

Steven Kleinknecht
Brescia University College, Canada

Antony Puddephatt
Lakehead University, Canada

Carrie B. Sanders
Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada

INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS CONFERENCE 2011: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The community of scholars that attends the Qualitative Analysis Conference in Canada each year has grown considerably since the event's inception in 1984. The inaugural meeting at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada saw a small number of committed qualitative researchers gather for a conference that was first called, "Deviance in a Cross-Cultural Context." Over the last 28 years, the Qualitatives has become an annual touchstone for qualitative researchers in Canada and abroad – attracting participants from all regions of Canada, as well as the United States, Mexico, Britain, France, Germany, Norway, Poland, Australia and Hong Kong. Last year, nearly 200

people attended the three-day conference. The theme of the 2011 conference, Contemporary Issues in Qualitative Research, was established to focus attention on both the application of qualitative methods and the debates surrounding qualitative inquiries, with a consideration of the implications for interdisciplinary standards for systematic qualitative research. The theme was broad enough to ensure a spectrum of papers from different disciplinary, theoretical, and methodological orientations. We encouraged presenters to focus their attention on current issues facing qualitative research, and to explore new and enduring challenges to qualitative methodologies, such as research standards, the inte-

gration of technology, the role and influence of emotionality, the researcher's place in field research, ethical regulations and boundaries in the field, and team-based qualitative approaches.

We had the privilege of hosting Patricia and Peter Adler as Keynote Speakers, who spoke about the lessons learned through their many experiences conducting field research across a range of social contexts. We were also fortunate to have a number of excellent featured speakers on hand: Adele E. Clarke spoke about the need to take the non-human into account in qualitative research; Christine Hine discussed dilemmas in conducting online research; and Robert Prus argued for the use of generic social processes to enable lasting, trans-historical, comparative-based knowledge through the practice of ethnographic research. To further stimulate a discussion around standards and contemporary advancements in qualitative methodologies, we held a panel to discuss funding priorities in qualitative research with representatives from major Canadian and American granting agencies. Finally, we were fortunate to have a number of journal editors serve on a panel to offer advice on the process of publishing qualitative research. The objective of the Canadian Qualitatives Conference has been threefold: (1) to encourage and nurture novice researchers; (2) to foster a culture that celebrates, values, and rewards the utility of qualitative inquiry; and, (3) to encourage and highlight inter-professional and multi-disciplinary qualitative research. We hope these goals seem worthwhile to the readership of Qualitative Sociology Review, and we encourage you

to participate in the Canadian Qualitatives in the future.

As the organizers for last year's event, we decided to pursue an outlet for some of the more insightful papers that were presented in 2011. The editors of the Qualitative Sociology Review were graciously willing to lend the journal's voice to our efforts. As editors, we had the task of vetting papers and putting those selected through a blind peer-review process with the generous help of leading international experts. The process led to three excellent articles. We also had the pleasure of including the Adler's impassioned and timely Keynote Address.

The issue begins with Patti and Peter Adler's Keynote Address from the Qualitatives, "Tales from the Field. Reflections on four decades of ethnography." Four decades of combined research efforts as a highly successful husband-and-wife team provides the authors with a unique perspective on the current state and future of sociological ethnography. Taking us on a journey through each of their major qualitative research projects, they show how their own brand of "classical ethnography" has served to generate rich, detailed, empirical analyses across a host of different settings. From studying the world of drug dealers, to college basketball players, to the social organization of resort hotels, to the interactional power dynamics of student cliques, to the experiences and perspectives of self-injurers, the Adlers have a wealth of insight and wisdom to pass on to future generations of qualitative researchers. They argue that while postmodernist movements of thought have

been creative and critical forces to aid in the development of the qualitative tradition, we must not forget, nor abandon, the core strengths of a classic, Chicago-school style approach to ethnography. No matter how tempting new and trendy methods and conceptual styles may be, there is never any good substitute for the long periods of time required to sufficiently immerse oneself into, and collect rich and rigorous data about, the social worlds of others.

Orlee Hauser's article, "Pushing Daddy Away? A Qualitative Study of Maternal Gatekeeping," questions the role that women play in perpetuating traditional parenting roles. She argues that it is important to consider what both women and men stand to gain and lose through the maintenance of such roles. Hauser notes that her study is not meant to detract from past research regarding men's limited role in the domestic sphere. Instead, she aims to add to the literature by showing how women play a part in restricting men's roles as caretakers of their children and how women benefit from doing so. Her in-depth qualitative approach extends past research on maternal gatekeeping by offering a detailed study of the nuances of each parent's perspective. The result is an insightful analysis of the various ways women limit men's role in the home, their motivations for doing so, and the gains, losses, and feelings of ambivalence mothers and fathers experience as outcomes of their partners' parenting behaviors.

In her article, "A Reflexive Lens: Exploring Dilemmas of Qualitative Methodology Through the Concept of Reflexivity," Suzanne Day de-

velops a comprehensive survey of the ways in which reflexivity is relevant to the practice of qualitative research. Day takes a firm line that improving our approach to reflexivity cannot guarantee greater truth or accuracy in research, but that the concept can be a useful lens with which to understand the numerous complexities and challenges qualitative researchers face in the field. For example, concerns with reflexivity often intertwine with attempts to bolster accuracy, credibility, and validity, or to consider the identity and social position of the researcher and the associated power dynamics in play in the research relationship. Rather than using reflexivity as a tool to try and settle these issues once and for all, Day considers how the concept enables us to think through these thorny issues in new ways, alerting us to the difficult personal, social, political, and epistemological dilemmas qualitative researchers face throughout the process of data collection and analysis.

In their article, "Reflexive Accounts: An intersectional approach to exploring the fluidity of insider/outsider status and the researcher's impact on culturally sensitive post-positivist qualitative research," Amanda Couture, Arshia Zaidi, and Eleanor Maticka-Tyndale engage in a reflexive discussion to understand how their intersecting identities and resulting insider/outsider statuses may have influenced their data collection. Drawing on empirical evidence from their interviews with South Asian youth about sexual intimacy, the authors demonstrate how participants' perceptions of a researcher's insider/outsider status are fluid and how one's perception of the researcher's status shapes re-

search relations and ultimately data collection. The researchers poignantly illustrate how the intersections of their biography (such as ethnicity, race, and gender) as well as their socialization experiences, all influenced the nature of their discussions with participants, their data analysis, and even their own reflexive accounts.

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