which Harvey Sacks made to sociologists by claiming that the social order could only be empirically recovered through the analysis of ordinary, mundane conversational interactions. Psychological strongholds such as memory and cognition (Middleton and Edwards, 1990; Lynch and Bogen, 1996), emotions (Edwards, 1997, 1999; Locke and Edwards, 2003), attributions (Edwards and Potter, 1992) and identity (Widdicombe and Wooffitt, 1995; Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998) were subject to a thorough reworking from a discursive point of view, with the result that ascriptions of mental states were considered for their role as interactional currency.

The focus of discursive psychology changed over the period from 1990 to 2005. In 1992 the focus was on fact construction, stake management and accountability (see also Potter (1996) for work along these lines) encompassed in the (decidedly ironic) construction of the Discourse Action Model (DAM), published in the heartland of mainstream psychology, *Psychological Review*. A more comprehensive account of discursive psychology was provided in Edwards (1997), where the influence of conversation analysis is more firmly felt, and more recently in Edwards and Potter (2005) whereby three overlapping strands of discursive psychology are outlined. These ranged from a discursive reworking of traditional psychological models, to looking at the interactional uses of psychological terms and finally studying where psychological states are implied in discourse. Here the study of talk-in-interaction in its own right is seen to not merely revolutionize social psychology but to potentially do away with the need for the discipline at all. Indeed, by 2005 Wooffitt (2005: 129) was given to note that 'on occasions it would seem that the methodology of discursive psychology is hard to distinguish from that of CA' (see also Silverman (2006) for similar sentiments). In other words, discursive psychology had become, for many, a branch of conversation analysis (see Chapter 5). This is reflected in the increasing 'ratcheting up' of the methodological standards of discursive psychology, such that by the mid-1990s, interviews and focus group material were of interest merely as peculiar interactional settings with the use of naturally occurring data considered as the gold standard (see Puchta and Potter, 2004; Potter and Hepburn, 2005). For critics of the approach, the political questions of what exactly a fine-grained attention to transcripts of conversation adds to analysis of pressing social and political questions remains ever more pertinent. The debate as to the *actual* differences between much of the work coming under the labels of discursive psychology or conversation analysis (aside from one method being mainly used by psychologists and the other mainly by sociologists) continues (see Wooffitt, 2005; Edwards, 2006; Kitzinger, 2006; Potter, 2006, 2012).

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

In the late 1970s a group of psychologists and sociologists began publishing a journal, *Ideology & Consciousness,* that explicitly aimed to develop the ideas of the French philosopher Michel Foucault

in relation to psychology. In a series of articles (e.g. Adlam et al., 1977) they argued that because our thinking is intertwined with the historical development of social practice and state power, it follows that our self-reflections on what we ourselves are (or 'subjectivity') is similarly structured. Hence the entirety of psychology must be considered from the perspective of the power mechanisms and structured modes of thinking with which they are associated (or 'discourses' for shorthand) that have made us what we are. Nikolas Rose developed this approach most extensively (see Rose, 1985, 1989). The critical question therefore is how does power produce subjectivity and how might we develop new forms of subjectivity that resist power (see Henriques et al., 1984)? In a piece of subsequent work, Wendy Hollway (1989) proposed an approach to the analysis of interview texts which would focus on the 'subject positions' that discourses allowed persons to adopt. This approach gave rise, in part, to what is sometimes called 'Foucauldian discourse analysis' (FDA).

In truth there is no clear set of methodological principles that unites work in the FDA tradition beyond the common use of the term 'discourse' to refer to those understandings which are made available by a particular social practice existing within a given field of power. The work of Ian Parker and Erica Burman (collaborating as the Discourse Unit at Manchester Metropolitan University) has contributed most to the development of this approach (see Parker and Burman, 1994; Parker and the Bolton Discourse Network, 1999). Parker and Burman insist that because power subsumes the entirety of any social world, one can analyse practically any material – from government reports to interviews with professionals through even (notoriously!) to the instructions on a tube of children's toothpaste (see Banister et al., 1989) – for evidence of the 'subject positions' we are forced to adopt to understand ourselves. However, for the most part, FDA work tends to be interview based and broadly resembles the approach taken in early discursive psychological work, but it differs through its commitment to locating the analysis within a broader social theoretical framework derived from Foucault's work. During the 1990s there was a series of fiercely argued exchanges between the Discourse Unit and DARG members, with the former arguing that the latter had reneged on any sense of the political, which was met with the counter-charge that FDA was methodologically unsophisticated and unable to provide the empirical evidence for the political claims its authors wished to make (Parker, 1990, 1999; Potter et al., 1990; Potter et al., 1999).

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

One way of considering all of the qualitative work in the 'second wave' is to see it as the renewal of social psychology by sociological thinking. Discursive psychology therefore took inspiration from the sociology of accounts (e.g. Garfinkel) and conversation analysis (e.g. Sacks) and FDA drew heavily on previous sociological interpretation of Foucault's work (e.g. Rose, 1989; Turner, 1996). There was one other major sociological tradition that influenced social psychologists – the 'grounded theory' approach developed by Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser. Grounded theory is a method that aims to provide a systematic process for inductively deriving 'categories' that can be developed into coherent theories. It demands that researchers minutely break down the transcript of an interview into tiny fragments of meaning (or 'codes') that are then assembled into broader 'themes'. This process is repeated for every interview, with themes being continually revised, until the researcher feels that the themes properly capture the substance of what participants are describing.

Despite its widespread use in sociology, few psychologists have attempted to adopt grounded theory in its entirety (see Henwood and Pidgeon, 1992; Pidgeon, 1996; Chamberlain, 1999 for exceptions). However, Jonathan A. Smith did develop, along with collaborators, an approach that was broadly in line with the spirit and general approach of grounded theory but placed far less constraints on the researcher and which, as a consequence, could be readily taught to undergraduate and postgraduate students. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) works with texts, usually transcripts of interviews with carefully selected participants. It requires researchers to make notes on the transcript and then to systematize these notes into 'themes' which are clustered together and subsequently compared across interviews to form 'master themes'. IPA work grew rapidly in the late 1990s, dealing mostly with health-related themes (e.g. sexual health, chronic pain, maternity). One impetus for its growth was the promise that it was possible to treat the texts it studies as 'windows' onto participants' cognitions. In this sense it is 'phenomenological'; however, such cognitions are inevitably mediated by both language and by the interpretive role of the analyst. In this sense the approach is 'hermeneutic'. But as critics (e.g. Willig, 2001) came to note, this view of language is not especially phenomenological because phenomenologists have a radically different view of thinking from cognitive psychologists. Moreover, the hermeneutic aspect

of the approach rather pales in comparison with the wholesale attempt to reconstruct context in first wave hermeneutics and second wave FDA. In the last half decade, IPA has found its home as a popular qualitative analysis in mainstream health psychology work.

CONTEMPORARY WORK: 2005 ONWARDS

In this third wave of qualitative research in social psychology, the dominant approaches in social psychology are versions of 'discourse analysis' and versions of 'grounded theory'. Discursive psychology, critical discursive psychology and FDA remain the best examples of the former, whilst IPA, psychosocial research and the newly emerging thematic analysis remain as the most common instances of the latter, linking to the strength of grounded theory methodology across the rest of the social sciences (e.g. Charmaz, 2013). However, there is a further division between a concern with 'interaction' and that with 'experience' that transcends the two approaches and connects to a broader renewed agenda around process, affect and materialism across the social sciences (see Wetherell, 2012).

In general, qualitative work in social psychology, with some notable exceptions such as conversation analysis and some discursive psychology, seems to be becoming more heterogeneous and diversified rather than homogeneous and methodologically 'purist'. Researchers have continued to adapt and modify many of the qualitative methodologies outlined in the first and second wave as they grappled with both their strengths and limitations. In this section we will point to some the defining features of contemporary qualitative research in social psychology.

Thematic Analyses

Thematic analyses have been around for a long time in a variety of forms, particularly, for example, in health psychology. Traditionally thematic analysis shared close links with content analysis in that both were concerned purely with topic rather than social action (see Miles and Huberman, 1994; Boyatzis (1998). More recently work by Braun and Clarke (2013) and Joffe and Yardley (2004) has revivified work using a thematic analytic approach by highlighting its links to the kind of constructionism found in early discourse analysis. In such methods, topics of concern are noted by going through the data, typically line by line, such that these topics can then be placed into larger categories or themes and sub-themes. As Braun and Clarke (2006) noted, the themes that are produced can be either inductive or deductive and can be taken to reflect broader discursive structures. Deductive coding would be where the researcher codes the data in the light of a previous theoretical model. Once the theming of data has occurred, it is typical to compare coding with others in order to obtain inter-rater reliability.

One reason why thematic analyses came back into vogue is arguably that they are able to sidestep tricky epistemological concerns. Such thematic analyses are particularly useful for those qualitative researchers who operate within an applied and practical domain and want to analyse their qualitative data for topic content without considering any methodological horrors (Woolgar, 1988). Their continued existence, and now resurgence, is arguably a product of a desire by researchers not to become enmeshed in the formal epistemological concerns that have marked much of the debate around first wave and second wave methods, and also part of an attempt to deliver straightforward answers to complex social psychological questions. Thematic methodologies also enable researchers to combine qualitative and quantitative research – often seemingly without question. However, as some researchers have noted (e.g. Wood and Kroger, 2000) such analyses can be considered as being more quantitative than qualitative in nature and spirit and adopt what Kidder and Fine (1987) have called a 'little q' perspective on research. That said, the detailed outlining of thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2013) suggested that thematic analysis was a method of data coding that could be taken into a variety of theoretical perspectives, meaning that in terms of the interactionist/experiential divide, papers writing from both perspectives could use thematic analysis as the starting point for this enterprise.

Psychosocial Research

The hope of a dialogue between the two forms of social psychology is that it will be possible to create a genuinely 'social' version of psychology. The psychosocial approach developed by Stephen Frosh (see Chapter 8), along with other researchers such as Anne Phoenix and Wendy Hollway starts from the same assumption as practically all qualitative methods in social psychology – that thinking and action are shaped by society and culture. But it grafts onto this the notion from psychodynamic theory that unconscious dynamics

are a key motivational factor, albeit one that is in continuous dialogue with social forces. In practice what this means is viewing persons as shifting between different 'subject positions' in 'discourse', rather in the same way that FDA proposes, in which they 'invest' unconsciously. Hollway and Jefferson's (2000) Free Association Interview technique is the most coherent methodological example of the approach, drawing upon psychodynamic theory by making the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee central. The feelings and associations produced by the interviewer (what psychoanalysts usually call 'countertransference') are seen to be analytically significant. Methodologically this is problematic, not least because all of the first and second wave approaches were united in their rejection of any form of 'depth psychology' (i.e. claims to read unconscious processes in empirical material).

An alternative dialect of psychosocial research has been proposed by discursive researchers such as Mick Billig (1999), who proposed alternative ways that Freudian concepts might be used to enrich conversation and discourse analysis. Margie Wetherell (2012) has also outlined how ideas around interaction and practice associated with the discourse approach can be mobilized to study emotional investments as 'affective practices'. Paul Stenner's work draws upon process philosophy, notably the work of A.N. Whitehead, to similarly sketch out a non-psychoanalytic approach to researching experience (Stenner and Moreno, 2013; Stenner, 2014). To date, neither dialect of psychosocial research has arguably really delivered on its initial promise. As with other movements in social psychology, such as ethogenics, it may be that the concepts developed here become more important in the longer term than the consolidation of the approach itself.

Conversation Analysis

Conversation analysis (CA) is certainly not a new methodology nor is it a new discovery for social psychologists (Edwards published a comprehensive introduction in 1995!). As we have described, conversation analysis has been critical to the development of discourse analysis and discursive psychology. However, as we have also noted, some social psychologists now regard themselves as having become conversation analysts and correspondingly see social psychology itself as having its legitimate destination in this approach. The initial ideas of CA were developed by Harvey Sacks up until his death in 1975 (see Sacks, 1992) and have since been developed into a more concrete methodology by names such as Emmanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson. Sacks's original work proposed a conversation analysis that looked at both the sequential components of talk and the categories that were utilized in talk (membership category devices). Interestingly in the years since his death, this second focus has developed into what some would regard as a separate methodology of membership category analysis (MCA), one which is sometimes, though not always, tied to (sequential) CA. Mostly when people talk about using CA, they are referring to the sequential analysis of typically naturally occurring conversation.

Current work in social psychology engages with a range of themes from CA, including the use of conversational markers in managing 'psychological business' (Wiggins, 2012), the concern with the interactional organization of everyday practices (Speer, 2012) and the situated epistemics that constitute social psychological phenomenon (Potter, 2012). Perhaps the most interesting development has been Elizabeth Stokoe's applied work (Stokoe and Stikveland, 2016) which has developed an intervention and training package for improving professional and workplace communication based on CA/discursive psychology principles, which dispels the argument that qualitative social psychological research lacks 'real world' applications.

CA research within social psychology remains a relatively small field, albeit highly vibrant, populated mainly by current members and alumni of the Loughborough Discourse & Rhetoric Group. Despite the occasional heated exchange about methodological and philosophical ambitions of CA-influenced Discursive Psychology (see Potter, 2012), the approach has carved out its own distinctive niche within social psychology and seems likely to continue to develop its highly particular research programme for some time.

Critical Discursive Analyses

Discursive methodologies in a variety of guises have been part of the qualitative movement in psychology from the start. As we noted earlier, this began with Potter and Wetherell's (1987) discourse analysis, which in some quarters was developed into discursive psychology (e.g. Edwards and Potter, 1992: Wiggins and Potter, 2008). However, whilst some went down a discursive psychology route, others developed discursive approaches that were able to answer the questions that they wanted to ask from the data. It is becoming increasingly common to see work

using ideas derived from Potter and Wetherell's version of discourse analysis married with a concern with power that is close to Parker and Burman's notion of discourse. One such way is the continual developing of critical discursive psychology (e.g. Wetherell and Edley, 2014). This is a form of discursive analysis that provides a synthesis of other approaches and is one that utilizes principles from both wider (conversation analytically inspired) discursive psychology (e.g. Wiggins and Potter, 2008) and post-structuralist Foucauldian-inspired discourse analysis (e.g. Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine, 2008), therefore framing discourse, language and action as being socially situated (Burr, 2015). A critical discursive analysis enables a typically wider examination of the data looking at what is being constructed by the participants, how is this being done in the interaction and what this tells us about wider societal ideologies. This work has been applied to topics such as masculinity and identity (e.g. Wetherell and Edley, 2014) and parenting cultures (Locke, 2015). Another way in which discursive methodologies have been broadened includes the use of multi-modal discourse analysis (Machin, 2013) where the focus is on analysing different forms of communication and not just language (e.g. Moran and Lee, 2013). These newer forms of discursive methodologies operate alongside the traditional discursive psychology, discourse analysis and FDA outlined earlier in this chapter.

Another stream of broadly post-Foucauldian analysis has continued to develop alongside this wider discursive analysis. Post-Foucauldian analysis is not so much an approach as a body of research united in the ambition to study what it means to be a person and how this is rapidly changing in the complex geopolitics of the early twenty-first century. Methodologically, most work in this area is highly varied (and thus not systematic or refined with respect to common criteria) drawing equally on interviews, naturalistic data and increasingly Internet-based data. However, politically the work shares the common perspective that it is the duty of the social researcher to invent concepts that not only capture the vicissitudes of contemporary life but also create new possibilities for thinking that life. This work emerged due to social psychologists' delicate placing within both the discipline of psychology and the wider social sciences.

SUMMARY

From a perspective of over 30 years onwards, we may now see that what the 'crisis' achieved for social psychology was twofold. First, it enabled social psychologists to consider the cultural and historical constraints and influences on its ideas and theories. Second, it enabled a more ecologically valid study of people in their natural environments, explaining and accounting for their actions and decisions. This was accomplished through introduction and flourishing of a range of qualitative methods over three successive waves. However, it is important to note that this is only one half of the story. Experimental social psychology not only survived the crisis more or less intact, but is currently 'in a state of rude health' (Brown, 2002: 70). Indeed, journals such as the *European Journal of Social Psychology* publish experimental work almost exclusively, reflecting a broader picture in northern Europe (with the exception of the UK) where social psychology is formally defined as much the same quantitative study of 'social cognition' that it has been since the 1950s.

Should we then conclude that the situation in the UK is a special case and, if so, what are the implications of this exceptionality? There continues to be occasional sharp exchanges between the 'qualitative' and 'experimental' camps within the discipline, particularly around issues such as what should be the priorities for national research funding (e.g. by the Economic and Social Research Council) during the times of ongoing economic and political austerity. But at the same time, there have been an equal number of initiatives aimed at building dialogue across methodological divisions, such as the working group set up by the British Psychological Society (BPS) in 2004 (see the 2005 special issue of *The Psychologist* on 'Dialoguing Across Divisions').

For the most part the situation now seems to be that of the parallel existence of two ways of doing social psychology that pursue their own distinct research agendas, topics, methods and audiences. Occasionally these two worlds intersect, such as at the BPS Social Psychology Section Annual Conference or within the pages of the *British Journal of Social Psychology*. Yet within both camps there is a similar sense that in comparison with significant debates and transformation of the field during the first and, to a lesser extent, the second waves, contemporary work has settled into the comfortable patterns of research and moderate innovation that the philosopher Thomas Kuhn (1962) once described as 'normal science'. This is by no means a bad thing for a discipline that had previously been absorbed in seeming 'perpetual crisis'. Business as usual can be more productive in research terms than ongoing epistemic and methodological disagreement. However, at a conference held at the London School of Economics

in 2015 on 'The Vision of Social Psychology' it was striking how many of the senior figures within the field who spoke had been in place since the first wave. The voices of the next generations of researchers were confined to the audience. The mirroring of the circumstances that led to that first crisis are clear. Whether this will result in new, revolutionary methodological developments is rather less so.

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26

Health Psychology

Kerry Chamberlain and Michael Murray

INTRODUCTION

Health psychology was formally established in the 1970s when a group of psychologists met in the USA to discuss the relevance and application of psychology to issues of physical health and formed the Health Psychology Division of the American Psychological Association (APA). A definition of health psychology was subsequently presented at the Division's annual meeting in 1979, which essentially defined health psychology as the contribution of all the educational, scientific and professional aspects of psychology to any and all areas of physical health and specifically included health promotion and maintenance, illness treatment and prevention, and the role of psychological factors in health and illness (Matarazzo, 1980). Later, the definition was extended to identify a role for health psychology in improving health care services and policies (Matarazzo, 1982). This definition of health psychology remains commonly in use today, although the degree to which health psychologists attempt the additional tasks of policy development and improving health care is limited. French et al. (2010) refer to the components in this definition as the four 'core elements of health psychology' and Sarafino and Smith (2014) identifies them as the four 'goals of health psychology'.

Health Psychology: Diversity in the Field

The scope of health psychology research and intervention can be overviewed by examining the nature of research conducted across these four 'core elements' or 'goals' of health psychology, as identified through Matarazzo's definition. The research examples used below to illustrate these goals cover a range of theoretical, polemical and empirical papers using a wide variety of methodologies, qualitative and quantitative.

The first core element is the concern to *promote and maintain health*. Research in this area is directed towards ensuring good health, and typically focuses on maintaining positive health behaviours and changing negative health behaviours, usually in healthy people. An example is Kok et al.'s (2004) presentation of a protocol for health promotion campaigns, which suggests explicit procedures to utilize health psychology theory in promotional programme materials and activities. Examples of more specific applications are provided by Young et al. (2005) in a project examining the role of the family in promoting sun protection behaviours in adolescents and by Garbers et al. (2016) who examine culturally appropriate ways to enhance sexually transmitted disease testing for black and Latino youth.

There has also been a considerable emphasis on involving social media for health promotional activities (e.g. Jones and Salazar, 2016) and critical discussion about the potential and usefulness of such approaches (see Lupton, 2015).

Second is the concern to *prevent and treat illness*. This is a substantial area of research, usually focused on people who are at risk of illness or who are ill. This area includes studies to understand the experience of illness, such as how people with primary lung cancer make sense of their illness, treatment, their body and continuing function with the disease (Salander and Lilliehorn (2016), children's concepts of injuries and contagious and non-contagious illnesses (Myant and Williams, 2005) or the social meanings of artificial limbs (Murray, 2005). It also includes research into treatment, such as the use of complementary medicine in illness (Cartwright and Torr, 2005), or adherence to medications by people with type-2 diabetes (McSharry et al., 2016). This area may also include intervention studies, for example developing theoretically based interventions for increasing Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination uptake for young women (Ferrer et al., 2015).

The third core element involves examination of the *etiological and diagnostic correlates of health and illness*. This area probably includes the largest arena of health psychology research. It involves research examining such issues as risk factors for stroke (Lambiase et al., 2015) or the role of loneliness and social relations in influencing health in deprived communities (Kearns et al., 2015). Included here also is research examining psychological factors in illness, such as the influence of control on quality of life for people with chronic headache (Tenhunen and Elander, 2005), how illness perceptions relate to quality of life for patients with irritable bowel syndrome (De Gucht, 2015) or how support obtained through face-to-face and online self-help groups assists young people with cancer (Thompson et al., 2015).

The fourth core element involves concerns with *health care systems and health care policies*. This includes research that examines how health psychology can contribute to public health policy and initiatives (Hepworth, 2015) or more specific research exploring issues such as using behavioural insights to increase vaccination policy effectiveness (Betsch et al., 2015) or the nature of interactions with health professionals about a contested illness such as fibromyalgia (Durif-Bruckert et al., 2015). It also includes research into how community-based health psychology programmes can promote and facilitate social change (Campbell and Murray, 2004; Campbell and Cornish, 2014).

Of course, there is also research within health psychology that extends beyond these areas, examining issues such as whether video games can be good for your health (Cranwell et al., 2016), the role of the media in health (Boepple and Thompson, 2016), how perspectives on menopause have changed historically (Murtagh and Hepworth, 2005) and the relation of food to health (Chamberlain, 2004). An examination of the references cited in the previous paragraphs quickly reveals the diversity of research approaches and epistemological assumptions, underpinning the research undertaken in contemporary health psychology.

Within the field of health psychology, several different approaches to the study of health and illness have developed. Marks (2002) argues that four different approaches can be identified – clinical health psychology, public health psychology, community health psychology and critical health psychology – each operating in different settings, with different values, assumptions, objectives and research practices (see Table 26.1; and see Marks (2002) for a detailed discussion of these). In this chapter, our interest is more specifically in the research orientations taken under these approaches, which are relatively different from one another (see Table 26.1), and the reasons for these different research agendas.

An alternative classification of health psychology, based largely on the type of research approach, distinguishes between 'mainstream' health psychology and critical health psychology (e.g. Crossley, 2000). This distinction is particularly pertinent to a consideration of the differing epistemologies and research methodologies adopted and used within health psychology.

Mainstream health psychology takes a conventional 'scientific' approach to the field. It assumes that knowledge can be uncovered through traditional scientific research processes and that it is fixed, independent of the context in which it is found and of the methods used to reveal it. Mainstream health psychology focuses on measuring, predicting and changing health and illness behaviours, and seeks to discover the 'truth' about psychological factors and health. The approach draws on the biopsychosocial model and has developed a variety of social cognition models of health behaviour. It focuses strongly on the individual and assumes that people behave in rational, thoughtful and predictable ways. These assumptions and the use of traditional scientific methods serve to legitimate mainstream health psychology as a professional adjunct to biomedicine. This is the approach presented in most health psychology textbooks, such as Sarafino and Smith (2014) or Taylor (2011), and is the basis for most peer-reviewed research publications in health psychology.

Critical health psychology, in contrast, challenges many of the assumptions and practices of mainstream health psychology. The critical approach argues that people are complex, changing

Table 26.1 Characteristics of differing approaches to health psychology

	Approach to health psychology			
Research issue	*Clinical*	*Public*	*Community*	*Critical*
Theory	Biopsychosocial model: health and illness are a result of combined biological, psychological and social factors	No single theoretical frame: draws on public health promotion and prevention approaches to bring about health improvements	Social and economic model: invokes the interdependence of individuals and communities in developing change strategies for health	Analysis of society and the values, assumptions and practices of health professionals and those they aim to serve
Values	Increasing or maintaining the autonomy of individuals	Mapping the health of the public as basis for policy, health promotion and intervention	Creating or increasing autonomy of disadvantaged and oppressed groups through social action	Understanding the political nature of human existence, freedom of thought and compassion for others
Context for research	Patients in the health care system (e.g. hospitals, clinics, health centres, etc.)	Schools, work sites, media and population segments (e.g. youth, elderly, etc.)	Families, communities and other local populations within their social, cultural and historical contexts	Social structures, economies, government and commerce; sites where power and knowledge operate
Research methodology	Efficacy and effectiveness trials, quantitative and quasi-experimental methodologies	Epidemiological methods, large-scale trials, evaluation methodologies	Participatory action research; coalitions between researchers, practitioners and communities; multiple methodologies	Critical analysis combined with any of the methodologies of the other approaches
Quantitative and qualitative balance	Almost entirely quantitative, with some qualitative beginning to emerge	Mostly quantitative, but some limited qualitative where relevant	Mix of qualitative and quantitative, although frequently qualitative	Mix of qualitative and quantitative, although mostly qualitative

Source: Adapted and extended from Marks (2002)

and multifaceted, rather than fixed 'objects' that can be studied 'scientifically'. Critical health psychology generally assumes a social constructionist position on knowledge – that knowledge is variable and changing and is always a product of the historical, social and cultural context in which it is located. Critical health psychology seeks understanding and insight into, rather than prediction of, human conditions and practices, and it generally uses qualitative interpretative research methods, although is not restricted to these. More fundamentally, critical health psychology seeks to challenge assumptions, including its own, and is concerned to identify how forms of knowledge can empower or disenfranchise different people. This approach is represented in some research publications, and textbooks taking this perspective are beginning to emerge (Lyons and Chamberlain, 2006; Murray, 2014).

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: ITS PLACE IN HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

The development of health psychology did not occur independently of developments within the discipline of psychology and the broader field of health. The mainstream approach within

psychology in the 1970s, assuming positivism and the scientific study of behaviour, and emphasizing the rational individual, cognitive processes, fixed variables, measurement and statistical analysis, was transferred directly to the study of psychological issues in physical health. Connections between health, medicine and psychology have been proposed and examined for centuries, but these became more explicit with the development of biomedicine and psychology. Psychosomatic medicine, which considered particular health problems such as ulcers, asthma, migraine and arthritis to have psychological causes, developed in the 1930s and was strongly influenced by psychoanalytic theory. Behavioural medicine, drawing from the keen interest in behaviourism and the experimental analysis of behaviour in psychology, developed as an interdisciplinary approach to health issues in the 1970s. Mainstream health psychology has its roots in both of these developments, but differs from them in having a strongly psychological, rather than interdisciplinary focus and also in encompassing a broader range of issues within its research and theorizing (Sarafino and Smith, 2014). Liaison psychiatry, a specialized sub-discipline of psychiatry concerned with psychiatric problems experienced by patients in medical settings, also developed alongside health psychology. Again, mainstream health psychology can be differentiated from this approach by its broader remit of research and theory (French et al., 2010).

As health psychology developed, critical influences within psychology were brought into play. In particular, these related to challenges made about the directions and nature of social psychology (e.g. Parker, 1989), the rising influence of critical theory and post-structuralism on psychology (e.g. Sampson, 1978, 1983), the engagement with social constructionism (e.g. Harré and Secord, 1972; Gergen, 1985) and the increasing turn to language and discourse (e.g. Billig, 1982; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Antaki, 1988). These influences and directions percolated into other areas of psychology, including health psychology. As a consequence, some health psychologists began to consider alternative methodologies for addressing health-related questions. They also began to ask different questions about health issues, questions that required different methodologies and methods to provide such understandings. This led to a rise in the use of qualitative methods in health psychology.

However, prior to the formal rise of health psychology, some early studies by psychologists had demonstrated the value of qualitative methods in health research. An important early study was conducted in the USA by Stephenson (1963), who used Q methodology to explore popular images of health. Ten years later Herzlich's (1973) classic study of social representations of health and illness in France, based largely on semi-structured interviews, was published. This work built upon the earlier work on social representations of psychoanalysis conducted by Moscovici (1961), which used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. In the early days of health psychology in the 1980s there was evidence of an interest in qualitative methods. For example, Murray et al. (1988) published a qualitative study of smoking among young adults that adopted an approach based upon Harré and Secord's (1972) concept of account-making. Their aim was to explore the different meanings given to smoking through a critical analysis of accounts given in qualitative interviews with young smokers.

During the 1990s there was a noticeable surge in qualitative research activity in health psychology and this has increased in momentum since then. One of the first published research texts to take an unabashed qualitative approach to health issues was Stainton Rogers's *Explaining Health and Illness: An Exploration of Diversity* (1991). Others followed a few years later, including the influential text *Making Sense of Illness* by Radley (1994) and texts by Yardley (*Material Discourses of Health and Illness*, 1997), Murray and Chamberlain (*Qualitative Health Psychology: Theories and Methods*, 1999) and Crossley (*Rethinking Health Psychology*, 2000). Articles promoting the use of qualitative methods in health psychology also began to appear around this time (Stainton Rogers, 1996; Chamberlain, Stephens and Lyons, 1997; Murray, 1997a, 2000; Yardley, 2000; Willig, 2000) and the first special issue of a health psychology journal devoted to qualitative research appeared (Murray and Chamberlain, 1998). Interestingly, Rennie et al. (2002: 185, Table 5) identified two health psychology journals (*Journal of Health Psychology* and *Psychology and Health*) in their listing of the 32 psychology journals that had published five or more qualitative papers before 2000. In 1999 the first International Conference on Critical and Qualitative Approaches to Health Psychology was held in Canada at St John's, Newfoundland. This meeting attracted health psychologists from all over the world, reflecting the increasing interest in these issues and approaches, and led to the founding of the International Society of Critical Health Psychology (https://ischp.info/) two years later. This society continues to meet on a regular basis.

It is noticeable that this early work does not arise out of the USA, but is largely centred in the UK with contributions from the rest of Europe, Canada and Australasia. Kidd (2002), on identifying the paucity of qualitative research publications in selected APA journals, argues that there is a contradiction

between the publication strategies of these journals and the aspirations of researchers at large. Although publications in qualitative research are increasing, this was not found to be the case for fifteen APA journals where qualitative research could be appropriately published (*Health Psychology* was not included as one of these) (Kidd, 2002). For health psychology, this is reflected clearly in the recent series of papers published in a special section of the APA journal, *Health Psychology*, reviewing 25 years of progress in health psychology and considering the future of the field (see Smith and Suls, 2004). Amongst the eight papers in this feature, only one (Yali and Revenson, 2004: 150) makes any mention of qualitative research, noting briefly its potential value and suggesting that 'Health psychologists seeking to contextually anchor their research may want to consider using qualitative methods'. However, there is evidence of a push for change with the production of a special issue of *Health Psychology* on qualitative research by Gough and Deatrick (2015). It was noticeable that a large proportion of the articles published in this special issue were authored by researchers located outside the USA, confirming the continuing dominance of quantitative methods there.

In practice, many health psychologists have progressed far beyond merely considering the methods and are actively using various forms of qualitative research practice to investigate a wide range of questions – questions that are made amenable to investigation specifically through the use of such methodologies. These topics have central relevance for a psychology of health. Apart from the more obvious concerns to reveal participant understandings and social practices, qualitative research opens possibilities for examining issues of embodiment, including disfigurement, stigmatization and illness portrayal, issues of materiality such as poverty and socio-structural effects on health and illness, and issues of culture and location, including migration and marginalization.

Most research articles published in health psychology either identify or claim the use of a specific methodology for the research. In Table 26.2 we outline the major qualitative methodologies used in health psychology, narrative psychology, discursive psychology, critical discourse analysis and interpretative phenomenological analysis, along with an example of research from each approach. However, this listing does not do justice to the diversity of qualitatively-based practices in health psychology. First, there are other methods that are used less commonly, some of which are identified in Table 26.3 (grounded theory, phenomenological analysis, action research and critical ethnography).

Table 26.2 Qualitative methodologies commonly used in health psychology

Methodology	*Narrative psychology*	*Discursive psychology*	*Critical discourse analysis*	*Interpretative phenomenological analysis*
Description of use	Identifying the narrative content of social and personal accounts of illness	Identifying the function of talk and how it constructs objects (e.g. the doctor), positions, and rights	Identifying how knowledge and power are constructed, circulated and contested, and how practices are located in ideologies	Identifying in detail personal understandings of experience and interpreting them to provide an account of experience
Example paper	Smith et al. (2015) explored the use of narrative as a tool for disseminating knowledge to adults with spinal cord injury (SCI).	Bowleg et al. (2015) examined how Black heterosexual men construct safer sex and masculinity, and how they discursively positioned themselves in relation to conventional masculinity.	Reitmanova et al. (2015) analysed print media for discursive framing of immigrants' health, identifying the power and social injustice involved and invoked by health policies.	Finlay and Elander (2016) examined the experiences of people transitioning from pain management services to chronic pain support group attendance.
Core references	See Chapter 10	See Chapter 6	See Chapter 7	See Chapter 12

Table 26.3 Qualitative methodologies less commonly used in health psychology

Methodology	*Grounded theory*	*Phenomenological analysis*	*Action research*	*Critical ethnographic methodology*
Description of use	Identifying a local and specific theory of a phenomenon, usually focused on the process involved	Identifying the essential nature of experience	Identifying ways in which social change can be effected in partnership between researchers and people affected	Identifying, largely through participant methods, insights into the field of interest, and ways in which it may be changed or altered to improve health
Example paper	McKean et al. (2013) developed a model of process for how women understood breast reconstruction following surgery for breast cancer as contributing to their self-image.	Willig (2015) used object elicitation and hermeneutic phenomenology to gain insights into how people live with and understand their existence when they have advanced cancer.	Ingram et al. (2015) worked alongside key community informants to develop, implement and evaluate a project to improve access to primary health services for farmworkers.	Durocher et al. (2016) took a critical ethnographic approach using multiple data sources to understand how social and political practices shape discharge planning and rehabilitation practices for older adults.
Core references	See Chapter 14	See Chapter 11	See Chapter 4	See Chapter 3

Other methodologies, although relatively uncommon in health psychology, could be identified here, including case study (see Radley and Chamberlain, 2001), memory work (e.g. Nic Giolla Easpaig et al., 2014), biographical research (e.g. Radley, 1995; Zinn, 2005) and Q methodology (e.g. McParland et al., 2011). Second, some researchers use aspects of a specific methodology without using the complete practices specified for the methodology (e.g. Werner et al., 2004). Third, many research projects use more than one methodology (e.g. De Souza and Ciclitira, 2005; Gillies et al., 2005) and the practice of mixing qualitative methodologies is increasing. Fourth, other researchers, although clearly taking a qualitative orientation to their research, do not explicitly identify their methodology and it can be difficult to classify their methods into one particular methodological form (e.g. MacPhee, 2004; Radley, 2004). Regardless, the use of qualitative research in health psychology is clearly increasing, both in usage and complexity. That in turn gives rise to a range of issues and potential concerns about how and why it is used.

UNDERSTANDINGS AND TRANSFORMATIONS

Qualitative approaches provide a means to research a wide range of different issues in health psychology and to address some traditional issues in new ways that reveal the depth and complexities associated with health and illness. Qualitative research has been used to address very diverse issues. We have summarized them into four broad areas: to understand meanings and experiences of health and illness; to reveal contradictions and complexities in health and illness; to examine and expose social processes around health and illness; and to promote change within social contexts. We will discuss each of these areas, presenting specific examples of recent research to illustrate the application of qualitative research methods in these areas. It should be noted that these areas are not independent, but overlapping, and the illustrative studies discussed often reflect more than the issues under discussion.

Examining Experience

Much qualitative research in health psychology is oriented to understanding the experience of health and illness. It is conducted using a range of methodologies, with grounded theory, phenomenology and narrative as the most prominent. To a considerable extent this research uses methods of individual interviews and focus group discussions for data collection, but as these examples show, other methods can also be used.

Jørgensen and Fridlund (2016) examined behavioural processes involved in coping with

fast-track surgery for total hip replacement in order to identify the predominant ways of coping used by patients. They used grounded theory methodology with 14 patients who had undergone such surgery, and a multimodal approach using qualitative and quantitative data. Participants were selected in accordance with grounded theory principles of purposive and theoretical sampling, and data was collected through interviews and observations. The researchers also supplemented their qualitative data with a range of clinical and questionnaire information to profile the patients involved. They identified four predominant types of coping, with distinct physiological, cognitive, affective and psychosocial features. Patients used coping in order to restore their physical and psychosocial integrity, while striving to fulfil the expectations of the fast-track programme. Three of the coping strategies integrated with achieving the objectives of the fast-track programme, while the fourth, used by those patients who were most nervous, involved claiming the right to diverge from programme expectations.

In a rather different approach to understanding illness experience, Hardey (2002) looked at how illness stories are presented on the Internet. There are many forms and sources of illness narratives available through interviews, life histories, letters and diaries, popular books and television documentaries. Hardey chose the personal web page as his data source, using systematic search strategies of Internet content to identify web pages that were both personal and gave accounts of illness. He located 132 pages for analysis, which was conducted thematically. He also sent an open-ended email questionnaire to all web page authors who provided an email address and included their comments in the analysis. He found that the personal illness accounts were structured in four quite different ways. One was to present an account where authors explained their personal illness experience and its effects on themselves and others (my story and explanation). Another type involved the authors as experts on the illness, offering advice from their experience to others with similar conditions (my story and advice). A third type drew on the illness experience to promote a particular health regime or approach to coping with illness (my story and my solution). The fourth type involved authors drawing on their illness experience to recommend and supply health care products and treatments (my story and my products and services). These illustrate the diverse ways in which illness experience can be storied and used to different ends. As Hardey notes, these accounts document new forms of appropriation and representation of health and illness. Although the Internet appears to offer easy access to data, Hardey also notes a range of issues that complicate its use. It blurs the boundaries between the public and the private, it is dynamic and interactive, and it is in constant change and revision. There are also difficulties in analysing the rich use of colour, image and sound that may be included on web pages.

Revealing Contradiction and Complexity

Health and illness are complex and not easily captured in any single research study. Qualitative approaches to research in this field offer possibilities for making sense of the contradictions and complexities that are integral to the nature of health and illness, and to related processes of treatment, care and recovery.

Such issues are illustrated in a study by Conrad et al. (2016) who offer a general discussion of the variety of ways that the Internet has impacted on health and illness for people, illustrated with an analysis of coeliac disease on the Internet. The complexity and interconnectedness of Internet-related coeliac disease content is extensive. These include public Facebook pages promoted by organizations concerned with coeliac disease, pages offering information about the disease, medical commentaries on treatment, news articles about the disease, gluten-free products, and recipes and videos for gluten-free food. Posts on these pages can range from personal matters, such as how to talk to family members about screening to public announcements about new gluten-free products. Postings on public sites include questions and responses, which are available globally. Additionally, many sites carry accounts of personal experiences of the disease, covering issues of diagnosis, treatment and management. Advocacy and support groups for people with coeliac disease have also created Facebook pages to facilitate local connection, both online and offline, for coeliac sufferers. There are also many closed Facebook groups, not publically accessible, that enable sufferers to connect more personally and privately. Conrad et al. (2016) have argued that the Internet has been influential in transforming illness experience from being private to being more public. They base this on findings that the Internet has become an important source of information for patients, given the broad repository of patient experiences that it makes available, and it has accordingly facilitated communication and support for people affected by similar conditions, helping to shape advocacy movements and change doctor–patient relationships. They contend that

this has so many benefits for ill or disabled people that these interactive sites are here to stay.

In another study, Nichols et al. (2015) explored what parents do to take care of their children's health using focus group discussion and in-depth interviews. Their findings reveal how these activities, which they label as family health work, are shaped by a variety of interrelated factors. These include the extent of their knowledge about their local health system and their ability to navigate its associated institutional processes, their social and professional networks, educational levels, health literacy and the way they seek information, alongside other factors such as where they live in relation to where services are located and the emotional needs of the family. However, whether or not parents manage this family health work effectively depends considerably on the fit between what parents know about their children's health and the demands of the health care system and its orientation to diagnosis, treatment and care.

Social Processes, Subjectivity and Power

Qualitative research in health psychology is also concerned with achieving an understanding of social processes, such as medicalization (Conrad, 2013) and how subjectivities are constituted and power infused through such processes. Much of this research attempts to connect professional and lay understandings of health and illness with the political, historical and cultural context.

For example, Holt and Stephenson (2006) were concerned with the ways in which the 'psychologization' of HIV impacted on the lives of sufferers. Psychologization is concerned with the ways in which the discourses of psychology and associated disciplines (psychiatry, psychotherapy, psychoanalysis) permeate and influence understandings and practices. As Holt and Stephenson note these ways of understanding illness can be functional, leading sufferers to be more reflexive about their practices and to learn ways of coping and adjustment to their illness. However, psychologization can also have negative consequences, positioning affected people as responsible for their illness, accountable for their treatment and open to moral judgement about their lives. Politically, Holt and Stephenson argue, this meets the needs of neo-liberal democracies to ensure that citizens are autonomous and engaged in practices of self-regulation and self-management. Further, they argue that this is part of an historical shift that casts individuals as responsible for their own welfare and thereby downplays the role of social forces in producing health and illness.

Holt and Stephenson used memory work as their method (see Stephenson, 2005) to investigate how psychological discourse, HIV status and health were linked in accounts given by HIV-positive gay men of their lives and treatment. Small groups of men met on several occasions to discuss memories based on agreed cue topics such as side effects of drugs, social discrimination or feeling infectious. Holt and Stephenson (2006) found that these HIV-affected people did draw on psychological discourse and understandings, but they also expressed scepticism about this knowledge and reworked it into their accounts in ways that diverged from 'expert' accounts but which served their own needs. The findings showed how 'disobedient or irreverent readings' (Holt and Stephenson, 2006: 228) of psychological discourse could be used pragmatically to re-conceptualize the self and yet resist the disciplinary pressures of such discourse. They also recognized the potential dilemma raised by the use of such discourse, querying whether it could be used productively in community strategies to assist HIV-affected people and, at the same time, promote critical relationships to psychological expertise. They concluded that 'if psychological knowledge is to be utilized by people with HIV in ways that do not threaten social connectedness or a sense of community, then we need to continue to explore how it is taken up and reconfigured' (Holt and Stephenson, 2006: 229).

Social Action and Change

Qualitative researchers are increasingly exploring how their work can contribute to various forms of collective health action (Campbell and Murray, 2004; Campbell and Cornish, 2014). This often involves participatory action research (see Chapter 4) designed to work with individuals and communities to increase social and health awareness and to promote personal and social transformation. Participatory qualitative research connects with the long tradition of popular education, including the work of Paulo Freire (1972/1993) who argued that the goal of education should be both critical thinking and action. Using this methodology, the qualitative researcher moves from being an observer to being a facilitator of personal and social change. In participatory research the arts have often been a popular technique used to engage marginalized communities. The original work by Wang and colleagues in the development of photo novella (Wang and Burris, 1994) and photovoice (Wang and Burris, 1997) has been

adopted in many different settings (e.g. Williams et al., 2016). However, the practice of this and other forms of social action reveals a range of tensions.

Campbell (2003) conducted an extensive study of a community-based intervention designed to raise awareness of the transmission of HIV/AIDS in South Africa. This intervention adopted a peer education strategy in which local people in the community were trained in how to educate their peers on the risks involved in unprotected sex. The aim of this strategy was to get the residents to collectively take ownership of the problem, begin to act in health-enhancing ways and to take broader social action to promote healthier communities. However, Campbell identified five key obstacles in the implementation of this intervention: variable commitment by key players; inappropriate conceptual frameworks; lack of appropriate capacity; lack of organizational infrastructure; and lack of systems for ensuring stakeholder accountability. Campbell concluded that in order to be effective health action programmes need to build and support the commitment of key players, challenge the individualistic and biomedical model of disease transmission, ensure appropriate resources and infrastructure, and ensure the accountability of stakeholders.

Some community psychologists have recently drawn upon ideas from the new social activist movements and have argued that community interventions can contribute to 'prefigurative social change' (Campbell, 2014), which is defined as positive changes in social relations that prefigure a more equal social world. An example is the study by Guerlain and Campbell (2016) on the role of community gardens as an agent of social change. This study adopted a mixed qualitative method design involving interviews and group discussions with the gardeners, a photovoice project and extensive participant observation. They concluded that these community gardens created 'health-enabling social spaces' within which the community gardeners could begin to address other adversities that contributed to their material and symbolic deprivation. There is ongoing debate about the contribution of such prefigurative social change as a means of promoting broader social change (e.g. Leach, 2013; Farber, 2014).

Together these studies show how qualitative research enables health psychologists to both contribute to community health interventions but also to understand their limitations. These are discussed fully in Chapter 29. The very term community is contentious and has been co-opted by the neo-liberal establishment as a means of deflecting critique of growing social inequalities (Hancock et al., 2012). Here it is sufficient to emphasize that qualitative health psychologists engage critically with community interventions, not seeing them as a panacea for social injustice but rather as a tool to further expose the factors that contribute to ill-health and provide an opportunity for 'prefigurative social change'.

Health psychologists can use qualitative research in a range of social settings to play an activist role in promoting social change for health (Murray and Poland, 2006). This can range from the critique of political discourses that focus responsibility for ill health on the individual rather than on the structural inequalities in society to revealing the various forms of distress experienced by individuals and communities (e.g. Kagee et al., 2014). It can also involve psychologists in forms of social activism to challenge the neo-liberal orthodoxy, which contributes to ill health (https://psychagainstausterity.wordpress.com/).

ISSUES, CONCERNS AND DEVELOPMENTS

There are several issues that complicate the use of qualitative research in health psychology and limit its acceptance. The prominence of positivist approaches to research operates to sustain dominant paradigms and 'orthodox' beliefs about health and how health should be researched (Dean, 2004). This also means that many health psychologists are trained solely within that perspective and lack opportunities for qualitative research methods training and experience, although this is not unique to health psychology (see Rennie et al., 2000). This is often accentuated by a lack of expertise in qualitative research methods by those involved in the graduate training of psychologists (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003; Madill et al., 2005), and the tensions around introducing qualitative courses into the curriculum (see O'Neill, 2002; Stoppard, 2002). At the same time, much of the demand for learning about qualitative research comes from younger health psychologists who are dissatisfied with the status quo of research in psychology.

A related issue is the relationship between qualitative and quantitative methodologies. These are often placed in opposition and presented as separate components of courses or in separate methods courses (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003; Wiggins and Forrest, 2005) rather than being regarded as different but complementary methodologies used to address different types of questions. Viewing these approaches as separate and disparate is counterproductive; health psychology researchers need to be fluent in both approaches,

functioning competently as 'pragmatic researchers' (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2005), and be able to use appropriate forms of methodology in relevant ways. Such methodological pluralism functions to increase the competencies of researchers, ensures that issues of epistemology are addressed and helps to ensure more reflexive research practices (see Yanchar et al., 2005; Chamberlain, 2014).

Further, health psychologists taking up qualitative research methodologies often have difficulty in moving into more constructionist epistemologies (Stoppard, 2002; Walsh-Bowers, 2002; Navarro, 2005). The 'hazards of orthodoxy' (Stoppard, 2002) are not easily avoided and the legacy of the hypothetic–deductive approach, with its structured approach and strong focus on methods, variables and statistical analysis (Danziger, 1990; Brinkmann, 2015), has an ongoing influence on qualitative research practice (Yardley, 2000). This is evidenced in the restricted use of theorizing in health psychology research (see Stam, 2000; Demuth, 2015) and in researchers seeking the 'proper' way to undertake research, falling victim to methodolatry (see Chamberlain, 2000). Qualitative research in health psychology also frequently falls short of providing an in-depth interpretation of the data, offering little beyond a thematic analysis of the data content (see Parker, 2005; Chamberlain, 2011). Brinkmann (2015) offers a commentary on the perils facing qualitative research in psychology. He identifies two. The first is the MacDonaldization of qualitative research, invoking standardization and methodolatry, working against creative and innovative approaches to research, and marginalizing the newer visual, material and artistic approaches being developed in other disciplines. The second major peril he identifies is neo-positivism, involving a bureaucratic approach to research funding, publication, and what counts as evidence in an audit-driven, 'what works' culture. This has the effect of marginalizing qualitative research, which seeks to find 'what there is' or 'what might become' (Brinkmann, 2015: 165), and accordingly as failing to meet the gold standard demanded by such a culture. However, Brinkmann (2015) also argues that there is considerable optimism for the future of qualitative research within psychology. As noted earlier, there is an established and growing body of research, researchers, publications and conferences taking up and working with qualitative approaches, and Brinkmann argues that the field is now firmly established. He considers that there are two major positive tendencies aiding the development of qualitative research within psychology. The first is the proliferation of new forms of inquiry that take us beyond reliance on interviews and observations and into considerations of such issues as time, space, materiality and visuality. This is important because the world we seek to investigate and the subject matter we study is 'polyvocal, multimodal and often multi-sited' (Brinkmann, 2015: 169). The second potential lies in the transcendence of disciplinary boundaries where we seek to develop integrative approaches that seek to understand 'the human being as a cerebral, embodied, symbolic, social and technology-using creature *at the same time*' (2015: 173, italics in original).

In health psychology, there is a need to find ways to promote more engagement with these ways of working and to develop these potentialities further, whilst resisting the perils of neo-positivism and 'evidence-based research' and the pressure for standardization that goes with it. There is a need to ensure that researchers do not become entrenched in the specifics of methodology and that they feel free to develop and extend innovative methods for the exploration of psychological issues in health and illness.

In terms of future developments, we highlight three areas where qualitative research is currently expanding: the expansion of methods and pluralistic approaches to research; qualitative research synthesis; and art-based approaches to qualitative research. These are discussed next.

Expanding Methods and Pluralistic Approaches to Qualitative Research

Although qualitative research has expanded within health psychology the methods used have largely been confined to the use of interviews and focus groups as a means of data collection, especially in relation to the experience of illness. There has been little interest in alternative methods, including the visual and material. The focus on interviews has led to the neglect of the multiple other sources of information on people's experiences of illness such as documents including autobiographies, personal diaries and letters. Historically, these documents have been important sources of information for social psychologists (e.g. Allport, 1942) but have been largely neglected by health psychologists.

There are so many written accounts of the experience of illness that their study has acquired the term 'pathography' (Hawkins, 1998). These accounts have been examined by literary scholars and various social scientists but as yet have been rather neglected by health psychologists. As one exception, Murray (1997b) explored the content and structure of a selection of published accounts

of the experience of breast cancer. There is also opportunity to explore how illness is represented in fictional accounts. For example, Kaptein et al. (2015) explored the experience of living with systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) as represented in the novel *A Tribe of Women* by Hervé Bazin. The process of writing can also be part of a therapeutic intervention (Sools and Murray, 2015) and writing has been promoted as a way of helping people recover from trauma (Pennebaker, 2004). Letters and diaries are another exciting neglected source of data by qualitative researchers in health psychology. Willig (2009) details her analysis of a diary she kept about her experience of being diagnosed with malignant melanoma. This article is both an analysis of the experience recorded but also of the process of writing about the experience. The classic work by Marianne Paget (1993) provides a graphic insight into the experience of developing cancer. Her account is more of a diary than a fully formed autobiography reflecting her deteriorating health that eventually led to her death.

There is a wide range of other methods for data collection that are coming to be used more frequently and deserve more attention for enhancing data collections. These include using visual materials (Reavey, 2012), time-use diaries (Thompson and Oelker, 2013), photo- and video-elicitation methods (Harper, 2002; Creighton, Brussoni, Oliffe, and Han, 2015), mobile go-along interviews (Carpiano, 2009; Garcia et al., 2012), participatory mapping (Dennis et al., 2009), timelining (Sheridan et al., 2011) and the use of material objects (Sheridan and Chamberlain, 2011).

More recently there has also been a move to consider more pluralistic forms of qualitative research practice (Frost and Nolas, 2011). This involves a kind of theoretical and methodological triangulation contending that the use of one or more of multiple epistemological approaches, theoretical frameworks, methodologies, analyses or analysts can provide enhanced interpretation of the phenomena under investigation, given the complexity of human experience. Published work in this area has taken a range of forms. This has included multiple researchers carrying out the same analysis process independently on the same data set and comparing and synthesizing findings (King et al., 2008) to multiple researchers analysing the same data set using different methodologies (Frost et al., 2010). Working more theoretically, Scharff (2011) critically engages with performativity theory, discursive psychology, cultural psychoanalysis and affect theory to develop a pluralist methodological framework that allows for the integration of theory and analysis. Focusing more on the use of multiple methods, Chamberlain et al. (2011) argued that methodological pluralism has value for extending and deepening the scope of data, forcing an enhancement of reflexivity and also working to intensify the relationship between researchers and participants. Clarke et al. (2015) conducted a meta-study of ten articles that utilized more than one form of qualitative data analysis with a single data set to critically examine how theory was used, methods were applied and findings constructed. They concluded that pluralism has value and potential for contributing to knowledge production, particularly by drawing attention to the tensions arising from attempting to combine different perspectives and attending to differences that emerge and also through promoting a more reflexive critique of research practice. Although pluralism remains a developing field that poses demanding questions on researchers, it also offers promise for expanding qualitative research practice in a wide range of ways.

Qualitative Research Synthesis

As qualitative health research publications have become more evident, researchers have begun to develop approaches to synthesize qualitative findings in order that relevant research findings on a particular topic, phenomenon, experience or process can be integrated, summarized or assembled so that they may have more utility for future research directions, policy development or practice (Sandelowski, 2012). This parallels the range of processes for conducting meta-analysis of quantitative studies. There are a variety of proposed methods for conducting synthesis (see Barnett-Page and Thomas, 2009; Sandolowski, 2012), differing primarily in whether they seek to aggregate or re-interpret findings. Procedures using thematic analytic methods are quite common, presumably because these are easier to conduct. For example, King et al. (2015) carried out a thematic synthesis of 20 studies that examined the experience of and need for support for men with prostate cancer, which drew conclusions about the type of support most desired by these patients. Dohnhammar et al. (2016) synthesized 20 qualitative studies that explored lay people's studies beliefs, understandings and expectations of medicines and provided a summary of the main themes identified by such research. Such thematic studies usually provide a summarization of this sort and often do not lead to new insights or directions from the research. More interpretative approaches, such as meta-ethnography (Campbell et al., 2011), are considered to be the most common approach for synthesizing health research

(Hannes and Macaitis, 2012). These approaches seek to re-interpret and transcend the findings of individual study accounts and to provide new insights, interpretations and conceptual understandings and theories. For example, Rodríguez-Prat et al. (2016) conducted a systematic review and meta-ethnography of 21 studies that were concerned with the relationship between perceived dignity, autonomy and sense of control in patients at the end of life. They offer an interpreted account of the synthesized findings showing how dignity and autonomy are intertwined and strongly connected with patients' notions of personal identity. There is now a developing body of critical information examining qualitative synthesis processes and advocating for enhanced practices and quality standards in the conduct of such research (Barnett-Page and Thomas, 2009; Campbell et al., 2011; Gough et al., 2012; Hannes and Macaitis, 2012; Carroll and Booth, 2015; France et al., 2016). We can expect this area of qualitative synthesis to develop further in the future as more qualitative health research is conducted and published.

Arts and Qualitative Health Psychology

The turn to qualitative methods in psychology was initially to language but has now extended to other forms of representation, especially the visual but also the literary and the performative arts. Each of these has contributed to enhancing our understanding of popular understandings of health and illness and they have also been used as part of participatory interventions designed to enhance health and well-being.

Murray and Gray (2008) produced an edited collection on the connections between health psychology and the arts. This included articles on the use of exhibitions to convey the experience of homelessness; using performance to engage a marginalized community in campaigning for environmental change; involving indigenous youth in a video-making project designed to enhance health literacy; using music therapy for cancer support; and various other artistic techniques. This collection was followed by another devoted to health psychology and writing (Murray, 2009).

This turn to the arts has been further enhanced by the development of journals (e.g. *Arts and Health*), conferences (e.g. Culture, Health and Wellbeing International Conference, UK), textbooks and organizations. These events and activities are generally multidisciplinary and often practice-based rather than connecting with theoretical or methodological debates. The involvement of researchers and practitioners from various fields has opened up qualitative health psychologists to new ideas and methods. An example in the area of ageing research has been the coming together of researchers from different backgrounds to explore the use of various artistic forms to further understanding of the ageing process (e.g. Murray et al., 2014). These art forms included literature, community arts, art galleries, drama and photography. The different disciplinary background can bring tensions and the search for an integrating theoretical approach – in this case narrative, which has attracted interest across many social science disciplines. Other researchers have turned to other theoretical frameworks that have introduced new ideas into qualitative health psychology. For example, Haaken and O'Neill (2016) in their video project on the lives of migrant women turned to psychoanalytic theory as a guide to interpretation.

WHERE TO NOW?

In Table 26.1 we reviewed Marks's (2002) model of different approaches within health psychology – from the clinical to the critical. Although these approaches can be conceptualized as distinct, it is our contention that we need to seek linkages between them. As Kincheloe (2001, 2005) has argued, qualitative researchers need to become bricoleurs – researchers who can operate interdisciplinarily, innovate and combine methodological strategies as necessary in the context of the research. Such a perspective gives attention to the complexity of social processes and the lived world and ensures a thoughtful approach to research methodology. Kincheloe (2005: 324) argues that bricoleurs avoid methodolatry and consider research methods 'actively rather than passively, meaning that we actively construct our research methods from the tools at hand rather than passively receiving the "correct", universally applicable methodologies'. He further argues that 'bricoleurs come to understand research methods as also a technology of justification, meaning a way of defending what we assert we know and the process by which we know it' (Kincheloe, 2005: 325).

In many respects this is similar to arguments raised by Yanchar et al. (2005) who discuss the need for psychology to adopt a critical methodology. They see this as involving a de-emphasis on methods, promotion of methodological innovation and critical consideration of assumptions underlying research methods and practices. Kincheloe (2005) proposes that pursuing these directions will

enable research that is synergistic with issues of empowerment, disadvantage, social change and social justice – key issues for a psychology of health. Bricoleurs, he argues, 'attempt to remove knowledge production and its benefits from the control of elite groups … helping address the ideological and informational needs of marginalized groups and individuals' (Kincheloe, 2005: 344–5).

Hence another major challenge for health psychology is to use qualitative research to address social problems and produce change, to move qualitative work from research to social action in order 'to resist the multiple forces that threaten the health and survival of poor people today' (Mishler, 2004: 391). We can start with Mishler's (2005) suggestion that we expand the scope of our research from the individual to the broader context within which the individual is located and adopt Brinkmann's (2015: 171) argument that the phenomena we seek to investigate 'are constituted not just by processes in people's brains and bodies or by processes of social construction; not just by individuals' experiences or by discursive categories, but by all these things in complex and intertwined ways'. Through this move we may come to understand the anger and frustration of those who are marginalized and excluded, and consequently highlight the causes of ill-health within social injustices. This is not just rhetoric; researchers are already beginning to research health issues using appropriate qualitative methodologies in this way.

One illustration of this is the turn in qualitative health research to performance-based methodologies. Performance is an opportunity for engagement, a means by which the researcher can participate in the lived experience of the other and move from being an observer to a participant. Discussing this form of research, Denzin (2003: 4) distinguishes between performance as imitation or mimesis and performance as 'struggle, as intervention, as breaking and remaking, as kinesis, as socio-political act'. Within the health psychology literature there are some examples of this form of praxis. For instance, Gray and Sinding (2002) reworked narrative accounts of illness into dramatic performances. These performances, enacted before different audiences, have provoked debate and discussion about the nature of healthcare. Projects like these illustrate how health psychologists, in their practice, can move from interpreters of the situation to participating in its transformation.

A final issue is that of reflexivity, which is concerned with increasing the researchers' awareness of their own role in the research process and on the broader impact of their research. Although this issue has been discussed increasingly within critical and qualitative psychology (see Shaw, 2010; and also Chapters 7, 17, 32, this *Handbook*), it is still rather underdeveloped within health psychology with the pressure to offer immediate solutions to pressing health problems. As Chamberlain (2014) argues, attending more strongly to reflexivity at all levels of qualitative research will not only improve the quality of the research, but it can also promote a more critical engagement with the research process and the phenomenon investigated, as well as enhance the ethical stance of researchers and the creativity of the research undertaken. Although qualitative research has been offered as a means to understand everyday illness experience, there is a need to step back and to reflect upon the wider structural and symbolic forces that shape our understandings and our role in accepting or resisting these forces.

CONCLUSION

The use of qualitative methodologies and methods in health psychology is expanding rapidly, and we can expect this to continue in the future, both in the amount of research conducted and in the range of methodologies and methods used. The range of issues being addressed in health psychology through the use of qualitative research methods is also expanding considerably. The study of health is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary boundaries are breaking down. We are seeing the uptake of creative and innovative methods in health psychology research, and methodologies and methods initiated in other disciplines, such as ethnography, semiotics or visual analysis, are being increasingly embraced in current health psychology research. Theoretical ideas and research strategies are flowing into health psychology, not just from closely related fields like the sociology and anthropology of health, but also from more diverse disciplines like geography, cultural studies, humanities and the arts. These will all influence future directions and cross-pollinate research activities in health psychology, leading to the development of a new generation of health psychology bricoleurs. Although we are only at the beginning of these developments, the future of qualitative research in health psychology is both promising and assured.

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27

Developmental Psychology

Erica Burman

INTRODUCTION

Qualitative research in developmental psychology is no different in principle from other areas of psychology, although its specific focus highlights in stark form key issues for all psychological research. In particular, its preoccupations with conceptualising, measuring and evaluating change and with working with a vulnerable, low status population – with arguably limited and certainly hard-to-interpret repertoires of responses – have generated complex methodological and ethical debates. Indeed the precise relationships between the attributions of limited capacity and difficulty of interpretation constitute most of the conceptual and methodological literature. My aim here is to review more standard methodological treatments in developmental psychology and, beyond this, to indicate some more 'outlying' but innovative approaches that offer glimpses of the kinds of research that might usefully extend the current remit and approaches of developmental psychology. This involves taking a broad understanding of cross-disciplinary treatments of both method and childhood.

METHODOLOGICAL INVESTMENTS IN DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Developmental psychology, like the rest of psychology, is as much defined by its methodological procedures as its conceptual concerns. But since theory informs and inscribes all methods, we have to attend to the ways conceptual commitments structure and are structured by methodological designs, approaches and techniques. There are three key starting points for thinking about the role of methods in developmental psychology: (1) developmental psychology as method in psychology; (2) method as theory in developmental psychology; and (3) the constitutive relationship between technological developments and methodological approach.

Developmental Psychology as Method in Psychology

Within the history of the discipline, developmental psychology has typically been accorded a

particular methodological role, in the sense that questions about development are used to answer broader questions about the origin and nature of psychological processes. The recapitulationist assumption formulated by Haeckel that 'ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny' (i.e. that the development of the individual repeats the development of its species) meant that the study of child development became the arena for posing a whole range of questions that were largely unrelated to concerns about specific children's development or welfare; rather, from Locke to Rousseau (and if we include religious models of original sin or salvation, then much earlier), childhood was the arena for formulating, modelling and evaluating ideas of the subject and society that connect philosophy to political theory. Configurations of childhood methodologically structured and reflected wider concerns with the good (or bad) society, and also had methodological procedures as their strategy. Indeed 'catching them young' (and its variants in 'headstart' or 'surestart' schemes) remains a key social policy assumption within national and international policies because the child is understood as the methodological tool by which national and international development can be identified, organised and planned (Burman, 2017, in press).

Modern developmental psychology is largely conflated, for significant historical reasons, with both the domain of 'individual psychology' (via study of 'the child') and with the rise of psychological testing. Indeed, for significant historical reasons – to do with social policy imperatives of emerging nation states for tools to assess the capacities and behaviour of their populations – the history of 'individual psychology' (as with 'individual differences') is largely (but not entirely, as we shall see) the history of the development of psychometrics (Rose, 1985).

All this may seem obvious, but one of the precepts of interpretive analysis is that the obvious, the 'common sense', can carry potent sets of assumptions precisely by virtue of seeming innocuous (Haug, 1992; Parker, 1992). A key paradox is that despite concern over 'the' developing child there is often little focus on the particular circumstances surrounding that child. Note the singular here – indeed a key methodological intervention has been to acknowledge, via research, that children usually grow up with at least one other sibling – thus challenging the cosy dyadic model[1] (Munn, 1990). The focus is typically either on general epistemological questions (about the origin and development of 'knowledge' – as in Piaget's project) or on applied social policy imperatives to avoid stigmatised 'endpoints' of development (deviance, pathology, criminality, teenage pregnancy, etc.). The latter agenda gives rise to the well-known methodological flaw of retrospectively – and thereby selectively – researching the early experiences and backgrounds of groups that have already been identified as problematic. Through this circular chain of reasoning it ignores those whose adverse early experiences did not lead to such outcomes (Clarke and Clarke, 1976)[2]. Either way, the study of the child arises out of other debates or concerns, but not as a concern with the actual states and processes of how this child (or set of children) develops. A key effect of this individualist approach typically works to implicate families and especially (given prevailing gendered patterns of childcare) mothers as responsible for such outcomes, rather than socio-economic conditions or state policies.

Through the conjoint focus on developmental progress, the trope of the child therefore produces an elision between individual and national development, and correspondingly naturalises understandings of development. In this way developmental psychology has fulfilled a key role in the production of mainstream Anglo–US psychology's abstracted, asocial model of the subject, with class, gender and culture only appearing as variables to be grafted on to it (Burman, 2008a, 2017), 'casting its object of inquiry – "the child" – in a predetermined (a priori after all) image of a situationally indifferent, naturally developing biological organism' (Code, 2000: 235–6).

It is precisely the awareness of such conceptual and methodological limitations that have generated new interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary methodological approaches to the study of children and childhood that we will consider next.

Method As Theory in Developmental Psychology

All too often in psychology questions of how something can be measured have substituted for an adequate model of what it is that is deemed to have developed. Indeed 'methods' sections in developmental psychology textbooks are either absent because they are subsumed within theories or they offer only brief accounts of research designs. It is widely acknowledged that the most efficient and widely used design – the cross-sectional study – measures only static states documented at a particular time. Moreover, taking age as the dependent variable privileges this over individual and cultural differences such that generational (or cohort) differences are also ignored. Such concerns have preoccupied some developmental researchers so as to render it an area of

theory in itself, for example in proposing other designs that more adequately take account of the historically situated character of the emergence and development of activities and qualities (e.g. Baltes et al., 1980). Ancillary subdisciplines, such as cross-cultural research, similarly function as a site for the validation of generalised psychological models that usually rely almost entirely on quantitative forms of measurement (see Burman, 2007), and so are regularly cited as designs for developmental research. Developmental psychology and cross-cultural psychology in fact fulfil reciprocal functions as methodological devices of mutual legitimation[3].

Clearly theoretical assumptions (about the model of the psychological subject under investigation as much as the trajectory of its change under investigation) structure each design. All measures of development are indirect and inferential; they therefore provide a key site for the rehearsal of ideological presuppositions. In fact, the very terms of investigation carry cultural–political assumptions that constitute an important topic for study.

As commentators on models of economic development have long noted (Crush, 1995; Rahnema with Bawtree, 1997), the metaphors by which we describe development are shot through with ideological assumptions that both reflect and perpetuate power inequalities. Although change is usually understood as positive, 'development' is typically constituted as an unquestionable good with its absence understood as deficit (undeveloped) or inferiority (underdeveloped) (Sachs, 1992). The epithet 'overdeveloped', now in circulation within post-development and critical development debates, works as an intervention precisely because it invites reflection on the presumed superiority and linearity of Western models of economic development. Not only does this prompt reassessment of ecological, environmental and structural inequalities of development, but it also invites attention to who benefits and suffers from this (see Burman, 1995, 2005a, 2005b, 2008a; Crewe and Harrison, 2000).

Moreover, the equation of developmental psychology with individual development itself betrays how individualism relentlessly structures our models and methods:

> The tendency to assign personal responsibility for the successes and failures of development is an amalgam of the positivistic search for causes, of the older Western tradition of personal moral responsibility, and of the conviction that personal mastery and consequent personal responsibility are first among the goals of child-rearing. It is difficult to imagine an American child without a core commitment to the proposition that *someone* is responsible for what happens in development … The child – like the Pilgrim, the cowboy, and the detective on television – is invariably seen as a free-standing isolatable being who moves through development as a self-contained and complete individual. (Kessen, 1979: 819; emphasis in original)

Notwithstanding the broader crisis heralded by claims that modernity is in crisis – sometimes it is cast as 'the end of history' (Fukuyama, 1992) – developmental psychological assumptions structured into the concept of 'progress' remain largely uninterrogated. Similarly, the conflation of psychological with physical change within notions of 'growth' betrays not only the biological, but also the functionalist agendas that structured the emergence of psychology – and developmental psychology in particular (Harris, 1987). Feminist theory has in fact generated critical scrutiny of the metaphors of development to highlight the cultural masculinity structured into models through notions of 'mastery' (equating to 'competence') (Walkerdine, 1988), and the privileging of the cognitive over the affective (Broughton, 1988). Even the seemingly innocuous 'arrow' of time can be critiqued for its cultural masculinity (i.e. asocial individualism):

> The arrow metaphor expresses three contemporary explanations of developmental change: (1) biology, which launches movements; (2) an ideal solution to a cognitive task, which serves as the target for development; and (3) linearity, which ensures continuity of travel. Arrows describe linear thought and linear development in a universal child. Arrows are also, of course, typically associated with aggression, domination, imposition of a view, and penetration of an influence. An arrow expresses development as a push towards change, not as a force that simultaneously transforms and is transformed. Kofsky Scholnick (2000: 34)

Kofsky Scholnick elaborates more feminist-friendly relational metaphors such as friendship, conversation, apprenticeship and narrative that usher in more socially-based understandings of contexts for and of development.

Methodology–Technology Relations in the Construction of 'The Child'

Technological change is the third key influence on methods of study in developmental psychology. Just as the invention of photography enabled Gesell to formulate his charts for age norms in development in the early twentieth century, so

from the 1960s, video allowed detailed frame-by-frame analysis of infant–caregiver interaction. These transformed understandings of the interactional attunement of very young babies (Condon, 1977; Trevarthen, 1977) – central to the relational shift in psychoanalysis (see Stern, 1985) – while virtual imaging allowed investigation of perceptual abilities (Bower, 1966).

As we will see later, technological developments have fostered methods of promoting children's self-representations (using photography, video and now mobile phones), and now with the 'born digital' generation other varieties and textualities arise (visual and written), with corresponding imperatives and sanctions on parents (especially mothers) to regulate children's use and exposure to online material (Gordo López et al., 2015). Such methodological developments thereby become research topics in themselves, with the birth of the information revolution giving rise to new forms of communication, literacy and sociality – as well as offering spaces for culturally specific forms of childhood. Thus technology informs culture, and method becomes topic.

Overall, models of infancy have made a marked transition from attributions of lack (i.e. what the baby 'can't' do) to those of competence, as Stone et al.'s (1973) landmark collection indicated. This discourse of competence owes much to the technology that produces such rich descriptions of small children's expertise. But Kessen (1993) argued that locating previously undiscovered skills and qualities within the child serves other functions, in particular in warding off contemporary anxieties about the adequacy of the conditions in which we are rearing children:

> The assignment of cognitive capabilities to the new infant frees the baby of dependence on environmental – specifically cultural and parental – influences; his intellectual growth is safe regardless of variations in his surrounding context. Whether or not western culture is the epitome of historical evolution, whether or not American child-rearing patterns are optimal, the child contains shielded knowledge that will exist independently of his nation or handling … [P]art of the strength of a developmental psychology that stresses what the infant's tissue gives to his future lies in the freedom from responsibility it affords parents. Nor does the assignment of cognitive richness to the infant escape political implications; the new baby of current research is conservative, protected from the vagaries of an unpredictable environment, holding the truths steady in the winds of cultural change … The baby has become the guardian of stability in an uncertain life. (Kessen, 1993: 424–5)

Here theory and method remain integrally linked, invoked to cover the gaps in each. This 'full infant' (in Kessen's terms) 'may have been constructed to save us from the disorder of no longer having shared conceptual models, or even assured research procedures' (Kessen, 1993: 415).

A Brief History of Qualitative Methods in Developmental Psychology

Although debates about qualitative research are relatively recent in psychology, such approaches have a long presence in developmental psychology, albeit overshadowed by the more recent quantitative emphasis (see Box 27.1). Most textbooks discuss Darwin and Preyer's mid-nineteenth century diary studies of their own children as important conceptual precursors to the emergence of modern developmental psychology, but they rarely discuss the wider child study movement that these prompted (Riley, 1983; see also Shuttleworth, 2013). The longitudinal single or small sample case study remains a key and powerful paradigm within child language research.

The history of the case study in psychology also speaks to longstanding although now suppressed links with psychoanalysis, which was also reflected in how US methodological imperatives transformed Piaget's approach (see Burman, 1996a). Piaget was in fact closely involved with psychoanalysis[4] and considered there to be close links between the two disciplines (Piaget, 1919). The methodological approach on which he based his studies of children (most fully discussed in Piaget, 1929) was what he called the 'clinical method' (or later the 'critical examination'), which was a semi-structured interview designed to elicit the narrative structure and logical status of a child's belief system. Although in its original formulation Piaget's concerns were with questions of certainty rather than 'knowledge', and with the classification of differently structured forms of reasoning, their transformation through translation and popularisation across the Atlantic rendered this merely a question of whether and when children do or do not 'have' certain concepts. This question of concept acquisition or possession is a misreading of Piaget's conceptual framework, turning a qualitative investigation into a quantitative test (of 'conservation', for example), hence the longstanding hostility and refusal on the part of Genevan researchers even to debate with their US counterparts on the basis of incommensurable work produced through incompatible methodological paradigms[5]. On the basis

Box 27.1 (A history of) qualitative research into 'childhood'

Piaget (1919) The clinical method: semi-structured interviews designed to elicit the narrative structure and logical status of a child's belief system.

Hinde (1983) Observation (behavioural approach): detailed time- and event-sampled descriptions of children's activities and friendship groupings.

Vygotsky (1962) Cultural–historical approach: focus on what the learner can do with others ('zone of proximal development').

Rogoff (2003) Observation (children's everyday life model): focus on how cultural norms elaborated within specific communities facilitate and constrain children's developing capacities.

Alanen (1992) Cross-generational research: looks at systematic ways in which age coordinates and constrains social relationships ('generational order').

Newman and Holzman (1993) 'Tool and result' methodology: embeds activity within social and material conditions and focuses on 'performance'.

Trawick (1992) Anthropological methods: use of semi-structured interviews, participant observation and researcher reflexivity in order to investigate the everyday relationships, mundane practices and day-to-day struggles that structure children's beings.

Billington (1996) Textual analysis: analysis of the ways in which official records construct 'the child' and their consequences for children's lives.

James et al. (1998) Childhood studies approach: focus on childhood as a cultural arena and on child agency as elaborated within specific social practices and conditions.

Elias (2000) Historical analysis: study of the history of manners via analysis of manuals for the education and training of young people.

Rose (1985) Literary analysis: study of fictional representations in order to understand the child as cultural product and the role played by children's literature in this process. See also Lesnik-Oberstein (1998a, 2011).

Marshall and Woollett (2000) Visual self-representation: production of video diaries to facilitate young people's self-definition and self-exploration and to explore the role of culture and cultural identifications within this context.

Keller (2003) Parental ethno-theories: identification of parents' own theories of development and parenting, and their grounding in cultural and economic conditions. This has been developed further to research child-care practices cross-nationally (Burke and Duncan, 2015) and beyond this to constitute a new arena of parenting cultural studies (Lee et al., 2014).

Burman (1994, 1996c, 2013, 2016) Analysis of media representations of childhood: discursive analysis of advertisements in order to identify the range of subject positions around children and their relationship with social and cultural practices. See also Wells (2013) on representations of children in non-governmental organisation (NGO) campaigns, and Coundouriotis (2010) and Mastey (2016) on representations of child soldiers.

Further developments include:
Taylor (2013) Post-human approaches used to link critical historical analysis of the constitution of children's 'natures' with ecological and sustainability agendas.
Lesnik-Oberstein (2010) Queer theory and critiques of models of growing up in favour of 'growing sideways' (Stockton, 2009), and of different developmental pathways that celebrate rather than pathologize variation (O'Dell, 2015; O'Dell et al., in press).

of his methodological approach, Duveen (2000) heralds Piaget as one of the first ethnographers of childhood.

Although observational approaches were also clearly central to the child study movement, a further tradition was developed in the 1970s by Robert Hinde and his colleagues derived from comparative psychology and anthropology, in particular ethology. Analogous to animal studies, which do not rely on verbal accounts from participants, it applied behavioural approaches to the observation of groups of children (Hinde, 1983). This body of research tended to focus on middle childhood – including playground studies, with detailed time- and event-sampled descriptions of children's activities and friendship groupings.

It provided quantitative and qualitative descriptions of children's activities – although it was clearly more suited for particular kinds of contexts (such as schools).

A more recent development of these observational approaches is the 'children's everyday life' model that draws particularly on Vygotsky's cultural–historical model. Developed by Rogoff (see, for example, Rogoff, 2003) to research across diverse cultural contexts, with a focus on how cultural norms elaborated within specific communities facilitate and constrain the capacities children can display at a much more radical level that previously thought, the approach has been taken up particularly by Norwegian developmental researchers (e.g. Haavind, 1987, 2011; Solberg, 1990; Andenæs, 2011, 2012; Andenæs and Haavind, in press) to promote a different model of children's relations with their environments. Here the model of the child as a competent social actor is used to explore specific children's roles within families, at home and at school. For example, Solberg (1990) analyses children's contributions to household labour and their different orientations to being the primary 'homestayer' (when they are alone in the house). Observations are combined with diary accounts and questionnaires to arrive at comparisons of time spent at home and time spent doing different forms of housework structured according to age (between parents and children) and by gender (mothers, fathers, girls and boys). This approach offers a good illustration of how qualitative observations can be assembled into and combined with some relatively simple quantitative analysis to formalise general and generative conclusions.

BEYOND DIFFERENCE AS DEFICIT: FEMINIST AND INTERPRETATIVE RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENTAL RESEARCH

A central dilemma motivating qualitative research in psychology has particular relevance for developmental psychology: how to move beyond established patterns of representation, with their presences and absences, to inquire instead into what such patterns mean and why and how they arise. In relation to developmental psychology the challenge is to find ways of interpreting change that do not presuppose the value of change or difference; to move away from the interpretation of difference as deviation, deficit or inferiority that is structured into statistical evaluations. Qualitative researchers instead elaborate ways of inquiring into the meaning of these differences, as understood by those identified with such qualities or statuses, and in relation to the construction of such qualities within contemporary conditions.

Qualitative methods in their diverse forms have major relevance to developmental research. The move away from reliance on quantitative measurement, with its conception of variation allowing a notion of difference only as deviation or inferiority, has enabled more thoughtful exploration of meanings, processes and interpretations of children and childhoods – as held by those who theorise about children and childhoods, including children themselves. As we will see, different models of the subject (humanist, discursive, etc.) are inscribed in specific research strategies.

Alongside such 'bridging disciplines' of Vygotskyan, cultural and narrative psychology and social constructionism noted by Miller and Kofsky Scholnick (2000: 10), the critical importance of feminist research should be noted as a resource for innovation and intervention in qualitative methods in psychology, and developmental psychology in particular. The differentiations made between epistemology, methodology and method (Harding, 1991) have particularly clarified how theory pervades all methods so that no specific methodological device can be assumed to imply any particular moral–particular framework. It is therefore important not to essentialise methodological paradigms (qualitative or quantitative) by attributing particular moral–political qualities to them.

This point is important because feminist work has been influential but its feminist origins typically disavowed within discussions of qualitative methodology, critical psychology or social constructionism (see Burman, 1999a, 1999b, 2004). Yet feminist analyses are especially important in developmental psychology where women's and children's interests and positions are so often set against each other (Burman, 2008b; Burman and Stacey, 2010). Notwithstanding the emerging feminist engagement with developmental psychology (Miller and Kofsky Scholnick, 2000), the continuing reliance of much US feminist psychology on quantitative methods is reflected in Nagy Jacklin and McBride-Chang's (1991) discussion of the impact of feminist work on developmental psychology which, significantly, fails to mention anything about methodological paradigms or interventions.

This matter is of particular irony because debates in feminist research provide the most acute interpretive resources relevant for developmental research, namely an attention to the ways power enters into the conduct as well as interpretation of research. For example, they have exposed the

paternalism that can underlie the drive to conduct emancipatory research (whereby the very desire to 'give voice' to the disempowered paradoxically performs those very power relations through the presumption of the power to bestow them; Bhavnani, 1990), and how the claim to conduct egalitarian research always threatens to disguise the power relations always set up (although not in unidirectional ways) by research (Ribbens, 1989). In this sense feminist research builds on, but goes beyond, humanist approaches to qualitative research in psychology.

However, beyond even specific methodological contributions, feminist analyses of gender relations – as constitutive of identities, status and role – are fruitful resources for childhood researchers, including investigation of relations between gender and age. Researching with women and with children poses particular methodological challenges because both are associated with the 'private' domestic sphere. This has particular consequences for the assessment of women's and children's labour because household labour is necessary but usually not acknowledged as 'work'. Various feminist researchers of childhood have highlighted the urgency and analytic utility of addressing the complex intersections between gender and childhood. For example, Nieuwenhuys (1991, 2000a, 2000b, 2007) has highlighted how any adequate analysis of international child labour in relation to poverty not only has to take account of the invisibilised character of both women's and children's household work, but also how this remains the last key resource for poor families' survival. This has particular implications for girls who positioned as both children and incipient women do more – and also more unpaid – work and consequently have less access to schooling than their male counterparts. Nieuwenhuys argues that the International Labour Organisation campaign to abolish the 'worst forms child labour' is unhelpful if 'the child' is taken as gender-neutral, therefore failing to address how work is constituted differently across the public–private divide.

In terms of research design, the feminist sociologist Lena Alanen has extended analyses of gender as a social category to childhood to advocate for the notion of a 'generational order' structuring adult–child relations. Like gender, adult–child relations are asymmetrical and structured by the public–private divide:

> Childhood orders children into the 'private' world of home and family and out of the world of economy and politics. It also orders a child's place within the family, in relation to and in difference from its adult members. (Alanen, 1992: 65)

She advocates a new methodological paradigm for cross-generational research that can address the systematic effects of social categories such as gender alongside how age 'coordinates and constrains' social relationships, whose rules become identified most clearly when they are transgressed:

> The working of such a generational order becomes usually apparent when its rules are violated, when e.g. children work for wages instead of going to school or when they disregard their obligations to their parents as a family child by taking to autonomous living. Such instances begin to make visible a generational system in analogy to the gender system theorised in feminist analysis: a social order composed of, but also constraining and coordinating, children's relations in the social world in a systematic way. (Alanen, 1992: 65)

It is important to note that this approach fits well with an attention to children's agency. As with feminist analysis, the project here is to formulate an epistemological and methodological approach that investigates the possibilities and limits for actions in contexts of specific social constraints. This account is also sensitive to the multidirectional character of power relations; children – like women – are positioned here as neither victims nor as 'free' agents, as Code (2000: 235; emphasis in original) also highlights:

> Children – real, embodied, feeling and feeding children – are born into complexes of familial–socialcultural–affective meanings and expectations, and studied within disciplinary expectations, that shape, *even if they do not determine*, who the child can be, what she can know, how she can respond and negotiate with and within the material and affective circumstances in which she participates in constructing her becoming-adult subjectivity.

In recent years, the development of new conceptual frameworks, specifically queer theory and post-humanism, have been applied to inform childhood and developmental research. In particular, Taylor (2013) draws on post-human approaches to link critical historical analysis of the constitution of children's 'natures' via early educational theorists such as Froebel and Pestalozzi with ecological and sustainability agendas. Crucially, such analyses not only critically interrogate the (gendered and cultural) conditions for qualifying as fully human or as fully developed but they also link these to decolonisation as well as ecological education. The second strand, using queer theory, offers a similar critique of the trajectory of

development as recapitulating Western, middle-class models that are also culturally masculine and heteronormative. Queer theorists have also claimed that the role of the figure of the child in models of the future presumes reproductive heteronormativity, which then functions as its guarantor (Edelman, 2004). Although such analyses themselves are hotly debated for the ways they configure the relations between feminisms and childhoods (Lesnik-Oberstein, 2010) in particular, the general move to critique models of 'growing up' in favour of 'growing sideways' (Stockton, 2009) is useful. Further work is now applying such arguments to highlight different developmental pathways that celebrate rather than pathologise variation (O'Dell, 2015; O'Dell et al., in press).

Specific Methodological Problems Posed By Developmental Psychology

It is a moot question whether, why and to what extent the challenges posed by researching with and about children are different in kind from researching with other populations – a question that is precisely at issue in much cross-disciplinary debate (see later). Formally speaking, childhood is a difficult-to-research area because it is relationally defined, transient and asymmetrical. Two key methodological issues, as we shall see, also pose core theoretical questions.

What is the Unit of Development?

Although developmental psychology technically could be concerned with investigating the development of any psychological process (and still sometimes is within discussions of skills or qualities), more typically it makes the individualist move to map and be mapped onto child development. The methodological decision about the unit of measurement for developmental psychological research therefore has profound theoretical consequences, as we have already seen (and we have not yet even discussed competing definitions of what a 'child' is). However, not all models have started from this asocial, individualist point. The famous assertion by the psychoanalyst Winnicott (1947/1964: 88) that 'there is no such thing as a baby' drew attention to how psychological development begins with the (m)other–child couple. That is, it is impossible to conceptualise, let alone engage with a baby without also addressing or presuming its caregiving context. Although as Riley (1983) points out this analytical and methodological point does not necessarily ward off abstraction from the social, it is certainly a move in the right direction. Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1979) much-cited 'ecological model' further embeds the mother–child unit within ever-widening familial, social, cultural and environmental systems. This key point has been overlooked by international child development policy where appropriations of Bronfenbrenner's model have significantly reverted to the individualist position and amended it to position the child alone at its centre (see Burman, 1996b).

However, although individualist approaches clearly remain very influential, other methodological and interpretive resources are receiving more attention, in particular those influenced by Vygotsky's cultural–historical approach (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978; Holzman, 2006; Vianna and Stetsenko, 2006; González Rey, 2009, 2011, 2014, 2015). In this case, it is what the learner can do with others rather than (as in individualist approaches) stripped of support that is deemed most important as 'the zone of proximal development'. This methodological intervention is theoretical, with notions of 'scaffolding' now central to models of teaching. This 'scaffolding' is simultaneously interpersonal, cultural–historical and physical–biological; it can be in the form of talk as narrative frames holding and inducting children in language (Bruner, 1983, 1990) or (as particularly elaborated within Northern and Eastern European readings of Soviet psychology) activity systems (Langemeyer and Nissen, 2005). Development is not the unfolding of some inner essence or quality but, according to some new readings of Vygotsky that focus on the notion of subjectivity, rather in the generation of new configurations that both arise from and produce specific (social and psychological) change (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978; González Rey, 2009, 2014, 2015).

Vygotsky (1978: 65; emphasis in original) emphasised the absolutely intertwined, dialectical character of method and theory, and method as theory:

> *The search for method becomes one of the most important problems of the entire enterprise of understanding the uniquely human forms of psychological activity. In this case, the method is simultaneously prerequisite and product, the tool and result of the study.*

Newman and Holzman (1993) in particular took up this 'tool and result' methodology as an explicit approach that counters (what they call) mentalism and dualism, and embeds activity within social and material conditions. They further developed this methodology as a theory for

the promotion of developmental (in their terms revolutionary) change in their focus on 'performance'. This focus departs from deterministic approaches that privilege repetition over innovation. They also extend the approach to Vygotsky's ideas beyond educational applications to therapy. Here they counter the more conservative focus of psychoanalytic approaches on the 'compulsion to repeat' by highlighting as a therapeutic tool (and result) how every action and interaction necessarily involves novel features and correspondingly new learning opportunities and outcomes (see also Newman and Holzman, 1997; Holzman, 1999, 2006). González Rey et al. (in press) also applies these new readings of Vygotsky to mental health contexts.

We Have All Been Children

A second key methodological issue posed by researching around children and childhoods is that we have all been children and experienced some kind of childhood. This perhaps makes developmental research almost unique in that in most cases the researchers are no longer members of the group or social category that they are researching, although they once were. In this sense we are neither ethnographic 'natives' nor absolute 'outsiders'. How we recall or imagine our childhoods and early experiences is clearly important in structuring the models and topics, as well as the process, of developmental research. How can we avoid presuming childhood as a domain already known, imposing our own histories and so occluding and colonising children's alterity? Equally, how can we attend to a child without treating its unintelligibility as something to be controlled, assimilated (as either deficit or deviance) or romanticised?

We should not underestimate the power of such desires and responses. Although experimental research attempts to eschew subjectivity via its statistical tests and procedures, qualitative researchers acknowledge that their standpoint, history and preoccupations are always present. It is incumbent on us as researchers to address the ways our prior commitments about children and childhoods may enter into the selection, conduct and interpretation of work with children, otherwise we risk ignoring the actual condition of children and childhoods in favour of other – personal or social – agendas. Children who deviate from dominant conceptions of what children 'should' be and do – for example, children who work, who have sex or who are violent – are typically expelled from the category of childhood and rendered monstrous rather than such issues prompting re-evaluating of our understandings of childhood, which would seem more appropriate. The vilification and demonisation of the two Liverpool boys who murdered two-year-old Jamie Bulger in 1993 illustrated how deeply childhood is connected with prevailing idealisations of human nature[6].

Not only are we frightened of what children can do and of acknowledging what it means to us that 'even children' can do such things, but we are also frightened of engaging with children's own fear. Rowe (2005) presents an analysis of attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD) as arising through the failure of adults to be able to tolerate children's anxieties and insecurities because they highlight their own. The move to diagnosis and medication arises from the mismanaged struggles over our own feelings – as well as the increasing power of the pharmaceutical industry

Commitments to children's innocence, protection or autonomy, or proposals addressing child welfare or neglect inevitably evoke reference to our own childhoods, whether as lived or as we would have wished them to have been (Burman, 2003). Various strategies to address this have been put forward by researchers. Psychoanalytic psychotherapy trainings include at least year-long child observations not only to ensure that trainees gain intimate knowledge of developmental trajectories, but also to facilitate exploration of the trainees' responses and identifications: 'to see what is there to be seen and not to look for what they think should be there' (Reid, 1997: 1; see also Miller et al., 1989). As Reid (1997: 4) points out:

> To observe in this way is like having scales removed from one's eyes – exciting and terrifying at the same time. It allows for the possibility of generating new ideas and hypotheses, rather than looking for evidence to substantiate existing theories. It is an enormous shock for any observer to discover how little we really see, in ordinary situations … for any professional working in the caring professions, the capacity for close and detailed observations (called upon in many different professional settings) makes us more effective in the service of our clients, pupils and patients.

Walkerdine (1997) explicitly advocates drawing on autobiography, including fantasy, as a resource for investigating the meanings and investments in gendered childhoods. Using a more explicitly psychoanalytic framework, Marks (1995) analyses how her identifications with the children within the education case conferences she was researching entered into her impressions and interpretations. Reflection upon her 'countertransferential' responses not only helped her to

disentangle her own history and preoccupations from those of her participants, but also became an added resource for generating interpretations of other professionals' responses and dilemmas. In both these accounts, biographical material is situated within axes of gender and class relations and so is more than, rather then merely, 'personal'.

These issues become more stark in contexts of intercultural exploration. In her anthropological study of sacred texts and household life in Tamil Nadu, Trawick (1992: xvii) explicitly espouses the 'boundless, ragged and plural' as methodological principles:

> One advantage of taking plurality as the way things are is that it makes us realise that the ethnographic situation (confrontation between 'fieldworker' and 'native') is not really all that strange, and it may make us more comfortable about focusing on that situation for what it is and playing it as it lays … We may not feel so inclined to pretend in our monographs that we don't exist. We may be able to act upon the faith that 'culture' is created only in the confrontation between cultures, as 'self' is created only in the confrontation between selves. (Trawick, 1992: xix)

Although Trawick includes a description (in a 'methodology' section) of the range of methodological devices she used (including semi-structured interviews, participant observation, etc.), she also writes of other aspects of the research process, in particular the importance of having to recognise that she was no longer in control of the project. This is a key feature of qualitative research because when the conditions for and practice of research are explicitly negotiated with participants we have to be able to cope with the unexpected:

> Learning a culture, like learning a language, is largely an unconscious process, which means that one cannot control it. Plain waiting, listening and hoping seem to be the most useful things one can do most of the time. (Trawick, 1992: 50–1)

Trawick documents how she came to appreciate that her study of Tamil sacred poetry was actually bound to, and played out within, the household life and activity in which she was participating. Moreover, the central concepts she was investigating (of love, conflict, loyalty and hierarchy) were present within the everyday relationships between the adults, and the adults and children around her. Reading her ethnography as a study of children and childhoods is instructive not only because she brings the reader face-to-face with his or her own positions and identifications, but also because we cannot learn about the children without also learning about specific and mundane cultural practices of food preparation, kinship relations and day-to-day struggles that structure their lives and relationships, their very beings. Thus, her account is not only a tale of orientalist admiration alongside grinding worry about child malnutrition, including the struggle to curb a Western impulse to intervene and 'know best' (although it is also that); above all, Trawick's account challenges and exposes what is at stake in the comfortable abstraction of childhood.

THE 'VALUES' PROBLEM

We have already noted contests and investments structuring how development is described and evaluated, and indeed whether it is considered desirable. Here I will address three key debates concerning major 'value issues' prompted by research with and about children. These are: children's trustworthiness as informants; the question of who speaks for children; and 'ethics'.

Children's Trustworthiness as Research Informants

This question is typically cast as a debate over 'reliability', generated in particular by abuse investigations and fuelled by false/recovered memory debates. A key difficulty in the psychological research is that the process of determining children's reliability threatens to recapitulate the very difficulties it sets out to investigate in terms of attempting to manipulate memorial accounts (Burman, 1997). Here the quantitative research has at least demonstrated that adults can, under some conditions, be susceptible to the same kinds of influences and effects noted in relation to children (e.g. Poole and White, 1991). This poses the question of what exactly marks the difference (if any) between adults and children – is it a question of competence, or confidence and sense of social power? (see also Burman, 2016a).

Motzkau (2005) wryly highlights the logical circularity structuring the 'suggestibility' debate, which in the end always returns to the evaluator's own commitments and predilections (about the credibility of children and how each particular child 'fits' in relation to his or her view of this). In turn Motzkau suggests that this realisation generates so much discomfort on the part of the evaluators, whether judges, psychologists or social workers, that they enter another round of the circle.

Who Speaks for the Child?

Although the politics of representation is a constant preoccupation for qualitative researchers, this takes a particularly acute and practical form in relation to research with children where questions of competence become confounded with those of status (Burman, 1992). The ethical requirement for 'informed consent' clearly recapitulates most developmental questions: how do we differentiate consent from compliance? Are practices that reduce notions of informed consent to assent or even dissent ethically acceptable, even more suited to children, or do they position children as having lesser rights (Leikin, 1983; Baines, 2012)? It is instructive to ask how the rights endowed by research practice confirm or transgress typical norms around adult–child relations, which often rely upon some degree of persuasion or coercion – in the name of enlistment or even 'scaffolding' (David, Edwards and Alldred, 2001; Gillies and Alldred, 2002).

It is a matter of some concern that as recently as 2009 psychologists were documented as having only a limited understanding of the relevance of children's rights to their practices (Powell and Smith, 2009). However, amid general calls to attend to children's rights to be 'properly researched' (Beazley et al., 2009), some approaches more generally focus on documenting children's accounts and, where possible, would seek to solicit representation via children (seen especially in relation to consultation over the development of child rights policies) (Driscoll, 2012). Others prioritise facilitating adults to advocate for the child (a position sometimes adopted by educational psychologists (Billington, 2000, 2006; Billington and Pomerantz, 2003). However, there are now calls to go beyond mere consultation or even participation to consider children's protagonism and citizenship rights (Larkins et al., 2015; Arce, 2015). This also includes children's communication rights that extend not only to questions of access but also to inform and shape communication technologies (Enghel, 2014).

Nevertheless, there remain tensions between protection and participation agendas. Within typical ethics procedures there are official requirements to gain adult permission for any research intervention involving children, either from parents/guardians or from teachers (depending on the nature and, more typically, the setting for the intervention). These tensions surrounding adult permission/protection versus child rights take on a particularly stark form in relation to matters involving the child's body – whether of consent to surgery (Alderson, 2002) or access to contraception (Hayden, 2002). They also map onto disciplinary differences and intradisciplinary debates (e.g. between structural and relational sociologies of childhood, for example), which are reflected in different research strategies: research by children, with children, about children or about representations of children and childhoods (see also Burman and Maclure, 2011; Lesnik-Oberstein, 1998b, 2011).

Perhaps one of the key contributions of qualitative research is to be able to enquire into and interpret absences when children are not present or included in their representation (see Davidge, 2016, in relation to the elusive character of 'pupil voice'). Some such consideration is now even being extended to the rights of pre-verbal infants participating in developmental psychological studies, for example on attachment (Mudaly, 2015). In terms of general educational and social care practices, children are often (literally) absent from multidisciplinary case conferences, which are supposedly collaborative decision-making arenas whose conclusions are usually of material relevance to children's lives. The frequent fact of children's (and often also parents') literal absence of self-representation in this arena may well speak volumes about the extent to which they regard this process as actually involving them in any meaningful way (see Marks, 1996; Burman, 1996c; Gallagher, 2008).

Beyond this, it is possible to trace the textual construction of the child via analysis of official records and the contests played out within these. Billington (1996, 2000) offers a close analysis of the subtle transformations and substitutions between the 'statement' of special educational needs he submitted and the version finally adopted by the local education authority. He traces the origins and insertions of particular phrases transposed from different professionals' reports made at much earlier points in the child's educational career and analyses how these worked to change his recommendations against diagnosis and segregation.

'Ethics'

Major ethical issues are posed by researching with and about children (not least – but sometimes forgotten – the issues posed for adults in their engagement with children and childhoods as real or remembered). There is now a vast apparatus of legislation surrounding children such that any intervention is accompanied by industries of checklists, policies and committees seeking to minimise harm and ensure informed consent. But it is important that this bureaucracy does not

evacuate the genuinely critical thinking that motivated such procedures. Ethical practice is a process, not an absolute state. There is a danger that researchers imagine that ethical issues are resolved by the successful negotiation of the paperwork. But although they should be anticipated, not all ethical dilemmas can be resolved in advance. A genuinely consultative and relational approach cannot specify all eventualities.

Clearly the inequality of the adult–child research relationship imposes some limits on levels of consultation and relationship. But if we are not merely either to pre-empt or to re-state all the problems composing the topic of developmental psychology in attempting to characterise ethical research relationships with and about children, we should perhaps take as a guiding principle that all research safeguards applying to adults should be considered applicable to children, with possible extra ones surrounding clarity of information and reflection on possible consequences; that is adopting as a methodological principle a theoretical position that goes beyond the 'special' status of the child. Instead, the analytical position that children imply and are implicated in relationships with others (including determining – as well as being determined by – the positions of mothers, fathers, teachers, professionals, etc.) also extends to an understanding of ethics. Ethical practice is not a part of the research process as an additional or separable element, but is the research process.

Ethical concerns expose the wider social investments developmental psychological discourses can inadvertently support. Alongside all the focus on child protection (and its struggle with more libertarian approaches) we might ask: is protectionism winning in an era of defensive practice and 'risk'? Protecting children can function as a way of pre-empting answers/silencing children/closing down questions (because parents/guardians are required to be present) (see also Stainton Rogers and Stainton Rogers, 1992; McLaughlin, 2012). More generally, the flow of the paradigm of abuse between the social and the familial seems to involve the projection of societal anxieties about personal, environmental and national safety onto children. This dynamic has now extended the discourse of 'grooming' from child sexual exploitation – via its gendered associations, perhaps, to political extremism – a shift that not only threatens to limit attention to sexual exploitation but also individualises and racialises these societal concerns. It has been suggested that the undermining of parental authority reflected in current child rights legislation arises from a model of society that is disillusioned and disempowered, and thereby positioned as in need of support from professional experts (Pupavac, 2002). In a context where the global 'war against terror' comes to be reflected in the insecurity of personal and familial relations, does this herald a return to new, but less confident, individualism that is all the more intent on regulating children, and some children and families more than others? In terms of international programmes, Poretti et al. (2014) highlight how the focus on victimhood in recent UNICEF policies has, paradoxically, worked to produce less specific and attainable goals. More locally, Moss and Petrie (2002) point out that such wider crises appear to enter into our models of services such that – especially in the UK – we have come to think of services for children, with children positioned as passive consumers in need of being contained and protected, instead of creating spaces for children to explore and interact with each other and with others. This configuration sits in some tension with other contemporary currents of 'active citizenship' associated with the neoliberal turn in state policies that predicate welfare entitlements on economic contributions and productivity (Millei and Joronen, 2016).

DISCIPLINING CHILDHOOD

Although psychology is typically rather parochial and inward-looking in its debates and resources, qualitative methods have wide cross-disciplinary connections. Developmental psychology – so often constituted as child development – has many intersections with other disciplines. Although often dismissed as merely providing a deficit model of children, developmental psychologists claim to investigate what is often presumed or ignored: what it is that develops or changes between children and adults. Nevertheless, there are many useful research and analytical strategies offered by other disciplines, in particular in relativising, or specifically situating, psychological knowledge claims.

Childhood studies, largely formulated from within sociology, portray childhood as a social category. Its model of the child as competent social actor emphasises the importance of the child as researcher or co-researcher, with a particular focus on child agency as elaborated within specific social practices and conditions (James et al., 1998). As Alanen (2003: 42) noted of generational relations: 'the socially determined source of individuals' agency in their capacity as children is therefore to be found by investigating the particular social organisation of generational relations existing in the society under study'.

Overlapping in methodology somewhat, anthropology invites exploration of cultural perspectives

on children and childhoods. Is childhood another culture? Such questions go in two directions: one concerns how the settings and approaches surrounding children constitute particular cultural environments worthy of study. Thus nurseries, schools, toys and games become cultural sites for investigation that tell us about the practices and positions elaborated for participants[7]. The second trend analyses how children in different contexts live different childhoods (Reynolds et al., 2006; Nieuwenhuys, 2008). Both approaches understand childhood as a cultural construct – a position that has powerful consequences for developmental psychologists' predilections towards naturalised, universal explanations (see Burman, 2008a, 2008b). I have already shown how discussions of working children, for example, offer key challenges to dominant conceptions of modern Western childhood as a period of innocence, play and freedom from responsibilities. Such work is methodologically important in revealing the limits of developmental psychological knowledge and its cultural presumptions. Similarly, the study of child soldiers and child-headed households are both urgent and important in themselves at the level of policy and practice, but they also prompt re-evaluation of the meanings and expectations surrounding dominant notions of childhood (see Coundouriotis, 2010; Mastey, 2016). An anthropological approach works with a model of the child as informant; that is, as expert on their own culture capable of alerting the researcher to salient aspects of its rules.

Historical treatments of childhood are also vital in attending to variations of and conditions for understandings of children and childhood. These include far-reaching debates over the status of childhood as a historically specific construct emerging in the modern period (Aries, 1962), while Elias's (2000) analysis of the history of manners devotes especial attention to manuals for the education and training of young people as key sources to identify social norms. Methodological debates focus on the interpretation of sources, for example Pollack (1983) disputed Aries's claims of lesser affective involvement on the part of parents on the basis of pictorial representations using analysis of other kinds of (written) historical records.

A further key methodological point emerges from attention to the selectivity of records. Since children, like other most relatively powerless groups, do not typically author the kinds of records that are preserved, children's political involvement gets written out of history. For example, it is impossible to evaluate the role of children and young people in the protests against exploitative conditions in the early European factories because age was simply not recorded (de Wilde, 2000). The role of children as 'freedom fighters' within the struggle against apartheid in South Africa is rapidly being forgotten (Seekings, 1993; Marks, 2001).

Perhaps most significant for evaluating the status of developmental psychology is historical research that investigates the interwoven character of constructions of childhood with the emergence of specific understandings of human nature. Steedman (1995) traces the historical and cultural conditions by which 'the child' became the signifier of interiority, a trope now so structured within contemporary Western culture that it is difficult to even to reflect upon it as such. However, the child as personification of the inner self owes its origins to the emerging theories of science (including cellular development), psychoanalysis and popular culture from the eighteenth century onwards, as well as broader social shifts in the organisation of family and labour via industrialisation. It is such attention to questions of culture and history as well as philosophy and politics that has enabled the formulation of post-human approaches to developmental psychology and education (Taylor, 2013; Burman, in press c).

The question of sources ties historical work to literary analysis. Here, once again we have a model of the child as cultural product, but with an attention to the literary forms and the relations structuring their production and reception. A key relevant methodological intervention is that fictional representations can be as analytically important as any 'real' historical record (Lesnik-Oberstein, 1998b). Indeed, that idealised representations can be constitutive as well as reflective of children and childhoods is well illustrated by J. Rose's (1984, 1985) analysis of how the preparation of Peter Pan for distribution as a school text in early twentieth-century England was explicitly oriented to creating and organising age and class differences, as reflected in the regulation of its form, narrative voice and lexical complexity. Here, particular ideologies of childhood and child development entered into the forms of language deemed appropriate for children.

Via analysis of educational policy documents, Jacqueline Rose traces how particular conceptions of language teaching (derived from emerging models of childhood as closer to nature; Singer, 1992) informed the selection and abridging of literature for schools:

> The language of the elementary school child was to be natural – which meant a vocabulary based on concrete objects and written composition constructed on the basis of speech … It meant literature based on physical actions and on facts

> which could be added to the child's stock of information. (1985: 94)

This example indicates a clear illustration of the circularity between the cultural representation of and the children's actual development because children's lives are shaped by the cultural conditions to which they have been exposed. As Lesnik-Oberstein (1998b) points out, unreflective accounts of children's literature and theories of child development play a merry-go-round game of mutual citation and legitimation. In addition, Rose's account is methodologically informative because she shows how ideas about language are constructed according to contingent social agendas, in this case class (indicated by 'cultured', Latinate-inflected prose):

> As educational policy at the turn of the century makes clear, the most natural of languages only has a meaning against that most stylistic form against which it is set. There is no natural language (least of all *for* children): there is elementary English and cultured prose, evoking each other, confronting each other, or else coming together as here [in Barrie's text] only to be carefully orchestrated apart. (J. Rose, 1985: 100; emphasis in original)

Significantly, this process of rendering Peter Pan into a form deemed appropriate for young children removes all traces of its sexuality and violence. Furthermore, its very form was changed to remove moments of self-referentiality (where language itself is glimpsed as a construction) from the text. The narrator becomes disembodied, and comments about the protagonists' grammar and vocabulary (and class position) disappear. Reading policy thus warrants the naturalisation of class privilege.

In addition to the disciplinary perspectives discussed earlier – all of which function methodologically as interpretive/analytic checks and commentaries upon the status and construction of psychological accounts – we have already also discussed how psychoanalytic and feminist approaches offer techniques for studying and interpreting children, and responses to children and childhoods.

INNOVATIVE SOURCES/TECHNIQUES

I will now take three examples of research to illustrate some recently emerging forms of qualitative developmental research, focusing on technologies of self-representation, ethno-theories of childrearing and analysis of media representations.

Visual Self-Representation

New forms of technology make available possibilities for children and young people to actively create their own research material. Visual culture has been seen increasingly as a participative tool of inquiry that allows for flexibility and self-representation – and even action (for example, Mitchell et al., 2005). As Marshall and Woollett (2000: 121) comment:

> Video diaries have been hailed as a democratic methodology, in part because of their ready public access but also because representational issues reside largely with the diarist rather than being professionally mediated through, for example, voiceover narration. Similarly when a video diary is used as a social scientific tool, the agenda for its content and contextualisation resides largely with participants.

Reflecting on their analysis of a young British Asian woman's video diary, they claim that this medium facilitates opportunities for self-definition and exploration, with

> culture and cultural identifications as variably expressed, and cultural referents as changeable and affording the potential for innovation [to] problematise notions that culture is a variable that is similarly experienced by all those designated as belonging to that culture. (Marshall and Woollett, 2000:129)

This methodological approach therefore opens up for inquiry key debates that other methods have closed down. Nevertheless, as the authors point out (Marshall and Woollett, 2000: 130), questions of ambiguity of interpretation and politics of representation still remain because – through their re-presentation – the young person's 'voice' is now framed by theirs. As we have seen, no mere technology can guarantee democracy or egalitarianism; rather, such commitments must be structured into the epistemological framework guiding the research. Such considerations extend into the further arenas emerging for self-representation (and perhaps also self-regulation), such as 'selfies' and vlogs (visual blogs), as well as the concerns about sexting, which now also threaten the criminalisation of children for exchanging sexually explicit material on mobile phones.

Parental Ethno-Theories

Drawing on anthropological contributions and turning the tables from prescribing to learning from parents, recent developmental research has positioned parents as worthy informants of their own theories of development. As mediators and moulders of development, parental accounts indicate sociocultural norms and standards. Keller's (2003) study documents how parental evaluations of caregiving practices are structured by distinct cultural norms related to particular economic and cultural conditions. She observed and videotaped rural traditional subsistence-based community versus urban (post)industrial cultures. These two groups were considered to have different socialisation goals and so corresponding notions of competence. She then presented to groups of seven to ten women extracts of the videos showing typical interactional situations with three-month old babies from each cultural environment, inviting comments from each woman on 'what they had seen (what they find good or bad, or whatever comes to their mind' (Keller, 2003: 293). Not surprisingly, the mothers from each cultural group could offer clear analysis and justification for the practices from their 'own' group. More interesting was their emphatically negative view of the other group. Irrespective of possible over-polarisation of cultural differences (through selection of two opposing cultural practices, rather than researching across contrasts of class and region intra-culturally; see Gjerde, 2004), this approach highlights the importance of situating the evaluation of childrearing practices within locally-defined norms. This approach has been taken up by Burke and Duncan (2015) to research professional early childcare and educational practices as they occur and are interpreted in New Zealand and Japan. What emerges from the cross-national commentaries by these professionals is highly culturally-specific and situated understandings of bodies, risk and boundaries that impact in direct ways in the organisation of childcare in both contexts, and arguably produce distinct forms of childhood. As a significant further development from sociology, equivalent concerns around class and the role of childcare advice has given rise to a new discipline of parental cultural studies (Lee et al., 2014).

Analysing Media Representations of Childhood

Rather like the historical analysis of texts produced for children and the previous discussion of ethno-theories, we can see media representations of and about children as providing a valuable methodological arena for investigating the discursive resources informing understandings of children and childhoods – understandings that have undoubtedly acquired the status of (at least popular) psychological theories and that function materially in performing children and childhoods. Methodologically, media texts – in their myriad forms – offer a rich array of representations of children and childhoods. Their diversity can be overwhelming; nevertheless, a structured approach can usefully address these as resources. There are of course now many approaches to analysing written and visual texts (see, for example, Chapters 5, 6 and 17 in this Volume). Here I offer two examples.

In Burman (1999 and 2008a) I take charity advertisements as a forum to investigate contemporary discourses of North–South relations as played out through representations of international aid for children. By analysing these I explicitly challenge the abstraction of the child from culture/community and reverse this to read dominant cultural representations through the portrayal of children. In particular, this approach is useful to explicate the range of subject positions around children (helping, saving, etc.) as well as how these become recruited into the paternalist discourse of donor–recipient relations[8].

A similar approach taken to social work training advertisements (discussed in Bradbury and Burman, 2004) highlights how the discourse of 'care' and personal involvement take priority over the regulatory and bureaucratic duties social workers perform within welfare state apparatus. Although gender, class and cultural themes are mobilised to emphasise childhood vulnerability and need for protection, psychological theories concerning cycles of abuse (or intergenerational transmission) and attachment disorders are visually invoked as resources informing professional understandings and intervention. Thus we see the practice of developmental psychological theories as a cultural resource drawn upon to interpellate the professional as concerned, engaged and as a saviour of damaged children (see also Burman, 2003, 2008b). Such discursive approaches enable investigation of the crucial link between theory and its popularisation that otherwise would stay inadequately theorised only in terms of decontextualised and asocial individual beliefs. As I discuss further in Burman (2016), in relation to a recent Save the Children campaign, the semiotic connections between child and nation facilitate discussion of the status of poverty as relative or absolute, offering further evidence of the ways children are affected by their parents' worries, as well limits on material resources.

STRATEGIES

The techniques discussed earlier rely on distinctly different orientations to knowledge-claims and production. Now I will highlight two distinct interpretive positions according to which material generated from research with children can be analysed.

'Giving Voice'

A first strategy for researching children and childhoods that emphasises the child as author of their account often makes claims to 'give voice' (Cullingford, 1991). Such claims underlay the video diary as a research tool but are subject to limits as indicated previously. We need to ask whose voice is privileged in such accounts – the researcher or the researched? Such work still cannot escape the work of interpretation. Instead of remaining complicit with how unequal power relations outside the research relationship structure access to representational arenas, this kind of research attempts to use the power of legitimation that research is accorded to re-present the accounts of and so advocate for a relatively marginalised and disempowered group. This approach also extends to collaborative and action research with children and families (Billington and Pomerantz, 2003; see also Larkins et al., 2015 for discussions of children's protagonism; and Enghel, 2014 for rights to communication).

Documenting Children's Accounts

Nevertheless, we should not romanticise or essentialise this 'voice', or treat it as somehow authentic or anterior to socio-cultural conditions and relations. Here discursive analysis is useful to address the forms of talk and frameworks of meaning mobilised by speakers. Such approaches are useful to help researchers working with children grapple with the interpretive complexity of the accounts they generate (Alldred and Burman, 2005). For example, in her study investigating children's accounts of being excluded from school, Marks (1996) was surprised to find that instead of generating accounts of defiance or indignation, many of the young people's (mainly boys') accounts apparently concurred with their detractors as to the reasons and justification for their exclusion. How was she to make sense of this?

Rather than invoking claims about the young people's beliefs or self-images, she attempted to analyse further the broader cultural contexts mobilised within the interviewing situation. Elaborating this discursive analysis, it became clear that it is not unusual for those subject to a regulatory practice to position themselves accordingly. This 'confession' is surely the expected framework within which the participants had likely rehearsed, and perhaps had to rehearse, their account of what had happened. By close attention to the forms of question she asked and comparison between the affective tone in the group and individual interviews, Marks identified what she called 'co-operative', 'resistant' and 'disengaged' accounts, all of which conveyed quite distinct relations: between the child and the school; the child and the (mis)deed/precipitating event; and the child and the interviewer. As much as giving 'voice', she was producing a subject through her research – a subject constituted in forms of talk as institutional practice (see also Alldred and Gillies, 2002; Gallagher, 2008). Furthermore, such strategies can be consciously deployed by children, as was highlighted by Silverman et al.'s (1998) conversational analysis of children's silence in parent–teacher consultations about them. In such contexts, rather than signifying incompetence, silence can work to successfully resist enlistment into a moral discourse children want to avoid, even as claims to document children's voice can paradoxically sometimes work to silence them further (Alasuutari, 2014).

DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY BEYOND THE CHILD?

Rather than offering conclusions to round off or close this account, I will indicate where else it might go. I will finish by offering two possibilities that span technical and analytical intervention, as methodological investigations inevitably do. Both address the central theoretical and methodological limitations that have been highlighted as pervading developmental psychological investigations – how the focus on 'the child' has produced an asocial account of individual development, abstracted from socioeconomic and political conditions. To disrupt this tendency, we can: (1) displace the focus on the child; or (2) use the focus on the child to open up wider questions.

Displacing the Child

Rather than indulging the prevailing sentimentalisation surrounding children (with its attendant

lack of engagement with actual children), we can ask: is it helpful to think about 'children' at all? The very term seems to occlude constitutive axes of class, culture, gender and even age in a meaningful way, let alone sexuality. 'Children' and 'childhood' as blanket categories typically get in the way of genuine intellectual inquiry and sensitive intervention. Indeed, much current research is designed to explore the constitutive ways that gender, 'race' and class inequalities structure specific forms of childhood, rather than privileging the category of childhood over these (as in Frosh et al.'s (2002) work on 'young masculinities', for example).

We can also take apparently problematic cases as revealing methodological limit cases identifying the analytical tensions structured within conceptualisations of childhood. For example, are 'teenage mothers' children? And how do we determine which 'voice' to privilege when mothers and children's views diverge – in a context of a mother in a refuge refusing to allow her child to have therapy (see Bravo, 2005). But we should take care when we look at the following issues: women as mothers, especially that problematic category of 'teenage mothers'; or at the contests that service providers have with women in shelters – about how they discipline children or whether the children should have therapy. These specific and seemingly exceptional circumstances offer crucial glimpses of the structurally ambiguous and unstable parameters of relationships posed by and around children. The question that has reverberated around women's studies – 'which women?' – applies equally to how we construct developmental psychological investigations – 'which children?'. The focus of recent feminist debates on intersectionality (McCall, 2005; Winker and Degele, 2011) invites consideration of how particular axes of socially-structured positions and identifications (around class, 'race', and gender, for example) align with or produce new configurations of age (see also Burman, 2013; Burman, in press b).

Widening the Focus

An alternative strategy is to use the focus on the child to open up broader issues of democracy, contested power relations and societal values. This is the approach used by Dahlberg and Moss (2005) in their cross-national comparative analysis of early childcare and educational provision. Their analyses highlight the different conceptualisations of citizenship, societal relationships and political participation discernible through the study of policies and practices around children in different countries. From this they generate specific proposals for facilitating models of childhood that emphasise and enable engagement, autonomy and resilience rather than the isolated, privatised and protected childhoods currently being configured in Anglo–US contexts. Further work has contested current global models of childhood as universalisations of modern Western conceptions to focus both on local versions but also how they function in relation to global transnational discourses of childhood and development (Imoh and Ame, 2012; Poretti et al., 2014). Such analyses can usefully inform understanding of what is at stake in the rise of new discourses surrounding children and childhood interventions, such as 'resilience' (Henderson and Denny, 2015). Acknowledging the wider agendas mobilised around work with children, including the political tensions involved, can therefore inform investigations that combine methodological attentiveness with political transformativity.

Notes

1 The portrayal of the caregiver–child relation as a mother–child dyad with the child pronominalised in English as masculine avoids (as various commentators have pointed out) acknowledging the homoerotic connection between mother and daughter, which thus prefigures and privileges heterosexuality.

2 Models of 'cycles of abuse' typically rely on this kind of reasoning and so should be approached with caution.

3 The emergence (from the 1970s onwards – significantly from US psychologists) of lifespan developmental perspectives arose from the acknowledgement that developmental models, in particular with their focus on cognitive development, had largely portrayed post-adolescent life in terms of stasis or even decline. Notwithstanding this, the main body of developmental psychological work tends to be equated with the study of childhood – hence my focus here.

4 Piaget was an early member of the International Psychoanalytic Association and both underwent and conducted analysis for a period (Schepeler, 1993). Discussing processes of symbolisation, he describes presenting a paper 'in which Freud had been interested' to the 1922 International Conference on Psychoanalysis held in Berlin (Piaget, 1951: 170–1).

5 Notwithstanding his other critiques, Vygotsky was favourable about Piaget's clinical method. See later for an account of his cultural-historical approach – a method as much as a theory.

6 Indeed, Franklin (2002) treats the media treatment and public response to this case as emblematic of a shift in the English conceptualisation of children from victims to villains, which is currently more receptive to authoritarian measures to control and punish children than empower them through 'rights'.
7 Children's geographies is a burgeoning area, for example – with a journal of that title.
8 Elsewhere I extend this analysis to draw on psychoanalytic theorising to account for dis/engagement with such campaigns (Burman, 1999) and consider the wider North–South relations recapitulated in such representations (Burman, 1994a, 2007, 2008b).

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28

Clinical Psychology

David Harper

THE INCREASING LEGITIMACY OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Since the publication of this chapter for the first edition of this handbook (Harper, 2008)[1], qualitative research has become increasingly legitimised within the discipline of clinical psychology. In countries like the UK, qualitative methods have become popular with students on professional psychology training programmes and there has been a steady growth in the number of qualitative studies in clinical psychology-related journals. This chapter reviews developments since 2008.

An illustration of the growth of clinically relevant qualitative research can be seen by focusing on one topic. Here we will focus on the topic of 'delusion'.

AN EXAMPLE OF THE USE OF THE GROWTH OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY: THE CASE OF RESEARCH ON 'DELUSIONS'

In preparation for a book on qualitative studies of unusual experiences and beliefs, including 'delusions' (Harper, forthcoming), I recently surveyed qualitative research studies published since the early 1990s. *DSM-5* (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th edn; American Psychiatric Association, 2013) offers the following definition of a delusion[2]:

> Delusions are fixed beliefs that are not amenable to change in light of conflicting evidence. Their content may include a variety of themes (e.g. persecutory, referential, somatic, religious, grandiose). American Psychiatric Association (2013: 87)

Thirty-two articles were identified in the literature search: three were published in the 1990s; 18 between 2000 and 2009; and 11 between 2010 and 2015, showing a steady growth over time. The following journals published at least two of these studies: *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory Research and Practice* (six studies); *British Journal of Clinical Psychology* (four studies); *Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy* (four studies), *Journal of Mental Health* (two studies); *Philosophy, Psychiatry and Psychology* (two studies). Many of the studies focus on delusions that would be seen by psychiatrists as persecutory or paranoid (i.e. involving the person thinking that they are at risk from a persecutor who has an intention to harm them). The list of methods in Table 28.1 is of those used

Table 28.1 Qualitative studies of delusions published between 1994–2015

Method	*Number of studies*	*Example study*	*Research questions*
Ratings of content of delusions	2	Startup et al. (2003)	Is it possible to reliably rate the contents of delusions? Can independent raters agree when persecutory delusions are dependent on the presence of anomalous experiences?
Attributional coding schemes	2	Lee et al. (2004)	Hypothesis-driven: the clinical sample would make more external-personal attributions for negative life events and would make highly stable and global external-personal attributions.
Generic thematic or content analysis	8	Stopa et al. (2013)	Explored 'threat experiences in people with social phobia and persecutory delusions' in order to elucidate these aspects of the respective cognitive models.
Conversation analysis	3	McCabe et al. (2004)	Investigating the claim that delusions represent a Theory of Mind (ToM) deficit by identifying how participants used or failed to use ToM-relevant skills.
Grounded Theory	2	Boyd and Gumley (2007)	Aim was to construct theory about persecutory delusions from an experiential perspective rather than from preconceived hypotheses.
Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA)	6	Campbell and Morrison (2007)	Aim was to 'find out about people's subjective experience of paranoia' by comparing a clinical and non-clinical sample.
Discourse analysis	4	Georgaca (2004)	Aim was to investigate how rhetorical devices commonly encountered in disputes about fact were deployed in an interview with a man diagnosed with delusions.

at least twice, covering 27 of the 32 articles identified. I have listed the methods with those subscribing to a more realist epistemology at the top and with the studies at the bottom subscribing to a more social constructionist epistemology. The table illustrates the range of the research methods used and also of the kinds of research questions asked. A number of the articles inTable 28.1 and in the overall group of 32 were co-authored with leading cognitive behavioural clinician researchers – further evidence of the increase legitimacy of qualitative methods – and were focused on phenomenological aspects of the lives of those endorsing belief claims viewed as delusional. The most commonly used methods were generic thematic or content analyses (eight papers) and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA; six papers). At the time of writing, Google Scholar lists 19,503 citations for Braun and Clarke's (2006) seminal paper on thematic analysis and it is clear that this method will continue to be very popular in clinical psychology and elsewhere.

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AND THERAPEUTIC AND THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Each set of method asks different questions because each has a different theoretical tradition, analytic focus and epistemological framework (Harper, 2012b). An idea of the range of qualitative methods available to the clinical researcher can be seen in the contents of a recent methods text I co-edited with Andrew Thompson (2012): qualitative methods for studying psychotherapy change processes (Elliott, 2012); service user research (Faulkner, 2012); IPA (Larkin and Thompson, 2012); existentialist-informed hermeneutic phenomenology (Willig and Billin, 2012); Grounded Theory (Tweed and Charmaz, 2012); Discourse Analysis (Georgaca and Avdi, 2012); Narrative Psychology (Murray and Sargeant, 2012); Ethnomethodology/ Conversation Analysis (Rapley, 2012); Q

Methodology (Stainton Rogers and Dyson, 2012); and Thematic Analysis (Joffe, 2012).

Different methods have different foci and strengths and Rohleder and Lyons (2014) helpfully structure their text by differentiating between methods useful for 'exploring individual worlds' and those useful for 'exploring social worlds'. There are now a number of clinical qualitative research methods texts that aim to help practitioners understand the range of questions that methods address because of the differing philosophical traditions from which they emerged (Barker et al., 2015; Dallos and Vetere, 2005; Harper and Thompson, 2012; Marks and Yardley, 2004; McLeod, 2011; Murray, 2014; Rohleder and Lyons, 2014; Slade and Priebe, 2006).

Clinicians have begun to look for alternatives to the scientist–practitioner model still dominant internationally in clinical psychology. Some of these are more able to incorporate the kind of insights likely to come from qualitative work, including Larner's (2001) *critical practitioner*; Schön's (1987) *reflective practitioner*; practice-based enquiry (e.g. Hoshmand and Polkinghorne, 1992); and the *narrative practitioner* (e.g. Béres, 2014; Greenhalgh, 1999; Roberts, 2000).

Qualitative research has influenced both theoretical developments and therapeutic innovations in clinical psychology often facilitated by the development of networks connecting clinicians, researchers, service users (which I will discuss in more detail towards the end of the chapter) and theorists. We begin by exploring recent therapeutic innovations.

Qualitative Research and Therapeutic Innovation

The impact of qualitative research is affected by the relative influence of the various epistemologies underlying those methods, for example the critiques associated with post-structuralism and social constructionism. Over the last few years a number of critical psychologists, some of them influenced by post-structuralism and psychoanalysis, have developed the field of psychosocial studies (e.g. Frosh, 2015, in press). In the UK the Association for Psychosocial Studies has been founded (www.psychosocial-studies-association.org/about/ [accessed 12 February, 2017]) together with a journal (*Journal of Psychosocial Studies*). There have been applications of psychoanalytic theory to research methods (e.g. Emerson and Frosh, 2009; Hollway and Jefferson, 2012; Parker and Pavón-Cuélla, 2014), and some academic researchers have subsequently trained in forms of psychoanalysis (e.g. Ian Parker and Eugenie Georgaca in Lacanian psychoanalysis and Erica Burman in group analysis). This can lead to theoretical developments in the psychotherapy field – see Georgaca's (2005) application of Lacanian theory and Bakhtinian ideas about dialogue to psychotherapy. In Parker's work there is an interchange of ideas between political critique, Lacanian psychoanalysis, critical psychology and qualitative research (e.g. Parker, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c; Parker and Pavón-Cuélla, 2014). In 1990 Parker and Burman founded the Discourse Unit which, according to its website (discourseunit.com/ [accessed 12 February, 2017]) is a trans-institutional collaborative centre that supports a variety of qualitative and theoretical research projects contributing to the development of radical theory and practice.

Parker, Burman and psychoanalytic colleagues have formed the Manchester Psychoanalytic Matrix which, according to its website (discourseunit.com/manchester-psychoanalytic-matrix/ [accessed 12 February, 2017]), is 'a virtual space hosting "cartels" devoted to close reading and discussion of texts related to the work of Jacques Lacan and other psychoanalytic traditions'. In recent years a growing tradition of critical psychotherapy has also developed (e.g. Loewenthal, 2015) and some of those involved are also qualitative researchers. Psychoanalytic frameworks have also been used by other researchers, including work on HIV (Rohleder, 2016; Rohleder and Gibson, 2006) and sex education (Rohleder, 2010).

Within cognitive therapy, however, constructivism has had more of an effect than social constructionism (e.g. Neimeyer, 2009; O'Connor, 2015). Constructivist approaches to therapy have a long history, for example in Personal Construct Theory (e.g. Kelly, 1955). As a result, qualitative research that is more realist or phenomenological has had more of an impact here than more critical or social constructionist work. However, there is a growing interest in qualitative research, and qualitative studies have drawn on Attribution Theory (Lee et al., 2004) and on cognitive behavioural models (e.g. Boyd and Gumley, 2007; Campbell and Morrison, 2007). In the field of psychosis research many researchers have worked closely with survivor researchers and experts by experience (a preferred term for many service users and ex-service users), often using qualitative methods (Davidson, 2003; Geekie and Read, 2009; Geekie et al., 2013).

Social constructionism found its most receptive audience within the family therapy field (Harper and Spellman, 2013; Lock and Strong, 2012; McNamee and Gergen, 1992), given the interest in systems of social relationships and the awareness of the existence of multiple perspectives on phenomena. Some systemic family therapists have fully engaged with social constructionist

theory, developing, for example, an approach to conversations about emotion that is not only theoretically consistent but also therapeutically useful (e.g. Fredman, 2004). Systemic therapists, consultants and researchers influenced by social constructionist ideas have formed the Taos Institute. According to its website (www.taosinstitute.net [accessed 12 February, 2017]) the Taos Institute is:

> a community of scholars and practitioners concerned with the social processes essential for the construction of reason, knowledge, and human value. We are a non-profit organization committed to exploring, developing and disseminating ideas and practices that promote creative, appreciative and collaborative processes in families, communities and organizations around the world.

Systemic family therapy researchers have drawn on a range of different qualitative methods (Burck, 2005; Dallos and Vetere, 2005). Methods like Conversation Analysis and Discourse Analysis can be useful in examining issues of process in family therapy sessions (Georgaca and Avdi, 2012; Sutherland and Strong, 2011) and how social categories like culture may be constructed (Pakes and Roy-Chowdhury, 2007). Although a focus on what goes on in the therapy room is natural for therapists and researchers, this means that the majority of the clients' lives remain unexplored but, in a fascinating study, Ole Dreier (2008) took a different approach, interviewing his family therapy clients about the events of their lives outside therapy sessions and their interaction with the therapy sessions. There is some useful exchange of ideas between researchers and therapists, and Strong has argued that discursive methods can help therapists develop 'discursive awareness and resourcefulness' (Strong, 2016). As there are objections amongst systemic therapists about some of the epistemological assumptions embedded in the evidence-based practice movement (e.g. Strong and Busch, 2013), many therapists and researchers prefer to use methods that are more epistemologically compatible with their work. Chenail et al. (2012) synthesised this material, adopting a pluralistic approach to evaluating discursive therapies and identifying supportive circumstantial evidence – much of it gathered using qualitative methods. Qualitative studies of systemic family therapy are regularly published in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy*; *Family Process*; the *Journal of Constructivist Psychology* and the *Journal of Family Therapy*.

There is a thriving body of researchers and practitioners engaged in using narrative research methods – see, for instance, the work of the Centre for Narrative Research (https://www.uel.ac.uk/Schools/Social-Sciences/What-we-do/Research/Centre-for-Narrative-Research [accessed 12 February, 2017]) based at the University of East London (see also Andrews et al., 2013). One focus of work for researchers and therapists has been the analysis of the process of psychotherapy and also of subjectivity (e.g. Avdi and Georgaca, 2007, 2009). Eleanor Longden (a research psychologist and voice-hearer) and Phil Thomas (critical psychiatrist and qualitative researcher) have used a narrative approach to link childhood adversity and madness (Thomas and Longden, 2013). An important ethical issue noted by some narrative researchers, and applicable in mental health contexts, concerns notions of narrative coherence. Many people who have experienced significant trauma have fragmented memories and narratives and it is unhelpful to further pathologise them for lacking narrative coherence or, even worse, in the case of people fleeing war, to regard their accounts as lacking plausibility (Hyvärinen et al., 2010).

Within narrative therapy (White and Epston, 1990), which emerged out of systemic family therapy in the late 1980s, there has been an increasing interest in theoretical innovations associated both with qualitative research and epistemological frameworks like post-structuralism (Angus and McLeod, 2004; Parker, 1999). Some qualitative researchers draw links between their conclusions and approaches such as narrative therapy. Hepworth (1999) sees it as attempting to avoid some of the pathologisation associated with other therapeutic approaches to anorexia. Other researchers have used qualitative methods to delineate key aspects of the approach (e.g. Wallis et al., 2011). McKenzie and Monk (1997) describe an interesting adaptation of discourse analytic ideas: inviting trainees therapists to practice identifying discourses and positions adopted by themselves and their clients in therapy. This kind of approach can also be helpful in broadening the context explored in psychotherapy supervision (Heenan, 1998). Chenail et al. (2012) identify a variety of qualitative studies used by narrative therapists, predominantly – although not exclusively – case studies and observational studies.

Another area where research findings and theories have led to therapeutic innovation is in the application of dialogical theories both to psychotherapy (e.g. Hermans and Dimaggio, 2004) and to particular problems like obsessions (Hallam and O'Connor, 2002). Therapies like the Open Dialogue model, which is explicitly informed by dialogical theories, are now developing (Seikkula and Arnil, 2006; Seikkula et al., 2001) and qualitative methods are often used to investigate psychotherapeutic processes (Lidbom et al., 2014)

with theoretical concepts such as subject positioning being introduced to psychotherapists as a way of understanding therapy as a dialogical enterprise (Avdi, 2012; Winslade, 2005). There is an International Society for Dialogical Science (http://web.lemoyne.edu/hevern/ISDS/ [accessed 12 February, 2017]) that publishes the *International Journal of Dialogical Science* where some of this work appears. The *Journal of Constructivist Psychology* and the *European Journal of Psychotherapy and Counselling* and family therapy journals like *Family Process* and the *Journal of Family Therapy* also publish much of this research.

Qualitative Research and Theoretical Developments

Critical qualitative research (i.e. research broadly influenced by post-structuralist ideas) has begun to have a moderate influence on the development of theory and practice in clinical psychology (e.g. Cromby et al., 2013; Harper, forthcoming; Parker et al., 1995). One significant area to which qualitative research has contributed is that of the experience of hearing voices – known in psychiatric parlance as auditory hallucinations. Important early work by Dutch social psychiatrist Marius Romme, inspired by his contact with voice-hearer Patsy Hage (e.g. Romme and Escher, 1989), was followed by further research, including qualitative research often conducted collaboratively with qualitative researchers (Leudar and Thomas, 2000; Leudar et al., 1997), leading to therapeutic innovations (Davies et al., 1999) very much in tune with other developments in the field like the Hearing Voices Movement (Romme and Escher, 2000). Apparently independently, Michael White and other narrative therapists developed similar ideas (Brigitte et al., 1996; Verco and Russell, 2009). Some qualitative researchers have also used post-structuralist ideas in their research to explore the embodied nature of the experience of voice-hearing, focusing on the work of the Hearing Voices Network (Blackman, 2001).

Over the last 25 years an international Hearing Movement has developed, based on the principle that hearing voices is not inherently a pathological symptom but rather a meaningful, if distressing, response to life events. It has enabled psychiatric survivors, researchers and practitioners to meet and collaborate, facilitated by an annual international conference (often attended by equal numbers of voice-hearers and professionals) and the Intervoice website (www.intervoiceonline.org [accessed 12 February, 2017]). An inter-disciplinary research programme has recently developed (e.g. Fernyhough, 2016; McCarthy-Jones, 2012). One example of this is the 'Hearing the Voice' project based at Durham University, UK, which aims to 'better understand the experience of voice-hearing by looking at it from different academic perspectives and working with clinicians, mental health professionals and people who hear voices themselves' (hearingthevoice.org/ [accessed 12 February, 2017]). Given the danger of researchers colonising voice-hearers' experiences, there is the ever-present risk that by rendering voice hearers' experiences into their psychological vocabulary, researchers colonise those experiences (see, for example, Corstens et al., 2014 and Waddingham, 2015). Jacqui Dillon, Chair of the Hearing Voices Network in England, has collaborated with qualitative researchers, practitioners and other voice-hearers to produce a range of publications (e.g. Romme et al., 2009; Rapley et al., 2011; Speed et al., 2014).

A recent development in qualitative research on voice hearing has been exploring women's voice hearing experiences (McCarthy-Jones et al., 2015). Indeed, social constructions of gender and mental health have been an important focus for some qualitative researchers (e.g. Lafrance, 2009; McKenzie-Mohr and Lafrance, 2014). As well as people's experiences of distress, the treatments that service users receive has been of significance (e.g. Day et al., 1996; Gibson et al., 2014, 2016; Harper, 1999; McMullen and Herman, 2009; McMullen and Sigurdson, 2014; Stevens and Harper, 2007). Critical qualitative researchers have also offered new perspectives in the area of child sexual abuse utilising a broad array of approaches (e.g. Haaken, 1998; Haaken and Reavey, 2009; Reavey and Warner, 2003). New perspectives have led to alternative therapeutic interventions like Sam Warner's 'visible therapy' (Warner, 2000, 2001) and innovative approaches to the training of professionals involved with child protection (Warner, 2003, 2009).

Critical and qualitative researchers have contributed to work on the nature of psychological distress and its effects on people's lives, with an area of debate being the relevance of social and other models of disability (Beresford et al., 2010; Spandler et al., 2015). For example, disability activist and researcher Tom Shakespeare, initially drawing inspiration from social constructionist work (Shakespeare, 1998), has recently found more value in critical realist approaches (Shakespeare, 2013). Concepts of recovery and resilience and the use to which they are put by health services have also been interrogated by qualitative researchers, including survivor researchers (Brosnan, 2012; Costa et al., 2012; Harper and Speed, 2012; Howell and Voronka, 2012; Morrow and

Weisser, 2012; all available freely online at brock.scholarsportal.info/journals/SSJ/issue/view/70 [access date 12 February, 2017]).

Clinical and Academic Collaborations

Collaborations between academic qualitative researchers and clinicians continue to be important in the development of clinical qualitative research. Alexa Hepburn, Jonathan Potter and colleagues collaborated with the NSPCC (National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children) – a child protection charity (e.g. Hepburn and Potter, 2003; Hepburn, Wilkinson and Butler, 2014). The late Mark Rapley collaborated with voice-hearer, author and activist Jacqui Dillon, sociologist Ewen Speed and critical psychiatrist Joanna Moncrieff (Rapley et al., 2011; Speed et al., 2014). Rosemarie McCabe collaborated with psychiatrist and researcher Stefan Priebe and other researchers (e.g. McCabe et al., 2002; Zangrilli et al., 2014). Charles Antaki is engaged with a range of practitioners and researchers in applied settings (e.g. Antaki, 2011; Antaki et al., 2015; Antaki et al., 2016). Erica Burman and Ian Parker at Manchester Metropolitan University's Discourse Unit have been involved in a number of collaborative projects between clinical practitioners and academics (Batsleer et al., 2002; Burman et al., 1996a, 1996b; Chantler et al., 2001; Parker et al., 1995). Clinical psychologist and family therapist Rudi Dallos has collaborated with Jonathan Smith on the use of qualitative methods in single case studies (Dallos and Smith, 2008). Working from a clinical psychology training context, I have worked with other qualitative researchers in work on methodology and embodiment (Brown et al., 2011), with Ewen Speed on recovery (Harper and Speed, 2012), with John Cromby on paranoia and social inequality (Cromby and Harper, 2009), with Andrew Thompson on clinical qualitative methods (Harper and Thompson, 2012) and with John Cromby and Paula Reavey to develop a mental health textbook very much influenced by concepts and findings from critical and qualitative work (Cromby et al., 2013).

However, although qualitative methods have found a place in the discipline most clinical research is still of a quantitative nature. In the next section we will examine four major influences on the take-up of qualitative methods internationally: the legacy of naïve realism; the policies of research commissioners; international differences in the culture of professional psychology training programmes; and the editorial policies of major journals.

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE USE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

The Legacy of Naïve Realism

Clinical qualitative researchers continue to face a powerful biomedical discourse that constrains what research can be funded, published and thus conducted. Indeed, even researchers who use predominantly quantitative methods to study the social context of psychological distress report evidence of a strong biogenetic bias within the mental health field (Bentall and Varese, 2012).

For clinical psychologists, their preferences for epistemological frameworks will probably be related to their preferred therapeutic orientation. The cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) tradition is large but is not the only, grouping; others identify themselves with other traditions (e.g. systemic family therapy, psychodynamic or humanistic traditions) or as eclectic or integrative (Norcross and Karpiak, 2012; Norcross and Sayette, 2016; Norcross, Brust and Dryden, 1992). Historically, cognitive behaviourism – along with its antecedent behaviourism – has been the tradition most associated with quantification; however, there are some signs of change. Over the last 10 to 15 years a number of quite varied traditions have developed within CBT (Pilgrim, 2009) under the rubric of 'third wave CBT' approaches, including Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Compassion Focused Therapy, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy and practices such as mindfulness – many of which were inspired, in part, by Eastern and Western spiritual traditions. Moreover, the journal *Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy* (the house journal of the British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies) now regularly publishes studies using qualitative methods.

The most popular 'big Q' qualitative methods are still those based on realist, critical realist or phenomenological epistemological frameworks. However, there are some signs that in most countries, apart from the USA and Canada, even social constructionist methods like Discourse Analysis are becoming increasingly legitimised within the discipline (Georgaca, 2014; O'Reilly and Lester, 2015, 2016). Discourse Analysis has even been included in a review of qualitative methods in psychiatry (Brown and Lloyd, 2001) and many mental health research methods texts now include Discourse Analysis as a valid approach (e.g. Barker et al., 2015; Dallos and Vetere, 2005; Dempster, 2011; Harper and Thompson, 2012; Marks and Yardley, 2004; McLeod, 2011; Potter, 1998; Slade and Priebe, 2006; Wertz et al., 2011).

However, cognitive behavioural researchers still primarily use quantitative methods within a realist

epistemology, which fits well with the evidence-based practice movement and, of course, with the assumptions of commissioners of research who have a major influence on the take-up of qualitative research in clinical psychology.

The Policies of Research Commissioners

In 2016 the UK Medical Research Council (MRC), probably one of the more methodologically conservative research funding bodies, included the following statement in an advert for MRC Skills Development Fellowships on its website: 'The development and application of advanced quantitative and qualitative research methodologies are strategically important to UK health research' (www.mrc.ac.uk/research/initiatives/population-health-sciences/funding-opportunities/ [access date 12 February, 2017]).

Although this is a promising sign, most major research funding bodies are still influenced by the hierarchy of evidence promulgated by the Cochrane collaboration (see Harper, 2008) despite the significant problems with the assumptions embedded in this hierarchy, for example the low status given to the views of recipients of services (Busch, 2012; Chenail et al., 2012; Gannon, 2015; Harper et al., 2013). It remains to be seen whether mainstream health research funding bodies invest significantly in qualitative research – often research funders in the charitable sector are more pragmatic in evaluating research methods.

There has been a growth in the use of mixed methods and a number of researchers have attempted to introduce qualitative methods into Randomised Controlled Trials (RCT) and the work of the Cochrane collective. Some researchers belong to the Cochrane Qualitative and Implementation Methods Group, and according to its website (methods.cochrane.org/qi [access date 12 February, 2017]) this group's purpose is:

> to advise Cochrane and its network of people on policy and practice and qualitative evidence synthesis, develop and maintain methodological guidance, and provide training to those undertaking Cochrane reviews. From 2012 our mandate has been extended to include methods for undertaking systematic reviews of implementation.

Indeed, there are signs that qualitative methods now feature in a proportion of trials. Lewin et al. (2009) surveyed RCTs in the UK between 2001 and 2003. Based on their data it would seem that approximately 30 per cent involved a qualitative component, although they noted they seemed poorly integrated with the overall study and often had major methodological shortcomings. Lewin et al. (2009) suggested qualitative methods that could offer potential insights, particularly in better understanding the effects of complex interventions and how they were experienced by recipients, an argument supported by Crawford et al. (2002).

Another area where qualitative research has made inroads is in helping to integrate findings across research studies (e.g. Shaw, 2012). Qualitative researchers have also been involved in the production of Cochrane reviews of the research literature. Noyes et al. (2008: 571) suggest that qualitative research can be of use in producing Cochrane reviews in several ways by:

- Informing reviews by using evidence from qualitative research to help define and refine the question, and to ensure the review includes appropriate studies and addresses important outcomes,
- Enhancing reviews by synthesising evidence from qualitative research identified whilst looking for evidence of effectiveness,
- Extending reviews by undertaking a search to specifically seek out evidence from qualitative studies to address questions directly related to the effectiveness review, and
- Supplementing reviews by synthesising qualitative evidence within a stand-alone, but complementary, qualitative review to address questions on aspects other than effectiveness.

In addition to the use of qualitative methods in mixed methods studies, qualitative researchers continue to contribute to practice-based evidence (as opposed to evidence-based practice). Strong et al. (2008) suggest that empirical studies of therapeutic conversations, using methods like discourse analysis, should be seen as contributing to the evidence base in the psychotherapy literature. Increasingly, research method texts have attempted to follow through the implications of embracing a variety of methods to address a range of questions using either a variety of qualitative methods (e.g. Harper and Thompson, 2012) or both qualitative and quantitative methods (e.g. Slade and Priebe, 2006).

International Differences in the Culture of Training Programmes

In Harper (2012a) I compared the results of a survey of qualitative methods on British clinical

psychology programmes in 2006 with a similar survey conducted in 1992, revealing a significant growth in the use of these methods. Of the 26 responding programmes (a response rate of 83.9 per cent) 100 per cent reported that they taught qualitative methods, devoting an average of 31.1 per cent of method-specific teaching time to them (Harper, 2012a). The percentage of final year dissertations using qualitative methods ranged from 0–92.5 per cent with an average of 42.8 per cent. For 12 of the 26 responding programmes (i.e. 46.2 per cent) qualitative theses accounted for more than 41 per cent of the total number. This is a much higher figure than those reported in Ponterotto's (2005) survey of North American counselling psychology programmes where only 8.6 per cent of programmes reported that the proportion of qualitative theses was more than 41 per cent of the total number of theses submitted.

In Harper (2012a) I noted that eighteen programmes responded to a question about the specific methods used in theses and the most common methods included IPA (17 programmes); Grounded Theory (11 programmes) or some form of textual analysis (i.e. Conversation Analysis, Discourse Analysis, Foucauldian Discourse Analysis and Narrative Analysis). Thompson, Larkin and Smith (2011) conducted a similar survey in 2009 and reported similar results: qualitative methods were used in approximately 40 per cent of UK trainee dissertations in the previous year, with half using IPA as their method. In Harper (2012a) I noted that respondents' comments on survey forms indicated that, over time, their concerns about how external examiners would react to qualitative theses had eased and more programmes were adopting what one respondent termed an 'even-handed' and 'pluralistic' approach where trainee clinical psychologists chose the method most appropriate for their research question. I noted some possible explanations for the rapid rise in this use of qualitative methods:

> From my own experience, some choose qualitative methods because they have previously only used quantitative methods and wish to extend their repertoire. Others feel that these methods are better at exploring the meaning of participants' experiences, which coincides with their interest in psychological therapy. The small sample sizes commonly available to trainees also make small qualitative studies attractive. Lastly, there is a group of trainees who are particularly interested in the kinds of research question best addressed by qualitative methods. (Harper, 2012a: 10–11)

Moreover, qualitative methods have the potential for some transformative learning experiences. In an article I wrote with previous research supervisees using Discourse Analysis in their clinical psychology doctoral theses, the three ex-students summarised what they thought they had learned from their projects:

> Phil: I think especially for me, looking at myself in it, I found it really useful, and kind of the way that I conduct interviews, clinical interviews as much, um yeah, so I think there's loads that I've learnt from it that'll never appear in my thesis.
>
> Peter: it changes the way, you know, you think about science and truth and all these quite weighty issues that, and I think it does you good as a sort of a human really, because you … stop making easy assumptions.
>
> Julia: I think it kind of develops the, I think kind of a third ear that sort of enables you to listen to things kind of critically … and you know, to be able to kind of carry that no matter where you are, sort of into referral meetings or conversations with friends, I find myself listening to conversations in a different way than I did previously, which I think has been really, really useful. Harper et al. (2008: 208)

Although there have been clear signs of increasing legitimacy on UK clinical psychology programmes, it is not to say that the situation in North America is unchanged. There are promising signs of change there as well. Following the American Psychological Association's publication of a text on qualitative methods in 2003 (Camic, Rhodes & Yardley, 2003) it published, in 2012, the three volume *APA Handbook of Research Methods in Psychology* in which qualitative methods and conceptual and epistemological issues were well-represented. Moreover, qualitative methods were institutionally embedded in Division 5 of the APA, and the APA journal *Qualitative Psychology* was founded in 2013 which has, subsequently, published several clinically related articles. Furthermore, Wertz et al. (2011) used phenomenological Psychology, Grounded Theory, Discourse Analysis, Narrative Research, and Intuitive Inquiry to analyse a text and interview transcript, the subject of which was a young woman who had been diagnosed with a life-threatening cancer and who wrote a response to the analysis and was also a co-author. But is the growing acceptance of qualitative methods within clinical psychology reflected in journal publication policies?

The Editorial Policies of Major Journals

In Harper (2008) I included a rather rough and ready survey of the percentage of qualitative

studies in key journals in clinical psychology[3]. Since 2008 qualitative research has continued to grow in clinical publications, though at varied rates. Newer journals (like *Psychosis* published by the International Society for Psychological and Social Approaches to Psychosis) and those more influenced by psychotherapy traditions have tended to publish more qualitative research. Both *Psychology & Psychotherapy: Theory Research & Practice*, the *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *Psychosis* and the *Journal of Mental Health* include qualitative researchers on their editorial boards whilst *Psychosis* and the *Journal of Mental Health* also include survivor researchers on their editorial boards. Even journals that had previously published relatively little qualitative research have, in recent years, begun to publish more, including the *British Journal of Psychiatry* (which tends to publish only studies with sample sizes of 30–40), the *British Journal of Clinical Psychology* and, as noted earlier, *Behavioural and Cognitive Psychology*. In the latter two journals, the most common 'big Q' methods are some form of generic thematic or content analysis or IPA. Often the word 'qualitative' is included in the title and the study uses a generic form of thematic analysis. In their ambitious bibliometric survey, Carrera-Fernández et al. (2014) reported that in clinical psychology the most popular methods were phenomenological and thematic analysis. Although no specific clinical psychology journal title was in their list of journals, the *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* – which publishes some clinically relevant studies – was highly placed in the list of journals publishing the most qualitative studies. The *British Journal of Psychiatry* includes some useful guidance on its notes for contributors on its website (bjp.rcpsych.org/content/authors#Qualitative%20research [accessed 12 February, 2017]).

However, even though qualitative research is increasingly seen in clinically relevant journals it is far from a mainstream approach and much clinical qualitative research appears in journals like *Qualitative Research in Psychology* – a special issue of which was devoted to qualitative research and clinical psychology (Willott and Larkin, 2012). The 2013 special issue of *Feminism and Psychology*, marking the publication of the American Psychiatric Association's (2013) *DSM-5*, included many qualitative researchers (Marecek and Gavey, 2013).

A significant event occurred in 2015 when there was a debate about the *British Medical Journal*'s editorial policy towards qualitative studies. The editors responded to representations from qualitative researchers with a statement including the following:

> Over the next few months we will be consulting with qualitative researchers to learn more about how we can recognise the very best qualitative work, especially that which is likely to be relevant to our international readers and help doctors make better decisions. In addition, we will shortly issue a formal call for research methods and reporting articles about qualitative research. Loder (2016: i641)

In response to this debate, Clark and Thompson (2016) published some useful guidance on how authors could increase their chances of publishing in high impact factor journals.

THE FUTURE

Potter (1998) made a number of predictions about qualitative research in clinical settings: that the amount would continue to increase; that therapy and counselling talk would be an initial focus of Discourse Analysis work at least; that there would be more mixed quantitative and qualitative studies (e.g. supplementing outcome research); and that there would be an increased focus on clinical work practices. In the years since then, many of these predictions have been borne out. For example, as noted earlier, qualitative studies now form a part of many trials, narrative and discursive work has played a role in the study of psychotherapy (e.g. Avdi, 2012; Avdi and Georgaca, 2009; Peräkylä, 2012; Peräkylä, Antaki, Vehviläinen and Leudar, 2008) and a range of clinical practices have been investigated.

It seems likely that the new theoretical and methodological perspectives found in qualitative research will be incorporated into clinical psychology and the special issue of *Qualitative Research in Psychology* on clinical psychology is one example of this (Willott and Larkin, 2012). There are also important ethical challenges to attend to, for example the use of interpreters (Vara and Patel, 2012) and ensuring confidentiality of participants (Morse and Coulehan, 2015; although see Parker, 2005, for a discussion of occasions when participants might want to be identified, as in Wertz et al., 2011).

There has been some pedagogical research focused on how best to support professional psychology students learn about qualitative research methods. Harper et al. (2008) developed a rich description of the supervisory support for trainee clinical psychologists using Discourse Analysis, and Cooper et al. (2012) developed a Grounded Theory model of learning qualitative methods. At

the time of writing, in the UK nearly 600 trainee clinical psychologists conduct doctoral thesis-related research every year, a large proportion of which involve the use of qualitative methods. However, a significant factor in the publication of such theses is the involvement of the research supervisor (Cooper and Turpin, 2007). Now that qualitative methods are increasingly legitimised, the focus for the future should be on consolidating the research skills of supervisors and supporting them in publishing high quality research – Clark and Thompson (2016) make some helpful suggestions in this regard.

In Harper (2008) I identified three issues that needed to be addressed more fully in clinical qualitative research: it needed to be more methodologically diverse; there should be more collaborative work with service users and psychiatric survivors; and there should be wider and more creative dissemination. In the next section I describe recent developments in these areas, but I also include a fourth challenge: that clinical qualitative researchers need to adopt more critical perspectives.

Clinical Qualitative Research Needs to be More Methodologically Diverse

The majority of the studies cited so far in this chapter use semi-structured interviews as their primary source of data. In Harper (2008) I suggested that clinical qualitative researchers could use a wider range of methods. This may pose particular challenges for many professional psychology training programmes, which appear to view the interview as the data collection method of choice for all qualitative research. Indeed, in the same way as the questionnaire has become over-used in clinical quantitative research, so the interview is starting to be over-used in clinical qualitative research (Chamberlain, 2012; Harper, 2013a). Chamberlain (2012), quoting Atkinson and Delamont (2006: 164) notes the rise of the 'interview society'.

Instead of interviews, practitioners could analyse other texts, including transcripts of psychotherapy sessions, multidisciplinary meetings, ward rounds, case notes and so on. Non-verbal material could be investigated, including the use of video-recording. Frith and Gleeson (2012) review a wide range of alternative data collection methods, and Reavey (in press) includes a very varied range of visual methods. Social media and mobile applications are also of increasing importance (Lyons et al., 2015; Tucker and Goodings, 2015; Tucker and Goodings, in press, 2017) and no doubt further kinds of data will be available as health surveillance and social media technologies continue to develop.

Since much qualitative work is primarily textual there is a danger that the embodied nature of experience is neglected. Methods like memory work (e.g. Brown et al., 2011; Gillies et al., 2004) attempt to address some of these difficulties and also attempt to address issues of power imbalance because the researchers are also participants in the study. In an innovative adaptation of memory work, for example, Goran Petronic (Petronic, 2005, forthcoming) facilitated discussions in two memory work groups about anomalous experiences (i.e. having an unusual perceptual experience like seeing a ghost). One group consisted of mental health service users with psychosis-related diagnoses; the other consisted of people with no history of psychiatric involvement. He was able to delineate both the commonalities and differences in how people talked about their responses to anomalous experiences.

Despite the fact that clinical psychologists work with individuals and small systems on a regular basis, the case study approach seems to be adopted much less, perhaps as a consequence of the increasing focus on the large sample sizes required in trial research. However, Dallos and Smith (2008) have made a case for adopting qualitative methods in case studies to invigorate clinical psychological theory and practice. Much useful theoretical development in the psychotherapies has emerged from the careful study of particular instances of work with individuals, families and other systems.

Given that practitioners often want to make a difference through conducting research, it is surprising that there are not more examples of Participatory Action Research (PAR; Lykes, 2013; Vaughan, 2014). One recent interesting example is in the field of grief research (Neimeyer et al., 2013) where an ongoing partnership was constructed, along community-based participatory research lines, between university-based psychologists and community organisations serving the bereaved, particularly an agency offering support to the bereaved families of homicide victims. Given that much qualitative research in clinical psychology is conducted by doctoral students who are also juggling other commitments, including clinical work and assessments, it is perhaps not surprising that because of the long time scales involved in building such partnerships, there is so little PAR. However, one possibility is for students to be involved in specific projects within an overarching partnership already developed between training programme staff and community organisations. Kagan et al. (2011) is a useful resource for those wanting to learn more about community psychology work, and Afuape and Hughes (2015) includes some excellent examples

of such community partnerships. Community psychology approaches are also an important tradition amongst South African psychologists (e.g. Rohleder et al., 2008) including a psychoanalytic inflection (Swartz et al., 2002).

Another significantly under used approach in clinical qualitative research is ethnography (Foster, 2014). Again, time is required in participant observation projects of this nature but the pay-offs can often be significant – see the ongoing impact and significance of work, such as that of Goffman (1961) and Rosenhan (1973), which are cited, according to Google Scholar, approximately 9,000 and 3,000 times, respectively.

Within clinical psychology the psychiatric survivor movement has played a significant role in helping to challenge both psychiatric and, to a lesser degree, psychological conceptions of distress and we have already documented the collaborative work conducted with survivors and survivor researchers. Clinical qualitative research would be enhanced by increased collaboration with this social movement.

There Should be More Collaborative Work With Service Users and Survivors

Collaborative research with service users and survivors and carers and relatives is an area that has seen continued growth with a growing literature – Faulkner (2012) and Wallcraft et al. (2009) have provided helpful and up-to-date overviews of the kinds of work conducted and the challenges faced. Not surprisingly, control and power are key challenges – who has ownership of the research agenda and the interpretation of results? As a result, over the last decade, a number of researchers who are or have used mental health services themselves have advocated for the place of survivor research where they have control over the research agenda (e.g. Sweeney et al., 2008). There is significant debate in this area and the contributions to Staddon (2015) outline the key elements in this debate.

In the UK there has been particular innovation, including the Service User Research Enterprise (SURE), which was founded at the Institute of Psychiatry in 2001. To quote from its website, it 'undertakes research that tests the effectiveness of services and treatments from the perspective of people with mental health problems and their carers' (www.kcl.ac.uk/ioppn/depts/hspr/research/ciemh/sure/index.aspx [accessed 12 February, 2017]). At the time of writing, SURE has two co-directors: clinical psychologist Professor Til Wykes and Diana Rose, the world's first Professor of User-Led Research (and a social scientist and mental health service user who pioneered user-focused research). SURE conducts a variety of work focused directly on key priorities for service users, often using qualitative research methods and having an impact on mental health policy. For example, its work on service users' experiences of Electro-Convulsive Therapy (ECT; Rose et al., 2004) influenced current ECT guidelines published by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE: a regulatory body for the UK's National Health Service). In 2011–12 Professor Diana Rose co-chaired the NICE Guidelines on the *Service User Experience in Adult Mental Health Services* (www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg136). Other projects include Gilburt et al.'s (2008) study of service users' experiences of psychiatric hospital admission and Hamilton et al.'s (2014) investigation of discrimination against people with a mental health diagnosis. Further examples are available on the NICE website.

Such research is important because the research priorities of academics and researchers may be very different from those of the people who use mental health services (Robotham et al., 2016; Thornicroft et al., 2002). Moreover, service users often have different perspectives from professionals who lack direct experience of mental health services. Sweeney et al. (2013) demonstrated how drawing on these multiple perspectives could lead to much richer interpretations of data. In their study they adopted a multiple-coding approach to analyse service users' discussions of CBT for psychosis from the perspectives of a service user researcher, clinical researcher and assistant psychologist. Coding from these varied perspectives enabled the team to see commonalities and differences in their interpretations and to discuss and debate these before developing a consensual understanding.

With the increasing importance of service user involvement and participation in mental health services, more survivor researchers are raising questions about their lack of involvement. A recent commentary on a special issue of a journal focusing on qualitative work in psychotherapy and mental health questioned the apparent lack of service user involvement in the interpretation of findings and asked 'whose voice are we hearing, really?' (Waddingham (2015: 206). Rachel Waddingham and colleagues have recently identified important considerations from researchers from the perspective of the Hearing Voices Movement (Corstens et al., 2014).

The SURE website also incorporates an online resource so that:

> service users and their organisations can learn research skills and be enabled to do their own research. It draws on teaching resources that SURE members of staff have used in the past and was developed in conjunction with Maudsley Learning and the Ortus Centre. (Retrieved from www.kcl.ac.uk/ioppn/depts/hspr/research/ciemh/sure/tools.aspx ([accessed 12 February, 2017])

Practitioners could support and encourage such endeavours, for example by providing training in research skills for service users. Although there are often tight time constraints for trainee clinical psychologists conducting thesis research, Pembroke and Hadfield (2010) have described one way of involving service users in the research process. Some of the tensions and dilemmas encountered when service users and professionals attempt to conduct research together are discussed by Faulkner (2012), Lindow (2001), Staddon (2015), Sweeney et al. (2008), Turner and Beresford (2005) and Wallcraft et al. (2009).

A relatively recent development has been the emergence of Mad Studies. Beresford and Russo (2016: 2) carry the following definition from a Mad Studies website:

> an area of education, scholarship, and analysis about the experiences, history, culture, political organising, narratives, writings and most importantly, the PEOPLE who identify as: Mad; psychiatric survivors; consumers; service users; mentally ill; patients, neuro-diverse; inmates; disabled – to name a few of the 'identity labels' our community may choose to use. […] Mad Studies, right here, right now is breaking new ground. Together, we can cultivate our own theories/ models/ concepts/ principles/ hypotheses/ and values about how we understand ourselves, or our experiences in relationship to mental health system(s), research and politics. No one person, or school, or group owns Mad Studies or defines its borders.

This is an area likely to see continued growth and has the potential for an exciting and innovative cross-fertilisation of ideas between survivor experience, activism, and theory and research. Key resources include Burstow et al. (2014), LeFrancois et al. (2013), McKeown et al. (2014) and Spandler et al. (2015).

Qualitative researchers can also act as collaborative activists, documentarians and archivists. For example, Gail Hornstein at Mount Holyoke in Massachusetts maintains a bibliography of first person accounts of madness (Hornstein, 2011). Hornstein's online bibliography is also a good example of the next issue to be discussed: dissemination of research findings.

Researchers Should Disseminate More Widely and Creatively

Peer-reviewed journal articles have a relatively limited impact outside the academic community. Members of the public do not read them and, indeed, many clinicians do not regularly read journals. The impact of research is an increasingly important criterion by which research is judged. What forms of dissemination might reach the public, users of clinical services or clinicians themselves?

Trivedi and Wykes (2002) note that research teams could set up webpages that participants could access or send out newsletters to research participants. In addition, researchers could write for newsletters and magazines that are more accessible to and more likely to be read by service users and carers (e.g. *Asylum* magazine: www.asylumonline.net [accessed 12 February, 2017]). Effendi and Hamber (2006) make some excellent suggestions in this regard. Some researchers, maintain blogs and the Mad in America website hosts a number of these, including a section for their 'foreign correspondents': www.madinamerica.com/writers/ [accessed 12 February, 2017].

Some qualitative clinical researchers have moved beyond a reliance on the written word. For example, Janice Haaken (clinical psychologist, community psychologist and Emeritus Professor of Psychology, Portland State University) and her collaborators have produced three films: *Diamonds, Guns and Rice: Sierra Leone and the Women's Peace Movement* (2006), *Queens of Heart* (2007) and, more recently, *Guilty Except for Insanity* (2013). The website of the latter film (www.guiltyexcept.com [accessed 12 February, 2017]) includes the following description:

> In *Guilty Except for Insanity*, Director and Professor of Psychology Jan Haaken goes behind the walls of the Oregon State Hospital, the location of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, and recounts the stories of real patients who enter this famous hospital for the 'criminally insane.' Their stories reveal the craziness of an American System where one must commit a crime to receive psychiatric help. The documentary probes this maddening world and uncovers deeper psychological truths about the human need for care and connection, as well as for freedom.

Clift and Camic (2015), Gergen and Gergen (2010), Schneider et al. (2014) and Thompson and Neimeyer (2014) describe other ways in which researchers and practitioners have worked with the arts. Artist Bobby Baker, who has had direct experience of distress and of mental health services, has worked with a number of practitioners and researchers like

Dick Hallam, as well as with other survivors and artists. In fact, she kindly allowed us to use some of her evocative artwork to illustrate a chapter in Cromby et al. (2013). She has an excellent website: dailylifeltd.co.uk/about-us/people/daily life-ltd-team/bobby-baker/ (accessed 12 February, 2017).

Earlier in this chapter I discussed innovative qualitative research about the experience of hearing voices, and this topic is a good illustration of the varied ways in which researchers can disseminate their findings. Psychologist, researcher and voice-hearer Eleanor Longden gave a TED talk in 2013 about her experiences and wrote a book for TED (Longden, 2013). At the time of writing, her YouTube video has been viewed over a million times on www.youtube.com/watch?v=syjEN3peCJw (accessed 12 February, 2017).

Eleanor Longden was also interviewed by Jon Ronson and featured on his BBC Radio 4 programme and in a *Guardian* article he wrote (Ronson, 2013). Musician Jocelyn Pook wrote a song cycle about the voice-hearing experience and she includes in her sources of inspiration her great aunt Phyllis, Bobby Baker and Gail Hornstein's (2009) book (Pook, 2012). The popular science podcast Radiolab produced a piece on voice-hearing, which included an interview with Charles Fernyhough (www.radiolab.org/story/93554-voices-in-your-head/ [accessed 12 February, 2017]).

Of course, another important domain of dissemination is influencing public policy. Some qualitative researchers have written illuminatingly about the policy development process. For example, Stevens (2011) produced an ethnographic account of his experience working alongside British policymakers, and Carey and Crammond (2015) interviewed key stakeholders in the policymaking process, helpfully challenging simplistic assumptions about the links between research and policy. Clinical psychologist and qualitative researcher Lisa Cosgrove has addressed ethical and medico-legal issues that arise in psychiatry because of financial conflicts of interest and has collaborated with science journalist Robert Whitaker (Whitaker and Cosgrove, 2015). Such work brings us to an issue that has become increasingly important in my view: the need for clinical qualitative researchers to engage with a wider range of empirical and theoretical literature and to question currently dominant assumptions about (and categorisations of) psychological distress.

Clinical Qualitative Research Needs to Adopt More Critical Perspectives

Clinical psychology operates within a field where terms and concepts are heavily contested – an indication of the ways in which psychiatric classificatory systems are contested was evidenced by the debates around the time of the publication of *DSM-5*. As we noted in Cromby et al. (2013), somatogenic – or biomedical – models of distress have historically vied for dominance with psycho- and socio-genic models. There is evidence of cultural bias in diagnostic judgements (Caplan and Cosgrove, 2004), that distress is socially patterned and that the default intervention is often psychiatric medication. Moreover, the views of users of mental health services have been neglected and many of those in the psychiatric survivor movement complain that their experiences are colonised by professional classificatory systems (Campbell et al., 2013). In this context, it is therefore important to interrogate the cultural assumptions implicit in the way research in this area is conducted.

In Harper (2013a) I argued, based on my experience as a reviewer and examiner of articles and theses using qualitative research methods, that clinical qualitative research could often be rather formulaic. I warned of the danger of the same research questions being asked, using the same data collection methods (interviews), regardless of the stated method, with the product being a rather generic and superficial cross-sectional thematic analysis that was overly organised by the structure of the interview schedule, the content of which was often simply a reproduction of the current dominant cultural ways of conceptualising distress, indicated by a somewhat uncritical use of psychiatric diagnostic terms and definitions.

These are well-known problems (Chamberlain, 2000, 2012) and they often stem from a rather narrow engagement with the field, for example missing important empirical studies from the 'grey' literature or ethnography and also missing the unique insights generated in talking with service users and engaging in collaborative work with survivor researchers themselves. Some poorer quality studies claiming to use Foucauldian approaches to Discourse Analysis often show little evidence of engagement with Foucault's work, whilst other studies claiming to be phenomenological often show little evidence of reading beyond procedural guides to using methods like IPA like the earlier phenomenological literature (such as Gadamer, Husserl, Heidegger, etc.) or later developments (Langdridge, 2007; Willig and Billin, 2012). One of the strengths of phenomenological work is its ability to examine the rich particularities of individual experience. However, much clinical phenomenological research seems to move too quickly to a cross-sectional level of analysis and often seems thinly descriptive.

Many, especially novice, researchers state a wish to avoid too much contact with the extant literature

lest they are too influenced by it, but this assumes that they are not already influenced. As much clinical qualitative work is conducted by people already socialised in a culture saturated with psychological concepts and in professions embedded in systems often uncritically adopting terms and concepts from biomedicine, one could make the case that the only way to identify one's assumptions is to read widely in order that one can trace and manage their influence on the study (e.g. in how data are collected and interpreted). A broader reading (e.g. on cultural and historical contexts) and knowledge gained from direct contact with service user advisors or research collaborators can also facilitate the data collection process. For example, for those conducting interviews the process of reading a wider theoretical and empirical literature and learning from those with direct experience can stimulate the interviewer's curiosity, enabling them to ask more searching questions and richer follow-up questions.

A further problem for clinical research is that, in a wish to draw on theory to illuminate data, some researchers allow a currently popular and culturally dominant theoretical model (e.g. Attachment Theory, the Recovery Model, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, etc.) to overly organise the analysis, with extracts of data presented as illustrations of this model rather than a new interpretation of the phenomenon emerging from the researcher's sustained engagement with the data. Surely good quality qualitative research should show more evidence both of the 'struggle' of analysis and of the researcher's curiosity, for example how has the analysis surprised them? How have preconceptions (their own or those of the literature) been challenged? For those clinical researchers interested in exploring data from a variety of interpretative traditions there are some helpful guides now available (e.g. Wertz et al., 2011; Willig, 2012).

It can be hard for clinician researchers to stand back from dominant cultural understandings of distress and, again here, reading a broader range of literature and talking with a range of stakeholders can help. Emotions are often taken for granted in clinical qualitative research and it can be useful to draw on conceptual resources to help researchers ask more searching and illuminating questions (e.g. Ellis and Tucker, 2015; Wetherell, 2012). A historical approach can be of benefit here to understand how our current understandings of affect and madness have developed over time (Cromby et al., 2013; Hornstein, 2009). The Centre for the History of Emotions is a useful resource (projects.history.qmul.ac.uk/emotions [accessed 12 February, 2017]). Clegg (2012) provides a helpful brief analysis of the ways in which the different editions of the *DSM* have been influenced by social, historical and institutional factors, which can be of use to novice researchers. Bunn (2012) describes historical research methods that can be usefully employed in delineating the context within which currently dominant understandings of distress have developed. There are good examples of research where researchers have interrogated, for example, the globalisation of Western biomedical models (Mills, 2014). Neoliberalism has also been a concern, and Cromby and Willis (2014: 241) identify the ways in which neoliberal governmentality reconfigures 'selves and the social order in accord with the demands of market economies'. Given the dominance of biomedical conceptions of distress it is important for critical researchers not to surrender the realm of the body to uncritical biogenetic researchers. Instead, there are a variety of ways in which the body can be addressed in research (Cromby, 2015; Cromby and Harper, 2009; Cromby et al., 2013; Rose and Abi-Rached, 2013).

Within mental health settings, psychiatric diagnostic classification systems like those of the World Health Organisation or the American Psychiatric Association's (2013) *DSM-5* are hegemonic (Harper, 2013b). Some critical qualitative researchers have engaged with this topic (see the special issue of *Feminism & Psychology* devoted to the *DSM-5*: Marecek and Gavey, 2013) including interviewing practitioners about the varied ways in which they manage working within health bureaucracies that require the assigning of psychiatric diagnostic categories (e.g. Strong et al., 2012). Clinical qualitative researchers need to begin to delineate how we might conceptualise distress in a post-diagnostic world (Cromby et al., 2013). They could, for example, focus on how the public experience and talk about distress and conduct that disturbs others, sensitive to multiple meanings and contexts, and cognisant of the fact that many industrial and post-industrial societies have been permeated by psychological and psychiatric conceptualisations. Such studies might help clinical psychology move towards ways of describing and understanding distress that breaks free from diagnostic constructs rather than simply reproducing them. There are now a wide variety of resources for those wishing to question the cultural dominance of Western biomedical and, to some degree, psychological constructs of distress (e.g. Caplan and Cosgrove, 2004; Cooke et al., 2014; Cromby et al., 2013; de Vos, 2012; Mills, 2014; Parker, 2015a; Parker et al., 1995; Rapley et al., 2011; Speed et al., 2014; Teo, 2014).

Clinical qualitative research has become increasingly legitimised, but there is a danger that its increasing popularity leads to a less critical approach because researchers fail to question taken-for-granted conceptualisations. Indeed, perhaps qualitative methods have become legitimised because researchers have adopted an uncritical perspective. Mary Boyle (1998) warned that the more

radical qualitative methods might be transformed in a manner that did not threaten the theoretical, epistemological and methodological status quo. It is important that researchers continue to challenge currently dominant understandings of distress through theoretical and methodological innovation, collaborative work between academic researchers and clinicians, service users, survivors and relatives, and in disseminating their findings to the wider public.

Notes

1 Though the structure of this chapter is similar to that of the first edition, the more generic section on research questions that clinical qualitative research methods can address (and those which they cannot) has been removed and the majority of the content is new with most sections entirely re-written.
2 A discussion of the conceptual problems with both this definition and with the diagnostic category itself is beyond the scope of this scope of this chapter – see Boyle (2002) for such a critique.
3 As another chapter of this volume addresses psychotherapy I excluded psychotherapy-related journals as I did in the 2008 version of this chapter.

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29

Qualitative Research in Counselling and Psychotherapy: History, Methods, Ethics and Impact

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This chapter updates the counselling research focused chapter that appeared in Willig and Stainton Rogers's (2008) inaugural first edition of this Sage Handbook (Ponterotto et al., 2008). The outline and structure of this revised chapter parallels the original chapter while providing significant updates and a more recent review of the literature spanning the eight years (2008–2016) since the inaugural edition. Similar to the original chapter (Ponterotto et al., 2008), we (a) provide a brief historical perspective on the place of qualitative methods in counselling and psychotherapy research and locate this specialty area in the broader discipline of psychology; (b) summarize the most prevalent research paradigms, methods and topics forming the foundation of qualitative counselling research; and (c) provide recommendations for qualitative research and training in the field.

Major revisions in the present chapter focus on (a) an updated review and content analysis of recent qualitative research in the counselling field and (b) new sections on student and professional misunderstandings when conceptualizing qualitative versus quantitative counselling research, and ethics in counselling and psychotherapy qualitative research. The major goal of the chapter continues to be to provide graduate students and experienced researchers, whether initially trained in qualitative or quantitative methods, with an accessible, user-friendly guide and cognitive map for critiquing, conceptualizing, conducting and writing-up qualitative research in the highly applied fields of counselling and psychotherapy.

AUTHORS' INTELLECTUAL BASE AND EPOCH

The three authors of this chapter live and work in the USA and are US citizens either through birth or immigration procedures. We are diverse in gender, race, ethnicity, native and preferred language and sexual orientation. Collectively our team speaks five languages fluently to the point of providing psychotherapy services and conducting research in these diverse languages. The authors are involved in conducting and supervising qualitative research, providing psychotherapy services and supervision, and consulting with a broad range of institutions and culturally diverse communities. Collectively, we have mentored 66 PhD dissertations in Counselling Psychology, of which 21 (32 per cent) have utilized qualitative or mixed methods designs.

We emphasize our cultural 'horizon of understanding' (Morrow, 2005) to highlight that

qualitative research in the USA has played a particularly significant role in informing and improving counselling services to culturally diverse populations. For example,

> qualitative designs often give voice to previously disempowered, marginalized, and silenced groups who share their worldview and lived experiences in their own words, in their own way, and under conditions set forth through co-membership in the research endeavour. Ponterotto, 2010: 584

In the USA, psychotherapists are trained primarily in three psychology specialties: clinical psychology, counselling psychology and mental health counselling. The professions of social work and psychiatry also equip their trainees with psychotherapy skills, but these disciplines are considered distinct from psychology. In this chapter, we focus on qualitative research in counselling psychology and mental health counselling; whereas David Harper, in Chapter 28, focuses on clinical psychology.

LOCATING THE FIELD

In North America, the terms counselling and psychotherapy are often used interchangeably, and we follow this practice in the current chapter. We should acknowledge, however, that historically the specialties of 'counselling' and 'psychotherapy' have included both philosophical similarities and differences. One helpful conceptualization for understanding the differences inherent in these terms is provided by Gelso et al. (2014), where they depict *counselling* and *psychotherapy* sitting on two ends of the same continuum:

> At one extreme, work that is supportive, seeks to educate, and focuses on situational problems and problem-solving at a conscious level, with normal individuals, is aptly called counseling. At the other end of the continuum, interventions that seek to reconstruct personality, include depth analysis, and analytically focus on subconscious processes with more troubled individuals, are best labeled psychotherapy. In the broad middle-range of this continuum, when interventions contain a mixture of the factors just described, the terms *counseling* and *psychotherapy* imply one and the same process. (Gelso et al., 2014: 13; italics in original)

Another distinction outlined by Gelso et al. (2014) is that counselling tends to be shorter term, averaging 12 to 15 sessions, while psychotherapy can be a much longer term process, sometimes continuing for years. Furthermore, counselling psychology is often distinguished from other subdisciplines within psychology (e.g. clinical and school psychology) based on five core values: (1) an emphasis on optimal functioning and individuals' strengths, as opposed to a strong focus on pathology and remediation; (2) a focus on the whole person integrating personal and career development across the entire lifespan; (3) an emphasis on multicultural competence and social justice advocacy in all counselling, consulting and research endeavours; (4) an emphasis on prevention and psychoeducation; and (5) an anchoring in the scientist–practitioner model (see Gelso et al., 2014).

HISTORY OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

Historically, qualitative research methods have served as a cornerstone for advancing theory and practice in counselling and psychotherapy. In fact, the origins of qualitative research in psychotherapy coincide with the development of the field itself. In the late 1800s, Sigmund Freud (1925) developed the 'talking cure,' the clinical treatment that is at the heart of psychoanalysis as well as many other forms of counselling and psychotherapy. Furthermore, it was Freud's (1910) psychoanalytic psychobiography of the Italian genius Leonardo da Vinci that initiated a century-long interest in understanding the psyches of notable personalities throughout history. Carl Jung, another psychoanalytic pioneer, developed his own variation of psychoanalysis as well as a popular theory of psychological types based on hundreds of individual case studies (McCaulley and Moody, 2008).

In addition to the psychoanalytic case study method, qualitative-oriented research in humanistic and existential psychology has markedly informed research in counselling and psychotherapy. A good example is the person-centred approach of Carl Rogers (1951). He developed his theory based on numerous case studies highlighting the centrality of the 'counselling relationship' rather than the 'counselling technique' as the critical variable in successful counselling (see Wampold, 2001). Rogers' theory appears to be anchored in phenomenology, or the client's experiences of self-in-relation to the environment (Gelso et al., 2014). Importantly, Rogers was one of the first counsellors to regularly audiotape his sessions for later transcription and analysis.

His attempts to understand clients' subjective experiences and their interpretation of reality, along with his systematic analysis of transcribed sessions, has had a profound impact on qualitative research in counselling world-wide.

Existential psychology has also clearly informed qualitative research in counselling and psychotherapy. A notable example in this genre is Viktor Frankl's (2006) work on meaning-making as reflected in his classic book, *Man's [person's] search for meaning*. The autobiographical approach taken by Frankl in his processing of his concentration camp experiences has informed not only his therapeutic model of Logotherapy, but also narrative and life-story approaches popular in counselling research.

Qualitative research in other subfields of psychology has also influenced research and practice in counselling and psychotherapy. Landmark qualitative research contributions have been made in developmental psychology (Erikson, 1969, 1980), cognitive psychology (Piaget, 1929), women's studiers (Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1998), personality psychology (Allport, 1937; Murray, 1938), aviation psychology (Flanagan, 1954), and multicultural psychology (Cross, 2001; Fanon, 1963; Freire, 1972). This pioneering work is clearly reflected in current qualitative research trends in counselling psychology. For a comprehensive historical review of qualitative research in psychology, the reader is referred to Wertz (2014).

In the counselling psychology literature specifically, the second half of the twentieth century brought forth influential publications that advocated for qualitative research by challenging the traditional quantitative hegemony in the field. Among these landmark publications were Goldman's (1976) 'A revolution in counseling research' and Polkinghorne's (1984) 'Further extensions of methodological diversity', both published in the field's leading quantitative research journal, the *Journal of Counseling Psychology;* and Hoshmand's (1989) proposal for 'Alternate research paradigms', which was published in the field's leading conceptual and theoretical journal, *The Counseling Psychologist.*

By the early twenty-first century, alternate research paradigms, particularly constructivist–interpretivist models and critical theory, were more accepted and valued in counselling training and research (Ponterotto, 2005a). During this period, the *Journal of Counseling Psychology* published its first special issue devoted entirely to qualitative and mixed methods (Haverkamp et al., 2005). This issue was soon followed by a double major issue of *The Counseling Psychologist* (Carter and Morrow, 2007a, 2007b) further outlining qualitative research methods. This set of three journal issues is now recommended reading in various counselling psychology training programs.

CURRENT STATUS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

During the mid- and later twentieth century, the research paradigms of positivism and post-positivism and their associated quantitative approaches (particularly experimental and survey methods) dominated psychological research in all specialty areas, save perhaps for psychoanalytically-oriented research (Camic et al., 2003; Haverkamp et al., 2005). Relative to research in the mental health fields, a number of content analyses documented the preponderance of quantitative studies in premier journals.

For example, in a review of 365 outcome studies in the areas of individual counselling, career counselling and school counselling published across 116 different journals worldwide in counselling, psychotherapy and psychiatry, Sexton (1996) found that less than 5 per cent of these studies relied on qualitative methods. Berrios and Lucca (2006) examined the six-year period from 1997 to 2002 across four US-based counselling journals: *Counseling and Values,* the *Journal of Counseling and Development*, *Professional School Counseling* and *The Counseling Psychologist*, and found that qualitative methods accounted for roughly 17 per cent of the research articles. A content analysis of the *Journal of Marriage and Family* from 1989 through 1994, found that less than 2 per cent of articles published relied on qualitative methods (Ambert et al., 1995). More recently, in a methodological review of 138 research papers published during 2014 in the journal *Drug and Alcohol Review,* Olsen et al. (2015) found only 4 per cent to be qualitative studies.

The low rate of qualitative research relative to quantitative research during this time period can be attributed, in large part, to the quantitative emphasis in counselling training programs. As of 2004, only 10 per cent of North American-based counselling psychology training programs *required* any coursework in qualitative research methods (Ponterotto, 2005b). This same survey found that the median percentage of annual doctoral dissertations across programs that relied on qualitative methods was also only 10 per cent. It should be noted that the quantitative research dominance in psychological research in North America over the last one-half century may not be reflective of the international arena, where

qualitative approaches are more common (see Rennie, 2004). Unfortunately, we could not locate a more recent curriculum survey to see if the incorporation of qualitative course training and dissertations has increased in the last decade. This is an important area for future research.

A FOCUSED METHODOLOGICAL AND TOPICAL CONTENT ANALYSIS

In the first edition of this chapter, Ponterotto et al. (2008) reported on a content analysis of the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, the *Journal of Counseling and Development* and *The Counseling Psychologist* during the period 1995 through 2005. The authors reviewed every issue of these three journals over the 11-year period, and each article was classified as to type: quantitative, qualitative, mixed method or conceptual/review article. For those articles identified as qualitative or mixed method (with a significant qualitative component) research, the authors also identified and logged the underlying research paradigm guiding the study, the particular qualitative inquiry approach employed, the chief data gathering procedures, characteristics of the sample and the topics addressed. Though narrow in scope, the Ponterotto et al. (2008) content analysis provided a clear snapshot of qualitative counselling research in North America during that decade. For the present chapter, the authors replicated the content analysis for research published in the same journals for the three-year period, 2013–2015.

Table 29.1 presents the results of the original content analysis taken from Ponterotto et al. (2008) and includes our most recent extension. By comparing the two time periods, readers can discern whether the representation of qualitative and mixed methods research in North America's three most prestigious counselling and counselling psychology journals increased over selected time periods.

Examination of this table shows that of the 868 research articles published across the journals from 1995 through 2005, 80 per cent were quantitative, 18 per cent qualitative and 2 per cent mixed methods. Counselling psychology's most prestigious research journal, the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, published primarily quantitative research (90 per cent), with smaller representations of qualitative (8 per cent) and mixed methods (2 per cent) research. By marked contrast, qualitative research was well represented in *The Counseling Psychologist*, accounting for 37 per cent of research studies, and in the *Journal of Counseling and Development*, representing 27 per cent of empirical studies.

Looking at the same data in the 2013–2015 period inclusive of 364 research studies, we note that collectively, the representation of qualitative and mixed methods studies increased. Qualitative research went from 18 per cent to 23 per cent of all research studies, and mixed methods representation rose from 2 per cent to 5 per cent. Z-Tests for two independent sample proportions yielded significant results indicating that the increase of qualitative studies ($Z = -2.11$, $p < 0.05$), mixed methods studies ($Z = -2.31$, $p < 0.05$) and qualitative and mixed methods studies combined ($Z = -2.96$, $p < 0.01$) across the two time periods was statistically significant. Though various counselling researchers had alluded to or predicted a

Table 29.1 Research methodology content analysis across the *Journal of Counseling Psychology, The Counseling Psychologist* and the *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 1995–2005 and 2013–2015

	Quantitative Number (%)	*Qualitative Number (%)*	*Mixed method Number (%)*	*Total research*	*Conceptual*	*Total articles*
1995–2005						
Journal of Counseling Psychology	432 (90)	39 (8)	10 (2)	481	25	506
The Counseling Psychologist	55 (58)	35 (37)	5 (5)	95	139	234
Journal of Counseling and Development	207 (71)	79 (27)	6 (2)	292	322	614
TOTAL	694 (80)	153 (18)	21 (2)	868	486	1354
2013–2015						
Journal of Counseling Psychology	164 (92)	12 (7)	3 (2)	179	7	186
The Counseling Psychologist	47 (51)	41 (45)	4 (4)	92	47	139
Journal of Counseling and Development	52 (56)	30 (32)	11 (12)	93	59	152
TOTAL	263 (72)	83 (23)	18 (5)	364	113	477

paradigm shift in the last decade (Haverkamp et al., 2005; Hoyt and Bhati, 2007; O'Neill, 2002; Ponterotto, 2002), our present analysis is the first empirical confirmation that a paradigm shift in the professions of counselling and counselling psychology has arrived and is in progress.

Although our narrowly defined analysis across three leading counselling journals provides statistical evidence for a paradigm shift, it is important to emphasize that the increase in methodological pluralism was evident in two (*The Counseling Psychologist* and *Journal of Counseling and Development*) of the three journals, while *Journal of Counseling Psychology* actually decreased from 80 per cent to 72 per cent in qualitative representation over the examined time periods.

Common Research Paradigms and Inquiry Approaches

One criterion of strong qualitative writing is the researcher's ability to elucidate her or his operating paradigm when introducing the study to the readership (Morrow, 2005, 2007). Ponterotto et al. (2008) examined all the qualitative and mixed methods articles in their review and classified each study's operating paradigm according to the four-paradigm schema introduced by Guba and Lincoln (1994) and expanded upon by Ponterotto (2005a): positivism, post-positivism, constructivism–interpretivism, and critical theory with related ideological positions (for explanations of research paradigms, refer back to Chapter 1 of this Volume).

During the 1995–2005 timeframe, constructivism–interpretivism was the research paradigm most frequently anchoring qualitative research, followed by some combination of the post-positivist and constructivist–interpretivist paradigms. Finally, post-positivism served as an operating paradigm in a minority of the studies in the review. In the updated 2013–2015 review represented here, 55 per cent of the qualitative studies are primarily classified as constructivist–interpretivist, 21 per cent as post-positivist, 18 per cent combined the constructivist–interpretivist and post-positivist paradigms, and another 6 per cent combined the critical theory paradigm with either constructivism–interpretivism or post-positivism. In the only other paradigmatic content analysis we could find in the literature, Gehart et al. (2001), focusing on family therapy research, also found variations of constructivism and post-positivism to be the primary paradigms anchoring the research.

Next, Ponterotto et al. (2008) identified what specific inquiry approaches were most common in the counselling research reviewed. Across paradigms, the most frequently employed qualitative approaches were life-story narratives or mini-biographies, phenomenological methods, the consensual qualitative approach, grounded theory and case studies. In the update from 2013–2015, 23 per cent of studies relied on phenomenological approaches (particularly following the models of Giorgi, 2009; Moustakas, 1994; Van Manen, 1990); 20 per cent on individual case studies, either the traditional clinical case description or the same incorporating some quantitative data; 17 per cent were grounded theory studies (particularly following the approaches of Charmaz, 2006; Fassinger, 2005; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 2008); 13 per cent utilized the consensual qualitative research (CQR) model (Hill, 2012; Hill et al., 2005); 11 per cent utilized more traditional content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004); 10 per cent relied on narrative methods (Riessman, 2008) particularly life-story and autobiography, and biography and psychobiography; and 7 per cent were case studies describing program implementations and evaluation.

These findings are somewhat consistent with the findings from other major reviews of the counselling and psychotherapy literature. For example, Berrios and Lucca (2006) found case studies, historical investigations and phenomenological studies to be frequently employed. The Faulkner et al. (2002) review found a predominance of content analyses (which they defined as any form of transcript analysis aimed at noting frequencies or establishing categories or themes), followed by ethnographies, case studies, grounded theory, conversational analysis and phenomenology. Gehart et al. (2001) found ethnography to be the most popular method in family therapy, followed by conversational analysis and phenomenological interviews. Finally, Hill (2005) highlighted grounded theory, phenomenology, consensual qualitative research and comprehensive process analysis as the most popular approaches to psychotherapy research.

Subsumed within the varied inquiry approaches identified by Ponterotto et al. (2008) was a wide array of specific data-gathering procedures. Of the 174 studies they analysed, the majority relied on face-to-face interviews (usually semi-structured) with multiple participants; also quite popular were biographical methods (usually interviewing the subject of the biography, supported with document analysis and sometimes interviewing informants), and life-story narratives of one or a pair of participants. Less popular were the use of multiple data-gathering procedures in the same study (e.g. a combination of two or more of the following: individual interviews, focus groups, document analysis, genograms, analysis of drawings/art work, participant observation); use of

archival document analysis; phone interviews of multiple participants; or case studies.

In the 2013–2015 update, a majority of studies (60 per cent) relied on multi-subject interviews. Of this percentage, 62 per cent gathered data through one semi-structured interview per participant, and 7 per cent interviewed each participant two to three times; 16 per cent gathered data through written responses to open-ended survey questions; 5 per cent utilized focus group interviews; and 10 per cent combined focus group interviewing with individual interviews. With regard to individual interviews, the majority were in-person although some were phone interviews; and the range of interview length was from 10 to 180 minutes, with a mean of 81 minutes. Researchers would often report the range length of interviews, and the majority were in the 60–90-minute range, followed by the 45–60-minute range, with a smaller percentage of short (under 45 minutes) or longer (over 100 minutes) interviews.

The strong reliance on face-to-face interviews identified in our content analyses is consistent with the methodology most frequently employed in family therapy research (Faulkner et al., 2002; Gehart et al., 2001). It is quite understandable that counselling and psychotherapy researchers are very comfortable with face-to-face interviews because this method of data gathering is also at the heart of their clinical training and practice.

Topical Foci of Qualitative Research Articles

The next process in the Ponterotto et al. (2008) content analysis involved classifying all 174 studies into their topical areas. The largest category included mini-biographies or profiles of pioneers in the field of counselling and psychotherapy. The second and third largest categories focused on multicultural counselling and career counselling, respectively. Personal narratives of experiences with racism constituted their next largest cluster of articles; this was followed by qualitative and mixed-method studies focusing on counselling process issues such as establishing a therapeutic alliance, working through therapeutic impasses, assessment of significant events during the therapy process and the impact of self-disclosure on therapy.

In our 2013–2015 update, we found that multicultural issues, broadly defined, dominated the research agenda, accounting for 56 per cent of all research studies. Other topics covered in-depth included training and professional development issues, including clinical supervision, ethics training, practicum training and counsellors' sense of professional identity (12 per cent); and therapeutic issues and strategies for developmental cohorts across the lifespan (10 per cent). Table 29.2 summarizes the topics addressed in our updated review of 101 qualitative and mixed methods studies.

Table 29.2 Topics covered in the *Journal of Counseling Psychology, The Counseling Psychologist* and the *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 2013–2015 (N = 101 research studies)

Multicultural issues broadly defined	56%
• Multicultural training, competence and social justice issues	16%
• Counselling issues and approaches specific to diverse racial, ethnic, immigrant and refugee groups in North America	15%
• Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender issues and counselling approaches	9%
• Counselling issues and approaches specific to spirituality and religion	6%
• Counselling issues and approaches specifically for men	6%
• Counselling women, specific issues and approaches	2%
• Intersecting identities	2%
Training and professional development issues for counselling students and professionals	12%
Therapeutic issues and strategies for populations across the lifespan	10%
Profiles of pioneers in the counselling profession	8%
Counselling persons with disabilities	3%
Health counselling issues, particularly cancer	3%
Work and career development	2%
Intersection of positive and counselling psychology	2%
Counselling offenders and those in prison	2%
Methodology critiques/position papers	2%
TOTAL	100%

The findings of this topical content analysis are fairly consistent with those of Berrios and Lucca (2006), particularly with regard to a focus on multiculturalism, profiles of counselling pioneers and spirituality.

SUMMARY OF CONTENT ANALYSES RESULTS

An examination of earlier content analyses reviewed in this chapter along with our 2013–2015 update yields the following conclusions.

1 Qualitative and mixed methods research in counselling has increased moderately yet statistically significantly in recent years. Representation of qualitative and mixed methods studies is dependent to some degree on the particular journals being investigated.
2 With regard to alternative (to positivism and the experimental method) research paradigms, studies on the constructivist/interpretivist (exploratory, discovery-oriented) to post-positivist (explanatory, theory/hypothesis influenced) continuum appear to dominate counselling research. The critical theory paradigm, however, was much less represented in the counselling research.
3 With regard to specific inquiry approaches subsumed within the alternate paradigms, phenomenological, grounded theory, consensual qualitative research, variations on the case study, quantified content analyses and narrative approaches were most popular.
4 In terms of data gathering procedures, the individual face-to-face and phone interviews were most prevalent, followed by open ended survey responses (allowing for larger and broader sampling), and focus groups which were occasionally utilized.
5 With regard to topics of empirical study, multicultural issues in counselling, broadly and inclusively defined, dominated the research landscape. Particularly popular topics in this area included multicultural competence of trainees and practitioners; the advancement of social justice initiatives; counselling specific racial, ethnic and immigrant groups; counselling and development issues with gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered individuals; spiritual and religious issues in counselling; and gender-specific counselling approaches.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF QUALITATIVE METHODS TO COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

Heretofore we have focused on deconstructing qualitative research studies to discern paradigms anchoring the research, most popular inquiry approaches and general topical areas. It is critical that subdisciplines in psychology periodically survey their predominant research paradigms and investigative approaches so that continuing and new directions for knowledge acquisition can be put forth (Ponterotto et al., 2008).

In this chapter, we have documented empirically that a methodological paradigm shift is indeed underway in the majority of the counselling profession's most respected journals. Now we must ask: what has this collective body of research contributed to the advancement of the counselling and psychotherapy professions? In this section we integrate the results of the studies reviewed in our content analyses as well as in a broader research review, to summarize the benefits of qualitative research to the counselling field. Table 29.3 outlines 13 benefits of qualitative research organized along five broader areas aligned, in part, with the unique mission of counselling psychology as outlined by Gelso et al. (2014) and reviewed at the start of this chapter. In this section we highlight research in the three most robust topical areas emanating from our review of the qualitative studies.

MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND ADVOCACY

As highlighted by Gelso et al. (2014) in their comprehensive overview of the field of counselling psychology, multicultural and social justice issues are a defining component of the subdiscipline. Our current content analysis (2013–2015) along with others highlighted throughout this chapter have confirmed that qualitative research in multicultural counselling is vibrant across the major journals reviewed. Among the insights garnered in this body of research are methods and approaches to enhance the multicultural and social justice competence of counsellors, particularly using case study and program development and evaluation models (Bhattacharyya, Ashby and Goodman, 2014; Flores et al., 2014; Motulsky et al., 2014; Swan et al., 2015).

Also popular in our research review were specific counselling issues and approaches relative to

Table 29.3 Benefits of qualitative research to disciplines of counselling and psychotherapy

Qualitative research in:	*Representative study/article*
Multicultural competence, social justice and advocacy	
1. Contributes to an accessible and equitable mental health system by involving and empowering previously disenfranchised racial/ethnic/sexual minority groups to participate in counselling services.	Mohatt and Thomas, 2006; Ponterotto, 2010
2. Particularly effective in uncovering and explaining microaggressions faced by less empowered groups in society such as racial/ethnic minority groups, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered populations, persons with disabilities, women, youth and the elderly, immigrants, refugee populations, overweight or very thin individuals.	Garber and Grotevant, 2015; Holder et al., 2015
Counsellor training, supervision and professional development	
3. Helpful in identifying specific training techniques and supervision processes that promote counsellors' skill development and professional identity.	Gray et al., 2001; Hill et al., 2015; Knox et al., 2008
4. Enhances the study of exemplary clinician and leadership profiles through narrative models in biography/psychobiography, life story and autobiography.	Casas, 2016; Gilbert, 2014; Subich, 2013
Counselling and therapy process and outcome	
5. Effective in studying the moment-to-moment and session-to-session interactions and processes that enhance the counsellor–client therapeutic alliance and promote growth in psychotherapy.	Fitzpatrick et al., 2006; Hill, 2005
6. Effective in studying very complex, layered and nuanced human phenomena because it is not constrained by a limited number of pre-selected, mathematically measured constructs as is often the case in quantitative research.	Hill, 2005; Nelson and Quintana, 2005
7. Ideal for studying the thorny and complex ethical issues that characterize the work of counsellors in the field.	Ametrano, 2014; Burkholder and Hall, 2014
8. Encourages the study of outliers and special cases often obscured in large sample quantitative studies. Such cases are of high interest to both professional counsellors and lay audiences.	Henderson and Montplaisir, 2013; Ponterotto and Reynolds, 2013
Hygiology and developmental perspective	
9. Promotes counselling psychology's hygiology and salutogenic emphasis by studying the whole person in social-cultural context and by balancing human strengths with mental health challenges.	Budge et al., 2013; Magyar-Moe et al., 2015; Scheel et al., 2013; Singh et al., 2014
Counselling psychologists as scientist–practitioners	
10. Engages students in the research process as counselling trainees often gravitate to more interactive and dialogic research designs.	Goldman, 1976; Sciarra, 1999
11. Enhances quantitative research in mixed methods designs by bringing descriptive and substantive depth to the central tendency and variance data that is often the focus of quantitative designs.	Frels and Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Morrow, 2007; Nelson and Quintana, 2005
Public knowledge and education in mental health	
12. Given its reliance on thick description of participant and researcher experience, the research engages a lay and public audience with the counselling and psychotherapy process.	Morrow, 2007; Ponterotto and Grieger, 2007
13. Serves to decrease the stigma of mental health services given the participant empowerment perspectives in critical theory and constructivistic designs.	Morrow, 2007; Silverstein et al., 2006

individuals and clients given their socio-cultural-political context, for example research on resilience in African American populations (Singh et al., 2013; Williams and Bryan, 2013), perceptions on health and mental illness in African American men and women (Capodilupo and Kim, 2014; Ward and Besson, 2013), and mentoring young African American males (Butler et al., 2013). Qualitative research also focused on understanding and working with undocumented immigrant adolescents

and adults (Ellis and Chen, 2013; Gonzalez et al., 2015), as well as various refugee populations, including those from Liberia (Clarke and Borders, 2014) and Myanmar (Bartholomew et al., 2015).

Another cluster of studies focused on psychological and mental health issues of recent immigrant communities, including Chinese Americans (Chen et al., 2013), and Asian Indians (Inman et al., 2015), while some research focused on longer standing American cultural groups, including examining resilience and values among Mexican American college students (Consoli and Llamas, 2013), the gender and career identity development or urban minority boys raised in single-mother households (Vargas et al., 2016), and acculturation of American Indian college students (Flynn et al., 2014). Finally, this topical area also included research on international subgroups, including a focus on racial–cultural identity development and sense of belonging in Black indigenous Australians (Neville, Oyama, Odunewu and Huggins, 2014) and the nature of secret disclosures of Korean clients to their counsellors (Han and O'Brien, 2014).

The last one-half decade has brought front and centre the developmental processes, psychological needs, and internal strengths and resilience of our lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered students, clients, and general population. This research has been significant in battling society's general homophobia and preparing clinicians to better serve this understudied broad and diverse population. Representative studies in this domain included long interviews on resilience and positive emotions in transgender youth and adults (Budge et al., 2013; Budge et al., 2015; Singh et al., 2014), case study and interview studies on the intersection of lesbian and gay identity and the world of work (Charles and Arndt, 2013; Nielson and Alderson, 2014); phone and in-person interview studies on family dynamics when children, siblings or parents represent sexual minority groups (Carroll and Tuason, 2015; Huang, Chen and Ponterotto, 2016; Lytle et al., 2013); interview and focus group studies on sexual schema development in bisexual (Elder et al., 2015a) and gay men (Elder et al., 2015b). Further, the importance and process of heterosexual ally development has been studied in counselling trainees and practicing psychologists using long telephone interviews (Asta and Vacha-Haase, 2013). Naturally, this latter study would also overlap with the social justice emphasis in counselling research highlighted earlier.

Considering our inclusive definition of multiculturalism, recent qualitative research has specifically examined ways of better understanding and serving our many religious minority groups internationally. Among the various studies in this topical area are interview studies of effective counselling for non-Orthodox Ashkenazi women (Ginsberg and Sinacore, 2013), supporting the academic and adjustment processes in Muslim graduate students studying science in Taiwan (Chen, Liu, Tsai and Chen, 2015), understanding sexuality issues in adult Mormon women (Jacobsen and Wright, 2014), and exploring the role and meaning of spirituality and religion in adult Muslim and Christian women (Ali et al., 2008).

Within this religious topical area Brewster et al., (2014) conducted a post-positivist, traditional 12-year content analysis of articles on atheism, finding that the topic is generally understudied, particularly with regard to mental health correlates. A number of qualitative studies have focused on spirituality perceptions of counselling trainees (Henriksen et al., 2015), as well as among Israeli Arab and Jewish adolescents (Rich and Cinamon, 2007). A good cluster of studies examined how clients and therapists navigate discussions of spirituality within therapy and how attending to spirituality impacts the therapist–client therapeutic alliance as well as therapy outcome (Clarke et al., 2013; Johnson et al., 2007; Knox et al., 2005; Magaldi-Dopman et al., 2011).

Also covered within the broad domain of multiculturalism has been a surge in counselling issues specific to the male experience, for example general content analyses of this coverage across leading counselling journals (Evans, 2013), specific issues and effective counselling approaches to working with men (Duffey and Haberstroh, 2013; Novack et al., 2013; Reed, 2014; Shepard and Rabinowitz, 2013), feminist identity development among male therapists (Baird et al., 2007) and the negative impact of the marked underrepresentation of men in the counselling and mental health professions (Michel et al., 2013).

Although women represent a majority of the research samples across the studies reviewed in this chapter, there were minimal women's-focused topics among the recent studies we reviewed in the general counselling journals. Topics that were covered relied on interview studies on the impact of, and coping with, dating violence during the educational experiences of adolescent females (Chronister et al., 2013), battered women's processes of leaving abusive relationships (Brown et al., 2005) and body image of female college volleyball players (Steinfeldt et al., 2013).

In summary, qualitative research has helped the counselling profession better understand the lived experiences, strengths and psychological needs of a broad swath of our society. We have engaged in dialogic discourse (i.e. constructivism) with many populations that have historically been stereotyped, silenced and understudied in the field. Counsellors and other mental health professionals

have an ethical and moral responsibility to serve competently all segments of our society, and the body of qualitative multicultural research reviewed here provides us some evidence that we are now meeting this ethical and moral mandate.

COUNSELLING TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE CAREER LIFESPAN

Our review uncovered significant attention given to the lives and experiences of counsellors and therapists themselves. Many pioneering counsellors, therapists and supervisors have shared their life and work experiences either through first-person personal narratives (e.g. Horne, 2014; Gilbert, 2014; Subich, 2013), mini-biographies (Borders and Cashwell, 2014; Nichols and Carney, 2013) or psychobiographical profiles (Henderson and Montplaisir, 2013). As such, readers have a broad window into the world of helping professionals: their training, day-to-day work, challenges, struggles and career rewards. Reading the life stories of pioneers in the field appears to have a strong impact on the training motivation and career self-efficacy of counsellors-in-training.

Our recent content analysis (2013–2015) and our broader research review uncovered a good amount of studies focusing on the training and supervision of counselling trainees. Consensual qualitative research (CQR) studies have examined the training of undergraduates with regard to basic counselling skills. This cluster of studies is rather unique in that counselling training in North America focuses almost exclusively on the graduate level. Among the topics studied here are training undergraduates to work with children of abused women (O'Brien et al., 2014) and teaching undergraduate students the skills of using immediacy in counselling (Spangler et al., 2014), as well as incorporating therapeutic challenges in counselling (Chui et al., 2014).

A good number of studies examined graduate level trainees' in the midst of externship and internship supervision. Hill et al. (2015) examined the effectiveness of externship training in a psychodynamic/interpersonal-focused training clinic using a mixed methods design. Merriman (2015) examined the concept of 'compassion fatigue' among counsellors (a form of professional burn-out) and used a case study model to outline best supervision practices in working with and preventing compassion fatigue among counsellors.

Ethical issues in the training of counsellors and therapists have been studied through a case study for teaching ethical decision making to counselling students in a course format (Ametrano, 2014), through studying trainees' reactions to ethical issues in noteworthy legal cases in the field (Burkholder and Hall, 2014) and through learning from the ethical values held by 'master' therapists (Jennings et al., 2005). CQR methods (Hill, 2012) have been used to study a host of clinical supervision topics, including supervisor transference with pre-doctoral interns (Ladany et al., 2000); counsellor trainee experiences of productive and counterproductive events in supervision (Gazzola and Theriault, 2007; Gray et al., 2001); supervisor perspectives on dispensing easy, difficult or no feedback to supervisees (Burkard et al., 2014; Hoffman et al., 2005); counselling trainee impasses in counselling and the impact of group supervision on their resolution (De Stefano et al., 2007); and the positive effects of selective supervisor personal self-disclosures of the supervisor–supervisee relationship (Knox et al., 2008).

The future of the counselling and psychotherapy professions rest largely on the competence and training of our master's and doctoral degree students, and on attracting strong undergraduate students to the mental health professions. The body of research reviewed here suggests that a good amount of research attention is being devoted to understanding the essential components of the training and supervision process. It should be acknowledged that the ground-breaking and prolific work of Clara E. Hill and her research teams using rigorous CQR procedures has significantly impacted the status and quality of professional training in counselling and psychotherapy. The last two decades of CQR research is summarized in Hill (2012) and is highly recommended to our readers.

COUNSELLING AND THERAPY PROCESS AND OUTCOME

The collective group of studies has provided us with a window into the deep emotional and cognitive experiences of clients, students, families and the general population. Through a strong focus on semi-structured long interviews, particularly within the research approaches of grounded theory, consensual qualitative research and phenomenology, we now better understand the positive and negative life experiences for both 'normal' and 'clinical' samples. By presenting 'thick

description' (see Ponterotto, 2006) of participants' life experiences through study context and participant quotes, counsellors and psychotherapists have collectively heightened their level of empathy for a wide variety of clients and clinical issues.

Qualitative and mixed methods research has helped to identify session-to-session critical events that both promote and hinder therapeutic progress. Whereas past quantitative research contributed significantly to pre-to-post therapy outcome assessments, qualitative studies have helped us understand what transpires session-to-session and minute-to-minute in sessions to promote therapeutic change and optimal health. Representative studies in this area include therapists' use of client strengths in the counselling process (Scheel et al., 2013), therapists perspectives on using silence in therapy (Ladany et al., 2004), the impact of critical incidents during the early stages of the therapist–client relationship alliance (Fitzpatrick et al., 2006), the beneficial therapeutic impact of clients offering and therapists accepting inexpensive gifts during therapy (Knox et al., 2009) and the value of therapist use of immediacy in brief psychotherapy (Hill et al., 2008; Kasper et al., 2008).

Collectively, qualitative research has helped the profession deconstruct the most critical in-session elements that facilitate (or hinder) successful psychotherapy process and outcome. Through this research we can now reconstruct best practice models for serving our diverse client base.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE COUNSELLING RESEARCHER

In gauging the reactions to our inaugural chapter in this Handbook (Ponterotto et al., 2008), readers requested more practical tips for engaging the qualitative research process. Although understanding the research paradigms, the most popular inquiry approaches, and frequent topics undergirding counselling and psychotherapy research was informative, our readers, particularly at the graduate student and new professional levels, wanted more guidance on challenges to the process, particularly those centred on theoretical anchoring, navigating the paradigm–inquiry model connection, and sampling issues and criteria. Furthermore, in teaching qualitative research and mentoring doctoral studies, the particular challenge of navigating ethical issues has continued to emerge since the inaugural publication of this book roughly a decade ago.

COMMON PROBLEMS IN COUNSELLING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Given the diversity of qualitative research methods, novice qualitative researchers may potentially stumble upon some pitfalls during data collection and analysis, such as equipment failure, environmental hazards and transcription errors (Easton et al., 2000). The purpose of this section is to caution novice qualitative researchers about three of the common problem areas in qualitative research and, in particular, grounded theory and phenomenology – two qualitative methods commonly embraced by counselling and psychotherapy researchers. These are the absence of theoretical literature; inconsistency among research paradigm and inquiry approach and research questions; and inappropriate sampling, 'method slurring' (Baket et al., 1992) and presentation of findings.

The Absence of Theoretical Literature

A common misconception about qualitative research is that it is atheoretical or 'theory-less.' Perhaps influenced by the false premise of the researcher as a blank slate, novice qualitative researchers may pay insufficient attention to any theoretical or associated literature relating to the research questions. As a result, their research question may not be properly anchored on the existing theoretical grounds. Nor is it clear how the research addresses a 'gap' in the literature and why it is important to bridge this gap.

The complexity of counselling and psychotherapy processes and outcomes presents opportunities for qualitative researchers to deepen our understanding of the rich, dynamic counselling encounters. Given the richness and diversity of counselling and psychotherapy theories, qualitative researchers should take advantage of the cumulative research evidence to shape the scope and focus of their study questions. This initial review of the literature is also helpful in the development of a semi-structured interview protocol to ensure interview questions are coherent and consistent with the research question.

Although qualitative researchers are not necessarily bound by a particular theory, they do operate with a set of conceptual frameworks and assumptions, explicit or otherwise, that will affect, directly or indirectly, their data collection and interpretive analysis of data. By adequately reviewing the related literature, qualitative researchers

remain mindful of the boundaries of their own experiences and assumptions as reflected in the literature review.

The meaning of the research participant's experience is inevitably derived and perhaps co-constructed through the prism of the researcher's worldview and assumptions. As such, researchers need to describe how their biases – implicit assumptions, tacit knowledge and undetected mistakes – are made explicit, monitored and controlled during each phase of the study. It is incumbent upon qualitative researchers to strike a delicate balance between drawing on prior knowledge from the existing theory and literature while also remaining open and flexible when new themes emerge from the data.

RESEARCH PARADIGM – METHODOLOGY INCONSISTENCY

Another common problem in counselling qualitative research involves the inconsistency among research paradigm, inquiry approach and research questions. As is the norm in the research enterprise, quantitative researchers do not need to make explicit their shared operating paradigm of positivism. Perhaps for this reason, novice qualitative researchers may overlook the importance of providing a description of and justification for their operating paradigm and the accompanied inquiry approach. An example of this 'method slurring' (Baker et al., 1992) is to apply interpretive inquiry approaches to the researcher's 'realist' epistemological and ontological assumptions. This lack of conceptual precision and methodological consistency undermines confidence in the rigor and trustworthiness of the qualitative study (Morrow, 2005) and is often a result of limited, if not superficial or erroneous, understanding of philosophy of science undergirding qualitative research (Ponterotto, 2005a).

The confusion between grounded theory and phenomenology further complicates this issue of research paradigm–methodology inconsistency. Grounded theory and phenomenological approaches are suited to counselling research because of their utilities in exploring clients' experiences and in establishing clinical relevance (Nelson and Quintana, 2005). Despite their similarities and utilities, these inquiry models each have their defining features, differing in their focus, anchoring research paradigm, and data collection and analytical procedures. Grounded theory, for instance, is useful in the exploratory phase in the absence of prior theory related to the phenomenon. Phenomenological approaches are appropriate when the counselling researcher aims to discover the deeper meaning of the client's 'lived' experience in regard to 'the individual's relationship with time, space and personal history' (Goulding, 2005, p. 303) within the interpersonal, socio-cultural context. Depending on the researcher's research question, both approaches may also be anchored across different paradigms, increasing the likelihood of qualitative research studies being mislabelled or classified broadly as qualitative without specificity in methodology.

We recommend that novice qualitative researchers in counselling and psychotherapy research carefully consider their research question and clarify the research paradigm from which they are operating, along with the specific variation of a particular inquiry approach. Sufficient description and justification is needed when there is any deviation from the researcher's chosen inquiry model. A higher degree of conceptual clarity and methodological consistency is established when researchers elucidate how their philosophy of science, personal assumptions, the nature and purpose of the study are in close alignment, on one hand, and how their chosen method is appropriate in terms of its strengths and limitations vis-à-vis alternative inquiry approaches on the other.

PERILS IN DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

In our experience of supervising students' qualitative research, another cluster of problems occurs in data collection and analysis. The first is one of sampling. As Suzuki et al. (2007) noted, 'the pond you fish in determines the fish you catch' (p. 295), underscoring the importance of purposive sampling in data collection – as opposed to convenience or random sampling – in qualitative research. In identifying and selecting a sample that is appropriate to the research question, qualitative researchers need to consider imposing both inclusion and exclusion criteria. This would result in a sample broad and heterogeneous enough to capture facets of the experience or phenomenon under study, but yet small and homogeneous enough to reach theoretical saturation.

A second common problem in data collection and analysis involves the apparent flexibility and the lack of systematic, standardized qualitative research methodology. In fact, studies using the same inquiry approach may be modified to the extent that the same method becomes too idiosyncratic. That is, research studies labelled

with the same inquiry approach may be executed with varying degrees of differences in data collection and analysis. Furthermore, the expected methodological procedure should be distinguished from the procedure as implemented. In addition to a general description of the expected sequential steps in data collection and analysis, evidence should be provided to ensure the study is carried out in accordance with the prescribed procedure.

More specifically, the emergence of different variations of grounded theory (Fassinger, 2005; McLeod, 2001) have contributed to differing, if not conflicting, opinions and unresolved issues regarding the nature, purpose and process of grounded theory as a qualitative approach. When studies described as grounded theory research do not actually adhere to the core principles of theoretical sampling, inductive coding or constant comparison, for example, it is subject to debate whether these studies are correctly labelled. In the practice of grounded theory research, researchers thus need to consider their research question and provide justification for their specific grounded theory method and clarify the expected level of theory to be induced from their study.

Third, this issue of methodological integrity or lack thereof is further magnified by the use of multiple research team members who assume differing roles and responsibilities in the data collection and analysis process. For instance, in-depth interviews are used in phenomenological research as a window into the individual's interior life or as a means to facilitate intense reflection of the individual's subjective experience. The research participant's experience is thus interpreted through the prism of the researcher's worldviews and assumptions, and researchers need to describe how their biases are adequately addressed during each phase of the study using phenomenology as an inquiry model. Our concern is neither the specific inquiry approach used nor the number of research team members, but the specific steps taken by the research team members, individually and collectively, in the generation, interpretation and presentation of the findings.

When the aforementioned problems of questionable sampling and methodological slurring are inadequately addressed, qualitative researchers' subsequent data analysis may be inevitably hampered as a consequence. These researchers analyse their data with varying degrees of precision and standardization, resulting in the results being presented with differing levels of specificity and clarity. Some researchers fail to get beyond a basic level of content analysis, with their findings tilting the evidence to the side of the results that are obvious or simplistic, or that consist of, among others, pure introspection or description of loosely tied categories.

Novice qualitative researchers may also be unable to get beyond a basic analysis of the content to generate a rich description of deep meanings and relationships among emergent themes due to their 'data asphyxiation' (Huy, 2012), namely feeling overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the data to be analysed. Because of a wide range of possibilities of interpretations and synthesis, integrating qualitative studies to build a cumulative knowledge base presents another challenge for counselling researchers with a behavioural orientation that values the measurable, observable concepts. After all, qualitative research methodology is an interpretive process that often requires delving into the local, personal and social-political contexts of the phenomenon under examination; it does not simply involve routine application of formulaic technique to data. Overemphasis on coding in grounded theory research, for instance, is unlikely to 'lift' data beyond the basic level, thus resulting in a failed search for a conceptually dense theory. Given the focus on analysing words rather than numbers, researchers using phenomenological approaches will be more likely to succeed in discovering meanings underlying personal narratives of experiences when they are in tune with the different tones, shades and intensity of emotions and meanings as conveyed in words that make up each interview, while remaining curious and introspective throughout the inquiry process.

In conclusion, a methodologically rigorous qualitative research study requires careful attention to each step of the data collection and analysis process in order to enhance overall quality of the inquiry and establish a greater degree of the results. Counselling and psychotherapy researchers cannot develop their qualitative research competencies quickly; as in quantitative research, these competencies can only be solidified through training, experience and hard work, as well as creativity, reflexivity and introspection. One area of introspection critical to applied psychologists conducting qualitative research is best ethical practice (Haverkamp, 2005).

ETHICS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Today, psychologists are under heightened and intense scrutiny. Recently, it was discovered and then publicly made known that several leaders of the American Psychological Association (APA) secretly collaborated with the Department of

Defense during the George W. Bush era in their involvement of the torture of political prisoners (McDaniel and Kaslow, 2015). The stain on the profession from APA's breech of ethics cannot be overstated. In fact, in our Google search of 'American Psychological Association and', the first search phrase that appeared was 'American Psychological Association and Torture.' Given our current time and place, it is even more critical that psychologists engaged in qualitative research act in the most professional and ethical manner and always carefully weigh the rewards of becoming intimate with the data against the potential for doing harm to participants, science and the profession.

Although every ethical dilemma is unique and must be viewed within its own social, political and cultural context (Thomson and Russo, 2012), qualitative research methodologies share some ethical challenges that are distinct from the common ethical pitfalls of quantitative approaches (Ponterotto, 2010). In this section, we briefly highlight some of the major ethical issues in conducting qualitative psychological research, although we limit our discussion to the areas of (1) competence; (2) privacy and anonymity; (3) informed consent; (4) multiple relationship and boundaries; and (5) the use and dissemination of qualitative research results.

Competence

In qualitative research, data usually consists of participant observation, interviews, focus groups, qualitative review of texts and other language-driven techniques such as discourse analysis and dialogues (Soti, 1996). Qualitative research requires that researchers are not only competent in qualitative research methods, but also comfortable and experienced in the basic and advanced counselling skills that are necessary to gather comprehensive information from participants (Soti, 1996). Furthermore, because qualitative researchers are oftentimes exploring the sensitive and private experiences of participants, they must also be equipped with the applied knowledge of psychological disorders or conditions that may emerge during the research process or may indeed be the focus of the research (Haverkamp, 2005). In addition, qualitative research can also be very intensive and time consuming, which can feel draining for researchers. Therefore, qualitative researchers also need to be highly attuned to the boundaries of their own competence as well as their thresholds for efficacy (e.g. knowing the signs of burnout) (Hill, 1991).

Finally, qualitative research requires cultural competence, not only because the major aims of qualitative research are to enter, thoroughly explore and deeply understand the world or culture of participants, but also because of the growing trend to explore multicultural research questions via qualitative methods (Choudhuri, 2005; Ponterotto, 2002). The increase in qualitative research activity amongst multicultural researchers may be in part because of the benefits offered by this approach when examining the lived experiences, narratives and identity of marginalized individuals. Ponterotto (2002) notes several major benefits, which include (1) close contact with and relationship with participant, where researcher acts as co-examiner (not expert) in participants' lives and learns about the world and worldview of the participant through their lens; (2) qualitative methods allow the researcher to stay true to the participants' lived experience through using their own words rather than attempting to categorize and rate participants' experiences via predetermined quantitative measures; (3) with the close researcher–participant interactions characteristic of qualitative inquiry, researchers may develop a deeper understanding or awareness of their own biases, privileges, expectations, etc.; and (4) from a critical theory perspective, the dynamic between the participant and researcher may allow for the empowerment of the participant and increased energy around social activism among the researcher.

Although there are clear benefits to qualitative approaches for multicultural research, there may also be distinct challenges (Bettez, 2015). Certainly, when considering psychology's history investigating indigenous and minority populations, it becomes especially critical that researchers are culturally competent (Burnette et al., 2014). Moreover, Burnette and her colleagues stress that cultural sensitivity during the research process will enhance the quality and utility of qualitative research. They also point to the significance of a variety of themes in qualitative research with indigenous communities including the impact of history, relational research, and incorporating cultural sensitivity and strengths.

Privacy and Anonymity

In qualitative research, where researchers aim to collect enough specific and detailed information in order to provide readers with a 'thick description' (Ponterotto and Grieger, 2007) of themes, protecting the privacy of clients becomes increasingly challenging and may require additional steps. In fact, Bickford and Nisker (2015) recently

identified a natural tension between thick description and anonymity. They note that while the goal of a qualitative research study is to collect specific, precise, unique and in-depth information from participants, researchers are also expected to keep participants' identity anonymous and their information private. Relatedly, in a recent article in the *Qualitative Health Journal*, Morse and Coulehan (2015) describe the difficulty in protecting participant confidentiality in qualitative health research, especially when a published study includes several demographic tags or identifiers. Given this significant and real threat of confidentiality breaches, the *Qualitative Health Journal* will no longer publish articles that list participant demographic information within tables. Related to protecting participants' privacy, another important ethical consideration in qualitative research is protecting the privacy of third parties who are mentioned or discussed by participants (Haverkamp, 2005).

Conducting qualitative research today is different than it was even just a decade ago. With the enormous amount of participants' personal information, which used to be considered private information, now available online, notions of privacy, confidentiality and anonymity in qualitative research have become increasingly complex (Saunders et al., 2015). A recent special issue of the *Qualitative Research in Psychology* journal focused specifically on the methodological opportunities and ethical issues related to conducting qualitative research online (Morison et al., 2015; Roberts, 2015). Roberts (2015) noted that the traceability of quotes, as well as sensitive content that may have implications for individuals and online communities, makes online qualitative research uniquely challenging. The primary ethical issues related to online qualitative research that Roberts identifies include tensions over public and private identities, reactions to being researched and the quality of data being collected.

In terms of protecting participant anonymity in today's digital era, researchers have suggested using disguise, refining informed consent and discussing privacy and confidentiality in greater depth with participants (Saunders et al., 2015). Relatedly, Lunnay et al. (2015) identify some of the risks associated with utilizing social media to interact, contact or gather information about participants. A couple of complications that these authors raised in using social media, such as a researcher's Facebook page, to recruit participants was the possible loss of privacy of the researcher as well as the boundary implications of becoming Facebook friends with participants and then 'un-friending' them at the termination of the study.

Informed Consent

By its very nature, qualitative research is fluid and it is therefore extremely difficult to predict all of the potential risks/discomforts and adverse effects of the research process (Haverkamp, 2005). Additionally, being interviewed in depth and for an extensive period of time about a sensitive topic can be experienced as stressful and intrusive (Gibson et al., 2013). Furthermore, providing informed consent assumes that participants are sufficiently autonomous to provide consent, and when conducting research with vulnerable populations, this notion of autonomy needs to be carefully examined and considered (Gibson et al., 2013). Considering these complexities in the research process, qualitative researchers have been encouraged to consider informed consent as an on-going part of the research process that is discussed and reviewed multiple times (Haverkamp, 2005).

Multiple Relationships and Boundaries

The nature of the relationship between the participant and researcher is considerably more intimate in qualitative research compared to quantitative approaches. The type and extent of interaction between researcher and participant in qualitative research is considered a unique strength of this approach and at the same time a potential source of ethical issues (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2008). Haverkamp (2005) points out that trustworthiness, which is the measure of validity/quality/rigor within qualitative research, is inherently relational in nature.

In qualitative research, multiple and sometimes overlapping roles emerge, requiring the researcher to be highly sensitive to issues related to power/privilege and boundaries (Haverkamp, 2005). In the context of shifting roles and a relationship that may develop into one that resembles the therapeutic relationship, the researcher must maintain his/her role as a researcher and may need to negotiate and re-negotiate boundaries and roles (Gibson et al., 2013; Haverkamp, 2005). Indeed, as Brinkmann (2007) notes, being a good qualitative researcher suggests a competence in both the ethical and epistemic sense where objectivity and validity are moral concerns.

Boundary issues and multiple roles are particularly relevant when the researcher's identity overlaps in some significant way with the identity of the research participants, such as when the researcher is from the same society or culture that is being

studied (Chaitin, 2003). According to Chaitin, when the researcher shares a salient identity with research participants, he/she needs to be vigilant, not only during date collection, but also during the analysis and interpretation stages of the research process. It may be that the researcher encounters material about his/her society/culture that is disturbing or upsetting. Considering the complexities that surface when the qualitative researcher and participants share some aspect of identity, some researchers have suggested the following actions: contextualize research, contextualize subjectivity, triangulate multiple sources, monitor symbolic power, and care during the research process (Few et al., 2003). In addition to a shared identity, researchers may find it complicated to maintain professional boundaries when they are utilizing a convenience sample that consists of acquaintances and friends (Brewis, 2014).

Presentation of Qualitative Research Findings

A major ethical challenge faced by qualitative researchers is related to the way in which findings from qualitative studies are presented to the scientific community and/or general public. Indeed, in this instance, precision of language is not only a good idea from a scholarly and literary standpoint, but also from an ethical one. Given the major goals, philosophical assumptions and nature of qualitative research studies, they are all limited in their ability to generalize their findings to a larger population (Hoyt and Bhati, 2007). However, qualitative researchers, many of whom were trained under a primarily quantitative research paradigm, are pulled to call their results 'evidence' and to highlight clinical or policy implications based on the results of their qualitative studies (Hoyt and Bhati, 2007). These authors also identified a trend among counselling psychology researchers to quantify their qualitative approaches. They warned that if the counselling psychology field tried to create a quantitative/qualitative methodological hybrid, the result would be a research method that was unable to fulfil the goals of either research paradigm. They state,

> Obscuring the distinction between procedural and validating evidence can be costly in terms of credibility both of the researcher and of the intervention or theory under study – and ultimately, if such claims become prevalent, of counseling psychology as a discipline. (Hoyt and Bhati, 2007: 208)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

This chapter has provided an analysis of qualitative research published across select counselling journals over a recent time period and has reviewed important issues in methodological integrity and ethical practice in the research endeavour. The information garnered from these reviews can provide a foundation for research and training recommendations for the profession of counselling and psychotherapy. In this last section, we present seven specific recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Graduate training programs in counselling and psychotherapy should cover in-depth philosophy of science and research paradigms in research courses (Berrios and Lucca, 2006; Hoshmand, 1989; Ponterotto, 2005a). Students must learn early on in training that when reporting their research studies, they should specify clearly the research paradigm from which they are operating. Researchers should also specify which variation of a particular inquiry approach they are employing (Morrow, 2005).

Furthermore, the traditional ethical research guidelines of the American Psychological Association are not sufficient in guiding qualitative research, particularly research that involves prolonged engagement with participants (Haverkamp, 2005), as is common in the counselling research endeavour. Ethical issues and best practices for qualitative research should be enhanced in counsellor training programs internationally. The study of ethics in counselling and psychotherapy research is also an important area for grant funding.

Recommendation 2: We suggest that counsellors-in-training complete one or more classes outside their discipline, in fields such as sociology, anthropology, journalism, education, history/biography or political science. Interdisciplinary training will enhance researchers' philosophy of science knowledge base, broaden their research worldview and expand their repertoire of inquiry approaches (McLeod, 2001; Ponterotto and Grieger, 2007). Furthermore, these sister disciplines also have their own ethical principles and guidelines for research, and this knowledge will support counselling professionals developing ethical awareness and vigilance.

Recommendation 3: Researchers in counselling and psychotherapy are encouraged to increase their utilization of qualitative methods in their research programs. There are now adequate numbers of highly qualified qualitative researchers in most counselling training programs with whom

traditionally trained quantitative researchers can partner to learn the qualitative craft. Naturally, we also encourage qualitative researchers to be competent in quantitative and mixed methods approaches to research. The scientific foundation of the counselling profession will be enhanced through the incorporation of qualitative and quantitative studies conducted in an iterative fashion dependent on the research question at hand. An overreliance on post-positivist quantitative research on one hand, or constructivist qualitative research on the other, will slow the scientific advance of the counselling field. Such a state of affairs is unacceptable in a society where the mental health needs of millions of our citizens are currently unmet.

Finally, it is hoped that university faculty and senior administrators responsible for promotion, tenure and internal grant funding will value constructivist and critical theory qualitative methods as equal to post-positivist quantitative methods in their deliberations and decisions. We encourage qualitative researchers in universities and research centres to embrace leadership positions, including serving as Department Chairpersons, Deans and Associate Deans, and Institutional Review Boards Chairs, in order to promote the expanded voice of methodological pluralism in the university's research mission.

Recommendation 4: Counselling and psychotherapy researchers are encouraged to expand their repertoire of inquiry models and data collection methods. One promising area for expansion is in the use of a wide array of visual methodologies (see Gleeson et al., 2005). In recent contributions on data collection strategies for counselling research, Suzuki et al. (2007) advocate for increased usage of participant observation, physical data and electronic data. Specifically regarding physical data, the authors are referring to archives, records, documents, visual data and cultural artefacts as data. With regard to electronic data, they are referring to email, instant messages, bulletin boards, chat rooms, web pages, as well as surveys and researcher logs. Meanwhile, Kohn-Wood and Diem (2012) encourage greater usage of ethnography (embedded fieldwork), autoethnography (drawing on the way lived experiences intersect with academic and professional endeavours) and performance ethnography (converting ethnography and autoethnography into dramatic pieces such as poetry, short stories and dramatic plays).

In the last decade the psychology profession has witnessed a resurgence of interest in psychobiography (Kőváry, 2011; Ponterotto, 2014). Counsellors, like psychobiographers, study their historical subjects and clients within sociocultural and historic perspectives. Psychobiography honours the tradition of counselling psychology by studying the 'whole person' and emphasizing both strengths and psychological limitations of the individual. In contrast to quantitative research, which focuses on the norm or central tendency and variance, qualitative research often focuses on the individual case and is interested in non-norms, or the outliers across examples of a variety of psychological constructs. We encourage increased psychobiographical research among counselling psychologists (see Schultz, 2005).

Recommendation 5: We urge counselling researchers to devote more research energy to studying children, young adolescents and elderly participants. These developmental cohorts were underrepresented in the studies we reviewed for this chapter. Increased qualitative research on family processes and family functioning is also warranted. The mental health strengths and challenges of 'non-traditional' families, such as extended families, single parent families and families headed by two gay or lesbian parents, need additional qualitative research attention.

Recommendation 6: A majority of the qualitative studies reviewed in this chapter relied on the one-point-in-time, semi-structured individual interview. Although long single interviews can provide deep insight into the *erlebnis* (lived experience) of study participants, researchers are encouraged to broaden their data-gathering repertoire. For example, interviewing participants two or three times can often enhance the depth of study on a topic and also assess process variables within the topic of study. Combining individual interviews with focus groups also adds a measure of data and source triangulation to the study procedure.

A few examples taken from our 2013–2015 content analysis include William and Bryan's (2013) study on resilience and overcoming adversity in high-achieving black youth, which relied on focus groups, long individual interviews and follow-up phone interviews; and Flynn et al.'s (2014) study of 25 American Indians raised on tribal lands and who attended predominantly White high schools. In this study the authors triangulated sources by interviewing the students themselves, select relatives and college administrators who now work with the students. They also triangulated methods by relying on individual interviews, focus groups and artefact analysis of students' tribal mementos, photos and other archival data. A study by Chan et al. (2015) is noteworthy in that the authors relied on individual interviews, archives (emails, joint publications) and observation of *in vivo* mentoring sessions in studying faculty mentoring of racial/ethnic minority PhD students. Finally, in

an innovative case study methodology, Hanks and Hill (2015) examined deafness and relational dynamics in counselling supervision by focusing on one triad – a Deaf counsellor trainee, a hearing supervisor and a sign language interpreter. The researchers triangulated data sources (each member of the triad) and methods by conducting two rounds of interviews and by analysing six weeks of journal entries of the participants. Although triangulating sources and/or methods in qualitative research is a more time consuming and intensive process, we feel the effort is well worth it in answering applied research questions.

Recommendation 7: Researchers well grounded in philosophy of science, with in-depth knowledge of constructivism and post-positivism, are encouraged to consider, on occasion, mixed methods designs. Such designs need to be carefully framed and rationalized philosophically, and should adhere to recent standards on mixed method designs. We strongly recommend the conceptualizations of Hanson et al. (2005) who review a variety of mixed designs for counselling psychology researchers.

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Qualitative Methods in Organizational Psychology

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INTRODUCTION

Work and organizational psychology has a rich tradition in qualitative research, yet anyone new to the field could be forgiven for thinking otherwise. Most academic journals and conference papers are dominated by empirical investigations that fit a positivist 'scientific' epistemology. In fact, organizational psychologists have been criticized for lagging far behind other social science disciplines in utilizing qualitative methods (Spector, 2001). This chapter explores where and how qualitative research is (or is not) used in organizational psychology.

First, we provide a historical context for the growth of organizational psychology as a field, and some of the research traditions associated with its growth. Then we provide a general description of some of the diverse epistemological perspectives that underpin qualitative research and methods in organizational psychology. This is followed by a discussion of how qualitative methods are used in the practice of organizational psychologists. We focus on role analysis to demonstrate the perhaps understated role that qualitative research methods play in this key activity. We then use another example – competencies – as a specific form of job analysis applied to politics to specifically demonstrate how competency modelling approached from a constructionist perspective provides a means to negotiate a shared agreement about the nature of political roles. Following this, we examine how qualitative methods are used in organizational psychology research. To obtain insight into this, we conducted a semi-systematic search of the literature, examining the range, type and prevalence of qualitative methods utilized in recent research, drawn from the top academic journals in the field.

Although this is not intended as an exhaustive description of the literature we hope to present evidence indicating the 'best' of published organizational psychology research and the patterns of qualitative methodology employed therein[1]. The chapter is, however, an attempt to demonstrate and explain the apparent 'tension' between quantitative and qualitative methods in the research and practice undertaken by organizational psychologists in the workplace. Our specific aims are to review the contribution made by qualitative research within organizational psychology; explore where and how qualitative methods are used in current organizational psychology research and practice; discuss reasons for the apparent dominance of quantitative methods and finally consider what the future might hold for qualitative research within the discipline.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Organizational psychology is concerned with the way people think, feel and behave in work and organizational contexts. Organizational psychologists (who are also known as occupational, work or industrial/organizational [IO] psychologists) are 'concerned about the ethical use of psychological theories and techniques and their impact on the well-being and effectiveness of individuals, groups and organizations' (Arnold et al., 2016). Important knowledge areas within this domain include motivation and employee relations, personnel selection and assessment, training, well-being at work, organizational development and change, leadership, appraisal, career development, work design and work safety. As such the topics studied by organizational psychologists are many and varied. They range from investigations of how individual characteristics impact on work performance, efforts to reduce stress at work and evaluation of training interventions designed to improve safety in the workplace. However, organizational psychology, like other applied psychology fields such as health or clinical psychology, involves the application of many different theories, including those that might be described as 'cognitive', 'social' or 'developmental'. For example, an important field in organizational psychology applies cognitive theory to workplace phenomena, such as strategic decision making and teamwork (see Hodgkinson and Healy, 2008). Consequently, the methods adopted by researchers and practitioners reflect a rich and diverse field.

Organizational psychology as a discipline emerged in the UK and USA largely as a consequence of efforts to improve assessment of personnel in the First and Second World Wars. Initially the US army developed methods of psychological testing to assist in selecting and training individuals for the armed forces during the First World War. This led to the appearance of several commercial consultancies (e.g. The Psychological Corporation) specializing in the creation of psychological techniques to assess individuals for occupational roles. At the same time, a slightly different approach materialized in the UK, where psychologists became increasingly interested in how work and the workplace could be designed more efficiently. An example of this was a series of studies investigating the personal health and efficiency of workers in munitions factories (for a more detailed discussion of these, see Chmiel, 2000). In 1921, this work led to the creation of the UK National Institute of Industrial Psychology (NIIP), set up with the specific aim of promoting and encouraging practical application of the sciences of psychology and physiology to commerce and industry. By the 1930s the NIIP was a centre of excellence for research into topics such as work hours, rest pauses, dexterity and work conditions: the underlying rationale being that the scientific approach could improve worker performance and, ultimately, national economic success (Kwiatkowski, Duncan and Shimmin, 2006). This emphasis on scientific measurement and prediction demonstrates the primarily positivist, modernist assumptions underpinning the origins of organizational psychology.

The advent of the Second World War prompted further interest in how psychological methods, such as job analysis, psychological testing, interviewing and vocational guidance, could help fit people to jobs. With such large numbers of people being recruited to military roles, there was a need to ensure that individuals' strengths could be identified and utilized most efficiently. The person–job fit model of work performance emerged as an important framework that still underpins much personnel selection research and practice to the present day. The basic premises of this model are that individuals differ in the knowledge skills and abilities (KSA) they bring to the workplace, and jobs require different KSAs, therefore a closer match between people and jobs should result in higher levels of performance. As a result, the quantification and measurement of individual differences, job requirements and work performance became central to the work of organizational psychologists. This further embedded organizational psychology and psychologists within positivist and post-positivist traditions, assuming an external objective reality that can be known through hypothetico–deductive methods, multiple data sources that reduce error and increase accuracy in predicting work-related outcomes.

However, the Second World War also prompted interest in the human side of technology and the dynamics of leadership and groups in military and industrial contexts, which led to work on group and organizational behaviour, culture and learning in the US (e.g. Lewin, 1947). In the UK the Tavistock Institute, established in 1947, became an influential focus for researchers and practitioners interested in psychodynamic perspectives on organizational change, action research methods, socio-technical systems theory and group dynamics (Guest, 2006). Around this time, a humanistic, person-centred perspective arose in the field, recognizing the role of subjectivities and self-reflection in personal and organizational development and change, and valuing richness and meaning in data collection methods. Arguably this point marked the beginning of a divergence within the field that can still be found today with quantitative and qualitative researchers.

A key difference between qualitative and quantitative researchers in organizational psychology is

that the former typically view reality as socially constructed and accept the existence of multiple and equally legitimate interpretations of work-related events. In contrast, quantitative researchers have generally adopted a positivist approach and sought to identify general principles about work-related phenomena that can be tested and replicated across contexts and populations. These differences are apparent in the methods these researchers utilize. For example, according to a constructionist approach, individuals shape meaning of work events in their effort to make sense of and understand their role and the workplace. Thus, work satisfaction will mean different things to different people, including monetary reward, flexibility and control over the timing of work, intellectual stimulation or social contact. Researchers interested in these unique perspectives are more likely to use qualitative methods such as interviews or diaries that enable them to probe topics that are more important to the participant than the researcher. However, quantitative researchers are more likely to use questionnaires that allow them to draw inferences and make comparisons across populations of workers or organizations and quantify differences. In organizational psychology the ability to measure difference has provided an important and powerful source of information for individuals in organizations making decisions about employees or the allocation of resources. This has in large part contributed to the popularity of quantitative approaches in this discipline.

However, while undoubtedly quantitative research in organizational psychology remains the dominant approach, we argue that qualitative approaches continue to play an important, but less well recognized role in shaping research and practice within the field. In the following sections, we provide an overview of the various approaches within qualitative research, to demonstrate the breadth of perspectives within this broad term. We then consider how qualitative methods are applied by organizational psychologists in practice. Following this, we review empirical qualitative research published in top academic journals in the field of organizational psychology.

QUALITATIVE APPROACHES TO PRACTICE AND RESEARCH IN ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Qualitative research entails 'capturing the actual meanings and interpretations that actors subjectively ascribe to phenomena in order to describe and explain their behaviour through investigating how they experience, sustain, articulate and share with others these socially constituted everyday realities' (Johnson et al., 2006: 132). Thus, qualitative research involves watching people in their own territory and interacting with them in their own language on their own terms (Fryer, 1991; Kirk and Miller, 1986). Qualitative approaches therefore emphasize lived experience and are useful for understanding the meaning people place on events of their lives (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Like qualitative researchers in other fields, those in organizational psychology are concerned with attempts to describe, decode and interpret the meanings of work-related phenomena for employees and employers. For the most part, they focus on *describing* the nature of something – in organizational psychology, this has often been a precursor to quantification or *measuring* the degree to which a particular feature (e.g. stress) is present. Several camps can be identified within the spectrum of qualitative work, and we highlight a small number of these to demonstrate the contrast later. Although we discuss some of the methods that may best fit with the assumptions underlying specific paradigms and perspectives, it is important to note that there is no fixed, categorical relationship between a set of methods and a philosophical approach; rather, what tends to happen is that some methods are more prevalent within certain perspectives. However, overall the extent to which an approach can be categorized/labelled depends on the application and intent (spoken or unspoken) of the researcher(s) and practitioner(s).

Interpretivism as a research paradigm focuses on 'understanding the social world that people have constructed and which they reproduce through their continuing activities' (Blaikie, 2007: 124). Investigating social reality requires understanding the meanings produced and reproduced by social actors in their everyday activities. Contrasted with positivism, interpretivism proposes that social phenomena are studied from the 'inside', whereas (physical) nature is studied from the 'outside'. Within the interpretivist paradigm, a common epistemological stance is constructionism.

Constructionism is 'the view that all knowledge, and therefore, all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context' (Crotty, 1998: 42). Thus, constructionist approaches to social inquiry reject the notion that interpretation and meaning can be 'objectively' understood; instead, the aim of inquiry is understanding and reconstruction (Guba and Lincoln, 2000) and a focus on the process of interpretation

(Sharpe and McMahon, 1997). Constructionism draws attention to the fact that meaning-making and interpretation occur in the context of the (social) world into which we are born, including its historical and cultural influences. Thus, knowledge is an active process, with individuals acting together in large and small groups, and in concert with history, culture and other broad factors to jointly construct the world (and organizations) in which they participate (Young and Collin, 2004). As our 'realities' are constructed through social processes and interaction, one method applied by organizational psychologists using this frame is action learning sets, designed and facilitated such that participants jointly construct knowledge (i.e. learn) about a phenomenon (e.g. line management, organizational change or team work) through reflection and their use of language.

Against the constructionist strand of interpretivism, we contrast critical approaches. **Critical psychology** is the systematic examination of how some varieties of psychological action and experience are privileged over others and how dominant accounts of 'psychology' operate ideologically and in the service of power (Parker, 1999). In the context of organizations, critical scholars aim to 'de-reify extant organizational practices through developing a self-conception in which members are knowledgeable subjects who are able to change their situation, as opposed to powerless objects determined by an immutable situation' (Johnson et al., 2006: 142). Although critical perspectives do not eschew quantitative methods, it is generally accepted that likely methods of choice will be those that challenge taken-for-granted power dynamics and knowledge sources. Critical organizational psychologists may thus focus on discourse analysis to examine the links between language, power and resistance in how employees talk about leadership, stress or engagement, for example. Discourses constitute knowledge and social practices that maintain power relations and specific forms of subjectivity (Fairclough, 1989, cited in Lawthorm, 1999). Critical organizational psychologists seek to examine and challenge assumptions about what leadership/stress/engagement look like, questioning interests that are served by dominant taken-for-granted understandings of psychological phenomena. Critical organizational psychologists may also adopt participatory action research projects in which practitioners and client organizations jointly create and challenge meanings associated with these terms. These could also include naturalistic observations (ethnographic approaches). A particular strand within the critical school is post-structuralist feminism.

Post-structuralism emphasizes the fluid, loose and dynamic nature of power and privilege, raising awareness of organizations' complicity in creating and sustaining inequalities (Calás and Smircich, 1999, 2009). This requires the researcher to have critical awareness of instances of subordination in their research, with the aim to create social change. Additionally, post-structural feminism views gender as a discursive process and practice, and its aim is the deconstruction of given, assumed knowledge. Feminist theoretical critiques shed light on the gendered nature of organizations and the power relations that exist within wider society that are reproduced within the workplace. Within organizational psychology this includes recognizing the gendering of work (amongst other social contexts) and problematizing the dichotomy of public/private social domains (Lawthom, 1999).

Having discussed some positions within the broad landscape of traditions underlying qualitative approaches within organizational psychology, we focus on how methods may be used in practice, before moving on their prevalence in research. In the next section, we outline how key qualitative methods have been used in the practice of organizational psychology.

QUALITATIVE METHODS IN ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICE

It is difficult to systematically assess the extent to which qualitative methods are used by work and organizational psychology practitioners, but there is plenty of anecdotal evidence that practitioners utilize them extensively during the design and implementation of activities like organizational change, training needs analyses, strategic reviews and employee development plans. Perhaps more surprisingly qualitative methods also feature strongly in personnel selection. There is little doubt that the design and validation of personnel selection systems has been an important area for the field of organizational psychology. It has generated extensive research aimed at demonstrating that psychological factors predict job performance (Salgado, 1999; Schmidt and Hunter, 1998), and resulted in a multi-million-dollar industry concerned with psychometric testing. As presented in the introduction, a powerful case has been made for the scientific practice of employee recruitment and organizational psychology as a discipline capable of furthering organizational objectives. In comparison, qualitative research, which focuses on describing rather than predicting, has received much less attention.

ROLE ANALYSIS

Despite these strong positivist leanings, it is still possible to argue that qualitative methods are more central to the development of personnel-related procedures than generally thought. This is best illustrated in the case of role (or job) analysis, which involves a systematic analysis of the responsibilities and tasks a role incumbent must perform, the standards they must be performed to, and the knowledge, skills and abilities they need to perform the role to this standard. The output of a job analysis can be used for many different purposes, such as job design and redesign, performance appraisal, training, succession planning and designing selection systems (Brannick and Levine, 2002).

Role analysis can incorporate a range of methods – quantitative and qualitative – and the process can also be treated as a positivist or a constructivist process by researchers and practitioners. Examples of positivist approaches to role analysis include the design and use of systems for classifying roles or jobs, such as the Job Components Inventory (Banks et al., 1982) and the Position Analysis Questionnaire (McCormick et al., 1972). Both of these are highly structured methods for analysing work roles that aim to classify aspects of job roles according to common work tasks and generic characteristics. Interactive, interpretivist and iterative qualitative methods like critical incident interviewing, diaries, focus groups and participant observation can complement these approaches by exploring a role from different perspectives and over time. We describe how these methods can be applied within more interpretive frameworks.

Interviews: there is an extensive literature on how interviews are used for personnel selection, but much less describing their use in role analysis, despite the fact that they are probably one of the most important and extensively used methods for capturing information. The personnel selection literature typically differentiates between unstructured, semi-structured and structured interviews. Structured interviews (i.e. where interviewers are usually required to ask the same pre-specified questions of all interviewees in the same way) are preferred for personnel selection and assessment because they can be focused more tightly on job-relevant criteria and tend to be more effective at identifying future high performers (Schmidt and Hunter, 1998). Unstructured interviews, on the other hand, are usually discouraged in assessment contexts because they are viewed as being more open to subjectivity and bias on the part of interviewers. As the aim of role analysis is to fully understand and describe a particular job role, semi-structured interviews that incorporate procedures like critical incident technique and repertory grid are often used.

Critical Incident Technique (CIT) was first described by Flanagan (1954) as a method for studying social science phenomena and later developed as an investigative tool in organizational and job analysis (e.g. Silvester et al., 2003). Flanagan describes CIT as a set of procedures for collecting observations of human behaviour. He defines an 'incident' as any specifiable human activity that is sufficiently complete in itself to permit inferences and predictions about a particular activity. In an analysis of a service role, this might involve an interviewer asking a role incumbent to identify and explain an important job relevant event, such as dealing with a difficult customer. By interviewing a range of people with different insights into the role (e.g. a manager, customer, incumbent) the interviewer can draw inferences about common features across different areas of role performance. CIT was actually the forerunner of 'behavioural event interviewing', a method developed by David McClelland and colleagues to identify and describe behavioural competencies – a topic to which we return later.

Repertory grid is another qualitative method that has been used in role analysis (Smith, 1986). This originated in George Kelly's (1955) work on personal construct psychology, which views people as being actively involved in making sense of their world. Kelly suggests that we create constructs that help us describe ourselves and the events we witness, and these constructs change and develop as we experience and learn from different events. The constructs we hold about our work can be explored as part of a role analysis.

The practice of the repertory grid technique involves three broad stages: (1) elicitation of elements relevant to the topic to be studied (in the case of job analysis, these might be an excellent performer, a poor performer and a novice), (2) elicitation of constructs differentiating these elements (e.g. a high performer may possess more strategic knowledge about the organization), and (3) construction of a matrix listing elements and constructs (Fransella et al., 2004). Interestingly repertory grid has been used in efforts to understand whether members of different gender or ethnic groups perform the same role: Dick and Jankowicz (2001), for example, used the method to explore how organizational culture impacts on differential career progression for male and female police officers. Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe (2001) used repertory grid methodology to explore leadership constructs held by male and female managers in the public sector. Finally, in his review of the use of repertory grid in employee selection, Anderson (1990) argues that repertory grid methodology offers a promising alternative for making a better match between a candidate's and a recruiter's job needs.

Although the repertory grid technique is typically described as a qualitative method, the repertory grids that are generated from interviews have often been analysed using quantitative techniques. This illustrates Cassell and Symon's (2004) point that it is important to consider how methods are used, the data interpreted and what conclusions (if any) are reached, in order to determine whether research is better described as qualitative or quantitative. The findings from our literature review (discussed later in the chapter) suggest that this blending of approaches is prevalent in research as well as practice.

Grounded theory: role analysis usually aims to understand and operationalize a specific construct (i.e. a job role), which is assumed to be constant and shared. But, when roles are changing or when incumbents have more power and autonomy to define the role for themselves, analysing unstructured interviews using grounded theory may be more suitable because this involves a dialectic exploration of individuals' perceptions and views (Nicholson, 1990). Originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory provides new insights into social processes without forcing the data into previous theoretical frameworks (Länsisalmi et al., 2004). In the case of job analysis, this means that grounded theory is a virtual antithesis to the application of pre-specified competency frameworks or job categories. Although a grounded theory approach may be commonly applied by practitioners, there is much less reporting in the personnel selection literature. Most reports relate to organizational change. For example, Carrero et al. (2000) used grounded theory to investigate development of innovation in the Spanish ceramic industry. Their choice of grounded theory was based on a desire to use an open and flexible research design that allowed reflection on the rapid and frequently changing organizational context.

Diary studies: researchers have asked employees to keep diaries in order to investigate a variety of organizational topics, including call centre work (Holman, 2005), violations of the psychological contract (Conway and Briner, 2002), mood changes in shift work (Williamson et al., 1994), well-being at work (Sonnentag, 2001) and professional identities (Atewologun et al., 2015; Doldor and Atewologun, 2014). The use of diaries can range from more quantitative, positivist approaches, to more qualitative ones (Symon, 2009). Diaries are also a popular method for capturing information about work roles. Diaries involve role incumbents keeping a personalized record of their work-related activities, who they interact with and, in some cases, their feelings and emotions about different activities. In job analysis, diaries are particularly useful for understanding how much time is spent on different activities, as well as the relative frequency of various tasks and responsibilities. Diary research varies from purely quantitative collection of questionnaire data at different time points to purely qualitative descriptions provided by employees about their own feelings and thoughts for work events they, rather than the researcher, might consider important.

The diary method is particularly useful in helping to identify those aspects of a job that are less easy to observe or may occur relatively infrequently, but are particularly important for understanding the role. For example, in the UK and many Western societies, most work involves cognitive rather than manual skills. There is also a greater focus on the emotional labour undertaken by service workers (Holman, 2005). Diaries allow researchers to capture role incumbents' perceptions and thoughts about their work and the cognitive skills required. This can provide important additional information for shaping selection systems that provide a realistic insight into the job for applicants, given that diaries enable access to phenomena as they occur in their natural settings (Ohly et al., 2010).

Participant observation: some organizational psychologists have argued that there are few methods that are more effective than allowing researchers to study at first-hand the day-to-day experience of people at work (Waddington, 2004). Participant observation, as the term implies, involves the researcher engaging (or participating) in the work that he or she is observing, but the degree to which 'observers' participate can vary. Four categories involving different levels of participation are described by Burgess (1984): (1) 'complete participant' – involving covert involvement, concealing the researcher's identity and purpose, (2) 'participant as observer' – where no attempt is made to conceal the observation or its purpose and where the observer can participate in activities and form relationships with those observed, (3) 'observer as participant' – involving more superficial contact with observed individuals such as occasional questions or interviews, and (4) 'complete observer' where the researcher has no interaction. The latter approach may be favoured where there is a belief that the researcher's involvement may pollute or distort the 'reality' of the workplace. This latter perspective is more closely associated with positivist approaches, seeking 'objective' reality.

That participant observation is used less frequently in job analysis is probably a reflection of the time and cost involved rather than its utility. But an excellent example is that of Anat Rafaeli's study of cashiers in local supermarkets in Israel

(Rafaeli, 1989). Rafaeli applied, trained and then worked as a cashier for 18 hours per week for three months. Her own observations and semi-structured critical incident interviews with cashiers and customers provided a detailed and rare insight into the cashier–customer relationship and identified a struggle for control between customers and cashiers during service interactions.

Revisiting Positivist and Constructionist Assumptions about Role Analysis

Having considered the range of qualitative research methods that can be drawn on when conducting role analyses, it is worth reflecting here on inherent tensions between positivist and constructionist approaches to role analysis because these help to illustrate more fundamental differences in the assumptions made by researchers and practitioners about job roles. For example, role analysis conducted from a positivist standpoint assumes that a job role exists and that job requirements (i.e. individual qualities and performance standards) can be described and quantified in order to compare and reward individual workers or job applicants. Such positivist approaches are also important due to the fit with a human resource management (HRM) philosophy, which views employees as an essential business resource (i.e. 'human capital') that must be carefully managed in order to maximize the likelihood of achieving business goals and return on investment (Guest, 2006). Thus, role analysis conducted from a positivist perspective identifies the criteria needed to assess employees reliably and accurately (Arnold et al., 2016).

Although there are certainly critics of the role played by HRM in the commodification and measurement of workers as a business resource (e.g. Watson, 2004), there are also important advantages of a positivist approach for employees, particularly in relation to perceived fairness and reward. For example, the ability to define and describe role and person requirements, and demonstrate that these relate to work performance, means that role incumbents or applicants are more likely to be evaluated on the basis of job-relevant criteria like competence and non-relevant factors such as patronage, perceived similarity or liking will play less of a role. The approach therefore aligns with a need for employers to comply with legal requirements to demonstrate that employment decisions are fair and non-discriminatory. A second related advantage is that a role analysis can help to increase transparency by clarifying what is expected of employees, how their performance links to reward and why specific training is required. Such transparency increases shared understanding and generally leads to improved feelings of efficacy and motivation, positive work climates, and more engaged and satisfied employees, while a lack of transparency in formalized systems tends to increase perceptions of organizational politics, dissatisfaction and employee turnover (Wyatt and Silvester, 2015). Positivist perspectives are therefore appealing to managers because they are aligned with business needs, HRM procedures and convey a 'scientific legitimacy' to proceedings.

Much less discussed, however, is the fact that role analysis often begins by using qualitative methods, such as critical incident interviews, which are used to capture information from multiple stakeholders (i.e. managers, role incumbents and possibly internal and external customers). It is assumed that these different people have varying insight into different aspects of a role and, therefore, by capturing and combining multiple perspectives, it is possible to gain a more rounded understanding of the multi-faceted nature of a role. In this instance, role analysis is therefore still conducted with the aim of uncovering and 'accurately' describing the true nature of a role, and although qualitative methods are used the process is conducted from a positivist perspective that still conceptualizes a job role as an entity that exists rather than a social construct.

However, the dominance of this positivist approach is being eroded somewhat by an increasing need to accommodate the need for job roles to adapt and evolve in response to changing business needs. In a highly changeable work environment, systematic role analyses that treat job roles as static entities are likely to be short-lived in usefulness as role needs continually change in line with developments in technology, globalization and innovation. In these situations, organizations need to take a more strategic perspective by focusing on what a role might become or how it may need to change. In this instance, a role analysis that aims to 'accurately describe an existing entity' may be less useful than one that takes a more constructionist approach to defining and shaping shared understandings about what a role needs to be and how it is expected to develop over time. We come to this again in the conclusion.

There are two other important limitations to traditional (i.e. positivist) role analysis. First, it is less capable of describing job roles where incumbents have greater power to decide for themselves how they will perform their role and engage in higher levels of role crafting. One example of this is professional service work, where performance often depends on generating novel solutions for clients.

Most job roles will vary in the extent to which an individual can decide how to perform their role (e.g. an academic may have considerable freedom over what they decide to study in their research, but might be expected to follow a certain format in compiling and publishing teaching notes and slides for students), but generally speaking, individuals in most senior positions have more power to negotiate the nature of their role. This may be the reason why role analyses are much less prevalent at senior organizational levels.

A second, potentially more difficult challenge for traditional role analysis is that it fails to take sufficient account of roles and work performance as contested constructs (Silvester et al., 2014). That is, different stakeholders may not only vary in their opportunity to observe different aspects of a role, they may actually have conflicting views about how a role should be performed and therefore what constitutes good and poor performance. For example, although a CEO might have agreed business objectives, different stakeholder groups (e.g. shareholders, employees, unions, board of directors, clients) may have conflicting views about how these objectives should be achieved. Furthermore, role incumbents might have different views over contested aspects of their job – for instance, leaders have polarized views over the use of organizational politics in order to manage effectively (Buchanan, 2008; Doldor et al., 2013; Doldor, 2017). In such situations a role incumbent must be able to navigate these contested views about how they should act. One area where this challenge is strong is politics, and the next section explores how competency modelling has been used to resolve this issue in relation to political roles.

POLITICAL COMPETENCIES

According to Sparrow (1995), competencies have been one of the 'big ideas' in HRM – they can be thought of as either the observable skills and abilities an individual needs to perform a role effectively, or as behavioural dimensions that affect job performance (Woodruffe, 2000). Although competencies are associated with underlying individual characteristics, such as personality, motivation and skills (Boyatzis, 1982), the emphasis is very much on what can be observed in terms of patterns of behaviour, referred to as behavioural indicators, which are often used as decision criteria in employee selection, assessment and development procedures. Competency modelling is a form of role analysis that has grown in popularity over the past decade. It refers to the method used to identify and define competencies for a particular role and produce a competency framework describing the behavioural indicators associated with good and poor performance. Here we consider how competency modelling approached from a constructionist perspective provides a means to negotiate a shared agreement about the nature of political roles.

Arguably one of the most contested of all job roles is that of a politician. Elected representatives have a democratic and legitimate right to decide what interests and political aims to pursue in office, and therefore how they enact and perform their roles. In fact, there has been surprisingly little systematic study of political roles, and the closest approximation to a job description for a British Member of Parliament (MP) is the Code of Conduct, which according to the House of Commons Information Office exists 'to assist Members in the discharge of their obligations to the House, their constituents and the public at large' (House of Commons, 2010, p. 6). However, efforts to define good and poor performance for MPs are equally, if not more, challenging because the same behaviour or political outcome can be judged good, bad or both depending on a particular observer's needs and what they believe the MP should do in their role (Silvester, 2008).

Autonomy and power to one's role is of fundamental importance in democratic process, but it comes at a cost. In politics it is not possible (or at least very unwise) to introduce formalized HRM systems because these imply that some higher order has more right than constituents to influence the actions of elected representatives. However, in other work settings HRM systems help to clarify the nature of a role and provide support to assist an individual learn and perform their role. In fact, politicians receive very little formal training and therefore those new to their roles must rely almost entirely upon their own efforts, informal socialization by peers and the support of officials to learn about the demands of their role. A dearth of formal procedures in politics can also increase the potential for discrimination against individuals from minority groups (Silvester and Wyatt, 2015; Wyatt and Silvester, 2015).

Competency modelling conducted from a constructionist perspective can help here because it provides a way to create a shared agreement about role requirements and facilitate effective performance without imposing the formal standards and procedures that result from more positivist approaches. For example, a competency analysis begins with stakeholder analysis to map the individuals and groups or organizations that may be influential in

determining or defining a job role. This is often followed by critical incident interviews with different stakeholders to elicit behaviours they associate with varying levels of performance across different areas of the role. In doing so, competency modelling aims to create a common understanding and language about a particular role and its requirements that helps to facilitate a shared agreement about important work components and behaviour (Schippmann et al., 2000). The ways in which competency frameworks are used to guide selection and assessment decisions within organization are very similar to how information from any other role analysis might be used within HRM. For example, the formalization and use of agreed competencies as decision criteria allows for objective and fair assessment, and for reward to be tied more closely to performance. However, the assumptions that underpin the practice of competency modelling can in fact be more constructionist.

Lievens et al. (2004) claim that the scientific community treats competency modelling with scepticism because the research evidence has lagged behind practice and because it is perceived to lack the rigour of traditional forms of job analysis. But this argument neglects why competency modelling is being performed and, crucially, the approach taken by the researcher or practitioner in identifying and describing the behavioural indicators and competencies. Unlike traditional job analysis, which aims to elicit and accurately describe the 'true' nature of a role, competency modelling ties job specifications more explicitly to the organization's strategy (Lievens et al., 2004). Moreover, stakeholder analysis, which is typically a feature of organizational change research (Burgoyne, 1994), generally involves information gathering from multiple perspectives, acknowledging the legitimacy and importance of addressing multiple perspectives that may conflict as well as overlap. In using stakeholder analysis and looking for synergies and discrepancies as part of the process of understanding job roles, competency modelling can therefore be better conceptualized as a constructionist process that allows for different and changing views, but aims to negotiate a shared agreement about what a role requires at a particular time and how it should be performed.

Unlike traditional role analysis, which usually defines work roles from a managerial perspective, competency modelling acknowledges and renders explicit multiple legitimate sources of influence and power that can influence the nature of a job role. As such, more effort and time is required to communicate, discuss and negotiate agreement with different stakeholders in order to develop a shared agreement about the competencies and commitment to how they will be used within the organization. Thus, competency modelling can be seen as a formative and iterative process of developing an understanding of a particular role and its requirements.

This approach is particularly suited to political contexts, in which there is less hierarchical decision-making, more acceptance of pluralist and potentially conflicting views about role performance, and where role incumbents have more freedom and power to decide how they will act. Jo Silvester and her colleagues have adopted just this approach in their work with political parties in Britain to develop competency frameworks for political candidates and local politicians (Silvester, 2012a; Silvester and Dykes, 2007; Silvester et al., 2014). In the case of political candidates, the purpose of the role analysis was to develop a competency framework that the political party involved could use to make decisions about whether or not to approve an individual as a prospective parliamentary candidate. Being approved is the first stage along the route to becoming an MP because only those individuals who have been judged by the political party to have the qualities needed to become a future MP are allowed to apply to local associations to be selected as a parliamentary candidate and then to campaign in a general election. However, prior to the work to develop a competency framework, there were no agreed criteria, and so anyone involved in the assessment process was free to use their own judgement based on their own personal decision criteria about whether an individual was suitable or not.

Political roles are very different to many work roles in that politicians do not have managers directing what they should do; similarly, observers can make performance judgements on the basis of entirely personal and subjective views. This makes implementing a consistent system to evaluate applicant potential very difficult, unless there is a shared agreement about what competencies are important and how to assess them. In this case it was therefore absolutely necessary to adopt a constructivist approach to role analysis by working with stakeholder representatives from across all different parts of the political party (i.e. MPs, volunteers, local association chairs, parliamentary candidates, campaign agents) both to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the role and to make sure that all perspectives were heard and shared. This process involved critical incident interviews, focus groups and open questionnaires to elicit examples of behaviours associated with good and poor performance in different parts of the role, followed by a qualitative analysis to identify common themes (i.e. competencies) and a discussion to agree wording and illustrative behavioural indicators for each of the competencies. Once

Table 30.1 Example behavioural indicators for the local councillor competencies

Competency	*Positive behavioural indicator*	*Negative behavioural indicator*
Communication skills	Uses diverse methods to communicate with different parts of the community (+)	Uses language that is unclear or inappropriate for the audience (–)
Scrutiny and challenge	Quickly understands and analyses complex information (+)	Demonstrates aggressive, confrontational style when challenged (–)
Working in partnership	Builds good relationships with colleagues, officers and community groups (+)	Uses divisive tactics to upset relationships or council decisions (–)
Community leadership	Engages with community and looks for new ways to represent people (+)	Keeps a low profile and is not easily recognized in their community (–)
Regulating and monitoring	Chairs meetings effectively by following protocol and keeping process on track (+)	Fails to declare personal interests and/or makes decisions for personal gain (–)
Political understanding	Can work across political boundaries without compromising values (+)	Has poor knowledge of their political group's manifesto and objectives (–)

agreed, these competencies were used as the basis for a structured assessment process where those judging potential candidates used the same decision criteria to evaluate all applicants.

Although this democratic process can take longer than a traditional 'top-down' role analysis that focuses on a managerial view of what a job role should be, it can have considerable advantage in work situations characterized by dispersed authority. This is because it ensures that a majority of people are involved in a role analysis and therefore feel ownership over the output, making it potentially easier to implement and more robust in the long term. In many ways this also reflects the participative action research advocated by organizational development practitioners. Although the full competency frameworks for the political parties are not publically available, Table 30.1 illustrates the competencies and examples of positive and negative behavioural indicators that emerged from a cross-party analysis of local councillor roles, undertaken with the purpose of helping new councillors understand different aspects of their roles and as a basis for guiding design of support and leadership development activities (Silvester, 2012b).

QUALITATIVE METHODS IN ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH

As the previous sections indicate, there is a spectrum of approaches to qualitative methodologies and their practice in organizational psychology. In this section, we present the findings of a review of empirical studies we conducted to assess how these approaches and methods are applied in research. To ensure that we tap into leading edge and fresh research in the field, we included studies published between January 2007 and September 2015 in leading organizational/work psychology journals[2]. After excluding purely theoretical journals (e.g. *International Review of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*), we retained a list of 16 journals (see Table 30.2). Our semi-systematic review process entailed two stages. First, we electronically searched the title and abstract of all papers using key terms such as 'qualitative' and 'qualitative methods', thereby retrieving a total of 111 papers. These papers were then further selected by reading the abstract and inspecting the full text document of each paper. We discarded several papers that did not use qualitative research methods (e.g. where the term 'qualitative' had been used to refer to something else but methods), retaining a total of 82 papers (see Appendix for a list of papers reviewed). Of these, 51 papers used qualitative methods exclusively, whilst 31 used a mixed-method design that combined qualitative and quantitative methods. There was a prevalence of qualitative studies in certain specialized journals and research areas such as the psychology of accident prevention, stress and well-being, and managerial psychology.

To identify the range, type and prevalence of qualitative methods used, we extracted information about each paper's methodology, focusing on the information provided regarding data collection and data analysis procedures. Table 30.3 provides a summary of our findings, categorizing the papers reviewed according to the data collection method used (strictly qualitative or mixed methods), listing the topical research areas in which each method was applied and commenting on the data analysis approach. We discuss these findings next.

Interviews. Our findings indicate that interviews are the most widely used qualitative method in organizational psychology research. Of 82 selected papers, 34 incorporated interviews of some form.

Table 30.2 List of journals surveyed for qualitative studies (2007–2015)

Journal title	*Papers initially retrieved*	*Papers selected*	*Purely qualitative papers*	*Mixed-methods papers*
1. *Journal of Applied Psychology*	9	7	3	4
2. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*	13	7	7	0
3. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*	7	6	4	2
4. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*	6	6	2	4
5. *Organizational Behaviour and Human Decision Processes*	12	3	1	2
6. *Personnel Psychology*	2	2	1	1
7. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*	25	20	11	9
8. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*	5	5	1	4
9. *Ergonomics*	8	7	6	1
10. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*	3	2	2	0
11. *Human Factors: Journal of Human Factors and Ergonomics Society*	1	1	1	0
12. *Human Performance*	0	0	0	0
13. *Journal of Experimental Psychology-Applied*	0	0	0	0
14. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*	12	10	8	2
15. *Scandinavian Journal of Work Environment and Health*	3	2	2	0
16. *Work and Stress*	5	4	2	2
Total	111	82	51	31

The most frequently mentioned format was semi-structured interviews, although several authors used a more structured approach with pre-determined questions; very few used unstructured interviews. An additional 10 papers used interviews drawing on the CIT method. Nine papers explicitly claimed an interpretivist perspective, some of them using a grounded theory approach. Most studies using mixed method designs had a positivist perspective, with interviews used as precursor of main quantitative study. Interview schedules were rarely included in the Methodology section or the Appendix. However, in most cases, interviews were recorded and transcribed. Interviews were generally subject to thematic analysis, although we found a wide variation in the detail provided about the data analysis process. A few authors drew on established approaches (e.g. template analysis by King, 1998) or software (NVivo), explaining in detail how the coding structure evolved and illustrating their findings with quotes; most provided surprisingly little insight into how they analysed the qualitative data (this occurred most often when interviews were utilized as a precursor for scale development). There was a general tendency to use multiple coders and to report on inter-rater reliability using Kappa coefficients in the analysis of interview data. Additionally, the findings often focused on frequency counts of identified themes per participant, and in some cases even of hypotheses testing using Chi square. This focus on 'objectivity', reliability, measurement accuracy hints at a somewhat positivist approach to interviews as a research method in psychology, and less acceptance of more constructionist and interpretivist approaches. There were however studies that employed a more inductive grounded theory approach.

Focus groups were often used in conjuncture with other qualitative methods (in about half of the sample) and most often treated as a supplementary data source. Overall, 13 papers used this method. One study combined critical incidents with focus groups. Most papers used content or thematic analysis. Among the mixed-method studies, focus group data was used for scale development. A few papers used more interpretivist and critical approaches (e.g. critical discourse analysis, grounded analysis, ethnographic content analysis) to make sense of the data emerging from focus groups.

Secondary data were utilized in nine papers, comprising publicly available data (e.g. press coverage using LexisNexis), organizational (e.g.

Table 30.3 Qualitative methods used in empirical psychological studies (2007–2015)

Data collection	*Purely qualitative*	*Mixed methods*	*Research topics*	*Common data analysis approach*
Interviews (N = 34)	23	11	• Stress and well-being (N = 12) • Ergonomics (N = 12) • Career (N = 6) • Occupational health and safety (N = 3) • OD and organizational change (N = 3) • Ethics/justice (N = 2) • Motivation/commitment (N = 2)	• Thematic analysis (identification of categories), with frequency count and inter-coder reliability (Kappa)
Critical Incident Technique-based interviews (N = 10)	7	3	• Stress and well-being (N = 5) • Ergonomics (N = 3) • Occupational health and safety (N = 1) • Motivation/commitment (N = 1)	• Thematic analysis and frequency count
Focus groups (N = 13)	7	5	• Occupational health and safety (N = 8) • Stress and well-being (N = 3) • Ergonomics (N = 1)	• Content/thematic analysis
Secondary data (N = 9)	5	4	• Ergonomics (N = 3) • Organizational culture (N = 2) • Stress and well-being (N = 1) • Occupational health and safety (N = 1) • Leadership (N = 1) • Team dynamics (N = 1) • Careers (N = 1)	• Content/thematic analysis, sometimes with frequency counts
Qualitative surveys (N = 7)	1	6	• Motivation/commitment (N = 3) • Occupational health and safety (N = 2) • Team dynamics (N = 1) • Leadership and gender (N = 1)	• Content/thematic analysis, with frequency counts and inter-coder reliability (Kappa)
Observation (N = 3)	1	2	• Occupational health and safety (N = 2) • Stress and well-being (N = 1)	• 'Automated video analysis system' to analysis recordings • Template analysis • Observation notes analysed using NVivo software
Diaries/journals (N = 3)	2	1	• Stress and well-being (N = 1) • Job design (N = 1) • Careers (N = 1)	• Template analysis • Generalized 'case study analysis'
Repertory grids (N = 1)	1	0	• Leadership (N = 1)	• Grounded theory and repertory grids approach (eliciting elements, constructs and linking mechanisms)
Delphi technique (N = 1)	0	1	• Occupational health and safety (N = 1)	• Questionnaire developed by sampling expert opinions on topic
Method of empathy-based stories (MEBS) (N = 1)	1	0	• Motivation/commitment (N = 1)	• Content analysis using NVivo software

company documents, pre-existent HR surveys or employee data), interpersonal (e.g. customer call recordings) and individual (e.g. biographical) data. More than half of the papers adopted a positivist perspective (e.g. three papers used secondary data for scale development). In one study the content analysis (of press coverage) focused on key events, again blurring boundaries between methods, as critical incident analysis is typically used from primary data sources (i.e. in interviews).

Qualitative surveys such as open-ended qualitative surveys or questionnaires were used in seven papers. Surveys were sometimes online; however, this was not a prevalent feature of this method. Some authors described their surveys as 'qualitative questionnaire' and, arguably, these were barely different from structured scales commonly used in quantitative studies. Most studies therefore had a positivist approach, coding focus group material based on pre-determined taxonomies or using it for scale development. The data analysis process for one paper was unclear.

Observation and diaries. Despite the significance of data-rich methods to organizational psychology practice (discussed in the previous section), relatively few studies adopted these approaches. Only three studies used observational methods, and three studies used individual diaries or journals. All studies used observation in conjuncture with other qualitative methods. Diaries were event-focused or problem-focused in two papers, whilst one paper used online reflective journals focused on broader experiences (career transitions). Of the 82 studies, only one study used repertory grids.

It is worth noting that these methods can be utilized in a variety of research designs used in inductive qualitative or mixed method studies. For instance, among the studies reviewed, only three utilized these methods within case study and ethnographic research designs. Papers using a case study research design employed a combination of methods (e.g. interviews, observations and secondary data). A particularly rich and well-executed case study comprised self-reports, interviews, archival data and questionnaires, with within and cross-case analysis to explain discontinuous career transitions triggered by traumatic life events (Haynie and Shepherd, 2011). Case study and ethnographic approaches generally focus on phenomena beyond the individual, and are more widely adopted in sociologically influenced organization studies. A key strength of these methods is that they provide a context-sensitive perspective on individual and interpersonal experiences at work (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009). Their scarce use in organizational psychology reflects the relative invisibility of critical and context-sensitive perspectives in the field.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the more unusual methods adopted in organizational psychology qualitative research. One study on health and safety used video recordings to collect observational data. Another, on occupational health, adopted the Delphi technique, which is a structured technique for agreeing a set of responses from a set of relatively open questions. In this study (Fung et al., 2012), the frequencies of responses from a broader discussion (i.e. key aspects in risk assessment in construction work) were selected as a basis to form a structured questionnaire. The method of empathy-based stories (MEBS) was applied in a study of psychological contract and motivation (Kultalahti and Viitala, 2015). MEBS is attributed to Eskola (1998) as a narrative data collection method in which participants write short essays or stories according to the instructions given by the researcher. Respondents are given a short framework or perspective (in this case, stories of high and low engagement), which helps them to orientate to the situation they are supposed to write a short story about (Juntunen and Saarti, 2000). The data can then be analysed in a range of ways, such as content analysis, narrative or discourse analysis.

Overall, our review of research published over the last nine years revealed that qualitative or mixed-method studies remain rare in top psychology journals, and we join recent voices advocating for change (e.g. Cassell and Symon, 2011). Given the numbers of issues and papers published annually in the journals reviewed, we estimate that less than 10 per cent of organizational psychology studies published in top academic journals employ qualitative methods. In our concluding section, we comment further on the causes and perils of this lack of methodological diversity in the field.

CONCLUSION

Overall, our review of the practice and research of organizational psychology indicates that qualitative approaches offer a different, sometimes critical, and arguably more comprehensive and complex perspective on our understanding of the way people think, feel and behave in work and organizational contexts. Although the call to incorporate more qualitative research within organizational psychology and management is increasing (Cassell and Symon, 2011; Fryer, 1991; Hickson, 2011; Johnson et al., 2006; Locke, 2011; Van Maanen, 1998), qualitative methods remain largely underutilized, misunderstood and devalued in the field. This is not simply an argument between researchers with competing epistemologies. There are also strong commercial interests based on the claim that a 'scientific' positivist approach can predict and enhance work performance. To understand why the quantitative approach dominates, it is therefore important to consider why organizational research is being conducted and who it is ultimately for.

Hollway (1991) argues that it is important to consider how knowledge is created in organizational

psychology in order to understand why certain approaches and models have been successful. She also argues for the need to acknowledge the social and political conditions important in producing such knowledge, thereby rendering explicit the political considerations of power and influence that are rarely considered by organizational psychologists. Hollway considers that the lack of debate about the status of knowledge that makes up the field of organizational psychology as being the result of an uncritical identification on the part of researchers with the natural sciences. Whilst this may well be the case, the scientific legitimization of organizational psychology is also popular among clients and practitioners because according to a positivist model it is possible to uncover universal principles of workplace behaviour and use these to predict, shape and control performance. A multi-billion-dollar industry has developed based on this premise, with organizational psychologists now working in some capacity in most large organizations. This success is in part due to the availability of methods for quantifying and comparing the effectiveness of individuals and practices: factors that have enhanced the power (and resources) of HR, traditionally one of the least powerful organizational functions.

Some of the tension between qualitative and quantitative perspectives can therefore be explained by the way in which research 'findings' are used in practice. Organizational research has commercial value, and research findings represent a commodity. For example, results are often presented as 'evidence' that a particular approach works. That is, if an organization adopts this approach (which might be a stress management programme, a training intervention, selection process or form of work design) they will be able to enhance performance, well-being, or some other factor relevant to achieving organizational objectives. However, the commercial value of the research (the extent to which an approach can be 'sold' to different organizations) often depends on the generalizability of these research findings. This is particularly apparent in the case of psychometric measures such as personality, work attitude or cognitive ability questionnaires, which are marketed on their ability to work equally well across different occupational and organizational domains. The ability to generalize findings to multiple work contexts fits with a scientific positivist search for universal principles of behaviour. In comparison, qualitative researchers, who emphasize the uniqueness of individuals and work contexts, represent a potential challenge to these assumptions (Bartunek and Seo, 2002). For example, if we conceptualize organizational culture as a socially constructed phenomenon that will vary both across organizations and within organizations over time, this represents a challenge to the commercial viability of psychometric tests that claim to measure culture across different organizations. Thus, resistance to qualitative research may be explained in part by the more attractive commercial proposition of quantitative methods and the scientific approach. To gain more popularity in organizational psychology, qualitative researchers may therefore need to emphasize the potential relevance of their work to a commercial as well as an academic audience. For example, in his practitioner commentary on a special issue of the *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology* devoted to qualitative research, Kandola (2000: 586) suggests that it is important to ask 'how have organizations benefited from this approach?'. That is, where is the evidence that qualitative research has made an impact upon organizational effectiveness? Ironically, in the work context, where performance is quantified, compared against objectives and equated to financial profit, qualitative research may need to rely on quantitative methods in order to demonstrate 'worth' and impact. However, Kandola's question also raises the issue of whether 'worth' is conceptualized in the same way by different stakeholders (e.g. managers, shareholders, employees and customers). For example, introducing a new work design that facilitates increased levels of production in manufacturing may be perceived as 'effective' by managers, but not by workers who find that they have less opportunity for social interaction in the workplace. Organizational psychologists rarely acknowledge the power and influence of different stakeholders when undertaking research and practice, or the fact that there may be different and conflicting views about the 'effectiveness' of such work, and for whom this knowledge serves. This is a central charge laid by critical psychologists (Parker, 1999). Interestingly, however, King (2000) points out that in some quarters of discursive and rhetorical psychology the assumption that qualitative research *should* have an influence on practice has itself been strongly criticized. According to Widdicombe (1996) this would almost inevitably mean some compromise or acquiescence to the status quo and its dominant power relations, in this case a managerial perspective.

Power relations should also be critically examined when it comes to scholarly research in organizational psychology. Our review exposed the unquestionable dominance of quantitative research in top academic journals in the field. We attribute this lack of methodological diversity first to insufficient training in qualitative research methods, leaving journal editors and reviewers ill-equipped to judge the quality of non-quantitative studies (Halbesleben, 2011). The dominance of

quantitative methods creates implicit norms and reinforces hegemonic narratives about what constitutes rigorous methodological practice in the discipline, as evidenced by Cassell and Symon's (2011) study of how organizational psychology scholars understand qualitative research. These institutional pressures shape publication records and career opportunities for researchers who might want to break the mould and embrace qualitative methodologies. Contemporary organizational research conducted within 'sister fields' such as organizational behaviour and organizational studies (typically published in management journals) is more diverse and eclectic, having moved beyond the confines of positivistic perspectives (Buchanan and Bryman, 2009). Interestingly, we note that qualitative research conducted by some organizational psychologists, or research that is highly relevant to them, is currently more likely to be published in top management journals rather than purely psychological ones. The field of organizational psychology therefore remains insulated from the methodological debates that have moved organizational scholars in business schools beyond positivism. Moving forward, we would argue that organizational psychology scholarship will enrich its methodological approaches only if gatekeepers in the field (e.g. journal editors, heads of departments, academic societies, funding bodies) create institutional mechanisms to encourage the production and publication of qualitative work.

With regards to practice in the field, despite its tremendous contribution to the practice of organizational psychology, Hollway is right to challenge organizational psychologists for their single-minded dedication to a scientific positivist approach. Person–job fit is based on the premise that it is possible to measure work performance, but yet work performance is almost always defined from a managerial perspective. The most popular form of criteria for evaluating selection systems is managers' ratings of employee performance (Arvey and Murphy, 1998). 'Good' performance contributes to achieving organizational goals and, as such, is a constructed phenomenon shaped by the views of an organizational elite. Ironically, however, one of the greatest challenges to the scientific approach in personnel selection is the pace of change that now exists in the workplace (Patterson, 2001). The success of matching people to jobs assumes that both people and jobs do not change. However, organizations are now changing at an increasing pace, and job roles and employees must continually develop in order to cope with the changing demands of the workplace. Many selection and assessment methods have been criticized for being too rigid and inflexible to accommodate such change. In the UK and other Western nations, organizational psychology practice and research will need to adapt to broader socio-demographic trends, including population change based on an aging population and the impact of migration, the likely growth of new and different industries, and changes in consumer–producer relations enabled by advances in technology (Lewis and Zibarras, 2013). Technological advances will also change the nature, availability and manipulation of data based on availability of 'big data', accessibility of videos and even multi-dimensional perspectives on personality gleaned from publically available social media profiles. Ironically, however, change and evolution are central to a constructivist perspective. The changing nature of relationships between employers, employees, consumers, entrepreneurs and investors also indicates how domains traditionally related to 'work' are shifting. Thus, innovation and the future utility of organizational psychology in this area may well depend on incorporating more qualitative approaches. The future may be bright for qualitative research in this area after all.

Notes

1 For a review on the topic, see Cassell and Symon (2004) and the 2011 collective conversation within the *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* (Cassell and Symon; Locke; Halsbleben; Hickson).

2 We used the 2015 journal ranking list published by the Association of Business Schools as a guideline, selecting organizational psychology journals ranked 3 and 4 stars (rankings range from 1 star to 4 stars, where 4 stars denotes the highest quality peer-reviewed journals).

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APPENDIX. LIST OF QUALITATIVE AND MIXED-METHOD PAPERS REVIEWED (2007–2015)

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31

Forensic Psychology

Peter Banister

HISTORY OF FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY IN THE UK

Since the previous edition of this book there have been many major changes in this area, some of which have impacted on the use of qualitative research methods. Forensic psychology in recent years has proved to be an increasingly popular topic as demonstrated by the growth of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in the area. To some extent its popularity has been boosted by its portrayal in many popular fictional shows in the mass media, leading to the somewhat erroneous image of being particularly associated with solving crimes and acting as an expert witness in court cases.

The term 'forensic psychology' is, however, much wider than this, and is now more accepted in the UK. The British Psychological Society (BPS, the professional body for psychologists in the UK) established a Division of Criminological and Legal Psychology in 1977, when there were sufficient interested members to make a separate Division viable. This title emphasised that psychologists working in this area tended to do so in criminal justice and legal settings. This initial choice of title highlighted that when it comes to looking at the causes of crime and attempts to reduce the incidence of crime, psychologists needed to be aware of the contribution of other disciplines, including sociology, criminology, law, social policy, political science and economics. To some extent there is a sharing within this wide interdisciplinary basis and differentiating between these disciplines is often difficult (and may not be desirable).

After extensive debate it was felt within the discipline that there was a need to present a more distinctive image with a greater emphasis on psychology and on 'science', and so the Division changed its name to the Division of Forensic Psychology in 1999, with a more overt focus on 'forensic psychology'. The word 'forensic' historically goes back to the Latin word 'forum', which came to mean 'in open court' and more recently 'of the courts', referring specifically to psychology being involved with legal decision making, including expert witness advice in courts, fitness to plead and evaluating eyewitness testimony. In some countries Forensic Psychology is seen as being limited to these areas, but in the UK and elsewhere the term has been taken to be broader than this, being concerned with not only the application of psychology to court settings but also to the care and treatment of criminals. The Division exists to represent the interests of those psychologists who work in the Criminal and Civil Justice Systems (and not just the Courts).

It is interesting to note that although there has been this change in the name of the Division, the leading BPS journal in this area still goes under the title of *Legal and Criminological Psychology*. This title implies that articles published are from diverse sources in terms of methodology and discipline, but in practice the majority of articles printed in this journal and other journals published in the general area of forensic psychology utilise quantitative paradigms. A perusal of the last four years of publication of this key journal reveals there to be a relatively large number related to topics such as eye witness testimony and court procedures, with some on treatment and more specialist areas such as stalking and the Internet. Very few of the published papers specifically use qualitative methods; despite this (as will be spelt out below), articles may include qualitative elements, sometimes acknowledged and at other times more implicit.

Division membership thus includes forensic psychologists working in academic settings, prison services, mental health, health, education, privately and social services. Most forensic psychologists in the UK are employed in prison, probation and mental health contexts, where they may be involved in such areas as testing and treating people, running and supervising group programmes and helping the management. Substantial numbers, however, act as consultants to the police in the detection of criminals and in court settings as expert witnesses. In addition, they may be involved in the training of police, probation and prison officers. Many are employed in research settings, typically in Higher Education Institutions but also in bodies such as the Home Office Science Group, which brings together scientists, researchers and analysts. Like other areas of applied psychology, the forensic psychologist is often needed to provide concrete advice to courts or in institutional settings to deal with actual current problems in real-life settings, the emphasis being on pragmatic outcomes and ongoing situations rather than theoretical developments. Over the recent years there has been a substantial growth in Division membership, which now stands at around 3000 in total.

RECENT CHANGES IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

Forensic psychologists used to be regulated by the BPS but since 2009 the regulation of the profession has been taken over by the Health Professions Council (HPC), more recently the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). This is an independent UK regulatory body set up to protect the public and is responsible for keeping a register of qualified health and care professionals who meet the appropriate standards of training, professional skills, etc. Most (but not all) have welcomed this change, which has meant that the BPS is now more the representative body for psychology and psychologists in this country, helping the development, promotion and application of psychology for the public good.

Under the HCPC the term 'forensic psychologist' is one of the legally protected titles that can only be used by those who are registered with the Council. Note that it is only this precise term that is so protected, which means that possibly similar terms such as a 'lecturer in forensic psychology' can be used without legal bars.

These changes have affected the education and training of forensic psychologists, which has had a positive recent effect on the development and use of qualitative methods within forensic psychology. In addition, there has been growth in the number of journals focusing on the area in recent years.

There are similarities to this in other countries to a varying degree (although the professional development of forensic psychology is proceeding at a somewhat different pace elsewhere in Europe). Examples include Australia, where forensic psychologists are seen as applying psychological knowledge to assessment, intervention and research in the context of the legal and criminal justice system. They are employed in such settings as corrective services, youth justice, forensic mental health, crime policy and research, but the majority are in private practice in related areas, including offender programme development and evaluation, court assessment and advisory services, and crime prevention services. They will have successfully completed a four-year psychology honours degree and normally go on to gain postgraduate qualifications in Forensic Psychology; exceptionally they will follow a more Apprentice-based model (see Berry, 2014). Ultimately if they have satisfactorily completed academic, research and placement requirements, they will be registered as a Psychologist and then with further supervised experience they can become a member of the Australian Psychological Society's College of Forensic Psychologists and can use the 'Forensic Psychologist' specialised title.

Another example is in the USA, where forensic psychology is seen as the production and application of psychological knowledge and research findings to the civil and criminal justice systems (Bartol and Bartol, 2015). It includes areas such as research, law enforcement, policing, institutional

and community correctional psychology, psychology and law, expert witness and evaluation, advising legislators on public policy, working with law enforcement officials, victim services and the delivery and evaluation of intervention and treatment programs for juvenile and adult offenders. To become qualified in the USA generally a doctorate level education is required, along with the successful passing of a State certification/licensing examination. Most are also professionally certified by the American Board of Forensic Psychology, although this is not necessarily required (as in the UK) by the State.

Traditionally the BPS has laid down in general terms the curriculum and other requirements for undergraduate and postgraduate degrees to be recognised by the Society, but now as part of the change to the HCPC it is the latter that currently accredits entry into the profession. Most entrants, however, will have successfully completed a relevant BPS accredited MSc as part of their route to accreditation, and recently there has been considerable growth in the provision of such courses, with some 37 separately accredited MScs (plus four Doctorates in Forensic Psychology). As an illustration of the diverse nature of this area it is interesting to note that the titles in use for these MScs differ considerably, with some 12 different variants in existence, ranging from Applied Criminological Psychology to Investigative and Forensic Psychology. This diversity to some extent reflects universities' marketing strategies, but it also demonstrates that there is still considerable variety in academic provision in this area.

What is also interesting in terms of the relatively recent growth of the use of qualitative methods in Forensic Psychology is that part of the BPS curriculum requirements emphasise the need to have studied qualitative methods, which is already beginning to have an impact. According to the 'Supplementary guidance for research and research methods on Society accredited postgraduate programmes' (BPS, 2014) students need knowledge and understanding of a range of data collection techniques and methods, including semi-structured interviews, focus groups and observational approaches. They will need an awareness of approaches to the transcription and analysis of qualitative data, and how to conduct qualitative research. They will need an appreciation of the different approaches to qualitative analysis (e.g. thematic analysis, discourse analysis, conversation analysis, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), grounded theory, narrative analysis and content analysis). They should also appreciate the limitation and strengths offered by different approaches and show awareness that high quality qualitative research includes reflexivity and appropriate quality criteria. The guidance then goes on to provide a list of more advanced areas that students of programmes may choose to cover, including critical and Foucauldian discourse analysis, descriptive phenomenology, meta-analysis, ethnographic approaches and mixed methods. There are many examples of this in practice – typically an MSc in this area will have a module on qualitative research and analysis, and may also specifically cover mixed methods. Areas covered will include interviews and ways in which such data can be analysed. Postgraduate dissertations may also use qualitative methods. It is envisaged that in the longer term these curriculum changes will affect the use of qualitative methods in forensic psychology.

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE USE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

It is interesting to note that most standard (especially American) texts on forensic psychology do not currently devote much space specifically to the methods used by psychologists working in this area, although many are replete with case studies that are used to help to illustrate the points being made. The focus is often on the causes of crime, investigating crime, different sorts of crime, the courts processes and how offenders are subsequently dealt with. There is an interesting methodological review by Copes (2012) who although looking more at American developments in criminology and criminal justice (rather than forensic psychology especially) points out that qualitative methods are not only underrepresented in American text books but they are also not well covered in undergraduate and graduate programmes. He also notes that they are less visible in many journals (although he does point out that they have more impact in the UK). The suggestion is that researchers are discouraged from carrying out and submitting such work for potential publication, and that the journals themselves may well favour more quantitative submissions. In fact, Copes (2012: 12) suggests that the low number of qualitative articles in some journals could be a 'byproduct of their connections to the psychology discipline' because such journals have psychologists as editors and editorial board members or are sponsored by them. A similar review of the first 10 years of the *European Journal of Criminology* by Smith (2014) notes that only one-fifth of the published articles report any qualitative data, the most common being unstructured or semi-structured interviews.

Moreover, in recent years there has been a growth of texts particularly from the UK that are more specifically concerned with carrying out research in forensic psychology, and even if they are mainly focused on quantitative methods there is a growing realisation that work is also being carried out using qualitative paradigms. Examples of this include *Research in Practice for Forensic Professionals* (Sheldon et al., 2011: xxv), which recognises that 'qualitative research methods now represent an important suite of methods and approaches to aid the construction of knowledge and are becoming increasingly popular with practitioners and researchers'. Another example is *Forensic Psychology: Theory, Research, Policy and Practice* (Brown et al., 2015), which has been written to support MSc forensic students and includes qualitative methods as part of its coverage of research. More specifically there is a book entitled *Research Methods for Forensic Psychologists: A Guide to Completing your Research Project* (Brown and Sleath, 2016), which has been deliberately designed to help MSc forensic students carrying out their postgraduate research project and includes, amongst other things, qualitative methods. For undergraduates there is the comprehensive text *Criminological and Forensic Psychology* (Gavin, 2014), which contains an extensive section on qualitative methods. There are of course other more general texts that again have had a definite effect on recent developments in the more general use of qualitative method, including Willig (2013) and Braun and Clarke (2013).

Traditionally, forensic psychology may well have taken it as axiomatic that quantitative methods are the best way forward, especially when it comes to establishing arguments that will stand the scrutiny of trained advocates in a courtroom situation, or to produce something that will provide 'evidence based practice'. There is also a tendency to perceive the area as one of recent growth that is still attempting to establish itself, seeing that the methods of natural science are the most appropriate starting point. Traditionally, the emphasis has been that forensic psychology needs to be based on empirical studies, with reliability and replicability of findings (which does not necessarily exclude qualitative approaches).

Given this and the emphasis that forensic psychology is above all concerned with the application of psychology to real world problems, has meant that the focus has been on pragmatism, rather than on theory development. Recent research has focused on areas such as crime scene analysis, eye witness testimony, interviewing techniques, psychopathy, violent and sexual offenders, anger management, developing effective treatments, bullying, stalking, suicide and risk assessment. There have been changes related to current political and social developments, such as those related to terrorism and to the increased use of computers and the Internet (by both criminals and researchers). The nature of crime itself has (and is) changing with remote grooming for sexual or physical abuse, stealing of passwords, misusing Internet banking, anonymity, electronic hijacking, etc. In addition, there have of course been legislative changes, for example laws tackling cyberstalking and cybercrime.

Leading on from this pragmatic emphasis there has been the growing recognition that many of the people involved in the criminal justice system have problems with literacy and with the written language and may be skilled in deceptive self-presentation. This has meant that there has been a realisation that conventional quantitative psychological approaches using standardised psychometric instruments may be problematic, which has contributed to the often unacknowledged use of qualitative methods as part of the 'toolkit' of the forensic psychologist. This is not so much driven by an explicit commitment to a qualitative philosophy but more by a growing realisation that relying solely on quantitative methods may be particularly problematic with many such participants.

There is also the recognition that in many areas the traditional looking-in-from-outside approach favoured by quantitative approaches may not answer important questions concerning criminal behaviour, motives and experiences, and there is often a need to involve participants directly in the research process, which thus involves the necessity of attempting to gain more of the way of an insider perspective. There is also often the need to do pioneering work in a previously unlooked at area, and qualitative methods are particularly appealing as a starting point in what essentially may be an exploratory study, ensuring that what is being investigated comes from the participant, and is not just a reflection of the researcher's preconceptions. Often potential sample sizes are very small, which may make quantitative methods more difficult.

Forensic psychologists utilising qualitative methods may therefore not be doing so for particular theoretical reasons, but because they feel that such methods offer the best way of tackling particular pragmatic problems and at the same time overcome many of the problems mentioned earlier. Partly related to this (as well as the changes in curriculum mentioned previously) some aspects of qualitative methods are beginning to make an impact, including notions of reflexivity, acknowledging the position and influence of the researcher and appreciating that qualitative methods may involve interpretation. The method

also allows access to extremely small numbers of people, which may be of particular use in evaluation research.

Given that qualitative methods have inevitably been used for pragmatic reasons rather than because of a theoretical commitment to such methods, this chapter to some extent reviews and to some extent reiterates the material from the previous edition of this book, looking at key qualitative methods with examples and stressing some of their implications (see Table 31.1). The chapter will also look at more recent ongoing and possible developments in terms of the use of qualitative methods within forensic psychology, before providing some conclusions about this field. Recent years have seen vast technological changes, which have affected the world of forensic psychology research, including developments in video-recording, tracking, remote close circuit television, remote monitoring, computing, using the Internet, blogs, social networks, apps, mobile phones, etc.

GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT THE USE OF QUALITATIVE METHODS IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

From the outset it is important to emphasise that the contribution of qualitative methods is far more widespread within forensic psychology that the casual perusal of recent journals would indicate. Often such work is unacknowledged, but is nevertheless an important part of the research process. An example of this is that quite a number of journal articles published involve working directly with criminal populations and, as has been mentioned earlier, such participants may have literacy and other such problems. This means that test and questionnaire administration can at times only be carried out via verbal administration or some form of interviewing, including semi-structured interviewing. Such results may apparently be interpreted within a more quantitative framework, but inevitably the interviewing

Table 31.1 Overview of qualitative methods used in forensic psychology with illustrative examples

Methods used	*Data source*	*Brief explanation*	*Examples*
Interviews	Mainly semi-structured one-to-one interviews/focus groups	Detailed analysis of verbal material using a variety of methods (including thematic analysis, interpretative phenomenological analysis, discourse analysis, grounded theory)	Kennedy (2014) on prison riots; Nelson and Desroches (2014) bank robbers
Textual analysis	Using mainly pre-existing texts and Internet resources	Detailed analysis of available material (including blogs and social media use), use of language	Lowenstein (2016) judges' sentencing remarks; Whitty (2015) online dating scams
Case studies/ narrative enquiry	Detailed examination of individual occurrences, including autobiographical material	Detailed examination of real-life events	Tombs and Whyte (2015a and 2015b) corporate crime
Ethnography	Observations (can be participant), interviews	Attempt to gain an 'insider' perspective through immersion in a given setting	Loftus and Goold (2012) covert police work
Action research	Interviews/observation	Detailed analysis followed by suggested changes and then further analysis	Katz (2002) looking at addressing the needs of young parents in prison
Observation/ participant observation	Fieldwork observation of participants in a given setting; can be participant	Systematic observation of behaviour in real-life contexts	Dabney et al. (2004) shoplifters; Nagle et al. (2014) behaviour in court
Repertory grids	Kelly repertory grids	Analysing grids looking at a particular aspect of how the participant makes sense of their environment	Blagden et al. (2012) sex offenders
Role play	Replications of real-life situations	Participants role play and the results are observed	Haslam and Reicher (2012) role plays of mock prisons

process will have produced material that influences the subsequent analysis of the findings. Illumination often comes from unexpected sources (often the most interesting findings are serendipitous, which as Banister et al. (2011) stress can be an excellent route to further psychological research), and the inclusion of qualitative points raised by participants in carrying out a quantitatively based study is probably the mark of a good researcher.

Qualitative research methods are being increasingly used, often in tandem with quantitative approaches or as a precursor (e.g. as a pilot study) to the development of quantitative measures. Questionnaires and psychometric measures are extensively used in published forensic psychological research and practice, and pilot work should be an essential part of this process, starting off with checking through the understandability and appropriateness of questions and their responses (perhaps in tandem with statistical examination of internal consistency and other psychometric variables). The particular problems with offender literacy mean that traditional psychometric measures often have to be modified to cope with this difficulty. It may be that these processes are taken for granted, but published journal articles in the area tend to gloss over the procedures utilised in developing measures (although postgraduate and undergraduate dissertations will hopefully spell out in detail the processes followed in carrying out the studies being reported on). Most studies are likely to have some qualitative contribution, even if it is unacknowledged.

As well as often unacknowledged contributions to studies, qualitative material may be used in an overt fashion to illuminate findings. An example of this is in Wright and Holliday (2005), who carried out a questionnaire-based study of the perceptions held by police officers in the UK of older eyewitnesses. Although the major data gathered was subjected to content analysis, the article included a lot of qualitative material to illustrate the findings. Thus, when discussing cognitive interviews (which is a specialised interview technique developed in forensic psychology that tries to improve witness recall by emphasising different retrieval pathways and by context restatement) the findings are illustrated with the comment from one officer that with older witnesses 'it is a very good idea to explain (the interview) to the witness first, and subject to circumstances, inject some humour, for example when looking at the scenario from an alternative view' (Wright and Holliday, 2005: 218). This adds to the findings of the research, it opens up potential avenues for future research, and a discourse analyst may well want to comment on this example.

Comments made can suggest avenues for further research or provide a partial explanation for the results obtained. An example of the latter is an Australian study reported by Ahmed and Braithwaite (2005), who were looking at tax compliance by ex-university students. In Australia (and more recently in England) there are high university tuition fees and students are provided with loans that are theoretically repaid via the tax system when a certain income threshold is reached; there is considerable evidence, however, that those who should be making the extra payments are more likely to attempt to evade paying their taxes. Their paper includes a complete section entitled 'qualitative observations and data reflections', which includes lengthy pertinent quotations from participants' personal narratives, which help to illuminate their findings. An example here is the claim that 'the most unexpected outcome of the current study was that dissatisfaction with the university course studied played a key role in directly triggering tax evasion'. They continue that 'personal narratives provide insight into how dissatisfaction with university courses increased shame displacement and reduced shame acknowledgement' (Ahmed and Braithwaite, 2005: 303), the implication being that 'blame for being deceived and tricked into wasting one's time and money on a university course is directed to tax evasion' (304). This interesting finding has implications for student loan developments in other countries.

QUALITATIVE METHODS USED IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

There is an enormous range of potential material that could be covered here, and inevitably what is presented in this chapter is a narrow selection of exemplar studies that have utilised qualitative methods. The choice has been partly determined by using studies that provide interesting findings, thus illustrating how forensic psychology has used qualitative methods pragmatically. It is hoped that this concentration on certain studies will help to illustrate some of the range of the work that has been done within forensic psychology using this methodological approach, and to bring out the general emphasis on the applications of psychology. An effort has been made to use studies from many different countries to provide a wide picture, and to build on some of the work covered in the previous edition of this chapter.

Interviews

The greatest use of qualitative methods within forensic psychology has probably been through the use of semi-structured and unstructured interviews (which includes to a lesser extent focus groups). This method has been used with many different participants in the forensic world, including law enforcement personnel, court personnel, juries, victims, legislators and criminals, with the general purpose to gain insights into their worlds. In particular, there have been a large number of studies with criminals in areas such as burglary, violent property crime, female crime, property crime, shoplifting, armed robbery, sex offences and car theft, many of which have had applied outcomes. As Nee (2004) stresses, it is important to include the perspective of the offender in forensic psychology, and a number of examples are now presented to illustrate some of the diverse findings from such studies. In recent years, with the growth of the Internet availability and use, studies have carried out interviews using remote texting, audio (and telephone) interviews and Skype; there are advantages and disadvantages in using more remote methods such as these. The BPS (2013) has set out guidelines to help with some of the ethical problems involved in carrying out such research.

It is interesting to note that a variety of methods have been used to examine the findings from research, and in more recent years the analysis of interview material has become a lot more sophisticated, with thematic analysis still being the most popular method of analysis, but with an increasing amount of interpretative phenomenological analysis, and some use of discourse analysis and grounded theory.

Books have been written based on extensive interviews, such as Pogrebin's (2012) edited readings entitled *About Criminals: A View of the Offender's World*, which looks at a whole variety of different sorts of criminal behaviour in the USA. This book partly focuses on criminals discussing their offences and themselves from their own perspective so that they can both describe their offending behaviour and outline the reasons for their criminal behaviour, including their thoughts about their victims. Crimes covered include property, violence, sex, white collar crimes, guns and drugs. Gang membership, gender differences and returning to society after prison are also included.

A particular example of such work is domestic burglary, which involves going into (often forcibly) private domestic property in order to steal some of the householder's possessions. The best known work in this area is probably that of Bennett and Wright (1984) in the UK, who interviewed imprisoned burglars and found that burglars were not necessarily just opportunistic, but tended to specifically choose targets related to a number of environmental factors, including security features, how accessible the property was, whether it was overlooked and who was occupying it. Nee and Meenaghan (2006) have carried out follow-up research in this area, confirming that many burglars had predictable target patterns and that this knowledge could be used to 'target harden' (i.e. to make houses less vulnerable to being targeted).

There are some fascinating findings that have come up from interviews, especially looking at the cognitive distortions employed by some criminals. A good example of this is the large-scale research project by Nelson and Desroches (2014) in Canada. This research interviewed 80 incarcerated bank robbers (taking seven years to do so) and looked at how they conceptualised 'victims' and 'victimisation'. Using content and thematic analysis they found that their participants actually reversed conventional understandings of such scenarios, seeing bank robbery as being basically non-violent and victimless, and claiming that any problems occurred because the people in the bank resisted and did not play the passive role demanded – their 'foolhardy and feckless' aggressive actions being what caused problems, making the robbers into 'victims' themselves. Banks were seen as being entities and that bank robbery was inherently a victimless crime. This account reverses conventional notions of who is the victim in a bank robbery and clearly indicates a need to address such distortions.

Looking at these and other accounts that offenders give as to the possible reasons for their criminal behaviour has had implications for the development of treatments that aim to reduce further occurrences. The various studies that have been done in this area on violence, for instance, have contributed to the development of theory and have also helped to suggest ways in which techniques can be developed to help to minimise future such occurrences. Novaco and Welsh (1989), for example, looked at the cognitive distortions of violent males in the USA and found that such people tend to see the world as being generally an aggressive place and to perceive others around them to have hostile intentions. They are likely to think that victims will often react violently and they will interpret victims' behaviour as being challenging and a potential threat. A consequence of this is that they often feel that the other is likely to hurt them if they do not strike first, and thus they will attack the other to prevent being attacked themselves. They also found that such offenders tend to have difficulties in seeing situations from the viewpoints of others, see a violent response as

being the only possible behaviour and tend to over believe in the importance of their first impressions of the other and the situation. Such findings have had a considerable impact on the development of programmes in forensic settings, where offenders are encouraged to discuss their offences in detail, to look at them from the viewpoint of others and to develop alternative strategies for dealing with potentially confrontational situations. A review by Wilson et al. (2013) of such anger management programmes in a high-security hospital found that they reduced incidents of physical aggression in response to provocation.

Another study with similar interesting findings was carried out by Indermaur (1995) in Australia. He interviewed 88 imprisoned offenders who had been involved in a classic street face-to-face robbery. He found that the actual confrontation is generally planned by the offender and attempts to avoid direct violence are often achieved through threatening the victim. If the robbery was unplanned then violence may be more likely as the offender may feel to be less in control. Violence was used in the commission of a robbery for a variety of reasons, including a way of helping the offender instrumentally to get the desired property, to control the situation better when another person comes onto the scene before the robbery is successfully completed and to help them to better make an escape. It was frequently claimed by offenders that they were under the influence of drugs and alcohol at the time, but most said that they were nonetheless in control of their aggressive behaviour. As has been found in other studies, many did not think of their impact on the victim, or dehumanised them, or could not recall clearly what it was they were thinking at the time. Several stated that they did not think during the commission of the offence, given how short the time taken was. The importance of violence and its possible effects on the victim was often minimised. From studies of this nature it has been suggested that it is best that the victim should comply immediately and without resistance to the demands, should be non-confrontational and should not endeavour to hinder or to pursue them.

Some interview studies of burglars have found interesting rationalisations to justify their behaviour, including claims that they perceive themselves as doing victims a favour (as they are likely to make a subsequent profit from an insurance claim), and it gives them an interesting topic to talk about with their friends.

Other examples focusing on a given crime are the New Zealand studies by Walsh and Lambie (2013) who investigated via interviews and thematic analysis the motivations for committing arson. Unusually this study not only interviewed a sample of arsonists but also their parents; the results suggested that additional variables such as family historical factors needed to be taken into account beyond the arsonists' individual reasons for starting fires.

Yet another example is the study by Kellett and Gross (2006) who interviewed, using semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis, convicted joyriders in the UK (young people who had stolen cars and driven them for the fun of driving them). They came to the conclusion that such behaviour could be conceptualised as being highly addictive and similar to other addictions such as alcohol or drug addiction. As is common with many of the studies presented in this section of this chapter, such findings have policy implications in terms of how to prevent future occurrences of such behaviour.

Another final example of the examination of the offender's perspective is the work of Willott and Griffin (1999) who carried out a number of semi-structured group discussions involving male offenders in probation settings and prison in the UK who had been sentenced for money-related crimes. Their study focused on the offenders' criminal activity and the implications of this for their gender identity. A combination of grounded theory and discourse analysis was used to analyse the transcripts, and they interpreted the results within a discourse of male breadwinning to provide for their families and at times using a 'Robin Hood' narrative (i.e. robbing the rich to provide for the poor).

As well as interviewing offenders, there have been many studies looking at crime from the standpoint of others involved in the process. One example of such work is the study of jury decision making. Although direct questioning of juries about specific decisions made in specific cases is not allowed in England, there has been research examining the views and attitudes of jurors who have recently completed jury service. For example, Matthews et al. (2004) in a partly qualitative interview study found that ex-jurors in England were generally impressed with their experience in the court room, ending with a more positive and confident view of the jury system after their service and would be happy to do jury service again. They did, however, feel that less legal terminology could be used and that the evidence could sometimes be presented in a clearer fashion.

Another example looking at crime from a different angle are the extensive studies carried out looking at the 'fear of crime'. These have generally been carried out using surveys but there have also been qualitative studies, such as the work by Rypi (2012) who carried out focus groups with elderly participants in Sweden and found that they

should not be looked at as a single homogeneous vulnerable category because they had a great variety of responses to the possibility of being a victim. Fear of crime has been found to particularly affect older people, and women more than men, and in several cases makes them virtually housebound (particularly at night time). Ironically, statistics demonstrate that those who are most likely to be victims of crimes on the streets tend to be young males who are out on a Friday or Saturday night, and such victims are least affected by fear of crime.

Developments in interviewing techniques, including 'cognitive interviewing', might be an indication as to how the increasing emphasis on qualitative methods has led to changes in interviewing methodology, especially in cases involving the investigation of crimes. As has been mentioned, cognitive interviewing has been extensively used with witnesses to help them to remember more details about what they have seen by encouraging the use of alternative retrieval paths to memory and by detailed context reinstatement, as well as asking the witness to recall the event from the viewpoint of another participant or in a different temporal order (see, for example, Fisher and Geiselman (2010) for a summary of the technique).

In addition to the examples mentioned previously, there have been a host of relatively small-scale interview-based studies published (especially in recent years) that show how the qualitative technique of interviewing is particularly useful when accessing small and difficult to access populations, especially when there is a need to carry out some evaluation research looking at, for instance, the impact of a particular intervention.

The purpose of this review is to give a flavour of such research, all of which have used thematic or interpretative phenomenological analysis. These include insider's accounts where the findings would not be obtainable using other methods, such as the Kennedy (2014) study of prisoners who had taken part in a riot at a prison; the work of Ireland et al. (2014) interviewing people who had engaged in hostage taking, barricades and roof-top protests; Perrin and Blagden (2014) on the impact of being a listener in prison; Marzano et al. (2015) who interviewed prison staff on their experiences related to self-harm incidents; James and Harvey (2015) who interviewed ex-drug and alcohol offenders who had become employees of a substance abuse service; Merola (2015) who looked at the experiences of young offenders who had been given an indeterminate sentence; and Donna et al. (2015) who interviewed female victims of domestic violence concerning their experiences of taking part in court proceedings.

There is also similar work using what Hill (2012) calls 'consensual qualitative research', where the results are discussed by the researchers. This includes a study by Daniels et al. (2015) who interviewed people who had been convicted of hostage taking.

Interviews have also been increasingly used in evaluation studies, such as Ward and Attwell (2014) who carried out an evaluation of two community outreach forensic psychological services from the perspective of the service users, and Stewart et al. (2012) who again used interviews to find the service users' perspective on a violent offender treatment programme that they had taken part in.

Textual Analysis

Particularly with the growth of the Internet, opportunities have increased for research-analysing material that has been obtained remotely and is generally publically available (but not necessarily exclusively via the Internet). This has particularly been noticeable recently in forensic psychology undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations (possibly related to the apparent relative ease of access to a suitable group of participants).

An example of textual analysis in this area is the study by Lowenstein (2016) who looked in detail at the actual recorded sentencing remarks made by the judiciary in England in the context of sentencing riot offenders. He found that rioters were generally commented on negatively, regardless of their level of participation. Offender mitigation was rejected, the emphasis being more on preserving society from the harm and threat posed by rioters than on punishment and deterrence. A similar study was carried out by Smiley and Fakunle (2016) who looked at mass media portrayal of unarmed black male victims killed in the USA and concluded that they tended to be posthumously criminalised.

Researchers have examined blogs, allowing areas to be looked at that would normally be very difficult to access. Lambert and O'Halloran (2008) examined the postings on a female paedophilia website, which was meant to be written by women for women with a sexual interest in children. They used a form of thematic analysis and concluded that the postings displayed similar characteristics to males engaged in similar processes (cognitive distortions, etc.). Another such study is Whitty (2015) who looked at posts from a public online support group for victims of online dating romance scams, looking at how victims were ensnared and hoping through this knowledge that it prevented reoccurrence.

CASE STUDIES/NARRATIVE INQUIRY

Case studies, life history, narrative, documentary and oral history based works have been also used extensively in forensic psychology and feature heavily in textbooks where the focus is often on illustrating specific crimes. Examples of the latter include Gavin (2014) where case studies are extensively used throughout her book to illustrate the material being covered by reference to real-life examples. Another example is de Ruiter and Kayser-Boyd (2015) who present a series of case studies to illustrate how forensic psychologists in practice work on their assessments.

Again, such studies allow research to take place in areas that are otherwise inaccessible to study; it must be noted that the boundaries between forensic psychology and other disciplines are particularly blurred here. A typical such study is Hobbs (1995) whose book on professional criminals is based on interviews carried out over a three-year period with people in the UK involved in violence, protection rackets, drug dealing and car crime.

There are also extensive accounts of 'corporate crime' (see, for example, Tombs and Whyte, 2015a, 2015b), which look in detail at actual crimes committed by corporations (recent examples here include bank mis-selling, Libor rate fixing, non-payment of taxes, horsemeat selling, phone tapping).

There are also a number of biographies and autobiographies of criminals that potentially provide interesting source material. An interesting review by Killengray (2009) looks at the use of such material, which potentially provides rich material for psychology but, at the same time, presents many potential dangers. It is recognised that there may be dangers in generalising from isolated and rare examples, but this may be the only way in which certain avenues can be examined.

Individual case studies looking at specific topic areas are also carried out to illuminate practice and to help develop treatments in a wide variety of areas. For instance, Lad (2013) looked at the effects of attempting to treat an offender who had developed post-traumatic stress disorder resulting from his offence. Another example is Griffin-Shelley (2014) who presents two case studies of convicted online pornography users, looking at their self-justifications.

Case studies may also have implications for practice. For example, Cooper (2005) looked at the results of a programme that used behaviour therapy on an individual sex offender in the UK. The individual kept a sexual fantasy diary during his treatment and it was found that the fantasies reduced following the treatment. On the other hand, some of the work examining cognitive behavioural programmes with sex offenders has found that participation in such programmes, rather than reducing cognitive distortions, can provide offenders with further distortions that they then use to justify their behaviour.

Sometimes case studies are used in tandem with other methods. An example here is the study by Kiely and Hodgson (1990) that looked at stress in prison officers in the UK and carried out an evaluation of exercise as a way of reducing this stress. In their study they conducted interviews with staff at a prison where an exercise programme had been in operation. They surveyed governors concerning occupational stress and they carried out in-depth interviews with selected staff who had been sick with stress attributed illnesses. These combinations of methods helped to provide a more detailed picture about stress in the institutional environment and ways in which they might be reduced.

ETHNOGRAPHY

Ethnographic methods have been used in this area for a long time, right from the early mainly sociologically-based studies in Chicago. Ethnography within forensic psychology involves a mixture of methods, including observation, interviews, looking at case and life histories, etc., which theoretically enables the researcher to get close to their focus of interest, to hope to understand it better and possibly to effect changes as a result of the study. Examples include Loftus and Goold (2012) who took part in UK police covert surveillance, an under-researched area that is normally completely closed to an outsider and opens up issues of morality. In the USA, Goshin (2015) looked at life within a supportive housing alternative to incarceration for female offenders with young children. Goshin suggested that the success of such initiatives may depend on there being appropriate support in other areas such as mental health, drug use and paediatric care, and it was not just the matter of keeping the family together.

Another example with direct implications is the study by Bloor (2016) who looked at the risk-taking behaviour of male prostitutes in Glasgow, Scotland, especially in light of the dangers of the spread of HIV. This study was carried out mainly through observations and interviews, and led to concrete advice as to how unsafe commercial sex and violence could be reduced. In particular, he recommended that outreach workers who distributed condoms at regular places where prostitution occurred should encourage the prostitutes to carry out overt commercial negotiation with clients

before sexual activity commenced. This helped to alter the balance of power between the participants, and to set limits as to what was acceptable behaviour. It also has implications for the study of power in such settings.

Action Research

This was highlighted in the previous edition as an area that had a great deal of potential. As was stated then, this particular approach has not been extensively used to date within forensic psychology – and when it has been used it has been on relatively small-scale community-based projects and in education. This is still very much the current position and there is little evidence that there have been any substantial developments in using action research in forensic psychology. An example of this is the prison contexts in Katz's (2002) mainly interview-based UK project carried out under the Prison Reform Trust, which looked at the needs of young fathers and mothers in prison and how these needs might be addressed. As part of this project there was action-based research work carried out in seven establishments to ascertain the views of young parents in custody, with the aim of developing a useful and accessible advice and information service and an information guide for all young parents entering prison. This method has a lot of potential, but has yet to be extensively used.

OBSERVATION AND PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Qualitative methods in one form or another have been considerably used in this area, and many studies take as their starting point pertinent observations by researchers working in the field. As stressed earlier, forensic psychology has historically developed from criminology (with sociological roots), and the boundary between where one discipline ends and another begins can be unclear. For example, Goffman's famous study of asylums (1968) is in the tradition of extensive studies carried out looking at the possible anti-socialising aspects of being in a closed institution, including institutionalisation, developing criminal skills and becoming (anti)socialised into an 'inmate code', which essentially provides a set of unwritten rules as to how to behave as a prisoner (see, for example, Ricciardelli (2014) looking at this in a Canadian context). There are also other adverse effects of being in prison, including the development of criminal knowledge (known as 'criminal contamination'). Realisation of these problems has led to some changes, including some reductions in the use of institutions, especially for people with mental health and learning disabilities. There is now a greater emphasis on some support following prison release, and often there are attempts to provide a pattern towards release via transfer to less custodial institutions.

Many studies have utilised observational or participant observational approaches based on studies of offenders in many real-life contexts, such as prison, prostitution, car radio theft, gang behaviour, shoplifting, police behaviour (e.g. procedures, discretion and targeting on the streets), courtroom behaviour and jury decision making, drug taking, white-collar crime, corporate crime, etc.

Obvious ethical problems may be involved in such work (especially in terms of participant observation), but recent technological developments, such as the ubiquitous use of cameras with continuous video-recording (including wearing by police on active duty), have reduced some of these concerns. Nevertheless, this approach does offer the opportunity to carry out studies that are not really amenable to research from other methodological approaches, and has produced interesting research findings, which at times have direct applied relevance. There are many examples that could be used here, and the following is but a small selection of such studies.

There have been a number of studies carried out observing shoplifting (stealing goods from a shop, concealing them and leaving without paying for them). A classical example of this is Buckle and Farrington (1994) who systematically observed a random sample of customers of department stores in two locations in the UK and carried out detailed analysis of the behaviour of those observed shoplifting. In their study, they also provided a number of detailed illustrative case examples of shoplifting. The study, which obviously raises some concerns about ethical issues, provided some interesting findings, including the observations that males were more likely than females to shoplift, that most shoplifters in department stores steal relatively small and low-cost items, and tend to purchase goods as well as stealing them. Contrary to previous work that found a higher likelihood of older (aged over 55) people shoplifting, this study found more shoplifting was carried out by younger (aged 25 or less) people. Although they do not speculate for reasons for the differences, they could be related to population differences, time differences and department store differences. This can be illustrated by looking at the results of a similar study that used remote video cameras (thus ensuring that the observer presence was not a confounding factor).

This was carried out in the USA by Dabney et al. (2004) and found somewhat different results, where shoplifters tended to be between the ages of 35 and 54 and tended to be Hispanic females. However, they also found that the shopper's behaviour was a key variable, described behavioural cues of shoplifting intent, and also noted that unlike the previous research shoplifters were much more likely to leave the store without purchasing anything. These different findings from different countries both indicate that shoplifting is far more frequent than official figures would suggest and adds to knowledge obtained through other methods such as victim surveys of retail organisations, self-report surveys, interviews of shoplifters and police and store detectives' records of apprehended shoplifters. This work on shoplifting has helped in the redesign of shop layouts, the development of alternative surveillance systems and for store detectives to be better trained at targeting and detecting shoplifters.

Another example of observational studies that have had impact is the phenomenon of 'repeat victimisation' where it has been found that in certain circumstances a given target is more likely to be vulnerable in the future. For instance, it has been found that there is a tendency for houses successfully burgled once to be more likely to be re-victimised because offenders were successful, they were not caught, they found items of value, it is likely that those items will be replaced, they are familiar with the layout of the house, they know whether there is a dog or not and what the burglar alarm arrangements are, etc. This work on repeat burglary led to a very successful repeat victimisation prevention project in Kirkholt Rochdale, England, based on targeted police activity, which concentrated on recently burgled houses, making victims more aware of their house's vulnerabilities and what could be done to reduce burglaries. Similar interventions have been carried out elsewhere in a number of countries, with mixed success (see the review by Grove, 2011). There may be a need to further refine interventions of this nature because as Montoya et al. (2016) in a study in the Netherlands point out that targets may be different at different times of the day.

Within law courts there have been a number of studies looking at court procedures, for example looking at juries, which normally comprise untrained representatives from local communities who are used in many legislatures to decide on the guilt of the defendant (and in some also the sentence). Early work was carried out in the USA that involved actual observations of the jury's private decision-making processes, but this was stopped because it was felt it interfered with 'due process' and also revealed the sometimes arbitrary nature of decisions. More recent work has been carried out by Baldwin and McConville (1979) who systematically observed jury trials in Birmingham, England, looking at the patterns of decision making, the influence of how cases were presented and how trials were run. In addition, they noted how jury composition matched the general population and whether ethnic minority groups were adequately represented, etc. The latter has been taken up in other research, such as Sommers (2007) in the USA where there has been a long tradition of careful jury selection. Other studies have looked in more detail at actual behaviour in courts. For example, Nagle et al. (2014) observed gender differences in smiling in courts and related that to the perceived trustworthiness of witnesses.

Other observational work has led to actual changes. For instance, studies looking at police handling and questioning of suspects and victims have led to extensive changes in procedures involving, for example, interviewing victims of alleged rape or child witnesses.

REPERTORY GRIDS

As was remarked in the previous edition, some see personal construct theory as being a qualitative method, and because this technique has been used to a limited extent within forensic psychology it would be appropriate to make a brief mention of it. Winter (2003), in a British book examining the use of personal construct perspectives in forensic psychology, provides an oversight of such applications in the area of violence and homicide. He suggests that violent offenders could construe too tightly, tending to be cognitively simple and unable to communicate well with others, deficient in the ability to anticipate both the construing and the behaviour of others, and lacking in the ability to integrate conflicting information about others. There are obvious parallels (but from a different theoretical perspective) with the work mentioned previously, and Winter goes on to draw interesting links between cognitive behavioural approaches and personal construct theory. These have a common emphasis on recognising and attempting to tackle cognitive distortions, and both attempt some form of cognitive restructuring in an endeavour to make violence less likely to occur as a solution to the offender's problems in the future. This is an interesting example where advances from qualitative methods may lead to the greater integration between approaches, theories and methods.

Again, to illustrate how personal construct theory can be used in tandem with other work,

a paper by Blagden et al. (2012) looks at a case study involving the use of a repertory grid with a sexual offender who denied that they were a sexual offender, and who consequently is normally deemed to be 'untreatable'. This study found that such use of the grid elicited hypotheses that could be used for problem formulation, thus providing an adequate starting point for intervention.

A similar approach can be found in Houston (1998: 3) who, in writing a book on the impact of personal constructs work with offenders in the UK, starts by saying 'historically researchers have long been interested in the ways in which offenders make sense of their own behaviour'. She reviews the area from within a cognitive framework, suggesting that criminals may justify or neutralise their behaviour by denying their responsibility, denying the amount of harm done, saying the victim deserves it, condemning the condemners and appealing to other factors such as the need for peer approval. In addition, they may tend to lack understanding of social behaviour and may be unable to empathise with others, thus having difficulty in anticipating or predicting the behaviour of others. Such cognitive deficits may be addressed through programmes such as cognitive behaviour therapy, which involves identifying and restructuring cognitions, and providing training in appropriate coping skills. She acknowledges that personal construct approaches have influenced the development of cognitive theory, but still sees the two as having a different emphasis, in particular the former being more individual in its focus. Moreover, she remarks that 'the subsequent application of the approach to understanding and working with offenders has been surprisingly limited' (Houston, 1998: 20–1).

ROLE-PLAY

Another group of studies that potentially could be included here are the simulation or role-playing studies (although it is recognised that again boundaries are fuzzy, and some of the studies in this area do not really meet the usual philosophy within qualitative methods of treating the research participant as an equal in the process). Here the participants know that what they are doing is an attempt to replicate the essence of some 'real-life' setting, and such studies have the potential to explore areas that are not amenable to other methodological techniques. The most famous forensic example is the American study carried out by Zimbardo and his colleagues (see, for example, Haney et al., 1973), where students role-played 'prisoners' and 'guards' over several days within a mock prison setting on a university campus. This study was prematurely stopped when it became obvious that many of the 'prisoners' were in serious distress and the 'guards' were behaving brutally, supporting an argument for situational determinants that prisons set up their own demand characteristics. This study raises a number of ethical issues and it is interesting to note that its implications for the treatment of prisoners and the running of prisons have still not been taken completely on board by those responsible for training prison guards. More recent research in this area has produced somewhat different outcomes (see, for example, Haslam and Reicher, 2012), which indicate some of the problems of replication over time in different social settings.

There have also been extensive role-play studies of juries, particularly because the direct interviewing of jurists during and after trials has been made illegal in a number of countries. These can vary from simple simulations to the complete re-enactment of past trials, and have led to a number of interesting findings looking at person perception and stereotyping biases in such situations, as well as contributing to our knowledge of the dynamics of decision making in such settings. They have even been used in preparing for criminal cases in the USA where lawyers try out different potential arguments in a courtroom simulation. Examples of studies here include the findings that less guilty verdicts were associated with more respectful prosecution lawyers and that more guilty verdicts were associated with judges who spoke less warmly and patiently with defendants. Weiner et al. (2011) review a number of these studies from the USA, but it must be remarked that although the results do, to some extent, fit findings utilising other methodologies, they can be criticised for being solely intellectual exercises, they often use student participants, they are not constrained by the seriousness of the actual trial situation (where there will be different social and role expectations and interpersonal dynamics, with no real consequences of the decision reached), and where the moral implications of the decisions being made are not impacting on the defendant.

PROBLEMS WITH THE APPLICATION OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY

This review has given some indication of the range of the contribution that qualitative methods have made to both theory and practice within

forensic psychology, but it must be said that there are also difficulties involved with working in this area.

For example, interviewing has many advantages, but the approach is also fraught with potential methodological problems, some of which may be particularly acute if it is offenders who are being interviewed. These include the possibility that offenders may not be very verbally skilled; they may not have thought about their criminal activity until questions are posed; they may have rehearsed their stories in court and in other settings so that the original is lost; they may have been on courses that have provided them with alternative viewpoints they did not initially have; they may not be telling the truth; they may well want to present themselves in a good light; they may have poor memories; they may have committed so many crimes that recall is difficult; they may have difficulties with recall over prolonged periods of crime, etc. A pertinent example here is the Australian study on violent property offenders by Indermaur (1995) who found on checking the actual case histories of his offenders that some had minimised how much violence they had used and tended to discuss their less serious offences, whilst others had maximised the violence, giving the impression that their violence was a lot more serious and extensive than the court records indicated. This of course does beg the question as to whether the court records were accurate, and brings home the possibility that the same event may well be perceived in a rather different way by all the participants concerned.

There is also the tendency, which has been hinted at earlier, for psychologists to assume that people do make sense of their social world, they do carry around with themselves a set of implicit rules as to how to behave (which they may not necessarily be consciously aware of) and that we do behave purposefully. As Indermaur (1995) noted, many offenders often deliberately did not think about the impact of their behaviour on their victims as a way of coping with their own aggressive behaviour, and Pagnini, Bercovitz and Langer (2016) make the interesting suggestion that a lot of the time we do not behave thoughtfully, but instead act in a 'mindless' fashion, not really thinking about what it is that we are doing. This may be particularly likely when it comes to committing crimes, when criminals are often under the influence of drink or drugs at the time of the event and are thus unlikely to clearly remember what happened and why they behaved as they did.

The whole qualitative emphasis on meanings and understandings with people from a variety of different backgrounds might need to be further thought through, particularly in contexts such as prisons. Many criminals, for instance, deliberately do not think about the impact of crime on their victims. There are also problems with using focus groups, where offenders might be more concerned to impress their colleagues than to contribute to the debate, or might be inhibited because of the presence of others and the need to speak in public.

This does not mean that the method should be abandoned, but rather (as is true of all psychological methods) one should be aware of its relative advantages and disadvantages. The material gained can be very useful and has a large contribution to be made to forensic psychology, especially in terms of richness of material and new avenues to explore. Moreover, a lot of the material so gained cannot be obtained by using other methods.

There are also problems of generalisability of findings (which is a problem across all psychological methods). There is often a tendency to adopt a 'one size fits all' philosophy, thus overgeneralising the results of particular studies. This suggests that there may be a need to be more cautious when looking at what the implications of a particular research study might be. Variations related to culture, ethnicity, gender, etc, are often not fully recognised in the drawing up of intervention programmes. Coupled with this, there is a growing realisation that the meaning that people give their experiences differs enormously from person to person, and that there may be a need to understand more about this before attempting to intervene in a given case. Cognitive behavioural intervention may at times actually make some offenders more likely to subsequently commit crimes, rather than less likely.

Another problem that is increasingly becoming recognised is that incarcerated offenders may not be a random sample of offenders – those who get caught, who get processed by the criminal justice system and who end up in prison may not be a random sample of offenders. To some extent this is an intractable problem, but one that is not unique to qualitative approaches. It is possible to use snowballing and other techniques to gain access to a wider selection of participants for some studies, but again such methods have fresh drawbacks of their own. Similarly, there are dangers in using the Internet as a source, either for recruiting participants or for providing original material that is suitable for further analysis.

There are also many other potential problems in research in this area; for instance, direct observation of criminal activity may be illegal, possibly unethical and fraught with other problems (such as the potential danger to the researcher). Ethnographic researchers speak of the problems of getting too involved with their participants, particularly when potential illegal activities are involved. Some interesting attempts to remedy

this have been made, including the use of role-play studies, which have been mentioned earlier. Some researchers have used simulation studies, an example of this being the creation of 'virtual realities' of residential environments and asking burglars to comment on the relative attractiveness of different properties shown in the presentation, thereby getting some of the information that might otherwise be very difficult to access (see, for example, the UK study by Nee and Taylor, 2000).

POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Speculations as to the future are always doomed to failure, but the developments over the recent years indicates that there is now greater acceptance of the use of qualitative methods within forensic psychology, but there is still some tendency for quantitative methods to 'colonise' qualitative methods, where there is some attempt to quantify the data. Examples of this are applying numerical content analysis to data emerging from interviews, or using computer programs to analyse qualitative data.

The areas that seem to be developing recently are discussed next.

Meta-Analysis/Meta-Synthesis

This is known under many headings and is a methodology that has been used both quantitatively and qualitatively. This has arisen to provide a synthesis of different studies that looked at the same basic topic area, but within qualitative methods tends not to be simply aggregative but to be more interpretive. This has been used in psychotherapy (see, for example, Timulak, 2014), but has not been extensively used in forensic psychology, although it has considerable promise.

Mixed/Hybrid Methods

In recent years there has been an increased use in mixed methods, where a research project uses approaches from both qualitative and quantitative methods. There is also the growing realisation that the most quantitative of studies can nevertheless still provide serendipitous insights that open up new avenues for research or enquiry and that help in the better understanding of current concerns.

Examples of mixed methods include the use of questionnaires or surveys that have not only direct questions to answer but also include the opportunity to make freestanding comments, which add to the richness of findings. Sometimes qualitative feedback is used to modify ongoing quantitative research – and to improve it. An example of this is Allan et al. (2014) who researched making apologies in restorative justice and modified their vignettes considerably as a result of qualitative feedback.

Sometimes the combination of research methods is to add to the findings. An example of such a study is Bahr et al. (2010) who were interested in what factors were associated with successful re-entry into the community after being released from prison, and carried out extensive interviews with releasees, which involved gathering both quantitative and qualitative data and looking at details of family, social, work and other support. A similar study but in the UK context is by Souza et al. (2015) who carried out quantitative and qualitative interviews with prisoners and their (ex-) partners before and after release, looking at their pre-release expectations and what subsequently occurred post-release.

Another example is Bousfield et al. (2014) who used both quantitative and qualitative techniques in their comparisons between members of the public and mental health and legal professionals over the use of evidence-based criminal justice policy in Canada.

Developing New Methods

The conventional quantitative/qualitative distinction is becoming increasingly hard to draw; one interesting recent example where new methods are being developed is the work in forensic psychology by David Canter. He is well known for his pioneering work in 'investigative psychology' in the UK (see, for example, Canter and Youngs, 2009), which has an emphasis on helping the police and the courts in investigating and prosecuting crimes, initially through the development of techniques such as offender profiling to aid police detection of criminals. His methods are, to some extent, rooted in traditional 'science' notions, but his techniques use material that has been gathered using a variety of methods. More recently he has been carrying out work in an area that he is labelling 'narrative roles'; an example of this is Ioannou et al. (2015), which looks at the narratives produced by criminals in describing their identity. This study involved extended individual sessions with prisoners using, amongst other things, a questionnaire based on material gathered initially through interviews. The data

was then subjected to Smallest Space Analysis (SSA), a multidimensional scaling technique, and ended up with a conclusion that there were four narrative roles being presented by their participants, namely 'hero', 'professional', 'revenger' and 'victim'. To some extent qualitative methods are therefore integrated into this whole process, which is already promising interesting results.

Spatial Turn

Again related to the recognition that the boundaries between disciplines are getting increasingly hard to define is the work that has been done looking at where crime is committed: Canter's work helped to highlight this, and the area is called by some 'environmental criminology'. Some interesting recent work that shows the impact of technology on research are studies using Experience Sampling Method (ESM) techniques, where participants, through a mobile phone app, are recording their ongoing experiences and feelings as they move around spatially and in time. Solymosi et al. (2015) looked at the fear of crime experienced by members of the general public who used such mapping techniques in their everyday lives to look at where and when people are most fearful of being the victim of crime. These methods are being used in other areas of psychology and will be increasingly used in future research.

Criteria Development Debates

There has been perennial criticism of qualitative methods in terms of whether the results are generalisable or merely idiosyncratic. Several efforts have been made to try to counter this criticism, including triangulation, which uses different sources of data to look at given findings and independent analysis of the same data by different researchers.

One advantage of qualitative methods is its emphasis on the need for the overt acknowledgement of reflexivity and the influence of the researcher's own position, standpoint and demographic characteristics and how these might affect the whole research process, from initial interviews/observations to the conclusions drawn from the results. There is the growing realisation that neutrality is never possible regardless of how much one may strive to achieve it. Any piece of research cannot be independent of the researcher and the very presence will affect the outcomes (true of nearly all forms of research).

There are of course many other criteria that can be considered, such as 'credibility' (does the participant agree with the conclusions, do they make sense to colleagues and other researchers) and 'transferability' (whether the results can be transferred elsewhere).

Barnard (2012) advocates Critical Qualitative Theory (CQT), which has been developed by the UK National Centre for Social Research for government-sponsored evaluation research using qualitative techniques to answer a need for good quality generalisable research that is robust and provides insight into how policy and interventions work. Here there is an emphasis on using a wide range of approaches together (e.g. case studies and thematic analysis of interviews). An example of such a study (which included other methods as well) is Barnard et al. (2009) who looked at drug treatment seekers and frontline treatment workers involved in a drug treatment programme.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Forensic psychology is always a changing area, posing new challenges and questions as a result. In recent years, technological change has led to considerably increased criminal opportunities and, to some extent, the whole nature of crime' has changed. There are also demographic changes that are having an effect.

There has been more emphasis recently on victims within the criminal justice system and a recent growth of using restorative justice-based approaches – qualitative research will help to judge the impact of such initiatives on offenders, their victims and the community. Other initiatives such as the introduction of extensive electronic monitoring (e.g. tagging and curfews) needs to be researched in terms of the meanings and understandings people have of such interventions. The wearing of a tag may, for example, become seen as a status symbol by certain offenders. Another contemporary example is the use in the UK of Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) where perceived troublemakers are banned from certain locations, for example. To date, little work has been done on the effect of such orders on the individuals concerned. Other areas that deserve further qualitative research include issues related to immigration, which is yet to be extensively researched in forensic psychology.

As has been seen, there is a somewhat discernible move towards theory, rather than just using qualitative methods purely as a tool.

TEACHING QUALITATIVE METHODS

The Psychology Subject Benchmark (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2010) emphasises the importance of qualitative methods as part of the basic curriculum in degree-level Psychology in England, and this is also emphasised at the postgraduate level by the BPS (2014). With the growth of postgraduate education and teaching in this area there is increased emphasis on the importance of qualitative methods as being an essential part of a forensic psychologist's 'tool box'. Teaching in qualitative methods has expanded over recent years, and there is now a qualitative methods section within the BPS. This change and the gradual growth is to be welcomed and will eventually lead hopefully to more published research using such methods, but it must be remarked that more emphasis is probably needed at the postgraduate level. As mentioned previously, this is not dissimilar to the position elsewhere in the world in relation to the teaching of qualitative methods in psychology. As the use of qualitative methods expands in Forensic Psychology it is likely that its use will become increasingly sophisticated and there will be a move away from the purely pragmatic utilisation of research techniques to broader debates about the philosophies underlying qualitative research. This will also involve a more critical use of such approaches because there will be a growing awareness of theoretical issues, different approaches and the limitations of particular approaches.

IN CONCLUSION

It is hoped that this chapter has demonstrated that there has been some expansion of the use of qualitative methods in forensic psychology over recent years, with an emphasis in particular on (mainly semi-structured) interviewing. This has tended to have been subjected to more sophisticated analysis, including thematic analysis, IPA, discourse and grounded theory. Nevertheless, there is still often emphasis on such research as being 'exploratory', 'pilot work', 'providing ideas for future research', 'descriptive' or 'surveyor of the land' (rather than being 'interpretive') and there are concerns over issues such as reliability, validity and generalisability. It is probably true to say that there are still gatekeeping issues, but also a reluctance to submit potential articles utilising qualitative methods for publication.

Nonetheless, since the first edition of this book there has been gradual change within forensic psychology, helped to some extent by the BPS emphasis on the research skills needed within postgraduate forensic psychology. There is a movement away from just thinking along a passé qualitative/quantitative divide to a growing realisation that the question as to why a particular method is appropriate to use will depend on the objective of the researcher. Is the aim to understand the meaning, looking for in-depth descriptions, looking at small numbers of potential participants in real-world situations (e.g. what does it mean to be a prisoner in a high secure unit?) or are we interested in large-scale measurement? It is becoming increasingly recognised that a more eclectic approach is likely to be useful to forensic psychologists, especially given their focus on coping with practical problems.

Rather than thinking in dichotomous terms, it is probably much better to think in terms of the two being somewhat complementary, illuminating and inspiring each other. It might be useful to think of them as being part of a circle (or a spiral building up), each providing the other with further avenues to explore.

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32

Cultural Psychology

Leslie Swartz and Poul Rohleder

INTRODUCTION

Social scientists have been interested in the concept of culture for a long time. The concept of culture – of what it is and where it is situated – is a complex one. For many years, culture was seen as explicit and observable in group and individual activities (Berry, 2000). More recently, culture is seen to include implicit, symbolic meanings underlying behaviour. Helman (1994: 2–3; emphasis in original) describes culture as a

> set of guidelines (both explicit and implicit) which individuals inherit as members of a particular society, and which tells them how to *view* the world, how to experience it emotionally, and how to *behave* in it in relation to other people, to supernatural forces or gods, and to the natural environment. It also provides them with a way of transmitting these guidelines to the next generation – by the use of symbols, language, art and ritual.

We can therefore see culture as a set of rules and guidelines that inform society about ways in which to experience and behave in the world. These rules can be transmitted and changed over time, and culture is not static.

The commonly held idea that a person or group 'has' a culture that is fixed and unchanging is not supported by the complex and flexible ways in which people live their lives.

There are two general approaches to cultural psychology. In the first view, people see cultural psychology as a discipline on its own, separate from other approaches to psychology, such as social psychology, for example. In the second view, cultural psychology is seen not as an approach that competes with other branches of psychology, but more as a lens through which we can try to understand people – a particular emphasis and concern within psychological research as a whole. For reasons that will become clear, we prefer this latter approach, and this chapter should be read alongside those on community psychology (see Chapter 19), and post-colonialism and psychology (see Chapter 18). In an important founding essay in the history of cultural psychology, Shweder (1990: 1) described cultural psychology in this way:

> Cultural psychology is the study of the way cultural traditions and social practices regulate, express, transform, and permute the human psyche, resulting less in psychic unity for humankind than in ethnic divergences in mind, self and emotion. Cultural psychology is the study of the ways

> subject and object, self and other, psyche and culture, person and context, figure and ground, practitioner and practice live together, require each other, and, dynamically, dialectically, and jointly make each other up.

This locates cultural psychology firmly as an interpretive discipline, deeply interested in the importance of context for meaning, and in the ways in which meaning is constructed and shifts and how it changes depending on both local contexts and more distant ones, such as those of history and broader influences of globalization, international trade and exchange, and even the simultaneously very local and broadly global influence of new technologies like the Internet.

As an orientation to cultural psychology, we begin the chapter with a brief outline of the historical development in cultural psychology, starting with a universalist approach, through relativism to a view that everything is culturally situated. We then discuss some of the issues that arise when conducting research which takes culture into account. Table 32.1 gives just a few examples of some recent research studies, using different qualitative research methods. We will refer to some of these studies in our discussion of research issues. We also will take a closer look at the issue of language diversity in cultural psychology, and the use of translation and interpretation. Some text boxes give some guidelines to follow in research. Finally, we speculate on some future developments in methods in cultural psychology.

APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING CULTURE

There are many approaches to studying and understanding culture. We will here discuss universalist approaches to culture and psychology, then relativism, critical approaches and finally indigenous psychologies.

Universalism

A universalist approach to culture and psychology presupposes that psychological concepts are universal, that is, they are found transculturally. The job of psychology in this universalist model is essentially to strip away the distracting local forms in which the 'real', or universal, phenomenon is hidden. For example, researchers, mostly from Western systems of thought, would attempt to determine whether psychological phenomena such as depression exist in other cultures. Universalists would thus try to show, for example, that a person in Harare, Zimbabwe, who complains of somatic pain and thinking too much (Abas et al., 1994) may actually be considered to be depressed, in the same way that someone in London who complains of low mood may be considered depressed. To a universalist, the key issue here is the depression, seen to be common in both contexts; the somatic pain and thinking too much hides the phenomenon of depression in Zimbabwe from the view of the untrained Westerner. Traditionally, universalist approaches have tended to adopt a quantitative approach to methods, focusing on the development of scales that are presumed to measure universal constructs which may appear somewhat differently in different cultural contexts, but which are amenable to essentially the same measuring instruments. For example, there are many locally translated versions of the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), all of which measure a supposedly universal construct – depression. In various local translations of the BDI, however, idiomatic expressions from the original version may be translated in such a way as to avoid the use of confusing idiomatic language, for example the original BDI has a

Table 32.1 Examples of qualitative research in cultural psychology

Methods used	*Sources of data*	*Example studies*
Discourse analysis	Written texts, group talk, interviews	Candela (2005); Keller et al. (2004); Kirschner (2006)
Foucauldian discourse analysis	Interviews	Yen and Wilbraham (2003a, 2003b)
Narrative analysis	Interviews, autobiography	Langhout (2005); Tappan (2005)
Ethnography	Group conversations, participant observation, interviews	Bedford (2004); Estroff (1985); Fadiman (1997)
Grounded theory	In-depth interviews	Gilchrist and Sullivan (2006)
Participatory action research	Texts, drawings	Mohatt et al. (2004); Rohleder et al. (2008b)
Case study	Observation, interview	Köpping (2005); Lawrence et al. (2004)
Social representations	Content analysis of print media	Schmitz et al. (2003)

question concerning whether the person feels 'blue' or sad. The term 'blue', in the universalist model, must not be translated literally because it will obscure the true meaning behind the idiomatic term (Drennan et al., 1991).

Where do the 'universals' of psychology come from, though? Universalist approaches may hide an implicit evolutionism that claims Western culture as top of a pyramid. In this view, Westerners (and Western psychologists) know and understand the 'real' phenomena, and our job is to look for the ways in which these universals, which are very clear in our own culture, are hidden by the cultural practices of others. Not only that, the psychological and emotional worlds of Westerners are seen implicitly and explicitly as the peak of human cultural development; other cultural groups are seen as moving along a continuum towards this peak. In the field of mental health, for example, Western diagnostic systems may uncritically be used as the standard, representing the core syndromes that may manifest with some variation across cultures. Kleinman (1977) argued that this universalist psychiatry imposed Western models of psychiatric illness across cultures, failing to take into account the actual experiences of distress and suffering of the people they were studying. The result was to look for a limited range of diagnostic symptoms, rather than explore the emotional experiences of the people being treated or studied.

It is possible methodologically to interrogate the assumptions behind the universalist approach. In South Africa, for example, Yen and Wilbraham (2003a) used discourse analysis to explore talk around culture and mental illness in interviews with psychiatrists, psychologists and traditional healers. They found that discussions around 'cultural illnesses', which were understood as a form of distress unique to African patients, was constructed as a less severe variation of Western psychiatric disorders, thus re-inscribing 'the universals of psychiatric disorder' (Yen and Wilbraham, 2003a: 552). By using the critical methodological stance of discourse analysis, they could begin to view even diagnostic categories, which are sometimes thought to refer to states of 'nature' as texts open to scrutiny.

Relativism

Relativism focuses largely on the idea of mutually incommensurable separate cultures. This is the approach of cross-cultural psychology, which remains a dominant field today. Context is seen as important, and all psychological phenomena need to be understood within context. Universal meanings cannot simply be extracted from data without referring to context.

A key method used in relativist understandings of the world is that of ethnography. There have been many classic accounts of how societies and groups work, which underscore a relativist approach. The implicit aim of many of these accounts is to discover and explore the internal logic of apparently strange societies and practices, even when these appear illogical and inexplicable at first blush. The work of ethnographers such as Margaret Mead (1928) and Melford Spiro (1982), for example, which involved the interpretation of notes taken from extensive field-work over a long time, have contributed to ongoing questions about the cultural specificity or otherwise of many developmental theories (including psychoanalysis).

One challenge associated with classical ethnography is that it is extremely time-consuming and not altogether practical in terms of rapid production of research data. It is also increasingly difficult to find funding for intensive ethnographic work. Partly for this reason – and partly for others, which will be discussed later – there has been a turn more recently towards more truncated ethnographies which, although remaining true to the quest to find the internal logic and meanings in various societies and groups, do not require the same level of immersion and input. For example, Rhodes (1995) studied aspects of the culture of health care by regular attendance at case conferences and bedside meetings in a hospital. Estroff (1985) was interested in the inner world of psychiatric patients and, as part of her fieldwork as a participant observer, took the controversial decision to take psychotropic medication in order to gain a sense from the inside of what the side-effects of this medication felt like. Her argument, from a relativist perspective, was that one could not understand the inner world and culture of mental illness without experiencing first hand this key feature of what it means to be mentally ill in a society in which psychotropic medication is commonly used.

Critical Approaches

From a critical approach, everything is viewed as being culturally situated. This is the cultural psychology position. Cultural psychology claims that there is not one standard psychology, but rather multiple, diverse psychologies. However, cultural psychology attempts to make sense of this diversity, without denying universals. As Shweder (2000: 210) states, cultural psychology is characterized by 'Universalism without the uniformity'.

Whereas a universalist approach argues that psychological concepts are found in all cultures, and a relativist approach argues that there are different psychological experiences in separate cultures, a critical approach would argue that all contexts have multiple and diverse cultures, and psychological concepts can only be understood with a critical understanding of diversity and how knowledge is produced. Critical approaches are not necessarily separate from other approaches, and a key factor in a critical approach to cultural psychology is that it views issues of difference and diversity as being linked to broader social phenomena of power and control. It is not, for example, merely *interesting* that many (probably most) people express psychological distress in somatic terms, but that psychiatrists and psychologists tend to use psychological understandings. A critical approach to this issue begins to ask questions about how it is that certain forms of understanding (in this case, a psychologized view of the world) have come to be seen as offering better explanations of the world than other kinds of understanding (such as a somatic view of emotional and interpersonal life). How does the dominance of psychology and psychiatry interlink with processes of colonialism, the global economy and even the economic power of multinational drug companies? When Western psychology meets non-Western ways of being in the world, what does it do to make sense of these ways of being and even to make these ways of being knowable to and controllable by the West? These are all questions within the critical tradition in cultural psychology.

The emergence of the mini-ethnography has been a key method in furthering the critical turn in cultural psychology. We mentioned earlier that large-scale ethnographies, where the researcher goes to another culture for a long period of time, are expensive and increasingly difficult to fund, useful though the data they produce may be. From a critical perspective though, the process of setting up an ethnographic study of another culture raises questions about power relationships across cultures, who has the right to speak for whom (see Box 32.1) and the ways in which the very method of ethnography may impose narrative structures on the data collected (Clifford and Marcus, 1986). Smaller ethnographies and ethnographies of organizations within the dominant culture enable us methodologically to show that many of the ways in which so-called 'primitive' or 'strange' societies are organized are not that different from those seen in dominant 'Western' culture. Part of the skill in ethnographies of aspects of dominant culture lies in being able to 'make strange' things that may appear 'normal' or ordinary about

Box 32.1 Critical question: who speaks on behalf of whom? The case of female genital mutilation

Shweder (2002) explores the controversial arguments surrounding the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM). He documents some of the arguments put forward by the anti-FGM movement criticizing the practice as a gross violation of women's human rights and is a practice which is 'enforced' by patriarchal African societies. Shweder argues that these arguments are put forward from a position of moral disgust and indignation from particular cultural values. These emotional reactions are strengthened by the use of powerful images and words (for example, referring to the practice as 'mutilation' rather than 'circumcision'; circumcision being practiced on many males around the world).

Shweder suggests that many of the arguments put forward by the anti-FGM movement are not always based on empirical evidence, and he documents research and voices of women who have been circumcised who support female genital circumcision. He refers to Fuambai Ahmadu, a young academic in the USA who is a Kono woman from Sierra Leone. She herself has undergone the customary circumcision and has publicly declared that the anti-FGM discourse of the custom does not reflect her experience or that of many Kono women.

Shweder suggests that the reported practice of FGM provokes what he terms a 'yuck' response, with a recoil of horror at the savagery of the custom. This response is based on Western attitudes towards beauty and the body:

> Instead of assuming that our own perceptions of beauty and disfigurement are universal and must be transcendental, we might want to consider the possibility that a real and astonishing cultural divide exists around the world in moral, emotional, and aesthetic reactions to female genital surgeries. (Shweder, 2002: 222)

Shweder's views are not uncontroversial, but his emphasis on the need to take seriously the question of cultural diversity, however unpalatable that diversity may be, is important.

dominant culture. The critical approach to cultural psychology therefore requires a methodological stance within which even the most mundane and apparently obvious aspects of life become open to scrutiny. This general critical stance towards methods can also of course be transposed into a range of methodological techniques, including interviews, focus groups and a range of participative approaches.

Indigenous Psychologies

Alongside the development of cultural psychology as a focus within psychology as a whole, there has also been increasing interest in what has been termed 'indigenous psychology' or 'indigenous psychologies'. In similar fashion to the definitions of and approaches to cultural psychology, there are two major emphases in the field of indigenous psychologies. On the one hand, the study of indigenous psychologies is very much within the relativist tradition, attempting to gain an understanding of world-views from the perspective of people who inhabit psychological worlds and realities that differ from one another (Heelas, 1981). This tradition provides important data, and requires careful ethnographic work. On the other hand, however, the study of indigenous psychologies can also be seen as operating from a more explicitly political position which seeks to advance the interests of oppressed indigenous groups in a range of colonized countries. For example, there has been increasing concern with the psychological implications of the subaltern status of indigenous Canadians, of Maori people in New Zealand and aboriginal groups in Australia, all of whom experience psychological and health challenges linked to their political status.

The critical turn in the study of indigenous psychologies has also led to debate about methods used in research. For example, Tomlinson and Swartz (2003) examined a text that uses the method of ethnographic fiction and is designed to provide insight into the different approaches to infancy and childrearing across the world. They show that the book has some benefits but is methodologically and politically suspect in that some of the chapters notionally written from 'indigenous', insider perspectives, were in fact written by Western outsiders, some of whom had never even visited the countries and groups in whose voice they claimed to be writing. It is not acceptable methodologically, Tomlinson and Swartz (2003) argue, to claim to be able to speak in and represent the voice of the other.

The term 'indigenous' in psychology and in society more broadly is, like the term 'culture', open to abuse. For example, claims may be made as to the effectiveness of 'indigenous' remedies for ailments in the absence of evidence as to their efficacy, justifying such claims with reference to the importance of respecting indigenous views and remedies (Swartz, 2006). However, as Farmer (1997) pointed out, if all remedies and practices touted as efficacious by people who are concerned to promote indigenous systems had the range and quality of effects sometimes claimed for them, the rich West would long since have imported and appropriated more of these remedies. When we aim to be culturally sensitive and to promote the rights of oppressed groups, we need to keep a clear methodological head, and not make claims that are made without any consideration of evidence and which in the end may not promote understanding.

Although these approaches are usually seen as distinct approaches, there are areas of overlap. Recently, Ellis and Stam (2015) observed the growing merger and collaboration between cultural psychology, indigenous psychologies and cross-cultural psychology. They argue that this merger has much to do with the rise of the more critical approaches of cultural psychology and indigenous psychology, which cross-cultural psychologists have increasingly steered towards.

CULTURE AND ISSUES IN RESEARCH

Neutrality

Researchers come with their own set of cultural values, and we need to take into account the position of the researcher and observer in relation to the culture being analysed (Salvatore and Pagano, 2005). There is no neutral position when studying cultural phenomena. As stated by Gjerde (2004: 153–4):

> Each view of culture is positioned and every statement about culture has an ideological dimension. Cultural psychology is per se a critical discipline; anyone who maps cultural phenomena has, implicitly or explicitly, a value orientation that influences his or her perceptions. Hence there is no neutral place from where to observe, interpret, or name cultural phenomena.

In addition, very often we think of cultures as natural, homogenous entities, and do not take into consideration diverse viewpoints within a particular society. This raises questions about who speaks on behalf of whom? Who is a cultural spokesperson/broker? Shweder (2002) raises these issues in

his discussion around female genital mutilation (see Box 32.1).

Shweder also raises the issue of representivity, and who can speak for whom. In the case of female genital mutilation, for example, does a man from a very patriarchal culture have more status as an insider to speak on behalf of oppressed women in his culture than does, say, a woman from another culture who has pan-feminist ideas? There is no easy solution to this dilemma. Gjerde (2004) argues that no individual can be representative of a culture, and so it becomes problematic to speak of a 'cultural insider'. What is perhaps important is to provide a balanced view with an aim to understanding different points of view.

Fadiman (1997) provides an excellent example of an ethnographic study that takes differing cultural interpretations into account. Her award-winning book, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, gives a detailed ethnographic case study of a Hmong child being treated by American doctors. The case study is of a refugee family from Laos living in California, USA. The family's young daughter was diagnosed with severe epilepsy and received medical treatment from a California hospital. However, her family understood her seizures as being caused by her soul fleeing from her body and called it by the Hmong name *quag dab peg*, which means 'the spirit catches you and you fall down' (referring to the soul being stolen from the body and the person left falling). There existed a continuous clash between the hospital and the family due to a lack of understanding between the doctors and the family over the illness and its treatment. For example, Hmong understanding of the body and the soul meant that procedures like blood sampling, spinal taps and anaesthesia would be understood as causing the soul to flee the body. Fadiman writes with an overarching political commitment to the particular child receiving the best health care. However, she does so in a spirit of active neutrality and curiosity about different perspectives, with a desire to understand different forms of internal logics.

The Need to Acknowledge Differences

When working in a multicultural context, there are many ways of understanding and making sense of different identities. In order to process these differences in a helpful way, we must acknowledge them and recognize that they do exist. If we assume that everyone is similar, we risk ignoring individual ways of being. There is a silencing effect in wanting to be culturally correct and non-discriminatory, but in order to achieve a deeper understanding of difference we need more open discussion of dilemmas. This can be shown in the study by Kai and colleagues (2007) on health professionals' experiences of working with cultural diversity, where it was found that the professionals' uncertainties and anxieties about being perceived as culturally inappropriate partly disempowered their ability to deliver patient care. Shweder and Sullivan (1993: 501), however, caution that although we need to acknowledge differences, we should do so 'without falling back on the interpretation of the other as a deficient or underdeveloped version of the self'.

To do this, we need to also acknowledge our own prejudices around issues of difference. If we are able to reflect upon our own sensitivities about diversity, then we can observe more clearly what others do. Family therapists have developed a helpful way of contrasting two particular ways in which culture is used (Friedman, 1982; DiNicola, 1986). People's 'cultural costume' refers to the beliefs and values that people may hold and have inherited from their particular community. However, these beliefs and traditions may be used as a way of distracting attention away from problems; what authors refer to as 'cultural camouflage'. This may lead to the abusive use of culture in making certain claims. For example, Gibson et al. (2002) show how people can refuse to change oppressive practices, and gender oppression in particular, on the grounds that these practices are part of an unchanging culture that is immune from scrutiny from the outside.

In the USA, the question of the use and abuse of culture took place in heated discussions around the future status of Elián Gonzalez, a Cuban boy found adrift at sea in November 1999 during an attempt to reach Miami. During a struggle to decide on whether Elián should return to Cuba to his father or remain in Miami with relatives, much political debate ensued on whether it was 'right' for the boy to be raised in a communist culture or a capitalist culture (see Sahlins, 2002).

In the use of 'cultural camouflage', individuals will cite cultural difference as a basis for misunderstandings about a certain problem or difficulty. We cannot get away from 'real' differences that may exist, but what is important is to take these differences into account when trying to make sense of the world. Anthropologists have suggested that it is possible to work without fully understanding what is occurring across cultures. They talk about a 'working misunderstanding' and suggest that it is not fully possible for one to understand another individual's cultural traditions or beliefs, but that

even when we recognize this incommensurability, we can still find a way of working across divides (Sahlins, 2002).

The use of diverse research teams and collaborative research projects can be a useful means by which to facilitate necessary reflexivity and open discussion of dilemmas. Together with colleagues from two South African universities, the authors of this chapter have been involved in a collaborative, inter-disciplinary teaching research project. This project aims to facilitate students' collaborative learning on issues of diversity, community and professional work, across the boundaries of race, class and culture (see Rohleder et al., 2008a; Rohleder et al., 2008b). In this project a practical module was designed as part of the fourth-year social work and psychology students' curriculum. The project used a combination of face-to-face workshops and Internet-based (E-learning) interaction. One of the universities has a history of having mainly white[1], middle-class students, and the other university having mostly black or coloured students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The project was informed by a participatory action research approach, which emphasizes practical collaboration and reflexivity. Students generated written online discussions around diversity and communities in small groups. These discussions were then analysed using qualitative methods, such as content analysis and discourse analysis. The project enabled students to broaden their awareness around issues of diversity, with many students discussing how their racial, classed and gendered history impacted on their social and professional lives. The project aimed to encourage the necessary reflexivity needed when engaging with differences. However, this is not easy to do and many of the students tended to focus on their commonalities and silencing their opinions in the interest of appearing culturally correct (Leibowitz et al., 2007).

Multilingualism and the Use of Interpretation and Translation

The issue of language differences is a particular concern in cultural psychology research when researching different cultures and societies from one's own. In a multicultural, multilingual society (and most societies in the world are now in fact very diverse), clinical and research practice in psychology regularly needs to take into account the translation and interpretation of language.

There are a number of ways in which language difference can be viewed. An empiricist approach to understanding language regards language as labels used to refer to things that exist in reality. Different languages would therefore use different labels for objects and realities that exist across the world. A translator or interpreter would relatively easily find the appropriate label that describes the object or reality spoken about.

In a hermeneutic or social constructionist approach, more consistent with current trends in qualitative methods, language is seen as the means in which meaning and reality is fabricated and self-experience is constructed (Bruner, 1991; Burr, 1995). In this model, translation and interpretation become complex activities. We need to consider how language is used in conveying not only information but also emotional experience and implicit beliefs about status, and about how social life operates. In this hermeneutic model, we also have to take into account 'the extent to which the act of translation implies the construction of a particular reality' (Swartz, 1998: 29). There are often cases where words or phrases are not exactly translatable and equivalent meanings therefore need to be found. Regmi et al. (2010) refer to *transliteration* as the process where words or meanings of one language is replaced with, or complemented by, words of meanings of another where there is no exact match. Here, Regmi and colleagues suggest that in such cases a panel discussion could be held to arrive at a consensus as to what is the closest meaning.

Interpretation

When conducting qualitative research in cultural psychology, very often interviews are conducted with participants speaking a different language to that of the interviewer. Thus, an interpreter is needed for the interview. The use of an interpreter needs to be considered when gaining informed consent from interviewees for their participation, and it also has implications for the confidentiality of the interviews.

In hospital settings in lower income countries, staff members who are not trained interpreters are commonly called upon to interpret interviews conducted. Studies have highlighted how the unclear role of these interpreters in the hospital structure, as well as the lack of training around the act of interpreting, may contribute to failures in interpreted interviews (Crawford, 1994; Drennan, 1996, 1999; Elderkin-Thompson et al., 2001).

Vasquez and Javier (1991) outline common errors that are made by interpreters when parts of what is said are omitted or added on, or sections of messages are condensed or substituted with other messages. Interpreters may also take on the role of interviewer. These errors are outlined in Box 32.2.

Box 32.2 Common errors made by interpreters in interpreted interviews

1. *Omission*: this is when an interpreter leaves out sections of a message given by a person speaking. This commonly happens when a large amount is said in the interview.
2. *Addition*: the interpreter adds to what a speaker has said, often to make what is said clearer or more polite.
3. *Condensation*: here an interpreter summarizes what has been said, according to what he or she views as being most important. This summarized view, and emphasis on what is most important, may differ significantly from the views of the interviewee, as well as the interviewer.
4. *Substitution*: here an interpreter replaces what is said, with something that has not been said. This arises out of responding to assumptions that arise in every social interaction.
5. *Role exchange*: the interpreter starts to take over the role of interviewer and may substitute their own questions for those posed by the interviewer.

In addition to these common errors, there is also the issue that there is not only one correct translation for a particular word. For example, in India, Shweder (2003) notes how in the Oriya language the word *lajya* may be interpreted as 'shame', 'modest', 'shy', 'bashful' or 'embarrassed'. Similarly, in South Africa the Xhosa word *ukukhathazekile* may, depending on context, mean 'depressed', 'anxious' or 'worried' (Swartz, 1998).

These issues make interpreted interviews difficult. In Box 32.3, we outline a number of suggestions for before, during and after the interview, which may improve its success.

Translation

In psychological research, questionnaires or written texts are often used as data for analysis. It may be necessary in the research to translate these into different languages. The act of translation may be as difficult as that of interpreting, with similar issues such as there not only being one correct translation for a particular word. Brislin (1986) suggests some translation methods that may help in obtaining best possible results. These are outlined in Box 32.4 and include back-translation, the need for conceptual equivalence, bilingual translation and a translating committee.

This approach to translation, although useful, often does not take into account the power relations that are involved in the translating process (Drennan et al., 1991). Cultural representations may be suppressed or advanced by those who hold power (Gjerde, 2004). Conceptual representations that are constructed by the investigator may not be equivalent to the research subject's representations (Shweder and Sullivan, 1993).

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Cultural psychology is a discipline that is still evolving. As the world changes, with more shifts in populations through war, natural disaster, commerce and tourism, the cultural landscape of the world is also changing. Cultural psychology came of age in an era when issues of cultural difference seemed much less complex, and boundaries between cultures more clear. We now live in a world in which there is confusion about the role of cultural tolerance and respect in light of ever more obvious manifestations of cultural intolerance, immigration, xenophobia, racism and terrorism. In some sense, the easy idea that 'if we all just respect all cultures everything will be better' has now disappeared – not that this complacent and somewhat romanticized view was ever really accurate.

The disciplined approach of cultural psychology to questions of reflexivity and difference, especially in these difficult times, has much to offer to many who are struggling to find ways to navigate diversity issues effectively and with integrity. Qualitative methodologies such as mini-ethnographies and critical discourse analysis are particularly useful because they allow for reflexivity and the exploration of diversity and the dynamics of power in social contexts. As highlighted earlier, the role of the researcher (as well as the researched) in the construction of knowledge is a key area of exploration when answering such critical questions as who is talking for whom. As an approach, cultural psychology does not by any means have all the answers, but it certainly helps us to ask the right questions and to think about ways of going about answering them.

Box 32.3 Suggestions for improving interpreted interviews

1 Preparation
   i It is important for the interviewer and interpreter to discuss and have a clear understanding of each other's roles, how the interview is to be structured, the aims and purpose of the research interview, and how issues and problems will be dealt with as they arise in the interview.
   ii It is essential that the interviewer engages with the interpreter around any issues or suggestions that the interpreter may have.
2 Introducing the interview
   i In addition to discussions around confidentiality and informed consent, the interviewee needs to be informed as to how the interview will be structured and what the roles of the participants are. It can be suggested to interviewees that their responses can be delivered in a manner that allows for periodic interpretation of what is said, rather than long, continuous narratives. Interviewees can also be invited to ask questions and raise any concerns that they may have.
3 Conducting the interview
   i It is important to conduct the interview with consideration of the interviewee's feelings and comfort. It is useful to periodically clarify with the interviewee how the process is working.
   ii Interpreted interviews are usually long and can become tedious, resulting in fatigue, irritation and frustration. It is important to discuss and deal with these feelings as they arise. Breaks in the interview may be required.
4 Discussions after the interview
   i It is useful for the interviewer and interpreter to sit for some time after the interview and discuss what happened. Issues and points that were raised during the interview can be clarified. The impressions of the interpreter as to the interviewee's behaviour or approach may provide some useful data.
   ii Depending on the focus of the interview, it may elicit some traumatic material that may have upset the interpreter. This must be addressed – and, indeed, planned for afterwards.

Box 32.4 Suggestions for translation of texts

1 Back-translation
   The text is translated from the original source language to the target language. A second translator then translates the translated text back to the original source language. The back-translated version can then be compared to the original version, and adjustments made until both are conceptually as similar as possible.

2 Need for conceptual equivalence
   Conceptual equivalence refers to the equivalence in the meaning of the items in source and translated texts.

3 Bilingual use of questionnaires
   For example, bilingual people are asked to complete versions of the questionnaire in both its original and translated languages. Their responses can then be compared to check for accuracy of the questions asked.

4 Translation committee
   A committee can be used to discuss aspects of the translated texts.

Note

1 We use the classification of racial categories 'white', 'black', 'coloured', as is commonly used in modern-day South Africa to identify groups of people. However, we acknowledge the negative connotations of these terms because the use of these categories also carries with them a history under apartheid in South Africa, where sections of the population were classified and kept separate from each other according to these racial categories.

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33

Cognitive Psychology

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INTRODUCTION

Writing about qualitative methods in studying cognitive phenomena immediately runs into a problem: cognitive psychologists have long claimed that people's subjective self-reports cannot be trusted as complete or accurate records of the cognitive processes underlying behaviours. Researchers are therefore expected to adopt objective techniques when investigating cognition, which necessitates the use of quantitative methods. In contrast, we propose that a full understanding of cognitive phenomena is achievable only through the rigorous application of mixed methods that capitalize upon the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

To support our proposal, we first review the historical context whereby quantitative methods have come to dominate cognitive research. Second, we outline reasons why we believe cognitive psychology must also make recourse to qualitative methods. Third, we summarize and illustrate key qualitative methods for studying cognition, focusing especially on their use in studying design cognition – an important area of real-world cognition. Fourth, we exemplify how qualitative and quantitative methods are best practiced together through a case study examining reasoning in insurance-fraud investigation. Finally, we overview emerging mixed-methods approaches to analysing cognition that are set to engender exciting new discoveries and theoretical insights.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Cognitive psychology primarily focuses on advancing a theoretical understanding of the mental processes underlying behaviour and action. As such, cognitive psychologists are typically concerned with the nature of 'procedural knowledge' – the rules, methods, strategies, heuristics and the like that are applied during cognitive processing, whether aimed at low-level perception, recognition and retrieval, or high-level thinking, reasoning, problem-solving, judgment, decision making and hypothesis testing. Procedural knowledge is distinct from 'declarative knowledge', which reflects a person's factual understanding about the world. Experienced designers, for example, will have procedural knowledge about how to develop design solutions under relevant constraints (e.g. time and cost) and will also possess declarative knowledge of design concepts (e.g.

familiar problems and solutions). Although some researchers (e.g. Rabinowitz, 2002) have argued that the procedural–declarative distinction is problematic, it continues to be a useful theoretical device for understanding and modelling cognitive processes (e.g. Jiamu, 2012; Gade et al., 2014).

One methodologically important aspect of procedural knowledge is that it is often tacit, implicit and intuitive in that individuals apply such knowledge to perform cognitive tasks without being able to report the knowledge they brought to bear (Van Gaal and Lamme, 2012). This limited introspective access to procedural knowledge has long been recognized, with the earliest pioneers of cognitive psychology emphasizing that 'preconscious' processes were fundamental for cognition but yet inaccessible to verbal description (Neisser, 1963). Self-report difficulties seem to reflect an access limitation: knowledge is possessed but cannot be retrieved for verbal description. Two crucial implications derive from this access constraint that undermine the utility of self-reports when studying cognition. First, people may be unable to give complete accounts of strategies and procedures. Second, people may unwittingly provide inaccurate or misleading accounts of procedural knowledge when prompted. Indeed, studies have indicated that introspective descriptions of cognitive processes may reflect *post hoc* rationalizations aimed at justifying the outputs of implicit processes (Lucas and Ball, 2005; Evans, 2010) or self-generated causal theories devised to account for behaviours (Wilson, 2004).

Although self-reporting is of limited value for investigating procedural knowledge, the method is very useful for understanding declarative knowledge. For example, people are adept at describing concepts within their domains of work activity, including common problems, tasks and constraints. People's access to this knowledge is valuable for cognitive theorizing, where it is important to understand the mental organization of declarative knowledge. This is hard to study quantitatively (because measurement of output allows only inference about internal structure), but is more amenable to qualitative methods that can reveal the richness and complexity of people's organization of factual knowledge. Eliciting such knowledge is best done using structured interviewing techniques, where the researcher guides the inquiry in a formally planned manner. Okechukwu Okoli et al. (2014) present an example of a structured interview approach where they used the Critical Decision Method technique to elicit declarative knowledge relating to cues that expert firefighters use when performing fireground tasks.

The realization that procedural knowledge – unlike declarative knowledge – is largely inaccessible to consciousness had a major impact on methodologies within the emerging cognitive tradition. The standard technique for studying procedural knowledge that soon became established involved setting short, controlled laboratory tasks based around factorial, experimental designs and obtaining objective performance measures (typically response latencies and errors) from which underlying cognitive processes were inferred. This experimental method still dominates cognitive psychology, although other laboratory-based approaches such as computational modelling and brain-imaging are now also prevalent. Even as the experimental method gained ascendancy in cognitive psychology in the 1970s, however, it was realized that the method has its limitations. In the next section we overview three arguments for the use of qualitative methods in cognitive psychology that derive from recognizing the limits of a purely quantitative approach.

ARGUMENTS FOR QUALITATIVE METHODS IN COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Understanding High-Level Cognition Arising Over Extended Time Periods

There is no doubt that experimental approaches based on quantitative measurements have led to enormous developments in understanding low-level cognitive phenomena associated with perception, recognition and language understanding. Likewise, laboratory-based studies using small-scale tasks tackled over short time-frames (seconds or minutes) have advanced an understanding of high-level reasoning, judgment, decision-making and problem-solving. The experimental method, however, is much more limited for studying cognitive processes that extend over long periods of time (days, weeks or months), as arises in tasks associated with professional design or scientific exploration. The quantitative approach is simply not intended for studying extended thought involving many stages of information processing before a final solution, judgment or decision is attained. In contrast, a qualitative approach can trace the organization and sequencing of processing over stages of goal-directed activity. Furthermore, the experimental approach needs to be theory-driven to operate effectively because it revolves around the deduction from a stated theory of logically necessary and empirically testable predictions that can be evaluated using factorial manipulations. This method is ill-suited to research in areas where theoretical models are lacking or poorly

defined and where inductive, exploratory data-gathering is more useful.

Capturing Situated and Distributed Cognition

Two aspects of real-world cognitive activity – especially in professional work contexts – render it impenetrable to quantitative, experimental approaches. First, such activity is highly 'situated' (Robbins and Aydede, 2009), such that processes are shaped by organizational and cultural goals, social structures and interpersonal interactions. For example, commercial design activity is bounded by the company context such that it is heavily influenced by constraints and affordances deriving from team members, team managers, organizational priorities and cultural conventions (e.g. Wiltschnig et al., 2013).

Second, real-world cognitive activity tends to be highly 'distributed' because cognition is not located within any single individual but is mediated through complex interactions between multiple internal and external knowledge repositories, including other team members and external artefacts (e.g. Suchman, 1987; Lave, 1988; Busby, 2001; Cowley and Vallée-Tourangeau, 2013). The 'distributed cognition' approach (Hutchins, 1995) goes as far as to argue that a traditional view in which context and culture merely *modulate* the cognitive processes of individuals is mistaken. Instead, it is proposed that 'cultural activity systems' have emergent cognitive properties rather than simply being the sum of the properties of the individuals working within the system.

Some of these notions are rather radical for the discipline of cognitive psychology in its classical, experimental form, where social and organizational factors are typically *controlled out* of laboratory studies, which instead focus on decontextualized and non-situated task performance. Our perspective on such issues is that different research endeavours within the overarching cognitive framework are directed toward different research goals – sometimes individual-oriented and sometimes organization-oriented – with it being perfectly legitimate to adopt a methodological stance that aligns with one's research agenda (Ball and Ormerod, 2000a, 2000b; Ball and Litchfield, 2013). At the same time, it needs to be recognized that different research goals (e.g. directed at understanding individuals or teams) can lead to very different accounts of cognition. For example, Hutchins (1995) observed how the well-established laboratory phenomenon of 'confirmation bias' (where individuals engage in verifying rather than falsifying tests of hypotheses; Nickerson, 1998) was absent in team hypothesis-testing in navigational decision-making. We have likewise provided evidence that although individual design practice is dominated by 'satisficing' (where people fixate upon a satisfactory solution rather than exploring other options), such satisficing is managed out of team-based design (Ball and Ormerod, 2000b).

Informing Technological Design

Qualitative methods nowadays play a prominent applied role in informing the design of technological systems, where the aim is to understand situated and distributed cognitive processes to guide the development of computer-based technologies to facilitate work practices (e.g. medical reasoning, business decision-making, criminal investigation and military command and control). Computer-based facilitation may be of two primary forms. First, technology can fully automate key aspects of work processes, replacing human operators who retain a monitoring function, engaging in interventions when automated systems fail. Examples of automated technologies include flight-control systems on passenger aircraft and emergency shut-down systems in process-control industries (e.g. nuclear-power production). Second, computer-based technologies can act as cooperative systems, working alongside human operators in an assistive manner (e.g. helping to represent complex datasets, pursue process simulations and facilitate decision making).

One intriguing phenomenon associated with technological systems development is the 'task-artefact cycle' (Carroll and Campbell, 1989). This is the observation that the analysis of real-world tasks motivates the development of technological artefacts aimed at supporting such tasks, with these technological artefacts, in turn, affecting the nature of task performance. In essence, artefacts become implicit psychological hypotheses that need to be tested through subsequent empirical evaluation. Thus, the researcher not only needs to conduct studies aimed at informing system design, but also has to assess the impact of such systems once they have been embedded within the workplace.

The task-artefact cycle means that the process of technological system design is not only iterative but is also steeped in complexity. Indeed, cognitive research has long been at the forefront in clarifying key difficulties in the relationship between humans and advanced technological systems.

Bainbridge (1987), for example, discussed the 'ironies of automation' that arise when human operators are replaced with automated devices. For instance, automated process-control systems can leave the human to do tasks that the system designer could not envisage how to automate (e.g. monitoring for rare, abnormal events). Similarly, Sarter and Woods (1997) showed that people may over-attribute capabilities to intelligent systems (i.e. mistakenly assuming that because a system can authoritatively automate one aspect of functionality it can also automate other aspects too). We contend that it is only through a primarily qualitative approach that applied researchers can penetrate the dependencies associated with the task-artefact cycle, making qualitative cognitive psychology central to the effective design and evaluation of advanced interactive technologies in computer-supported work environments.

TYPES OF QUALITATIVE METHODS IN COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Table 33.1 summarizes the main qualitative methods that have been used in cognitive research to advance an understanding of people's procedural and declarative knowledge. The table distinguishes between two broad classes of qualitative methods: those primarily applicable for studies of relatively de-contextualized cognition and those addressing the complexities of fully contextualized cognition.

De-contextualized studies entail observing an individual working in isolation on small-scale versions of tasks relevant to their domain of expertise. Such studies include a level of control over the individual's environment whilst still simulating key aspects of problems and opportunities that arise in typical work activity. For example, a professional designer might be given a design brief that can be tackled over one hour, with access to computer-based tools and external knowledge repositories, but without the input of other designers, managers or clients. We provide detailed discussion of two decontextualized methods later: verbal protocol analysis, which is deployed to gain insight into people's procedural knowledge, and card sorting, which is used to gain insight into people's declarative knowledge.

Unlike de-contextualized approaches, contextualized methods tackle head-on the situated and distributed aspects of real-world cognition. Such methods tend, therefore, to be focused on cognitive phenomena associated with groups engaged in work-based activity and not just the individual cognition of group members. The requirement for observational analyses of behaviour in situated environments means that cognitive psychologists use techniques such as ethnography (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983) that are traditionally the preserve of sociologists and anthropologists, which raises questions that we return to later about the extent to which such techniques can be adapted in order to render them sensitive to the aims of understanding people's procedural and declarative knowledge.

One important feature of our own approach to using qualitative research in cognitive research is that we do not solely adopt de-contextualized or contextualized methods in isolation. To do so would engender the very problems discussed in previous sections. Using exclusively de-contextualized methods risks missing the time-course and complexity of cognitive phenomena whilst potentially changing the nature of the activity under study by removing it from situated elements critical to its real-world nature. Using exclusively contextualized methods risks resulting theoretical accounts being contaminated by rationalizations of cognitive performance. The importance of 'triangulation' of observations therefore needs to be emphasized. We argue that just as ethnographers typically seek to demonstrate a key theme from different 'views', so too do cognitive psychologists need to provide accounts of cognitive activity based on both de-contextualized and contextualized methods and the converging evidence they afford. Such an approach resonates with the research on real-world scientific reasoning summarized by Dunbar and Blanchette (2001), which was likewise based on triangulating naturalistic and laboratory methods in their '*in vivo/in vitro*' approach to cognition (see Table 33.1 and later for further discussion).

Verbal Protocol Analysis

To understand how people undertake a cognitive activity it might seem a good idea simply to ask them. However, the unreliable nature of self-reporting means that introspection (i.e. asking individuals to *retrospectively* reflect on the processes underlying performance) is rarely employed in cognitive research. Another class of qualitative techniques, however, is generally far better at eliciting a reliable understanding of procedural knowledge. These techniques entail behavioural observation *concurrent* to the tasks being tackled. For example, people can be monitored informally in their natural work environments whilst engaging in activities. Alternatively, a formal observational study can be undertaken in a laboratory with an individual tackling tasks analogous to those normally dealt with, but under tighter levels of control

Table 33.1 Overview of qualitative methods used in cognitive research, with illustrative examples taken from the domain of design research

Method	*Behavioural trace obtained*	*Basic approach to analysis*	*Example applications of the method*
Verbal protocol analysis	A concurrent think-aloud record of the current contents of short-term memory produced by an individual tackling a small-scale version of a domain-based task.	The application of a coding scheme to categorize processes that are inferred to underlie the think-aloud record. The analyst can examine the coded protocol for patterns and processing sequences.	Ball et al.'s (1997) study of expert design entailed the application of an a priori coding scheme to categorize episodes of problem identification, solution generation and solution evaluation to enable identification of the strategic organization of behaviour.
Video protocol analysis	A concurrent visual record of an individual's activities, including gestures, bodily movements, external manipulations, pen-and-paper output and screen capture of computer-based interaction.	Visual depictions can be used to clarify codes applied to think-aloud protocols. Coding schemes can also be applied to categorize observable actions.	Ball et al.'s (2004) study of spontaneous analogizing in engineering design combined verbal protocol analysis with video-based analysis of sketching.
Card sorting	A description of dimensions and categories within them by which individuals or groups delineate conceptual knowledge, from which mental organization of knowledge can be inferred.	People sort domain-based object descriptions into categories. Sorts may be free (participants determine dimensions and the number and type of categories under each) or fixed (dimensions and categories are presented by the researcher).	Ormerod et al. (1999) used a free card sort method to explore the organization and prioritization of domain knowledge by specialist designers of educational tasks.
Cognitive ethnography	Records from fieldwork observations focused on the situated assessment of activity and emphasizing observational specificity, purposiveness and verifiability through data triangulation.	The analyst examines coded fieldnotes, conversation transcripts, video records and documents for patterns and processing sequences.	Ball and Ormerod's (2000b) study of commercial designers used cognitive ethnography to understand 'design re-use' (e.g. of previous solutions) to develop a computer-based tool for supporting innovative re-use.
In vivo method	Recording of natural dialogue arising during informal discussions and formal team meetings. No special instructions are provided for people to think aloud. They work normally and utterances and activities are video/audio-recorded.	Coding and analysis of conversation transcripts and video records using techniques akin to verbal protocol analysis (i.e. transcript segmentation and application a coding scheme). Coded material examined for patterns and processing sequences.	Christensen and Schunn (2007, 2009) used the *in vivo* method to analyse the nature and function of mental simulation in design. They showed that mental simulation arose in contexts associated with 'uncertainty' and resolved this uncertainty.
Diary analysis	Concurrent diary entries maintained by individuals working on tasks in real-world contexts. Diary entries may be structured at their time of production under pre-specified headings.	The application of a coding scheme to categorize processes inferred to underlie diary entries. The analyst can examine the coded diary for patterns and processing sequences.	Ball et al.'s (1994) study of pre-expert design applied an a priori coding scheme to categorize cognitive processes reflected in designers' diary entries to enable identification of the strategic organization of design behaviour.

so that the researcher can obtain a blow-by-blow video record of behaviour. Such data can be analysed so that underlying thought processes may be inferred. A fuller understanding of procedural knowledge can also be obtained by asking the participant to 'think aloud' whilst they are working on a task. The resulting think-aloud trace or 'verbal protocol' can be analysed to provide insights into the nature, organization and sequencing of activities to facilitate detailed inferences about people's thought processes.

This think-aloud technique is arguably one of the best methods for understanding procedural knowledge in domains involving extended stages of thought (Ericsson and Simon, 1980, 1993). A particular strength of the approach is that it can be used alongside other behavioural records (e.g. of work activity, facial expressions and bodily movements) to provide a rich account of procedural aspects of behaviour. One interesting development is the use of quantitatively based eye-movement tracking as convergent data to support qualitative insights gained from verbal protocols (see Ball, 2013, for a review of studies using eye-movement analysis and think-aloud protocol analysis as complementary approaches).

Verbal protocol analysis has become a respected method of cognitive enquiry since Ericsson and Simon (1980) presented powerful arguments supporting the validity of this approach. As a basis for their arguments they formulated a detailed information-processing model of cognition that explicated the mechanisms underpinning people's production of verbal reports in response to various verbalization requirements (e.g. instructions to think aloud, requests to reply to concurrent probes or instructions to produce retrospective reports). Within this model, concurrent verbal reports provide details of the information 'attended to' or 'heeded' by a participant at any particular point in time – directly reflecting the *current contents* of short-term memory. When analysing think-aloud verbalizations it is therefore important to appreciate that one is dealing with the 'products' of cognitive processes rather than self-reported 'descriptions' of cognitive processes. This means that underlying processes can only be inferred by researchers on the basis of careful and systematic interpretation of protocol content.

Ericsson and Simon (1980, 1993) additionally differentiate three 'levels' of verbalization, with each level being associated with an increasing number of mediating processes between heeding information and its externalization. Level 1 involves direct articulation of information that when heeded exists in a verbal code. Level 2 occurs when heeded information is encoded in a non-verbal form (e.g. as visuospatial imagery), which must be recoded into a verbal description. Level 3 arises in situations where the instructions require participants to verbalize only selected types of heeded information or information that would not normally be attended to during a task. This three-level characterization of verbalizations provides a foundation for formulating predictions concerning which think-aloud procedures are most likely to be reactive (i.e. to change the processes being studied). In particular, think-aloud requirements may have problematic effects when processing is required that is *additional* to that involved in the direct articulation of verbally heeded information. After reviewing a large number of studies, Ericsson and Simon (1993) conclude that thinking aloud does not affect the structure and course of processing for Level 1 verbalization, whilst for Level 2 verbalization it may slightly decrease performance speed. Level 3 verbalization, however, has a highly distorting influence on normal processing.

Another issue that Ericsson and Simon (1980, 1993) address is the 'completeness' of concurrent verbal reports. One key omission concerns the intermediate products of recognition and retrieval processes. Such intermediate products do not register in short-term memory, although the *final* products of these processes do and are therefore reportable – as when directly recognizing a familiar face. Another key omission concerns the intermediate products of 'automatic processes' that have become so well practiced as to render any conscious attention to intermediate products unnecessary. Automation is generally regarded as an intrinsic aspect of expertise and is closely associated with the concept of recognition-primed retrieval (Klein, 1998; Kahneman and Klein, 2009), both in situations where skilled performance involves perceptual–motor processes (e.g. games or sports) and higher-level reasoning processes (e.g. medical diagnosis or design).

When collecting and analysing concurrent verbal reports the approach taken depends upon the desired degree of rigour. If one wishes to test a specific hypothesis, then a formal approach to protocol analysis is essential. However, many studies, particularly those using protocol analysis in the formative stages of research in novel domains, adopt schematic methods of analysis that involve more subjective descriptions of verbalizations where researchers read through a protocol and group it into patterns or classes of activity. These analyses are relatively easy to conduct, but suffer a consequent loss of rigour. In contrast, formal protocol analysis aims to describe objectively each verbalization with a pre-determined coding scheme and entails five key stages, as summarized in Table 33.2.

Table 33.2 Stages of verbal protocol analysis

Stage	*Focus*	*Methodological recommendations*
Elicitation	This stage involves recording the verbal protocol.	Participants need instructions regarding the verbalizations required and they benefit from verbalization practice using a 'warm-up' task (e.g. solving anagrams). It's also useful to show a video of someone else verbalizing whilst performing a different task. Participants tend to stop verbalizing when concentrating; to get them talking again it is important to use neutral prompts (e.g. 'Please keep talking'). A prompt like 'What are you thinking?' might be interpreted as a cue that they have done something significant that requires justification.
Transcription	This stage entails producing a transcript of the session and time-stamping when verbalizations were made.	Transcription can take several hours per hour of recording and is best done using a foot pedal to stop, start and review the recording. Every utterance should be transcribed, even seemingly irrelevant ones. The researcher should avoid paraphrasing or correcting syntax and speech errors. Prior to the protocol analysis the transcript needs to be segmented into meaningful units that reflect speech related to specific topics. Segmentation requires judgement because people do not speak in punctuated or complete sentences and may change topic mid-utterance. Pauses in speech can guide segmentation because pauses often signal initiation or completion of activities (as well as concentration). A rigorous protocol-segmentation approach is to use discourse-analytic methods to identify speech markers as appropriate places to break text (Belkin et al., 1988). Segments determine the 'grain size' of protocol analysis, which is critical to theoretical interpretation.
Coding	This stage involves applying a coding scheme to transcripts to capture underlying task-oriented processes.	A formal protocol analysis needs a coding scheme (based on existing theory) prior to data collection. A good scheme should use as few categories as possible to describe all processes, whilst reliably distinguishing between different processes. It should have a restricted vocabulary that removes unnecessary words and synonyms. Typical coding schemes consist of two or more components. One component may describe the cognitive act (e.g. read, remember, infer, paraphrase, communicate, evaluate). Another component may describe the object of the cognitive act (e.g. a design concept, an analogy), while yet another may describe the outcome of the act (e.g. a design idea, an analogical mapping). It is important to check that the codes are applied reliably (e.g. using independent coders and calculating inter-coder reliability scores, or recoding a data sample after a delay to check for coding 'drift').
Interpretation	This stage involves interpreting the coded transcript to identify the nature and organization of the cognitive processes determining behaviour.	Whether interpretation involves theory testing or process description depends on whether a formal or informal analysis is being undertaken. In either case, a parsimonious interpretation should be sought, identifying the major processes and knowledge underpinning behaviour. One key task is to compile the coded segments into process descriptions (e.g. in analogical problem solving, there are retrieval, mapping and solution components). The researcher needs to group segments in a meaningful way to reflect sequences of related behaviours.
Verification of model	This stage involves testing specific hypotheses deriving from the theoretical outcome of protocol analysis.	The outcome of interpretation is a theoretical description of cognitive processes. The researcher may develop this theory by running experiments to test specific hypotheses. Another validation technique is to construct artificial intelligence models that simulate the theory. If running a simulation produces the same behaviour as participants then this provides support for the theory used to construct the model.

The Card Sort Method

Protocol analysis involves assigning segments of data (i.e. concurrent verbalizations) to categories that have interpretable meanings. A similar categorization approach underlies the card sort method, which involves individuals sorting piles of cards or other objects into discrete categories according to a particular dimension. The resulting assignments are interpreted as indicators of the mental organization accorded to the same knowledge set. For example, Adelson (1981) investigated differences between novice and expert computer programmers using a sort method whereby participants sorted sets of words used in programming terminology. She found that experts sorted terms according to conceptual similarities (e.g. placing the words 'do', 'while' and 'repeat' in a category of 'flow of control' terms), whereas novices sorted terms according to superficial relatedness (e.g. placing the words 'bits', 'of' and 'string' in the same category).

As with verbal protocol analysis, categorization schemes may be determined a priori. For example, Davies, Gilmore and Green (1995) tested a widely held view among computer scientists that 'object-oriented' descriptions are a more natural way to think of programming concepts than 'function-oriented' descriptions, by having expert and novice programmers sort samples of code into categories organized according to dimensions differentiating between types of object or types of functions. Contrary to predictions they found that even experts in object-oriented programming were more accurate in assigning code samples to categories under the functional dimension than the object dimension.

In our research we often use 'free sorts', where participants determine for themselves the dimensions under which to categorize items. Free sorts elicit new information about domain knowledge and skill in order to enable theory construction as well as testing. The dimensions and categories that individuals produce provide important cues to conceptual organization. Differences among individuals can then be assessed by comparing sort outcomes using descriptive statistical methods (e.g. multidimensional scaling and cluster analysis). For example, Ormerod et al. (1999) presented specialist task designers (textbook authors) and non-specialist designers (experienced teachers) with sets of middle-school examination questions, and asked them to sort them repeatedly according to dimensions that were most significant to them as professionals. The sorts produced by teachers clustered together, while there was little consistency in the categorizations of designers. Contrary to most of the literature in which differences between individuals in terms of their knowledge organization decrease with increasing expertise, individual differences in organization of knowledge about mathematics tasks actually increased. In design domains, a sign of elite expertise is being able to produce high-quality designs that are unlike those of others.

Another advantage of free sorts is that researchers can explore the order in which dimensions and categories are produced, under the assumption that individuals will generate significant or dominant conceptual descriptions of domain items before they generate less important or less familiar ones. This technique involves participants repeatedly sorting the same sets of cards with instructions to produce the first dimension that comes to mind or to prioritize what they consider as the most important or meaningful dimension. For example, in Ormerod et al.'s (1999) study, the teachers sorted the questions initially according to the mathematics skill and knowledge that the tasks tested (geometry, algebra, etc.). More surprisingly, the specialist designers initially sorted the questions according to superficial features (e.g. length of the questions, presence of pictures and familiar content), only generating conceptual sorts after sorting under four or five different superficial dimensions. The study revealed the role that goal-directedness plays in the way experts organize their knowledge. All participants had the same deep level of mathematics concepts, and to the teachers this was the most significant and easily accessible dimension. For specialist designers, the superficial aspects of questions were most salient because they are the features that differentiate novel from run-of-the-mill assessment tasks.

Cognitive Ethnography

Sociologists and anthropologists define ethnography in various ways, some equating it with any method that involves participant observation (Taylor, 1994), whilst for others the defining feature is its epistemological stance, which is rooted within a socio-cultural frame of reference (Hutchins, 1995). We have previously argued (Ball and Ormerod, 2000a, 2000b) that no encompassing definition of ethnography exists that denotes a set of necessary and sufficient attributes. As such, ethnography may best be seen as a 'radial category' that involves a core 'prototype' – encompassing features such as situated and rich observation, openness, reflexivity, personalization, historicity, observational intensity and participant autonomy – as well as variations from this prototype. We will not reiterate here our detailed

arguments for this view, but simply note that it seems legitimate for researchers to claim to be using ethnography even when some of its prototype features are violated. Thus, cognitive psychologists may adopt an ethnographic approach when pursuing the study of situated behaviours using observational methods such as interviews, observations, document analysis, information-flow analysis and social network analysis. Where cognitive psychologists differ from sociologists and anthropologists is not in their data-collection methods but in their interpretative approach, with cognitive psychologists interpreting observations in terms of cognitive theories concerning procedural and declarative knowledge. As such, we use the term 'cognitive ethnography' to refer to the observational fieldwork conducted by cognitive psychologists because this clarifies the researchers' analytic intent. Our use of the term cognitive ethnography owes much to the equivalent term proposed by Hutchins (1995: 371), who invoked it to refer to his approach to studying cognition 'in the wild'.

Cognitive ethnography's concern with a 'theory-oriented' analysis of behaviour aligns closely with traditional ethnographic approaches involving analysis of the rites, rituals, ceremonies and social contracts of tribal societies (e.g. Malinowski's (1967) foundational studies of the Trobriand islanders in the Western Pacific). This alignment arises because the pioneering work of early anthropologists was motivated by an analytic focus to construct a theoretical account of the functional role played by tribal activities (e.g. promoting social cohesion). In this way, both traditional ethnography and cognitive ethnography stand in clear opposition to the 'ethnomethodology' approach prevalent in contemporary research on socio-technical systems design and ubiquitous computing (e.g. Moore, 2013; Button et al., 2015). This is because ethnomethodology claims that 'it is simply not possible to go beyond members' knowledge, the knowledge that persons have of their own doings' (Button, 2000: 331). Button's argument is that ethnomethodology, in striving for an analytic account of the practices through which work activities are assembled and organized, is unable to provide insights that are not *already known* by the people being studied. From a cognitive perspective this view is highly problematic because cognitive research has clarified that members' knowledge is mostly not available to introspective access and, therefore, should not be explicitly recognizable when the mirror of ethnomethodological description is placed in front of people.

Our conception of cognitive ethnography is characterized by three features (Ball and Ormerod, 2000a, 2000b). First, it relies on small-scale data collection during representative time-slices of situated activity, thereby demonstrating 'observational specificity' as opposed to the intensity of a prototypical ethnography. Second, it is 'purposive', often focusing on ways to enhance existing work practices (e.g. through computer-based interventions). Third, it places a strong emphasis on 'verifiability', that is, validating observations across observers, datasets and methodologies. The essence of cognitive ethnography is situated observation, a feature shared with all forms of ethnography. Thus, the researcher spends time with those involved in the domain of study, establishing relationships to facilitate the acquisition of information about activities. Data collection may involve formal and informal interviews, records of meetings or conversations and descriptions of documents and systems. In contrast with other qualitative methods in cognitive psychology the data include personal observations and reflections. For example, if the researcher senses tensions in the workplace that are not explicitly revealed in behaviours, it is nevertheless important for this to be recorded.

Cognitive ethnography is especially well suited to addressing applied questions because it maintains levels of objectivity that enable replication and the validation of findings through methodological triangulation. Validation, however, does not necessarily imply the search for statistical reliability or consistent observations of the same cognitive activity or phenomenon. Researchers will want to know what people 'normally' do when attempting a task or using a system, but they may equally be interested in exceptional events that reveal potential sources of error or failure or novel practices. Where ethnographic studies yield unique observations, validation is again likely to come from cross-method triangulation.

The 'in vivo/in vitro' *method*

Dunbar (e.g. 2000, 2001; Dunbar and Blanchette, 2001) developed the '*in vivo/in vitro*' methodology to study cognitive processes in scientific reasoning. The name is borrowed from the biological sciences, where, for example, a virus can be examined both in the Petri dish (*in vitro*) and also when it infects a host organism (*in vivo*). Similarly, the same cognitive processes can be examined in the laboratory using controlled experiments and also as they occur in the real-world via an analysis of 'messy' data (Chi, 1997), especially conversations and discussions. This *in vivo/in vitro* approach allows researchers to investigate cognitive phenomena in a naturalistic fashion and then

to go back into the laboratory to conduct controlled experiments on what has been identified. The method has been used successfully in studying expertise in the Mars Rover Mission (Chan et al., 2012), scientific reasoning in domains such as physics, neuroimaging and astronomy (e.g. Trickett and Trafton, 2007) and analogical reasoning, mental simulation, requirement-handling and problem-solution co-evolution in expert design teams (Ball and Christensen, 2009; Christensen and Schunn, 2007, 2009; Ball et al., 2010; Wiltschnig et al., 2013).

The *in vivo* component of the method typically involves recording dialogue and subsequently applying a rigorous coding scheme to transcripts similar to the process of verbal protocol analysis. As such, the *in vivo* method utilizes natural dialogue as the main unit of analysis, with no special instructions being provided for participants to think aloud. People simply work as normal and their utterances and activities are recorded. As with standard protocol analysis, the *in vivo* approach entails several data-processing stages, including transcribing verbal utterances, segmenting verbalizations into particular grain sizes, developing and applying a coding scheme, quantifying resulting patterns and sequences of coded behaviours and conducting reliability and validity checks (see Christensen and Ball, 2014, for further details).

The *in vivo* method necessitates the identification of regular time-points where natural, task-focused dialogue arises. In molecular biology Dunbar (2001) found that laboratory meetings were an ideal time-point, involving discussions between senior and junior scientists that reflected a range of cognitive activities, including hypothesis generation, concept development, critiques of existing experiments and the generation of new experiments. Analogous time-points in professional design are the team meetings that regularly take place. For example, Christensen and Schunn (2007) followed and recorded weekly meetings of a product-development team over eight months, whose primary function was to develop design artefacts through creative problem solving. Activities included brainstorming, concept development, problem solving, planning and prototype evaluation. In these meetings, 6 per cent of the time concerned off-task verbalizations (e.g. office gossip, jokes and banter), 3 per cent was spent summarizing outcomes of past meetings, 3 per cent was spent planning future meetings, 10 per cent concerned planning future data collection and 78 per cent (the majority of activity) concerned design reasoning. Although these percentages are likely to vary across different design projects, they nevertheless illustrate the value of the *in vivo* method for analysing design cognition.

A CASE STUDY OF QUALITATIVE METHODS FOR COGNITION

In this section we describe a project that demonstrates the integration of qualitative and quantitative methods in studying cognition. The project was UK-government funded and was motivated by the desire to develop technologies to tackle the growing problem of insurance fraud. Our research became part of a task-artefact cycle in which a need drives empirical research in the workplace to specify technologies that subsequently change the work people do. Ironically, one of the main contributions of the project was to *prevent* the implementation of technologies in some insurance companies that might have had a negative impact on successful fraud detection and investigation.

Ethnographies of Fraud Detection and Investigation

The project began with four ethnographic studies, varying between two and four-weeks duration, that observed the work practices of insurance company staff handling and investigating claims (see Morley, Ball and Ormerod, 2006). The locations of the studies included claims handling offices in insurance companies (both commercial and personal claims), specialist claims investigation units and investigations departments of loss adjusters (third party specialists who assess evidence regarding claims). Our choice of locations reflected our cognitive goals: the claims handling offices provided *novice* contexts where staff typically had very limited company experience, while the investigations departments provided *expert* contexts, where staff specializing in fraud investigation typically had five or more years' company experience. The researcher adopted an open and inclusive approach to data collection and made field-notes of work activities, recorded meetings, interviewed employees, inspected documentation and technologies and recorded her feelings and beliefs. We were open to any form of outcome. For example, at the outset senior managers advised us not to expect much evidence of ability in fraud detection among claims handlers, an assumption that our studies showed to be false. Moreover, the research was truly immersive: for example, on one occasion the researcher found herself in a 'stake out' of a potentially fraudulent claimant.

The outcome of the studies consisted of twelve notebooks totalling around 200,000 words, with a standard day typically yielding approximately 2,000 words, which were made off-line with the researcher returning regularly to her desk to

record recent observations. In addition, she audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed meetings and interviews. The data were subjected to four different types of processing, analysis and interpretation. The example in Table 33.3 documents a situation where a claims handler spotted a mismatch between the value of a stolen car supplied on the claim form and the value on the car's purchase receipt that had subsequently been faxed in and appeared to have been fabricated.

The narrative analysis of the notebooks focused initially upon determining problems in existing fraud-detection and investigation practices and opportunities for enhancing processes. We were also interested in contrasting the behaviours and knowledge of specialist investigators with less experienced claims handlers to understand the cognitive components of investigative expertise. The analysis revealed that both specialists and non-specialists were adept at detecting anomalies in claims that might be indicative of fraud. For example, one claims handler commented that it was strange how a claimant reporting a vehicle theft had stated they had only one set of car keys but had nonetheless returned two sets with their claim form.

Observations like the latter are of practical importance. For example, most technological solutions to fraud reduction focus on detecting anomalies that might indicate fraud, and it appears that even inexperienced staff are readily able to do this. The companies we worked with had been proposing to install voice-stress analysis and data-mining technologies that would allegedly detect anomalies automatically. We argued that to do so would potentially inhibit the natural ability of people to detect anomalies while simultaneously generating many false positives. However, our analysis revealed that claims handlers were neither skilled at, nor supported in, pursuing and resolving anomalies once detected. Indeed, in one company claims handlers were rewarded for the number of calls handled, thereby disincentivizing them from delaying calls to explore anomalies. This issue exemplifies an important advantage of cognitive ethnography, which is that it allows individuals' knowledge and skills to be understood within the prevailing work context. Non-specialist claims handlers did not lack ability for fraud detection; they simply had no organizational vehicle for capitalizing upon their ability.

Revealing Declarative and Procedural Knowledge of Fraud Through Card Sorts and Protocol Analysis

One feature of cognitive ethnography is that the outcomes of one analysis approach become the data for another analysis approach. For example, the theme of 'spontaneous anomaly detection' led to a phase of event selection and categorization whereby data were systematically trawled for instances of anomaly detection, reporting or description referring to specific claims or to general beliefs about fraudulent and genuine claims. Approximately 400 instances were identified. We then undertook a card-sort study in which domain experts sorted the instances repeatedly under dimensions of significance to them. Descriptive analysis of the sorts produced five types of anomaly report (e.g. specific case anomalies, beliefs about frauds and fraudsters, search actions), seven anomaly foci (e.g. the insured, the vehicle, a third party, policy) and between three and ten anomaly descriptors for each focus (e.g. for policy, they included 'excessive cover', 'claimant not covered' and 'data mismatch with other documents'). The anomalies were then given to software developers as a database for an expert system. The classification scheme also provided a dialogue design using drop-down menus for each dimension to capture new anomalies with minimum disruption to the claims-handling process (see Ormerod et al., 2003; Ormerod et al., 2012).

The anomaly sorting additionally provided a coding scheme for subsequent analysis of the verbal protocols of specialist investigators who verbalized aloud while investigating suspicious claims. To this coding scheme we added *a priori* categories of cognitive act (e.g. read, summarize, infer, generate, evaluate) and of the intent or outcome of the cognitive act (e.g. a test of a hypothesis, an explanation of an anomaly, a suspicion). The transcripts were segmented and loaded into a bespoke database containing coding fields with drop-down menus for each of the coding dimensions. Two researchers coded the transcripts and checked for inter-coder reliability. The use of verbal protocol analysis allowed us to explore the cognitive processes employed by experts, enabling us to challenge some established laboratory-based phenomena. In contrast to Simon's (1981) observation of satisficing in hypothesis generation, specialist investigators were frequently seen to pursue multiple, alternative hypotheses in parallel. Furthermore, in laboratory studies of hypothesis testing individuals often show 'confirmation bias' – a tendency to select evidence that verifies rather than falsifies a current hypothesis (Nickerson, 1998). Again, our verbal protocol analysis revealed that specialist investigators specifically aimed to collect evidence that might *falsify* current hypotheses.

Some verbalizations revealed a conscious decision by investigators to 'knock down' a suspicion they were entertaining. Investigators described this

Table 33.3 Methods of analysis used in the insurance fraud study, as applied to one example observation from the ethnographic data

Method	*Approach*	*Example*	*Outcomes*
Notebook reporting	Researcher documented daily observations and added meetings and interview transcripts.	[Notebook segment]: '10.30 am: BW (claims researcher) says she has spotted something odd – client claims original purchase receipt was lost in post, sends fax, when validated by company figures had been altered. Intends to pass on to supervisor' + verbal transcript.	'Raw data' of ethnography, comprising notebooks and relevant documents encountered during observations.
Narrative analysis	After each observational study the researcher drew out key emerging themes.	[Notes on narrative analysis from internal project report]: 'Almost all claims handlers (researchers) were observed detecting anomalies, but only senior ones ("researchers") followed them up'.	(i) Internal reports to industrial sponsors detailing process observations, problems and enhancements; (ii) Broad theoretical themes for further exploration.
Event selection	Notebooks and transcripts trawled for instances of anomalies pertaining to potential fraud or beliefs about insurance fraud.	[Example anomaly]: 'Claimant claims original purchase receipt was lost in the post, sends fax, when validated by company figures had been altered' (suspect case).	Exemplars of domain expertise and materials for seeding a database for an expert system to aid insurance-fraud detection.
Event categorization	Events identified in the previous stage were categorized by domain experts using repeated card sorts. Each repetition elicited a new classificatory dimension (Type, Focus, Evidence, Outcome, etc.).	[Classification of anomaly]: *Type:* Claim anomaly; *Focus:* Insured's behaviour; *Evidence:* Document mismatch.	Classification scheme capturing: type of event (claim anomaly, general belief, etc.), focus (e.g. on insured's behaviour, third party, claim handler, etc.), evidence for anomaly (e.g. document mismatch, information withheld, excessive information).
Protocol analysis	Verbalizations of investigators coded and interpreted. In addition to coding via domain classification scheme above, each segment was classified according to cognitive act (e.g. generate, evaluate, infer, summarize) and cognitive output (suspicion, explanation, test).	[Verbalization segment no. 34, from claims handler BW, notebook 2 page 26]: Segment [BW: 2: 26: 34]: '… it might be … like … they diddled with the figures on the receipt and faxed it so as … cos it degrades it so we wouldn't see it was fiddled …'. *Cognitive act:* Generate. *Cognitive outcome:* Explanation of anomaly suspicion.	Interpretation of coded protocols revealed classes of expert behaviour, including 'explanation building' that went beyond available information, hypothesis testing that alternated verification and falsification strategies, and procedural decision-making on when to proceed with or stop claim exploration.
Experiments	Expert (investigator) and novice (claims handler and student) groups were given deductive inference tasks with insurance and general knowledge contents to test the hypothesis that these groups differ according to the inferences they draw when testing hypotheses.	[Stimulus material example given to participants]: Rule: 'If the theft is genuine, then the value of a car claimed by the insured will be less than the documented purchase price'. Instance: In one case, the claimed value was greater than the documented purchase price. Task: How do you reconcile these statements?	Experts drew fewer logical inferences (e.g. the Modus Tollens inference for the example here: 'The theft is not genuine') than the novice groups when the inference confirmed a fraud hypothesis. Instead they drew extra-logical explanations (e.g. 'They might have misremembered the value when claiming initially') that 'disable' the inference.

type of testing as an enactment of a 'presumption of innocence', that is, claims should be presumed to be genuine unless suspicions of fraud can be proved conclusively. This outcome is consistent with a key theme emerging from the narrative analysis where an important distinction was how specialists and non-specialists treated suspicions. The non-specialists tended immediately to interpret all anomalies as suspicious, while the specialists tended to find ways to account for anomalies and resolve suspicions. This expert behaviour is consistent with the way that insurance companies typically deal with fraudulent claims. One company goal is to find grounds to refuse to pay fraudulent claims, but yet criminal prosecutions are rare because companies gain little by pursuing expensive legal cases. A more important company goal is to identify as fast as possible any false positive claims that are genuine but at first appear anomalous because enormous damage to a company's reputation arises if genuine claimants are treated as fraudsters.

From Qualitative Observation to Quantitative Testing of a Theory of Fraud Investigation Expertise

A key theoretical argument we developed from our ethnographic analysis was that expert fraud investigators devise strategies that support the rapid detection of false positives. We were able to illustrate this theory with examples from the notebooks and protocol analysis. To test a hypothesis deriving from this theory we also conducted an experiment comparing the 'conditional' inferences that experts (specialist investigators) and novices (claims handlers and an out-of-domain control group) drew from example insurance cases and from general knowledge (Ormerod, Barrett and Taylor, 2008). For example, given the statement 'If the aeroplane crashes then the pilot will die' and the instance 'In one case, the pilot did not die', the logically valid (*Modus Tollens*) inference is 'The aeroplane did not crash'. It is commonly found that participants do not draw the logical inference, but instead develop extra-logical explanations of the instance, such as 'The pilot ejected just before the plane hit the ground' (Elio and Pelletier, 1997).

In our experiment, the realistic conditional statements were taken from the event classification described previously. For example, a common belief among insurance investigators is that the theft of a modern car will require a key to gain entry. A staged theft, where a car is reported as stolen but has been sold or destroyed, is sometimes indicated by the absence of one of the keys that has been given to a confederate to steal the car. Thus, a rule of thumb is 'If a reported theft is genuine, then the claimant will possess both sets of keys': the logical inference to draw given a failure to provide both sets when asked is that the theft is not genuine. We hypothesized that if specialist investigators adopt a strategy of trying to avoid false positives, they should be less likely than other groups to draw valid inferences and more likely to draw extra-logical explanations such as 'The claimant may have lost one set of keys'. The results confirmed our hypothesis, with the specialist investigators drawing 30 per cent fewer inferences of this type than the claims handler and student groups (there was no difference in inference rates with general-knowledge statements).

This case study illustrates the three features of cognitive ethnography: specificity of observations, purposiveness of data collection and verifiability of outcomes through methodological triangulation. The observations were subjected to contextualized narrative analysis and to de-contextualized investigations via sorting and protocol analysis. They were also used as materials for experimental studies of fraud-investigation expertise. The project also illustrates the move through the research process from qualitative to quantitative methods (ethnography to experimentation).

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

We examine here emerging trends and developments in the qualitative analysis of cognitive phenomena. We begin by noting that an area that has seen exponential growth over the past decade is that of 'embodied cognition' (e.g. Wilson, 2002; Gibbs, 2006; Spivey, 2007). This area is closely aligned with situated cognition, discussed earlier (e.g. Kirsh, 2009), and proposes that to understand how the mind accomplishes its goals one must recognize that the mind links directly to a body that is involved in *interacting* with the world. The body therefore influences the mind just as much as the mind influences the body. More recently, Barsalou (2010) has defended a general account of 'grounded cognition', whereby much cognition is claimed to be underpinned by simulations (e.g. mental imagery) as well as by bodily states and situated actions. Hutchins (2010) likewise evokes the concept of 'enactment' to argue that multimodal representations are involved in the construction of memories of the past, one's experience of the present and the attainment of future goals.

The notion of embodied cognition can be illustrated with reference to Eerland et al.'s (2011) study, which examined whether bodily posture can affect magnitude estimation. Eerland et al.'s study was based on the 'mental number-line' theory (Restle, 1970), which proposes that people mentally represent magnitudes by means of a line, with smaller numbers residing on the left and larger numbers on the right. Eerland et al. (2011) proposed that people should make smaller judgments of size when leaning slightly to the left than when leaning slightly to the right. Participants performed exactly as predicted in a magnitude-estimation task (e.g. estimating the percentage of alcohol in a beverage) when their position on a balance-board was manipulated to lean to the left or right by approximately 2 per cent, despite them believing they were standing upright and not reporting awareness of the manipulation.

The idea that aspects of the body are involved in shaping cognition is profound. Whilst there are many views of embodied cognition that are more or less radical in their assumptions (Wilson and Golonka, 2013), it is clear that emerging support for the notion necessitates methodologies amenable to studying situated interactions as people engage in high-level cognition in real-world activities. Again, it is qualitative approaches that are rising to the fore in relation to the analysis of real-world, embodied cognition in the context of complex task performance, where interactivity with external artefacts is paramount. An example of a powerful new method for investigating how cognition reflects an embodied coalition between internal and external resources is Cognitive Event Analysis (CEA; e.g. Steffensen, 2013; Steffensen et al., 2016). CEA is rooted in cognitive ethnography and distributed cognition (Hutchins, 1995, 2014) and is also linked to the Distributed Language Approach (e.g. Cowley and Madsen, 2014; Steffensen, 2015). It has been applied in analysing naturalistic and experimental data (Steffensen, 2013, 2016; Cowley and Nash, 2013) and involves examining 'cognitive ecosystems' via a microscopic focus on dynamic bodily and inter-bodily movements, gestures and prosody.

CEA encompasses specialized terminology describing the investigation of cognitive ecosystems as involving an analysis of a system's *cognitive trajectory* as it moves toward a *cognitive result* (e.g. in problem solving this might be an attention-shift or an insight). Achieving a cognitive result is termed a *cognitive event*, which reflects a specific configuration of *transition points* along the cognitive trajectory. The most salient transition points function as *event pivots*. In order for the analyst to understand any cognitive trajectory it is essential to take as a starting point the cognitive results and event pivots such that the analysis works backward from the identification of a cognitive event towards an understanding of the cognitive trajectory that led to it.

CEA involves five consecutive steps being applied to a video record of a participant's task-oriented activity, including their situated interaction with external materials and artefacts. Table 33.4 (derived from Steffensen et al., 2016) exemplifies the CEA steps in the investigation of a participant (Participant 27 – abbreviated to P27) solving the 17 Animals problem, which asks how one can put 17 animals into four enclosures so that an odd number of animals resides in each enclosure. To solve this 'insight problem' participants must view it as a set-theoretical problem, where one or more elements (animals) can be part of more than one set (enclosure). In Steffensen et al.'s (2016) study participants could interact with a physical model involving 17 animal figurines shaped like zebras and a pile of pipe-cleaners for the construction of enclosures. P27 solved the problem via an insight (a cognitive event) that derived from an event pivot in which they observed overlapping enclosures that had occurred serendipitously.

In Step 1 of CEA a cognitive event is identified, which for P27 is the point at which they see the 17A problem as being a set-theoretical problem rather than an arithmetic problem. In Step 2, involving event pivot identification, the analyst determines what prompted the cognitive event, which for P27 is the serendipitous overlapping of two enclosures. Step 3 is a data-annotation procedure involving action-by-action coding of a participant's behaviour (e.g. physical moves made in relation to task elements). Data annotation can occur at multiple, hierarchical levels and across different action modalities, including utterances, gestures, manual movements, posture, gaze, object handling, heart rate and galvanic skin response (Steffensen et al., 2016). At Step 4 the analysts can segment the cognitive trajectory into functionally or behaviourally defined phases reflecting salient changes in behavioural patterns that indicate transition points along the cognitive trajectory. At Step 5 the analyst can attempt to understand the enabling conditions for the cognitive result and how it was achieved by the cognitive system, thereby establishing an explanatory chain that captures the cognitive antecedents of the final cognitive result.

CEA is in its infancy as a methodology for the qualitative analysis of situated, embodied and interactive cognitive activities. CEA seems especially well suited for the highly rigorous and meticulous analysis of data deriving from single case studies, but it can also scale across multi-participant studies if the resources are available to invest in such detailed analysis. The method's

Table 33.4 The five analytic steps underpinning the Cognitive Event Analysis (CEA) method (after Steffensen et al., 2016)

Procedure	*Description*	*Example from Steffensen et al.'s (2016) case study of the 17A insight problem (see text)*
Step 1: cognitive event identification	Identification of a cognitive event in a video record of a naturalistic or experimental dataset, typically an organism-initiated change in the layout of affordances in the organism–environment system. The event may be defined from an observer's or participant's viewpoint.	The behavioural process through which Participant 27 (P27) comes to see the 17A problem as a set-theoretical problem by overcoming the impasse of seeing it as an arithmetic problem.
Step 2: event pivot identification	Identification of the critical transition point(s) without which the cognitive event would not be a specific kind of event.	The point in time where P27 observes that an enclosure overlap is an affordance for solving the 17A problem.
Step 3: data annotation	Segmentation and annotation of the (peri-pivotal) video sequence, using multiple domains and levels, with or without a constrained set of annotation values.	The 13 coding levels listed in Table 2 of Steffensen et al. (2016) that capture the 1,291 annotations associated with P27's cognitive trajectory during their problem solving.
Step 4: cognitive trajectory segmentation	Segmentation of video sequence into functionally and/or behaviourally defined phases.	The seven phases of P27's trajectory: preparation, Tryout 1, impasse, breakthrough, Tryout 2, validation and expiry.
Step 5: cognitive trajectory analysis	Analysis of how specific segments of the cognitive trajectory (particularly the event pivot) are enabled by preceding segments and behavioural tendencies.	P27's observation that the serendipitous overlap of enclosures – caused by her drive to organize the workspace more aesthetically – may be part of the solution.

richness and flexibility in terms of levels and modalities of data annotation indicate that CEA is applicable in studying most cognitive behaviours and correlated measures (including physiological and motor activity), which attests to its future value in the qualitative investigation of cognitive phenomena. To date CEA has primarily been used for generating novel hypotheses (e.g. regarding the role of serendipity in attaining insightful solutions), whereas in the future the method will no doubt be used to test hypotheses deductively, which will be important for advancing a fully fledged ecological understanding of embodied and situated cognition in real-world cognitive ecosystems.

CONCLUSION

We have reviewed various qualitative methods in cognitive research that can also be augmented with quantitative elements. We believe that cognitive researchers need to embrace mixed methods to capture the full nature of cognition because phenomena arising in laboratory-based quantitative studies (e.g. satisficing and confirmation bias) disappear in qualitative studies in realistic contexts. The reverse can also happen; for example, Dunbar and Blanchette (2001) show how spontaneous analogical problem-solving and communication in real-world situations almost disappear in laboratory studies. Our plea for mixed methods also emphasizes the importance of triangulating observations from multiple methodological perspectives because as researchers move from single-method to multi-method approaches the understanding of cognition becomes more meaningful.

The use of qualitative methods is increasing in cognitive research, as illustrated by the application of the CEA approach for investigating people's problem solving whilst interacting with external artefacts. However, because qualitative methods are time-consuming quantitative methods remain the norm in cognitive research and it is often only when interventions are attempted to impact

'normal' performance that qualitative methods become more prevalent. As our review reveals, however, a hard-and-fast distinction between quantitative and qualitative methods is difficult to maintain. When, for example, we count instances of 'anomalies' in ethnographic notebooks, are we using qualitative or quantitative methods? Indeed, the fuzzy boundary between approaches may often dissolve completely.

Proponents of experimental and modelling approaches raise vociferous arguments against those adopting qualitative methods, and the same is true in reverse. However, given our arguments concerning the difficulties of establishing a pure distinction between qualitative and quantitative approaches, maybe such soul-searching is ultimately unnecessary. We conclude that the distinction between qualitative and quantitative methods resides, as far as proper methods for the study of cognitive phenomena are concerned, in a statistical nicety rather than a psychological reality. What starts off as a qualitative exploration of a domain of cognitive activity often ends up as quantitative, and vice versa.

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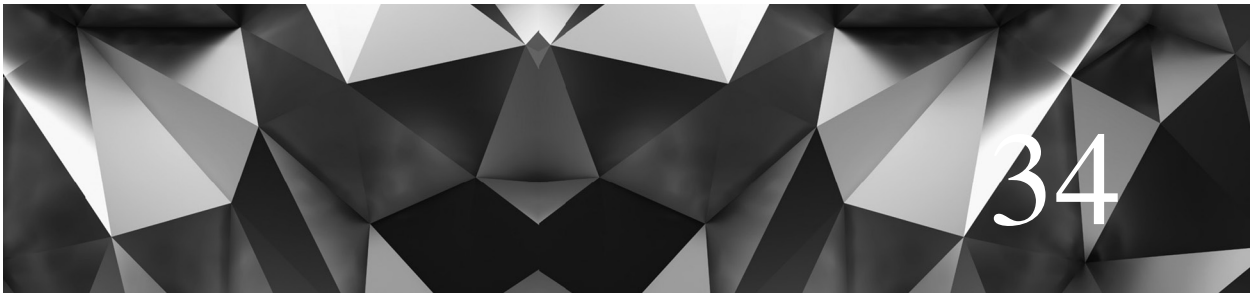

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Review and Prospect

Wendy Stainton Rogers and Carla Willig

In our Introduction to this second edition of the handbook we were in celebratory mode, describing qualitative research in psychology as expanding, innovating and diversifying in all sorts of ways. We are thrilled that since the last edition in 2008 there have been some real breakthroughs for qualitative research in psychology. Probably the most notable of these was the establishment by the American Psychological Association (APA) of the journal *Qualitative Psychology* in 2013. More generally, qualitative research in psychology has become increasingly popular, more new journals have been launched and more special editions devoted to qualitative work have been published. The production of the first edition of this handbook has been, in itself, another indication of the growing importance of qualitative research in psychology and its strengthening influence upon our discipline. Its publication in paperback demonstrated this popularity further, as has the commissioning of a second edition.

As its editors we have once again been bowled over (in a delighted kind of way) when re-editing the chapters by just how vibrant this movement has now become and just how widely it has spread its wings. It has become 'established' (Brinkmann, 2015), but we certainly hope it has not joined 'the establishment'. We can but admire the sheer confidence – chutzpah, even – that our authors in this edition continue to display. Working once more on the various drafts of the 32 authored chapters in this new volume has left us truly impressed by the abundance of what is now on offer and the expanding range and diversity of the methods, techniques and analytics being developed. We particularly value the scale and range of innovation being generated within the many different approaches, and the real commitment to doing good research that is so evident.

Looking at just one of qualitative psychology's rapidly evolving fields, it is inspiring to see the flourishing of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer psychology's theorizing, research and scholarship, evident in the recent collections by Peel, Clarke and Drescher (2007) and Richards and Barker (2015). Moreover, giving an indication of the esteem in which work in this field is held, two further collections have gained prestigious awards: that edited by Clarke and Peel (2007), which won the APA Division 44 Distinguished Book Award; and that by Clarke et al. (2010), which won the British Psychological Society's Book Award for that year.

In 2008, in our more optimistic moments, we speculated that psychology was at a 'turning point', ready to launch a whole range of new ways of theorizing our subject and researching within it. We have not been disappointed. Things have

changed in some fundamental ways, and this new edition sets out a whole range of new developments in methodology. Examples include the rehabilitation of Thematic Analysis (Chapter 2), new approaches to Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Chapter 12) and new ways to engage with the world of social media (such as Netnography, Chapter 22). There has also been real progress in relation to the interpretation of data, including the development of metasynthesis (see Chapter 16). Qualitative research in psychology has become more capable as an agent for change and has become more inclusive and respectful through a greater emphasis on reflexivity.

In this last chapter we will review and celebrate what has been achieved. Psychologists who turn to qualitative methods do not do so as an end in itself. It is not just a 'fashion thing'. Nor is it a 'whimping out' thing, even though this accusation is still muttered in some places, especially about psychology students who opt to use qualitative methods for their dissertations. Qualitative studies are increasingly being recognized as anything *but* a 'soft option', as any student simply wanting to avoid the need for precision and doing statistics finds out very quickly. Qualitative research requires serious levels of discipline and rigour, but also a sophisticated understanding of what are the appropriate methods with which to address particular research questions, and how to choose between them. Increasingly, researchers are 'diving in at the deep end' and constructing methods to suit particular kinds of research questions (see Chamberlain et al., 2011). The very lack of simple, standard, well-oiled procedures with 'no brainer' decisions about what methods and what statistical tests to use makes qualitative work just as hard, if not harder, an option.

So why carry out qualitative research in psychology? Given the personal and professional costs, there need to be some strong motivations. In this chapter we will argue that the revitalization of qualitative research in psychology has, in our opinion, come about from the pursuit of four somewhat interconnected agendas:

1 The 'to boldly go' agenda: to open up new frontiers and to explore new worlds (actual and metaphorical) that have not existed before or, more likely, that mainstream psychology has not been good at recognizing let alone researching before.
2 The 'what lies beneath' agenda: to go beyond simply documenting others' accounts (of their understandings, beliefs and experiences) by seeking greater insight into underlying processes and forces.
3 The 'making a difference' agenda: to achieve outcomes that cannot be gained by using quantitative methods, or where the qualitative approach can do it better. This is about providing insights and understandings that can be used to guide policy, practice and activism in applied fields such as health and forensic psychology.
4 The 'promoting social justice' agenda: to specifically challenge mainstream psychology's claim to political neutrality, contest its self-serving deployment of elite power, to champion the rights of marginalized groups and to realign psychological research as liberatory and emancipatory.

We will look at each of these in turn. We will selectively illustrate them by cross-referencing chapters within this handbook.

'TO BOLDLY GO'

Like the Starship Enterprise using warp drive to cover the immense distances involved in intergalactic exploration, qualitative researchers want to see things and go places that psychology has not been able (or brave enough) to reach before. This analogy is not so obscure because recent technological progress has had a major impact on the growing popularity and diversification of qualitative methods. Rapidly expanding and evolving innovations in information and communication technologies are opening up new forms of analysis, such as computer packages, to carry out data analysis (Chapter 23) and a whole range of new sites of data collection, including social media and, most notably all the opportunities for data collection on the Internet, including 'doing ethnography' on the Internet (Netnography, Chapter 22).

Blogging, video-casting and the recording of telephone interactions (for instance, for quality control purposes) are progressively blurring the distinction between the public and the private, and creating an explosion of texts (in terms of volume and diversity) that would have been unimaginable some years ago. As Wilkinson and Kitzinger (in Chapter 5, Conversation Analysis) point out, this makes possible the sharing of data sets among researchers and research communities, changing the nature and texture of analysis and interpretation and 'democratising' access to information. As we were writing the first draft of this chapter, Celia Kitzinger was posting her conversational analysis of the Clinton/Trump debate leading up to the 2016 US election on Facebook. We can

expect a lot more analysis of this kind as we progress into a Trump presidency and all the turmoil engendered by 'alternative facts' and 'fake news'!

The development, marketing and reduction in the relative costs of smartphones have led to widespread availability. The use of FaceTime, Skype, Instagram and Twitter as well as live-streaming from webcams and the like, make possible a range of virtual social interaction of less and more intimacy. The proliferation of reality TV is generating and publicizing an ever expanding range and modality of source texts. The lived experience of ordinary (and extraordinary) people is being made accessible as it never has been before, offering qualitative researchers a growing wealth (or perhaps burden) of material to scavenge. This offers new opportunities for interpretation and analysis as described, for example, in Chapter 21 on visual methods for research in psychology.

Indeed, it is more fundamental than that. The 'social' and the 'cultural' are rapidly requiring redefinition in a world where location is no longer the barrier to communication it once was. If, as Wilkinson and Kitzinger (Chapter 5: 76) claim, conversation is the fundamental site of social life and the most important 'medium through which we are socialized, through which we conduct our daily interactions and … through which social institutions are managed', then interpersonal communication itself is clearly undergoing profound change – at least for those able to engage in its new forms. As conversations become more possible across large distances, then the conversational negotiation and management of meaning is happening in unprecedented ways, with unprecedented consequences. The rationales for and means of collaborative action and conflict have dramatically changed, as have the ways and means by which such actions can be planned and carried out. The way that people live and experience their lives has undergone rapid and remarkable change – from seeking friends, lovers and sexual partners to selling or exchanging goods; from institutional political and religious proselytizing to organizing rebellion and resistance; from medical consultation to online counselling – people are doing things differently.

In this 'brave new world' psychologists have a whole new landscape of human behaviour and experiences to explore that either did not exist before or was hidden in the private realm rather than enacted in front of us as it is now. Moreover, its very availability and visibility offer all sorts of new avenues for research. Experiments and surveys are increasingly being conducted online, of course, and technological innovation therefore is also having an impact on quantitative research. However, the impact is far greater in the qualitative field. Many new methods would not be possible without new technology. The fine-grained work of conversation analysis (Chapter 5) is a good case in point.

However, perhaps the biggest transformation for qualitative research in psychology is the impact on us, as researchers and scholars, of operating in a world now saturated with vast amounts of display and performance, all of it potentially 'data' that we can observe and scrutinize. We can (and should) speculate about how this may be affecting our thinking when we initiate and plan our research projects. With such a carnival of the mundane and esoteric, how are we to choose what to focus on? On the one hand, this bustling 'carnival' offers all sorts of opportunities that psychologists have never had before. Perhaps the most remarkable are our encounters with 'aliens' (i.e. people and collectives who are well outside our social and cultural 'comfort zone' and were previously hidden from us, including by our own prejudices). They are all now so much more 'in our face' and, through our encounters we can gain deeper insight into not only these 'other worlds' but also into our own particular social and cultural worlds – whoever 'we' may be.

At the same time, the carnival provides us with entrancing and seductive opportunities to exploit others and to make ill-informed assumptions about what we actually can 'take for granted' about 'them' or indeed about 'us'. These days, we can all too easily become infatuated with all the amazing prospects opened up to us, only to be then drawn into a 'bull in a china shop' approach to research! Of particular concern here is the horror expressed within Chapter 18 (Post-colonialism and Psychology) about the ways in which 'research' can be used to exploit the oppressed. The detailed, fine-grained analysis in this chapter of the pitfalls of 'reflexivity' offers salutary warnings and very good advice.

WHAT LIES BENEATH?

The 'turn to interpretation' (see Chapter 1) entails taking very seriously the way we handle data when interpreting them (Chapter 16). As was outlined in Chapter 1, there are two forms of interpretation: 'empathic' (seeking to authentically articulate the accounts given by participants) and 'suspicious' (looking beyond the account itself, to seek for 'what lies beneath'). Our concern here is with the latter version, where interpretation is at the centre of the research strategy, and where

a variety of techniques are used to look at 'what is going on' when participants give accounts of their experiences, beliefs or of a particular phenomenon. This 'suspicious' approach itself comes in different kinds.

Psychoanalytic Interpretation

In their chapter on psychoanalytic approaches (Chapter 8) Stephen Frosh and Lisa Young outline the potential for psychosocial approaches to contribute to the new movements in social psychology:

> The 'new' social psychology, with its roots in social constructionism, Foucauldian critique and methodologically scrupulous qualitative research …, offers a grounded way in which to articulate the psychosocial bases around which personal and social accounts of experiences and beliefs are constructed. The possible contribution from psychoanalysis derives from the sophistication of its ideas about emotional investment and fantasy, which can offer a 'thickening' or enrichment of interpretive understanding brought to bear on personal narratives, especially those arising out of interview situations. (Frosh and Young, 2017: 124)

In fact, a surprising range and number of psychology's disciplines share a common history of being strongly influenced by psychoanalytic ideas, theories and methods, including counselling, developmental, forensic, health and occupational psychology. Within the last half of the twentieth century the mainstream of these sub-disciplines generally turned aside from anything as 'unscientific' as subjectivity and the psychic forces operating within it. The twenty-first century marks a desire within psychology – on its fringes at least – to rehabilitate Freud's 'dream work' – 'the tricky, hard-to-observe ways in which unconscious material finds its way into consciousness' (Chapter 8: 124) – as a legitimate target for psychological inquiry.

In terms of developmental psychology (Chapter 27), for instance, its 'founding fathers' were mainly drawn from a psychoanalytic tradition. As Burman (Chapter 27: 466) notes, 'Piaget was an early member of the Psychoanalytic Association and underwent and conducted analysis himself'. It is counselling psychology (Chapter 29) that can probably trace its roots most directly back to psychodynamic theory and Freud's development of 'the talking cure' for psychological distress and disturbance. This tradition has mainly been sustained by counsellors in their practice throughout the intervening period, particularly outside the USA. Even so, in research terms we see the familiar pattern – a fallow period that is now beginning to open up to qualitative methods. By contrast, clinical psychology (Chapter 28) had its origins firmly in cognitive-behaviourism, manifested at its inception in 1949 at a conference in Boulder, USA, by being promoted as an applied field of psychology designed to train and regulate 'practitioner scientists' with the tools and techniques to diagnose and treat psychological disorders.

Frosh and Young give a number of reasons why qualitative psychologists are willing to introduce psychoanalytic ideas into their theorizing and, in particular, into their data analysis and interpretative techniques. Psychoanalysis offers them an additional interpretative language, for example about the role of emotional investment in subject positioning. More than that, it offers access to potentially new interpretative insights that, for example, an account may be provided less as an explanation or mere 'telling it like it is' than as a form of defence.

> [P]sychoanalysis conceptualizes discourse as a site where the internal world of psychic reality is expressed and revealed … A psychoanalytic reading goes 'behind' the text as the positions that individuals construct through their talk are taken to be indicative of anxieties, defences and particular ways of relating. (Frosh and Young, Chapter 8: 126)

A good example is Burman's work on charity advertisements using depictions of children (Burman, 1994).

What is critical in this respect is a shift arising from the 'significant advances produced by discursive social psychology' where 'psychoanalysis, rather than viewing [psychic phenomena like] repression as *individual* in operation, needs to perceive it as *socially* produced' (Chapter 8: 126; emphasis added). This rehabilitation of Psychoanalytic Theory and its use as an analytic tool for analysing and interpreting qualitative data is gaining in popularity across a range of methods.

However, psychoanalytic methods in particular, such as the Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI) method (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000), are, as Frosh and Young themselves argue, more problematic. They ask on what basis researchers using this technique can present their reading as 'accurate' and are unconvinced by the claim of 'recognizability'. As they point out, 'the problem here is that an interpretation may be agreed upon by various people all looking at something from the same perspective … but this does not mean that it is right' (Chapter 8: 131). Discomfort at the

way this method creates the conditions that inherently privilege the researchers' interpretation has been expressed by a number of leading qualitative psychologists, including Parker (2005: 108) 'on the grounds that is individualizing, essentializing, pathologizing and disempowering – a "researcher knows best" set of moves' (Chapter 8: 131).

Hermeneutic Interpretation

Within this broader approach to interpretation some powerful new strategies and techniques are being developed that enable qualitative psychologists to be much more rigorous and systematic in the way they set out what they have found, to bring some order to the mass of potential data and data sources, and to resist imposing their own meaning.

As mentioned in the Introduction, it is becoming increasingly acceptable to acknowledge that qualitative analysis involves the work of interpretation. There is less talk of themes 'emerging from the data' and a lot more discussion of the role of the researcher's theoretical and personal commitments during the process of qualitative analysis. Developments in Grounded Theory demonstrate these developments particularly well, with Kathy Charmaz's constructivist approach to Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006) gaining increasing recognition (see Chapter 14). As qualitative psychologists engage with the process of interpretation more openly, they are beginning to look for strategies for making their interpretations as robust and convincing as possible. This is understandable because qualitative studies work with relatively small numbers of participants, which means that qualitative researchers need to find ways of ensuring credibility and relevance for their research which do not rely on direct generalizability of findings (see Chapters 16 and 24 for a discussion of evaluation in qualitative research).

There are two ways in which qualitative researchers have approached the challenge of making their interpretations credible and relevant. The first is to aim for greater sophistication in the analysis in order to render the resultant interpretation as nuanced and as sensitive to context as it can be. The second is to develop techniques for integrating the results from different qualitative studies so that the resultant interpretation is based upon a wider range of accounts and voices than is possible in any one qualitative study.

Aiming for greater sophistication

Combining different qualitative methods of analysis to interpret one and the same data set allows researchers to produce a richer and arguably more complete reading. Forms of pluralism and binocularity are gaining traction in qualitative psychology, and recent years have seen an impressive contribution to the development of highly sophisticated strategies for combining and integrating qualitative interpretations. These strategies seek to deepen understanding rather than to verify findings and, as Frost (2011) has pointed out, resonate with more recent conceptualizations of triangulation that are concerned with complementarity rather than with validation (see Morgan-Ellis et al., 2006).

Pluralist qualitative research tends to be pragmatist in orientation in that it wants to glean as much as possible from the available data, including 'complementary, contradictory or absent findings within it' (Frost, 2011: 8). Different methods of analysis are used alongside one another in order to demonstrate different ways of understanding the data. As such, pluralistic research heeds Frosh's (2007) call for caution regarding the researcher's search for coherent stories that make (one particular) sense of the data. Frosh (2007) argues that as human subjectivity itself is contradictory and fragmented, 'making sense' may not be the most appropriate goal for qualitative psychologists. Instead of trying 'to understand' what the data tell us, we may be better off seeking to 'open up' the data to allow diverse readings to be produced – more like 'unfolding' an origami figure and peeking at what is inside.

Binocular qualitative research also adopts a pluralistic approach in that more than one method is used to interrogate a data set, but its aim is different in that it seeks to integrate the findings from the two analyses (see Chapter 8). Two different analytic strategies are used to complement one another so that a more complete, 'thicker' reading can be produced. Binocular research is ambitious because it requires the researcher to develop a theoretical model that meaningfully integrates findings generated by two entirely different methods of analysis. The most recent version of binocular qualitative research involves a combination of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) and IPA (see Colahan, 2014; Colahan et al., 2012; also Chapter 16). Such an approach allows the researcher to situate subjective experience (as captured through the use of IPA) within its socio-cultural context (as reflected in the discourses and positionings identified through the use of FDA). This combination of IPA and FDA in one study enables the researcher to examine the interplay between language, culture and experience in a way that either one method on its own would not have allowed for.

It could be argued that binocularity is beginning to be practiced within IPA itself when researchers

explicitly work with two levels of interpretation, including an initial descriptive-phenomenological reading followed by a second more critical, hermeneutic probing of the data (Smith et al., 2009; see also Chapter 12). The latter allows the researcher to address questions about the context within which meaning is made and to make connections with psychological (and other) theories about human subjectivity and experience (Smith, 2011, 2012).

Techniques for integrating results

Integrating the results from different qualitative studies constitutes another way of increasing the credibility and relevance of qualitative research. Whilst many highly original and insightful qualitative studies are being published, their impact tends to be low because each one of them is based on a relatively small number of participants and can speak only of their (necessarily limited) experience. Qualitative metasynthesis allows the researcher to produce '(…) a new, integrated, and more complete interpretation of findings that offers greater understanding in depth and breadth than the findings from individual studies' (Bondas and Hall, 2007a: 115). Metasynthesis is an approach to interpreting qualitative results that is a relatively recent arrival in qualitative psychology (see Shaw, 2012), but one that carries much promise because it can contribute significantly to broaden the evidence-base for psychological practice. The use of metasynthesis can thus enable qualitative research to play a much bigger role in policymaking as well as informing activism and practice.

Metasynthesis is much more than a sophisticated literature review. It requires the researcher to integrate and interpret the findings of a group of qualitative studies rather than simply 'review' or aggregate them. As outlined in Chapter 16, there are a number of different approaches to conducting metasyntheses and researchers have different views regarding technical matters, such as the ideal number of studies that should be included in a metasynthesis and the nature of the inclusion/exclusion criteria for studies. More importantly when considering the role of interpretation, there are also differences in view regarding the extent to which primary findings should be re-interpreted, for example by re-labelling and/or re-grouping themes. The aim of a metasynthesis could be theory development or it could be to bring together research findings that are pertinent to a particular research question in order to build a cumulative body of knowledge. Depending on the aim, the researcher's approach to the primary findings may differ quite significantly. However, as Thorne (2015: 1348) argues, any metasynthesis should constitute 'a distinct piece of scholarly research and not merely an option for organizing and displaying available literature in the field'. This means that a metasynthesis needs to present an interpretation that systematically organizes and integrates the findings of a group of studies, takes account of and makes sense of the diversity within the body of studies, and places the studies' findings within the socio-historical contexts within which they have been produced. Metasynthesis research is a demanding interpretative enterprise that invites the researcher to engage in a triple hermeneutic (Weed, 2008), whereby the researcher interprets the interpretations of the primary researchers' interpretations of their research participants' interpretations of their experiences. This is heady stuff and requires the researcher to hold all three levels of interpretation constantly in mind whilst ensuring that significant aspects of meaning are not lost in the process of integration. Despite these challenges, increasing numbers of metasyntheses are now being published by qualitative psychologists (e.g. Bennion et al., 2012; Barker et al., 2014; Shelgrove and Liossi, 2013).

'MAKING A DIFFERENCE'

The most obvious candidates in this section include action research, community psychology, cultural psychology, and post-colonial psychology, because all four have explicit agendas to promote change-making. However, we have given them their own section in view of their explicit focus on bringing about social, economic and political change – promoting social justice. In this section we will concentrate on what, in Hispanic countries and cultures, is called 'socio-psychological intervention' (*Intervencion Psicosocial*; see, for example, the Spanish journal of that name). These interventions draw upon the various sub-disciplines within qualitative psychology. What is at stake is how research in each applied field can inform the provision of services (such as health care and support for those leaving prison) at individual, professional and managerial levels. It is about how qualitative psychological research can contribute to improving the quality of the welfare services that are provided, their effectiveness and the well-being of service providers and service users. This is not just about professional intervention in the workplace, but also includes the contributions of the wider community, volunteers, those in pastoral roles and informal carers.

Qualitative research in psychology has always had strong connections with social intervention.

For many (perhaps most) qualitative psychologists, what spurs them on is a determination to open up psychology to new fields of influence and push forward what it can achieve. Here we will concentrate on two different applications: health psychology (Chapter 26) and forensic psychology (Chapter 31).

Health psychology

When it was established in the 1970s in the USA, health psychology took (and for many psychologists still takes) a conventional, quantitative approach. Historically, health psychology's professional relationship with medicine put pressure on psychology to supply sound, scientific evidence for evidence-based practice, in the context of the growing move towards evidence-based medicine. Evidence-based practice is part of a wider movement that is increasingly referred to as 'the audit culture', where quality targets are prespecified and performance is audited by reference to these targets. Historically, it relied entirely on quantitative research to supply the 'evidence' required:

> Qualitative studies are routinely excluded from evidence review and policy development: it is quantitative data which are used to assess the nature and scale of the social processes in which governments seek to intervene. For example, the development of UK policies to tackle child poverty and social exclusion has been marked by the publication of authoritative reviews and strategy documents drawing on quantitative studies and routinely gathered statistics … Qualitative research is conspicuous by its absence in these influential texts. Informing them is a wider swathe of research reports, again relying exclusively on quantitative evidence. (Graham and McDermott, 2005: 21)

Certainly things have changed in health psychology, partly reflecting that in the practice of medicine itself there is now a growing desire to broaden the evidence base for clinical practice by opening it up to qualitative research, albeit mainly in fields like sociology and nursing rather than medicine per se (e.g. Popay et al., 1998). It is within this context that we can begin to examine the shift to qualitative methods being used in health psychology.

There is a 'pull' – the ability to achieve goals that cannot otherwise be attained – and there is, in this context, a strengthening 'push' – quantitative research is not delivering the goods. More generally, conventional quantitative research and the meta-analyses based upon it, which are used to provide the basis for policy and practice recommendations, are simply proving impractical in areas like Public Health. Efforts to make evidence-based recommendations for 'good practice' interventions are floundering when applied to health-related behaviour. One reason is the individualizing nature of this kind of research in health psychology and particularly its ignorance of (and hence failure to address) the profound impact of socioeconomic variables.

Qualitative health psychologists have therefore been motivated to seek understanding and insight rather than 'what works' kinds of evidence. Chamberlain and Murray's Chapter 26 illustrates the diversity and inventiveness of this growing body of work through studies of, for example: dietary practices in people with diabetes; the understanding of and meanings given to recovery from hip operations; experiences of people who are HIV positive; and studies of the impact of community gardening.

In their chapter on qualitative research in health psychology, Chamberlain and Murray draw attention to how far things have changed recently. In their previous version of the chapter they made reference to the special edition of the APA journal *Health Psychology* published in 2004 that purported to be a review of 25 years of 'progress' in the field. However, in that special issue, qualitative methods were mentioned only once in the whole volume – and then as a mere comment in just one paper that 'health psychologists seeking to contextually anchor their research may want to consider qualitative methods' (Yali and Revenson, 2004: 150).

In 2015, 11 years later, another special issue of the same journal, *Health Psychology*, was published. This one, however, had nothing in it *but* qualitative research because it was explicitly dedicated to qualitative research in the field. The special issue was edited by Gough and Deatrick (it is fascinating to read their editorial – see Gough and Deatrick, 2015). Brendan Gough was, at the time, the editor of the UK journal *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. These events happened just after APA launched a new journal of its own, *Qualitative Psychology*, which demonstrated a more general turnaround in attitudes.

In their chapter, Chamberlain and Murray also argue for an approach that they call 'critical health psychology' – one that assumes that knowledge is multiple, contingent and changing, and

> always a product of the historical, social and cultural context in which it is located. Critical health psychology seeks understanding and insight into, rather than prediction of, human conditions and practices, and it generally uses qualitative interpretative research methods, although is not restricted to these. More fundamentally, critical

> health psychology seeks to challenge assumptions, including its own, and is concerned to identify how forms of knowledge can empower or disenfranchise different people. (Chamberlain and Murray, 2017: 433)

Chamberlain and Murray outline four key purposes for this critical health psychology:

1 *Understand meanings and experiences of health and illness.* This can provide real insight into and understanding about, for example, what it is like to be a patient in hospital or to go through, say, bariatric surgery and what life is like afterwards. The richness of the accounts and the sophisticated interpretation that is made possible with qualitative research can have a dramatic impact, providing insights that can inform practice.
2 *Examining and exposing social processes around health and illness.* Chamberlain and Murray speak in this context about achieving an understanding of social processes like medicalization (Conrad, 2013) and the ways in which 'subjectivities are constituted and power infused through such processes. Much of this research attempts to connect professional and lay understandings of health and illness with the political, historical and cultural context' (Chamberlain and Murray, 2017: 438).
3 *Revealing contradictions and complexities in health and illness.* Qualitative research makes it possible to gain understandings of the various conflicts, tensions and resistances involved in social practices associated with health and illness, and it consequently has a role to play in intervention. The detailed scrutiny involved in qualitative research can not only reveal knowledge about what may be going on interpersonally, but can also elucidate environmental and structural factors involved. It can thus inform policy and practice in relation to community and public health. Qualitative research is also highly beneficial for gaining greater insight into processes such as diagnosis, treatment, care and recovery.
4 *Promoting change within the social contexts of health and illness.* It is a major challenge for health psychology to move qualitative work from research into social action in order 'to resist the multiple forces that threaten the health and survival of poor people today' (Mishler, 2004: 91). Health psychologists use qualitative research in a range of social settings to play an activist role in promoting social change for health (Murray and Poland, 2006). This can range from the critique of political discourses that focus responsibility for ill health on the individual rather than on the structural inequalities in society to revealing the various forms of distress experienced by individuals and communities (e.g. Kagee et al., 2014). It can also involve psychologists in forms of social activism to challenge the neoliberal orthodoxy, which contributes to ill health (https://psychagainstausterity.wordpress.com/ [accessed 4 February 2017]).

Forensic psychology

Forensic psychology (Chapter 31) has also undergone dramatic change since 2008, in ways that have influenced qualitative research in this field. Possibly the most significant change is in terms of its regulatory framework. As Peter Banister points out in the chapter, the British Psychological Society (BPS) is an association of UK academic and practitioner psychologists but, until recently, also acted in a regulatory role in relation to professional standards. It set out the basic qualifications and competencies required for psychologists of different kinds to become 'chartered' and thus able to practice in clinical and other settings.

However, as is the case in other fields like clinical and counselling psychology, the regulation of forensic psychology has been taken over by Governmental bodies, originally by the Health Professions Council (HPC) and in 2009 by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). This latter is an independent regulatory body set up by the Government of England and Wales to establish standards of good practice and ethics, and to protect the public. Similar bodies run in Scotland and Northern Ireland and in other countries, including Australia and the USA. Banister comments that adoption of such regulation has been slower in Europe. The UK HCPC keeps a register of qualified health and care professionals who have been certified as meeting the appropriate standards of training, professional skills and other elements required to practice competently. Under the HCPC the term 'forensic psychologist' is one of the legally protected titles that can only be used by those psychologists who are registered with the Council.

Banister notes that 'forensic psychology is above all concerned with the application of psychology to real world problems' and that this 'has meant that the focus has been on pragmatism, rather than on theory development' (Banister, 2017: 544) His chapter offers a compelling impression of very much the same level of growing diversity and

innovation in forensic psychology as we have seen in the previous section on health psychology:

> Recent research has focused on areas such as crime scene analysis, eye witness testimony, interviewing techniques, psychopathy, violent and sexual offenders, anger management, developing effective treatments, bullying, stalking, suicide and risk assessment. There have been changes related to current political and social developments, such as those related to terrorism and to the increased use of computers and the Internet (by both criminals and researchers). The nature of crime itself has (and is) changing with remote grooming for sexual or physical abuse, stealing of passwords, misusing Internet banking, anonymity, electronic hijacking, etc. In addition, there have of course been legislative changes; examples here including laws tackling cyberstalking and cybercrime. (Banister, 2017: 544)

Banister interestingly makes a point similar to that raised by us in the beginning of this chapter: that in forensic psychology qualitative data and its analysis is often found 'hidden' in published work that purports to be quantitative.

> The contribution of qualitative methods is far more widespread within forensic psychology than the casual perusal of recent journals would indicate. Often such work is unacknowledged, but is nevertheless an important part of the research process. An example of this is that quite a number of journal articles published involve working directly with criminal populations … [where] such participants may have literacy and other such problems. This means that test and questionnaire administration can only be carried out at times via verbal administration or some form of interviewing, including semi-structured interviewing. Such results may apparently be interpreted within a more quantitative framework, but inevitably the interviewing process will have produced material that influences the subsequent analysis of the findings. (Banister, 2017: 546)

Banister outlines two main functions for adopting qualitative methods in forensic psychology:

1. To reach places that psychometrics cannot reach
2. To improve the effectiveness of research in the field

There is a certain amount of interplay between the two, but looking at them separately is informative.

Reaching places that psychometrics cannot reach

Banister asserts that because of the specific conditions in which it is researched, forensic psychology brings into sharp focus the need for qualitative research. The pragmatic agenda is based, he says, very much upon the growing keenness among forensic psychologists for 'getting real' – acknowledging that quantitative research faces a truly uphill struggle, especially when seeking to work with certain populations. A high proportion of those involved in crime who enter the criminal justice system display low levels of literacy, many of them unable to read or write. Part of being a criminal is about being astute at deception, highly skilled at telling credible stories and fluent in presenting an image of innocence. Trying to use standardized psychometric tests within circumstances like this can prove virtually impossible.

This sort of situation, Banister argues,

> has contributed to the often unacknowledged use of qualitative methods as part of the 'toolkit' of the forensic psychologist. This is not so much driven by an explicit commitment to a qualitative philosophy but more by a growing realization that relying solely on quantitative methods may be particularly problematic with many such participants. (Banister, 2017: 544)

It is extremely hard for quantitative approaches to tell us anything much about the motivations for criminal behaviour and experiences of it. To do this requires gaining an 'insider perspective', and getting participants to 'open up' and be willing to get involved in (or at least somewhat play along with) the research process. Qualitative research is the only practical way to achieve these sorts of goals (although it is obviously crucial that ethical issues are taken seriously and dealt with honestly). Banister suggests that researchers in this field have to do 'pioneering work' (i.e. boldly going) that involves exploring in previously uncharted places. 'Qualitative methods' he says 'are particularly appealing as a starting point in what essentially may be an exploratory study, ensuring that what is being investigated comes from the participant, and is not just a reflection of the researcher's preconceptions' (Banister, 2017: 544).

Banister lists a wide range of studies that come under this banner and uses insiders' accounts when the findings would not be obtainable using other methods, such as the Kennedy (2014) study of prisoners who had taken part in a riot at a prison; the work of Ireland et al. (2014) interviewing people who had engaged in hostage taking, barricades and roof-top protests; Perrin and Blagden's (2014) study on the impact of being a listener in prison; Marzano et al. (2015) who interviewed prison staff on their experiences related to

self-harm incidents; James and Harvey (2015) who interviewed ex-drug and alcohol offenders who had become employees of a substance abuse service; Merola (2015) who looked at the experiences of young offenders who had been given an indeterminate sentence; and Donna et al. (2015) who interviewed female victims of domestic violence about their experiences of taking part in court proceedings.

However, as well as celebrating the growing range and scope of qualitative work in this field, Banister points out that something interesting tends to happen when the qualitative approach is adopted. When forensic psychologists turn to qualitative methods they may not start with any theoretical presumptions – they are simply being practical. But Banister suggests that when qualitative research enters by the 'back door', so to speak, other elements of the qualitative approach slip in too. Like a Trojan Horse, there is an infiltration of expectations such as the need for reflexivity, acknowledgement of the power-plays that go on between researcher and researched, and appreciation of the importance of interpretation. Banister claims that these 'added extras' have 'added value' – and they have contributed a great deal to improving the quality of research being done in this field.

Improving the quality of research

This takes us to the second reason that Banister gives for the growth and rise in popularity of qualitative methods in forensic psychology: it is partly because of an expansion of mixed methods studies, which have the specific aim to improve the quality of quantitative research.

One way of accomplishing improvement is by introducing qualitative elements at the beginning of a project. An exploratory pilot study makes it possible to scope the field being studied and identify the key aspect of 'what is going on'. This leads to the design of much more subtle and sophisticated quantitative measures.

Another strategy is to use interviews as adjuncts to questionnaires, specifically to flesh out the data available and provide opportunities for gaining insight. As an example, Banister makes reference to a study by Ahmed and Braithwaite (2005) who examined issues around tax compliance by ex-university students in Australia. At the time of the study there were high university tuition fees that students were expected to pay for through loans. These loans were intended to be repaid after graduation via the tax system once a certain income threshold is reached. Central to the study was whether – and why – graduates often sought to avoid paying this tax.

The paper publishing the study, Banister notes, includes a complete section entitled 'Qualitative observations and data reflections', which contains lengthy quotations from the participants' conversations with the researcher (called 'participant narratives'). From reading the paper it is clear that these data elucidate the findings in important ways. The paper, in its conclusions, states that 'the most unexpected outcome of the current study was that dissatisfaction with the university course studied played a key role in directly triggering tax evasion' (Ahmed and Braithwaite, 2005: 34). More boldly, the authors state that the 'personal narratives provide insight into how dissatisfaction with university courses increased shame displacement and reduced shame acknowledgement' (Ahmed and Braithwaite, 2005: 303). The implication, the authors suggested, was that 'blame for being deceived and tricked into wasting one's time and money on a university course is directed to tax evasion' (2005: 304). In this way introducing qualitative elements into the study allowed the researchers to offer much richer and surprising insights into students' tax evasion compared to just a simple questionnaire.

Banister also outlines the ways in which straightforward interview studies produce fascinating findings in their own right. A good example of this, he says, is the large-scale research project by Nelson and Desroches (2014) conducted in Canada. This research entailed interviews with 80 convicted bank robbers who were serving time in prison. The study explored how these convicts thought about 'victims' and the process of 'victimisation'.

Nelson and Desroches found that their participants reversed prevailing 'common sense' understandings of bank robbery. The men convicted of bank robbery regarded it as being basically non-violent and victimless. Banks were seen by the bank robbers as being impersonal institutions. The robbers felt that any violence that arose was because the staff and customers in the bank did not play the passive role as they had been told to do. The bank robbers complained that it was their 'foolhardy and feckless' actions that caused the problems, making the robbers the 'victims' of what had happened.

These findings illustrate the way 'reversals of agency' are commonly made in conversations in order to justify certain kinds of behaviour. The term was first devised by the feminist theorist Vickers (1982) to talk about the misattribution of agency – raising questions about who is doing the 'doing' in particular circumstances. Vickers uses a striking example – that of *sutee*, the 'custom' by which widows are burnt on their husband's funeral pyres. She noted that in a conventional ethnographic text,

it was claimed that 'at first *suttee* was practiced only by the wives of elites like princes or warriors, but over time the widows of weavers, masons and barbers adopted the practice' (Walker, cited in Daly, 1978: 117). Vickers retorted:

> Given the fact that widows were dragged from hiding places before being flung onto the funeral pyre, often by their sons, this is like saying that although the practice of being burned in gas ovens was first restricted to political dissidents, eventually millions of Jews adopted this practice. (Vickers, 1982: 39)

In the bank robbers case, reversing agency in this way was a means by which they denied responsibility for the harms caused in bank raids, blaming others instead for being 'feckless'. Banister suggests that findings like this have proved very useful in designing and delivering treatment programmes such as cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) group sessions, which are designed to challenge such 'blame the victim' ways of thinking.

PROMOTING SOCIAL JUSTICE

The aim to 'promote social justice' is inspired by a range of interconnected ideologies that share a commitment to liberation and social justice. These ideologies include countering structural inequalities (which used to be called Marxism), Feminism (with its potent women-liberatory and anti-violence agenda) (Chapter 17), and the wider anti-oppression, anti-imperialism movements around the politics of class, disability, race, sexuality and other modes of discrimination and exclusion.

For many qualitative psychologists the social justice agenda is what primarily motivates their rejection of quantitative methods because such methods of measurement are seen as a technology (or possibly more accurately *a techné*) designed for the governance and regulation by the powerful of the powerless (see in particular Chapter 18 on post-colonial psychology). From this perspective, the measurement of human action and experience is a mechanism of control – a manifestation of an 'audit culture' based on imposing norms, setting 'quality standards' and forcing people to conform. In South Africa this has particular potency, given the role of psychologists at the University of Stellenbosch during the apartheid regime.

It may go too far to suggest that qualitative psychologists have specifically adopted qualitative methods as an explicit means of resistance against psychology's establishment. Some (perhaps many) would want to be seen simply as pragmatists, just like many forensic psychologists, merely choosing 'the best tool for the job' without any reference to politics at all. There is no one-to-one link between being anti-establishment and using qualitative methods (Parker and Burman, 1993).

Some of psychology's sub-disciplines are less explicitly less ideological: cognitive psychology (Chapter 33) is a case in point. Here, though, we are concerned with those that are ideological by the very nature of their development: action research (Chapter 4), cultural psychology (Chapter 32), community psychology (Chapter 19) and post-colonialism and psychology (Chapter 18). However, our own impression is that framing research within a particular ideology can have more to do with how particular researchers position themselves than anything essentially to do with any specific method or sub-discipline. Chapter 19 on community psychology, for example, explicitly adopts a critical stance and would have been very different if written by another author – such as from the cultural relativist position of the classic 'psychological' study reported to 'Western civilisation' by Margaret Mead (1928). Having said all that, when perusing the chapters in this handbook it is evident that it is the principle of social justice that has persuaded many psychologists to adopt qualitative methods. In this section we will look in a little more detail at what is clearly a theme that pervades the handbook.

We have identified four main approaches that specifically focus on promoting social justice: action research, community psychology, cultural psychology, and post-colonialism and psychology. In this section we will briefly review all of them, identifying aspects of each that aid our insight and understanding of new approaches to qualitative research in psychology.

Action research

In Chapter 4, Kagan et al. draw on the work of Reason and Bradbury (2001) to identify three main purposes of action research:

1. To produce practical knowledge that is useful to people in the everyday conduct of their lives;
2. To contribute through this knowledge to increased well-being – economic, political, psychological, spiritual – of people and communities and to a more equitable and sustained relationship within the wider ecology of the planet;
3. To combine practical outcomes with new understanding 'since action without reflection and understanding is blind, just as theory without action is meaningless'. (Reason and Bradbury, 2008: 4)

Action research has been profoundly influenced by the concept of 'the pedagogy of the oppressed' initiated by Paulo Freire (1972). His aim was to challenge and transform the way those who provide services (like education, social and health care) and those who receive them relate to each other. Action research is a situated practice. Within it, problems are seen to arise from and research takes place in particular contexts – historical, geographical, economic and political. Consequently, it is always concerned with change – changes in practice, organizational change, social change and so on. There are limits to what it can do and where it can be used. It is hard to keep to tight timescales and pre-determined research designs because it needs to be flexible to respond to negotiations between researchers and those researched, as well as their communities.

New developments include a broadening out of data sources and a growing focus on the process of learning through dialogue, viewed as central to action research and its commitment to continual reflection and self-reflection. Wider dissemination is also being promoted, including workshops, celebrations, videos and so on to communicate findings back to the communities involved in the research. A good example is a project working with Chinese migrant workers (Kagan et al., 2011). Its dissemination included a booklet produced in English and Chinese that captured key life experiences of the participants in their own words, and was distributed in places where Chinese migrants might find them. The researchers augmented the official launch of the findings with performances, in Chinese, of the narratives collected in the research.

Cultural psychology

The anthropological study of culture has a long (and not very edifying) history, but it is only relatively recently that psychologists have taken it up as a subject of study. Helman, a medical anthropologist, defines culture as a:

> set of guidelines (both explicit and implicit) which individuals inherit as members of a particular society, and which tells them how to *view* the world, how to experience it emotionally, and how to *behave* in it in relation to other people, to supernatural forces or gods, and to the natural environment. It also provides them with a way of transmitting these guidelines to the next generation – by the use of symbols, language, art and ritual. (Helman, 1994: 2–3; emphasis in original)

From this description it is easy to see why psychologists have wanted to engage with culture as an organizing concept. In Chapter 32, Swartz and Rohleder outline two general approaches to cultural psychology. The first is where it is regarded as a discipline on its own, separate from other approaches to psychology, such as social or health psychology. Alternatively, cultural psychology is seen not as a sub-discipline, but more like a lens through which people's ways of seeing the world and acting within it is examined. The authors make clear that it is this latter perspective that they adopt. They illustrate this by reference to an early essay by Shweder when he described cultural psychology.

> Cultural psychology is the study of the way cultural traditions and social practices regulate, express, transform, and permute the human psyche, resulting less in psychic unity for humankind than in ethnic divergences in mind, self, and emotion. Cultural psychology is the study of the ways subject and object, self and other, psyche and culture, person and context, figure and ground, practitioner and practice live together, require each other and, dynamically, dialectically, and jointly make each other up. (Shweder, 1990: 1)

This description makes it clear that cultural psychology is into interpretation in a big way, concerned particularly with the way context influences the making and understanding of meaning. It is particularly interested in the ways in which meaning is changed in different contexts – such as shifting from local to distant (demographically, for example), from traditional to contemporary – all of which is going on within broader influences such as globalization, consumerism and whether what is going on is IRL (in real life) or on the Internet.

Cultural psychology offers a strategy for resistance against the universalist assumptions of positivist psychology – that its purpose is to strip away the distracting details of a specific disorder, for example, in order to get to the general and universal laws on which such psychology is based. The example that Swartz and Rohleder provide is how the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) has been translated into different languages, purported to make it possible to study 'depression' cross-culturally based on the assumption that 'depression' is a universal disorder, with fundamentally the same origins and manifestations in all cultures (see Drennan et al., 1991). Swartz and Rohleder also raise questions about cultural relativism, wherein phenomena like depression are seen to be experienced and understood (and consequently treated) differently in different cultures, as though cultures are unique entities in themselves. The authors argue that cultural psychology must adopt a critical approach, one where 'everything is viewed

as being culturally situated' and where 'issues of difference and diversity [are] being linked to broader social phenomena of power and control' (Swartz and Rohleder, 2017: 564).

Community Psychology

In a similar vein, community psychologists strive for socially just changes through the work they perform, particularly with excluded and marginalized communities. In Chapter 19, Malpert and her colleagues state that community psychology is based on the 'recognition of iniquity and injustice within social systems and the resulting negative impact on individual and community wellbeing' (Malpert et al., 2017: 318). In many ways community psychology shares similar goals with action research and is defined as a psychology seeking to enhance wellbeing via social change and social justice (Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2010). However, Malpert and her colleagues identify four key principles that are more specific to community psychology: the adoption of ecological and historical perspectives; the recognition of social power differentials; a preference for 'praxis' over theory, research, or practice alone; and value-based practice. It is the ecological perspective and specific focus on power that are the most distinctive to community psychology.

The ecological element is based on an analogy with natural ecosystems (such as a coral reef or a Highland glen) where understanding what is going on can only be found through looking at the system in question holistically – and as an ever-changing network of interconnecting processes and influences. The crucial importance of considering power is informed by more general theorizing (see, for example, Lukes, 1986). In itself, power is not seen as inherently good or bad. It is more the case that community psychology is expressly concerned to scrutinize how power is exercised in certain socio-cultural ecosystems. In particular, community psychology looks at how the inequitable distribution of power 'plays out' in communities in terms of how resources are allocated, how power relationships are performed, how power is resisted and how inequality, itself, is produced and sustained. The thinking behind community psychology has been strongly influenced by Wilkinson and Pickett's (2010) book, *The Spirit Level*. The book has become popular for the clarity with which it sets out quantitative evidence for inequality, and the powerful argument it makes about the way inequality constrains certain sectors of society in global terms.

A key aim is for community research to lead to the empowerment of those groups who are disadvantaged and excluded – in other words, those lacking power. It is a goal to which the qualitative approach is very suited. This is because it is designed to enable participants to make meaningful and effective contributions, and also because the qualitative approach is able to provide the level of nuance and sophistication needed to explore the deployment of power.

Community psychologists seek to empower in two ways. First, they do their best to make the research process *itself* more empowering. Research is conducted as a collaborative venture. Community psychologists use qualitative methods that give participants a more meaningful participatory role, and more power and freedom (i.e. more 'voice and choice'). They engage community members in the process of building shared narratives that will have greater impact as representative of the community rather than simply being treated as the lay views of individuals. They demystify the research process and avoid impenetrable language in the way projects are negotiated.

The second empowerment strategy involves community psychologists using their positions and power *as* researchers to champion the causes, rights, entitlements and priorities of the oppressed. In this sense community psychology research is claimed as political action in itself. Indeed, many become activists, who engage in politics as well as research.

Post-Colonial Psychology

However, as Chapter 18 demonstrates vividly, it is within the somewhat more theoretical engagement between psychology and post-colonial theory that there is the most determined challenge to systems that create and sustain power relations of domination (Foster, 1993: 56). The ideological agenda within post-colonial theory and research is explicit and in your face (an excellent place to start is the book by the Maori author, Smith, 1999). It is set out very elegantly in a post-apartheid South African book on *Critical Psychology* (Hook, 2004). In it Catriona Macleod (lead author of Chapter 18) states boldly that politics in critical psychology research demand that 'at the very least, there should be an explicit focus on power-relations and undermining exclusionary and discriminatory practices' (Macleod, 2004: 524–5). The root motivation for qualitative research in this view must *always* be to expose, oppose – and ultimately depose – elites who mistreat, marginalize and exploit others.

In Chapter 18, Macleod, Bhatia and Kessi say that research in psychology from a post-colonial standpoint has moved on from its 'embryonic' state in 2008, but not a great deal. They acknowledge that there has been some expansion since

then, particularly by those working in critical psychology (see Moane and Sonn, 2014; Painter, 2015; Teo, 2005). Much of the chapter is devoted to developments in post-colonial theory and in the research principles and strategies. In particular, Macleod and her colleagues draw attention to the enormous importance of reflexivity in post-colonial research:

> Research and theory within a postcolonial frame, as with other critical psychologies, implies being constantly vigilant and reflective in terms of self, other, context, process, assumptions and theory. Much of the discussion concerning this type of practice has, in qualitative research, gone under the rubric of reflexivity. In this, the multiple, contradictory and socially constructed interactive and reflexive positionings of practitioners, researchers, academics and participants along the axes of race, gender, class, ability, sexual orientation and religion are acknowledged and deconstructed. (Macleod et al., 2017: 309)

They point out that reflexivity's requirement for self-critique can all too often, in practice, provide an opportunity for enacting a continued sense of smug superiority – of being politically 'right on' or, what Spivak calls, 'the banality of leftist intellectuals' lists of self-knowing' that renders them invisible (Spivak, 1988: 70). Macleod and her colleagues argue that reflexivity must also encompass an acknowledgement of the power inherent in the role of researcher and the inevitable Othering of participants that it intrinsically entails. They argue that the Other then becomes represented by the researcher(s) first in their data interpretation and then in the research outputs (research reports, journal articles, theses and the 'grey' literature of charities, government agencies and non-governmental organizations). Although in Chapter 19, Malpert and her community psychologist colleagues view their representation of the researched-upon communities as mainly positive – a means to champion their causes – Macleod and her post-colonial psychologist colleagues take a much more critical (cynical, even) stance: that a social justice agenda cannot just be bolted on to psychology as some desirable 'added extra'. Rather Macleod et al. (2017) insist that we who peruse research with any kind of Other must fundamentally change what we mean by psychology, what we do as research and, most crucially, how we enact the relationship between the researcher and the researched.

This does not, they argue, imply a need to get better at representing the researched, but it is about:

> recognizing that representation is a production not a reflection of reality, that it is a process in which the discourses and silences invoked by the researcher and those invoked by the participants in question meet, challenge, dovetail, diverge, and generally construct new, hybrid understandings. It means creating points of departure rather than arriving at set understandings. (Macleod et al., 2017: 311)

The points of departure they call for include new research aims – research to identify and challenge the distortions of colonial and imperial imperatives (such as linguistic imperialism); research on the impacts of colonialism itself, for example on 'identity formation of postcolonial diasporas, borderlands and transnational migrant communities'; and research that produces 'knowledge with an explicitly liberatory intention' (Chapter 18: 312).

They also demand new research sites in liminal spaces (where there are 'edgy' boundaries), in the places where racialized, classed and gendered differences are being illusioned and disillusioned, resolved, absolved and dissolved, and where the taken-for-granted nature of 'everyday life' is being perturbed and disturbed. The approaches developed by qualitative psychologists through memory work (Chapter 9) and visual methodologies (Chapter 21) are promising in this regard. In both approaches, groups of researchers form collectives in which they conduct research on their own experiences and meanings, using techniques akin to consciousness-raising, and/or are explicitly performative. Such approaches can truly enable psychological research to explore new places in new ways that are less inherently colonizing.

GOING FORWARD

How do we go forward in our qualitative research in psychology endeavour? There are certainly places not to go. In a recent article Brinkmann (2015) offers a commentary on the perils facing qualitative research in psychology and he identifies two key potential pitfalls. The first is what he calls 'the MacDonaldization' of qualitative research. This entails pressure for standardization and new forms of methodolatry (Chamberlain, 2000; Curt, 1994) that will undermine the potential of creative and innovative approaches to research. It will also serve to marginalize the newer approaches being developed.

The second major peril is the move to neo-positivism within the Academy, where ever more stringent systems are being put in place to control research funding and publication, and also the pursuit of performance management (especially in

universities), all of which makes doing qualitative research more of an uphill struggle. This will not be helped by the growing audit culture that will put yet more pressure, especially, on research that takes time and needs to be pursued flexibly and by negotiation. There is certainly resistance being offered by the growing 'slow scholarship' movement, but we wonder how far it will get in the shark-filled 'survival of the fittest' environment that universities are increasingly becoming.

Thankfully, Brinkmann (2015) also argues that there is room for optimism in the future of qualitative research within psychology. As we celebrated in Chapter 1, there is now an established and growing body of such research, researchers, publications and conferences taking up and working with qualitative approaches. Brinkmann asserts that qualitative research is now firmly established in psychology and that there are two important things happening that will help to consolidate and promote it. First, there is the real flourishing of new forms of inquiry. Second, there is the way researchers are increasingly working across disciplinary boundaries, enabling us to learn from each other and, by working collaboratively, to achieve outcomes we could not reach within our disciplinary constraints.

Like Chamberlain and Murray, we are rather taken with the suggestion by Kincheloe (2001) that qualitative researchers need to become *bricoleurs* – researchers who can operate outside their own discipline, who can innovate and who can combine different methodological strategies. He argues that *bricoleurs* avoid methodolatry and consider research methods 'actively rather than passively, meaning that we actively construct our research methods from the tools at hand rather than passively receiving the "correct", universally applicable methodologies' (Kincheloe, 2005: 324). Furthermore, *bricoleurs* 'attempt to remove knowledge production and its benefits from the control of elite groups … helping address the ideological and informational needs of marginalized groups and individuals' (Kincheloe, 2005: 344–5). Sounds a great way to go – almost as good as shopping in Flea markets!

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