

How do we belong?

31 January 2018, University of Bath



Faculty of
Humanities &
Social Sciences



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INTRODUCTION

We would like to welcome you to the Fourth Annual *Qualitative Research Symposium* (QRS) hosted at University of Bath.

The theme this year, *How do we belong? Researcher positionality within qualitative inquiry*, aims to open for discussion the ways in which we are embedded in our research. Acknowledging that any form of qualitative inquiry is a social construction, the claims we make within our work are always negotiated through the voice of the author. Any author, then, should heed this acknowledgement and demonstrate an awareness of their position, which can be accomplished in several ways.

We organized the Symposium this year around three overlapping ways of thinking about positionality. One focuses on the ways in which authors engage their position through their work as a way to explore, better understand, and articulate their relationship to their work. Examples of this include how one's identity features in the work, or how one interprets data in relation to their position. A second understands positionality as a focus of the work itself, such as autoethnography or performance pieces. A third thinks through how positionality is linked to other methodological dimensions, such as validity, rigor, epistemology, etc. Several of the abstracts and presentations this year demonstrate the overlapping nature of these porous and temporary categories, which enables us to discuss positionality across several disciplines.

The ability to speak about qualitative research, and indeed positionality, requires a common ground to do so. We hope this conference is able to provide just that. Each year, one central aim of the Symposium is to facilitate an interdisciplinary discussion of common features, challenges, and changes in qualitative research – such as methodological approaches, innovative methods, sampling techniques, theoretical integration, or enhancing quality.

The initial idea for organizing a Symposium grew out of the Qualitative Methods Forum (QMF) at the University of Bath. The QMF meets monthly to discuss methodological and theoretical issues arising from qualitative research for all interested staff and students across campus. In 2014, this group's organizers developed the initial QRS, which was hosted at Bath in 2015 in order to connect and collaborate with our colleagues and peers across the South West of England. Each successive Symposium has carried an explicit theme meant to speak across disciplines and traditions in qualitative research. The themes from the previous three years were:

2015: Quality in qualitative research and enduring problematics

2016: Two faces of qualitative inquiry: Theoretical and applied approaches

2017: From the established to the novel: The possibilities of qualitative research

Following on from the continued interest and success of the previous three Symposia, we are pleased with the continued positive response this year both in terms of abstract submissions and registration, both of which are record highs. This year, there are more international participants than ever before. The Symposium continues to prove to be popular and useful for stimulating discussion of qualitative inquiry. We very much look forward to welcoming all delegates. We hope that the event will be a fascinating and insightful day for everyone involved.

Papers this year include contributions from: University of Central Lancashire; City University of New York; University of Bath; University of Birmingham; Bournemouth University; Cardiff University; Daystar University; University of East London; University of Edinburgh; Edinburgh Napier University;

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12.30-1.30	LUNCH Level 2 Foyer			
1.30-2.30	SESSION 3			
	Session 3A: Gendered and Gendering Positionalities 1 Chair: Aimee Grant CB 3.16	Session 3B: Moving In, Around, and Out of the Field Chair: Stephen Hickman CB 3.11	Session 3C: Emotional Labour in the Working of Positionality Chair: Nina Katrin Hansen CB 3.15	Session 3D: Positionality Within Analysis Chair: Charlotte Wilson CB 2.6
	Exploring female offenders’ discursive constructions of themselves and their crimes Ayoushe Natha, <i>University of Witwatersrand</i>	Embracing the messiness: Using confessional ethnography to reflect on the ethical position of My Strengths Training for Life™ Jennifer Cumming, <i>University of Birmingham</i>	‘When research wears us out’: examining the emotional labour of qualitative health research and the interplay between professional and lived experiences Sofia A. Vougioukalou, <i>Cardiff University</i>	What conversation analysis can offer to explore and uncover positionality in life story interviews Stig-Börje Asplund, <i>Karlstad University</i>
	“Is this a chat-up line?”: A young female researching men’s mental health Alexandra Vickery, <i>Cardiff University</i>	The three Rs, reciprocity, rapport and respect: Being the intrusive (English) outsider inside Welsh family homes Louise Folkes, <i>Cardiff University</i>	Autoethnographies and the power of stories to convey emotions, vulnerability, and positionality in research Ioannis Costas Batlle, <i>University of Bath</i>	Positionality in qualitative analysis: Who are we coding for? James Copestake and Gabby Davies, <i>University of Bath</i>
	Reflecting on the influence of gender in a female interviewer male interviewee relationship Jenny Young, <i>Edinburgh Napier University</i>	Eyes Wide Shut – reflections of a blind insider on qualitative migration research Kinga Papież, <i>University of Bath</i>	Emotional reflexivity – just another way of ‘managing’ emotion Liz Rivers, <i>University of Huddersfield</i>	

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TRAVEL INFORMATION

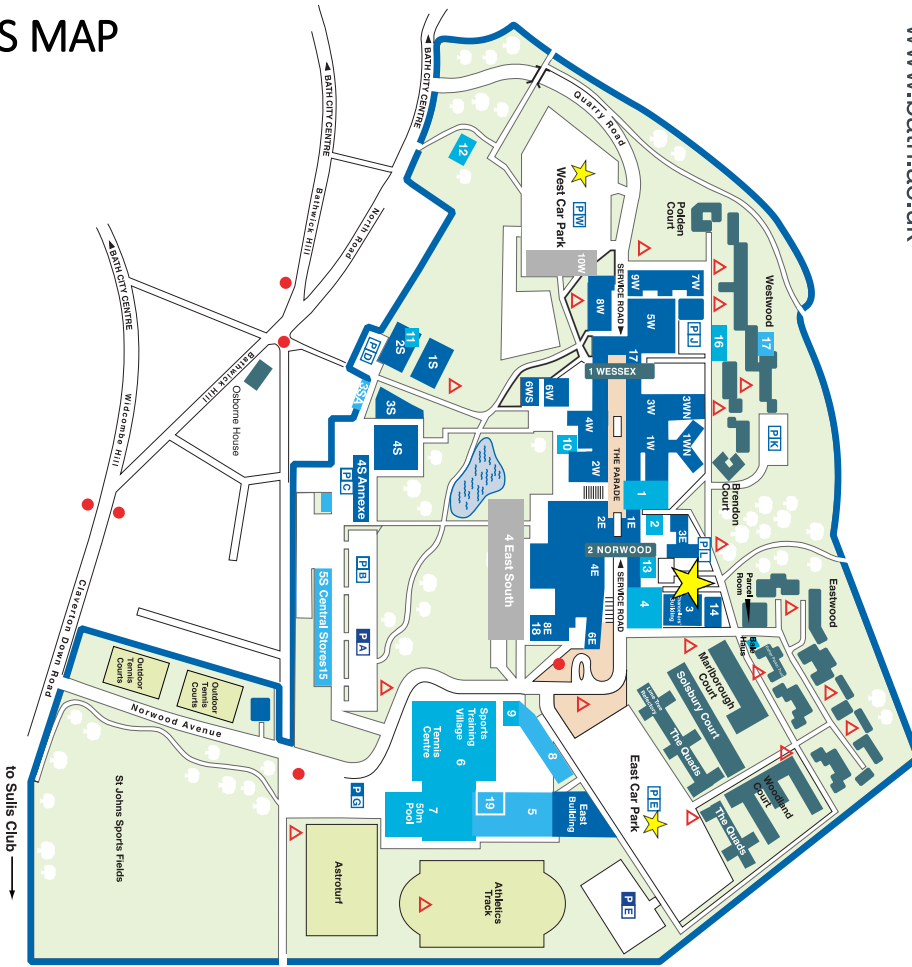
The Symposium will be held in the Chancellors' Building at the University of Bath. The Building is centrally located on the campus (please see Campus Map, next page), close to the bus terminus and East Car Park. On the day of the Symposium we will have signs posted around campus directing attendees toward the Building.

The introduction, keynote, and closing reception will be held on the second floor in room 2.6 and the foyer. All presentation sessions will be held on the third and fifth floors in rooms 3.11, 3.15, and 3.16, 5.6, and 5.8. Lunch and each coffee/tea break will be held in the Level 2 Foyer.

For all further travel information, please visit <http://www.bath.ac.uk/travel-advice/>.



CAMPUS MAP



Key	
4W	CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION
4VW	Vice-Chancellor's Office
WH	University Secretary's Office
WH	Admissions
WH	Registry
WH	Finance Office
WH	International Office
WH	Student Records & Examinations
4W	Student Services Centre
WH	Human Resources
4W	Graduate Centre
4W	Corporate Communications Services
4W	Development & Alumni Relations
4E	Architectural & Civil Engineering
4S	Biology & Biochemistry
2S	BUCS
9W	Chemical Engineering
1S	Chemistry
1S	Computer Science
1W	Computer Science
3E	Economics
1W	Education
2E	Electronic & Electrical Engineering
1W	Education
2E	Politics, Languages and International Studies
1W	International Studies
3W	School of Management
4W	Mathematical Sciences
4E	Mechanical Engineering
1S	Natural Sciences
3S	Natural Sciences
5W	Pharmacy & Pharmacology
7W	Pharmacy & Pharmacology
3W	Physics
2S	Psychology
1W	Health
3E	Social & Policy Sciences
2E	Sport & Exercise Science
1W	Division for Lifelong Learning
1	Library - Security and Enquiries
2	Chaplaincy Centre
3	Charcellors' Building
4	Founders Sports Hall
5	Athletics throws & jumps/Modern Pentathlon
6	Sports Training Village/Sports Café
7	50m Swimming Pool
8	The Edge
9	Arts Lecture Theatre
10	University Hall
11	Computer Centre (BUCS)
12	Medical Centre
13	Student Centre, Union Shop
14	Estates Office
15	Central Stores, Goods Received, Landscape
16	West Accommodation Centre
17	Westwood Nursery
18	Centre for Power Transmissions & Motion Control
19	Applied Biomechanics Suite
WH	The Fresh Grocery Store
8W	IPDS (Design Imaging and Print)
WH	Post Office, Banks & Shops
2W	The Parade Bar, Level 1 Café
2W	Claverton Rooms
4W	4West Café
WH	Careers Advisory Service
1E	ICIA
ACCOMMODATION	
	Norwood House
	Polden Court
	Westwood
	Brendon Court
	Eastwood
	Marborough Court
	Solsbury Court
	Woodland Court
	Osborne House
City Bus Service	
Fire Assembly Points	
Parking: Pay & Display and Permit Holders	
Parking: Permit Holders only	



ABSTRACTS

ASPLUND, STIG-BÖRJE (Session 3D)

Department of Educational Studies, Karlstad University, Sweden

What Conversation Analysis Can Offer to Explore and Uncover Positionality in Life Story Interviews

Using an approach where the interview is viewed as a social process where meaning is strategically assembled, and not a “state of mind” ready to be revealed by the interviewer (Silverman, 2017), this presentation focuses on how to make robust analysis of interview data by paying attention to the researcher’s position in the interview process, as well as in the data analysis process. In line with the argument that meaning is an interactional accomplishment (Holstein & Gubrium, 2012, 2016) a Conversation Analysis approach will be used in analysing life story interview data.

Conversation Analysis (henceforth; CA) deals with the methodical ways in which action is constituted through participants’ simultaneous use of different semiotic resources in face-to-face human interaction (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 2008). A fundamental principle in CA is that sense-making and understanding are constructed and co-constructed in and through the coordinated interaction of participants, and the interaction between participants and artefacts in specific social and cultural contexts (Goodwin, 2000; Schegloff, 2007). In identifying which actions the participants themselves orient to as relevant at a specific point in the interaction, and to show this in a convincing way in the analysis, CA research has developed a “proof procedure” method (cf. Heath, 1997; Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974), which takes into account the viewpoint of the participants. The way in which previous turns and actions have been understood becomes visible when analysing how participants show their understanding of previous turns and actions in the way the next action is executed. Thus, the method involves the use of the participants’ demonstrated understanding of each other’s actions and thereby provides material for analytic explication.

In my presentation, I will show that in order to fully attend to the actions (and positions) of the interviewer (and the interviewee) the CA approach has a lot to offer, and thus is a method that can increase both the validity and reliability in (life story) interview research.

BASS, DIANA (Session 2B)

University of Exeter and Kings College London

Pride or Prejudice? The Role of Ethnicity and Culture in the Mental Health and Professional Development of Medical Students.

Research has shown that medical students are more vulnerable to mental illness and psychological distress than other students and find it more difficult to ask for help. This doctoral research project which has been informed by the researchers own position as psychotherapist to medical students in a student counselling service, explores some reasons for this, and also considers several high-profile research studies that delineate a significant attainment gap between BAME + students and their white peers. In 2014 the General Medical Council stated that ‘it is now clear that ethnicity is a factor in doctors’ attainment from secondary school onward’. BAME students are significantly over-represented in British medical schools compared to the average population. This mixed-method

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research project compares Attainment Gap data, with a demographic description of the background of medical students in an inner city medical school, and students attending counselling sessions in the University Counselling Service.

This quantitative information is considered alongside a qualitative thematic analysis of assessment data of BAME and White medical students presenting for psychological help. Assessments are taken from a BAME psychotherapist and the White psychotherapist/researcher to take into account the therapists' own complex historical positionality with regard to the data. The emerging, often very powerful and moving narratives, emphasise the profound importance of students' relationships with themselves and others, and how these shape, and are shaped by their family culture as well as the external socio-economic environment. These themes are examined for difference and similarities within student presentations, and illuminate the ways in which several factors, including the surrounding medical culture, can reinforce the effects for some students of a background history of traumatic events in the family including immigration, experiences of racism and inequality in power relationships. These are issues which resonate in different ways with the psychotherapists own experiences in conducting these assessments, and the discussion about these differences have informed the research.

BLANCHARD, ANGELA (Session 1A)

Keele University

The drama of becoming an autoethnographer

Autoethnography is a methodology which takes many forms (Reed-Danahay, 1997). One challenge for a PhD candidate is how to balance sufficient rigor to meet the requirements of an academic degree, with sufficient use of self and subjectivity to remain autoethnographic (Wall, 2008). In this presentation, I share three ways that I have written myself and my positionality into the thesis; by sharing some of the content of my own story (the 'auto' part of my autoethnography); by writing reflexively about the research process; and by creative writing.

The subject of my research is childhood emotional neglect, an under-researched area of child maltreatment (Hildyard & Wolfe, 2002; Mullen, et al, 1996; Music, 2009; Stoltenborgh et al. 2012; Wright, et al., 2009). I aim to fill gap between the objective, (often quantitative), practitioner account and highly subjective 'misery lit' personal accounts (Muncey, 2010), by adding the participant's voice to rigorous study (Faulkner, 2012); exploring the narratives of the participants (the 'ethnography' part of autoethnography), alongside my own story. Autoethnography, associated with privileging the individual and empowerment, seems an appropriate method for this.

Sharing my own story has facilitated participant disclosure, thus enabling us to co-create knowledge (Ellis, 2004; Etherington, 2004a; Etherington, 2004b). I share some of my reflexive writing about the research process, and examine my insider/outsider status, and how I believe this has enhanced my research. I also explore how writing creatively may both facilitate my progress and illuminate the research themes.

In personal experience research, researcher bias and subjective use of self can be conceptualized as a strength, rather than a limitation (Bondi & Fewell, 2016; Price, 1999). Autoethnography requires a high level of reflexivity, enabling the reader to evaluate the research (Etherington, 2004b; Grant, Short & Turner, 2013). Creative writing can access deeper levels of knowledge which other forms of academic writing may not reach (Bolton, 2008).

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In conclusion, autoethnography is a challenging but rewarding methodology for personal experience research. Creative writing can facilitate learning and dissemination of knowledge; and reflexivity leads to greater transparency and potentially enhances the validity of the research.

BROWN, NICOLE (Session 4D)

UCL Institute of Education and University of Kent

The “I” in fibromyalgia

I research the construction of academic identity under the influence of fibromyalgia. Fibromyalgia is characterised by chronic, wide-spread pain, cognitive dysfunctions, sleep disturbances and psychological disorders (White and Harth, 2001). The symptoms of fibromyalgia are variable and move and change within days, sometimes within hours. There is no conclusive medical test and so fibromyalgia is diagnosed through the exclusion of other conditions. This makes fibromyalgia contested even amongst medical professionals.

Due to the variability of the symptoms, and due to the fact that the illness experiences of fibromyalgia are difficult to express in words, I am using metaphors, physical representations and simulations for my data collection process. Findings to date show that academics with fibromyalgia hold on to their academic positions as far as they can. Also, they tend to hide and/or push through symptoms in order to maintain their personal academic identity and to keep their public academic identity intact.

My concern with positionality relates to the fact that I have also been diagnosed with fibromyalgia. This supposedly makes me an insider researcher. However, due to the variability and uniqueness of the fibromyalgia illness experience I still remain very much an outsider to my research participants’ stories. I am acutely aware of the tensions around disclosing to the research participants and the public, in conferences or journal articles, whilst at the same time maintaining an academic, research persona instead of becoming “the fibromyalgia patient”. At the same time, however, the physical experience of fibromyalgia cannot be excluded from the research process. I often feel pain or fatigue, bodily and embodied experiences, especially in response to environmental and contextual influences. This has led me to consider the researcher’s positionality in relation to a wider range of bodily responses, such as “hearing voices” when reading interview transcripts. The issue of positionality for me is therefore closely linked with reflexivity and active engagement with the research experience. Within that I explore positionality by reflecting on the influences at work, whereby I experiment with a range of less commonly used, creative reflective methods.

CLARKE, VICTORIA (Unable to attend)

University of the West of England

BRAUN, VIRGINIA

University of Auckland

Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis

In this paper we consider the importance of reflexivity for qualitative methodologists and methodological scholarship. We reflect on our own training in qualitative research, our social positioning, and theoretical and political commitments and how these have informed our

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Creativity Works. We took a relational approach, considering all project members as relational subjects who care about building meaningful relationships with others. Further, the research was co-produced and committed to recognising the contribution of each member of the team. In this paper, we reflect on these relational and co-productive practices and how they have allowed for the minimisation of inequalities across the research project. Specifically, we suggest that a relation-based approach can narrow the gap between the positions of academics (outsiders) and people from community groups (insiders).

COPESTAKE, JAMES (Session 3D)

University of Bath

DAVIES, GABBY

Bath Social and Development Research Limited

Positionality in qualitative analysis: who are we coding for?

Positionality is a prominent concern for qualitative researchers in relation to data collection methods and inter-personal relations in the field. Less focus is given to positionality during data analysis. How does our position as a researcher affect the way we interpret and interrogate data, and the conclusions we draw? How do we balance the *emic* and the *etic*? And how is our positionality affected by the interests and perspectives of other stakeholders in research, including its commissioners? This begs the question: who are we coding for?

The context within which we explore these questions is a specific approach to thematic coding of qualitative data developed by Bath Social and Development Research Ltd – a social enterprise established through action research at the University of Bath to design and test a qualitative impact evaluation protocol (referred to as the QuIP). This systematises triple coding of narrative stories of change into: (i) drivers of change, (ii) outcomes, which can be at multiple levels, and (iii) strength of attribution of drivers of change to specific organisational activities or ‘interventions’ – whether explicit, implicit or incidental. Coding is systematic, transparent and open to being audited or checked for consistency and reliability, thereby enhancing credibility of findings. By exporting the coded data into a business intelligence platform it can also be explored and presented visually in a variety of ways.

We reflect on how the QuIP data analysis process has evolved through repeated use - mostly to assess NGO development projects in Sub-Saharan Africa. More specifically, we reflect on the political role of the analyst in seeking to represent the lived experience of respondents (despite geographical separation from them), at the same time as meeting contractual obligations to the organisation commissioning the research. Key to this is retaining methodological openness to the unexpected by ensuring that the data coding and management architecture does not restrict scope for involving other stakeholders in the sense-making process.

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COSTAS BATLLE, IOANNIS (Session 3C)

University of Bath

Autoethnographies and the power of stories to convey emotions, vulnerability, and positionality in research.

Though the positionality literature is ample as it is vast (Ganga & Scott, 2006), a substantial amount of this literature is concerned with issues such as the extent to which one is an 'insider' or 'outsider' (Gold, 1958). However, there is an alternative conceptualisation of positionality which is less discussed: the researcher's position in relation to how they feel towards the data they collect. How does a researcher continue to collect data, and 'see' that data, when one's assumptions about the benevolence or value of an organisation are forcefully challenged? What is particularly striking about this process is the emotional turmoil which accompanies the researcher in having to re-assess their positionality. One method to address and engage with this internal conflict is the autoethnography.

An autoethnography entails inserting the self (auto) into the study (graphy) of social and cultural phenomena (ethno) (Liggins, Kearns, & Adams, 2013). It is an approach which enables the researcher to 'tell their story' through a narrative infused with emotion, vulnerability, and doubt. Given the nature of social science research is often contested, having a space where the researcher can explore their feelings about what they are researching is particularly important. Since autoethnographies are rooted in personal narratives, they are a medium capable of establishing a meaningful connection with readers. Good autoethnographies, like good stories, are capable of captivating their audience and causing a profound impact on them. Thus, it is a way of enabling a reader to live vicariously through the experience of the author, and learn about a social phenomenon that they may have previously been unfamiliar with. Consequently, autoethnographies are powerful tools to help us grasp the extent to which social phenomena are contested, all whilst being able to inspire the reader through a narrative laden with emotion. In short, autoethnographies are an academic form of writing which can encourage an audience "to care, to feel, to empathise, and to do something, to act" (Ellis & Bochner, 2006, p. 433).

In this talk, I will reflect on how an autoethnography helped me address my positionality when my assumptions about the youth charity I was researching were challenged.

CUMMING, JENNIFER (Session 3B)

University of Birmingham

Embracing the messiness: Using confessional ethnography to reflect on the ethical position of My Strengths Training for Life™

My Strengths Training for Life™ (MST4Life™) is a positive youth development programme for homeless young people or those at risk for homelessness. Within the theoretical tradition of pragmatism, the programme was co-developed as community-based participatory action research with a large Housing Service in the West Midlands and evaluated using a mixed-methods research approach. Using the methodology of confessional tales, this presentation will offer the research team's own voice and reflections on the ethical position of MST4Life™. Drawing from field diaries and personal recollections, our tale provides honest insights into some of the ethical challenges and dilemmas raised by doing field-based research with hard-to-reach young people. These are complicated issues that could not have been anticipated by procedural ethics alone and required us

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have explored women's decision-making and experiences, less is known about the midwives' experiences of caring for them.

Methods: Adopting a narrative inquiry approach, my Ph.D. study has collected data in the form of written narratives and interviews of 45 midwives who self-define as facilitative of women's unconventional birth choices whilst working in the NHS. By collecting professional stories of practice complex, multi-layered and nuanced data has been generated that revealed stories of sense-making in relation to multiple identities whilst capturing the sociocultural context of what, how and why they did what they did.

Theoretical discussion: Within the context of my PhD study, I propose to explore and critically reflect upon my positioning as a midwife researching on and 'with' other midwives. Considering this alongside my growing interest in narrative co-production and co-construction, I critically reflect how my 'outsider-insider' positioning contributed to the narrative dialogue with the participants. By specifically critically analysing the (unplanned) questions I asked during the interviews, I discuss how this reveals more about my positioning, identity, and values than I appreciated at the time of interview. By looking back to move the work forward, I attempt to clarify my positioning within the study, whilst recognising reflexivity is always contingent, thus open to change. Through this critical reflexive discussion, I offer insights into the contribution an 'outsider-insider' has in the co-production of knowledge generation and argue that this a valuable form of situated epistemic knowledge. I shall conclude with an exploration of how this might be 'read' and accounted for within my reconstructions; thesis, publications etc.

FOLKES, LOUISE (Session 3B)

Cardiff University

The three Rs, reciprocity, rapport and respect: Being the intrusive (English) outsider inside Welsh family homes

Entering into the family home for fieldwork requires respect and negotiation from the researcher. You are rupturing their private space and routine, a world which would not usually be accessible for an outsider. This research used ethnographic methods to explore community, belonging, and family values in relation to (social) mobility. Based on fieldnotes from ethnographic family interviews, this paper will explore what can be learnt by thinking reflexively about what happens before, during and after the 'interview' has been undertaken. Interesting insights can be gained from 'the waiting field' (Mannay and Morgan 2015) and throughout the interview process, a reciprocal construction and presentation of self is being created. I will discuss how I tried to negotiate my 'outsider' position as both someone who does not live in the community I am researching, and as an English person researching a Welsh suburb. I will argue the centrality of reciprocity, rapport and respect when conducting fieldwork in a private setting such as the family home.

Where and how you rupture the family space and routine can often provide more critical insight into your participants' lives. An interesting insight which I only realised when reviewing my fieldnotes was that often the point of my 'rupture' coincided with women's domestic and caring responsibilities. Emptying dishwashers, feeding babies, ironing clothes, making lunchboxes, calling the doctor for a poorly child, dropping children off at school- all examples of 'spaces previous to' the research taking place. Although not directly part of the 'interview', these observations from my

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fieldnotes allow me to think about gender and how the division of labour may influence the stories that families tell me- an area I had not previously considered. This paper will explore this notion of ‘the waiting field’ further, and how my intrusive presence in a private space influenced the data created for this project.

GILMORE, SARAH (Session 4C)

University of Exeter

HARDING, NANCY

University of Bath

‘You’re one of us now’: Kinship and affect in a Premier League football club

Why do we choose certain organisations for our ethnographic work and why do those organizations then affect us in ways we had not anticipated? Our decisions about choosing and remaining within ethnographic locations – sometimes for extended periods – can be informed by a range of considerations that go beyond the usefulness of the site for data collection purposes. Gilmore and Kenny (2015) highlight the deep, affective attachments they formed to their respective studied organisations but why were they so affectively resonant? Drawing on an extended ethnographic study of an English Premier League football club and contemporary ideas contesting and reframing the concept of kinship (Garsten, 2004), we demonstrate how modes of what we term ‘kinwork’ provide a way of securing the researcher within a ‘homely’ organisational space. However, a deeper analysis of the kinwork process brings to the fore an alternate, uncanny experience involved with these activities (Freud, 1919).

We demonstrate how the kinwork attempted in this study is resonant with the desire to recover a lost object: i.e. that of an idealised family. In this way, the symbols of kinwork such as dining tables which might signify inclusion are illusions. They might work to give sufficient sense of inclusion to make ethnographic work bearable and to reduce the sense of isolation at the periphery, but this is the extent of their ‘offering’. The heimlich contains the unheimlich and the desire to ‘recover’ and connect with the lost family engenders repetitious behaviours that only lead to further experiences of disconnection, but they offer alternate, unconscious reasons concerning repeated returns to the ethnographic field.

GRANT, AIMEE (Session 4B)

Cardiff University

A childless woman researching breastfeeding overtly and covertly: positionality, research relationships and a changing sense of self

Gender, and particularly women interviewing women, has been the focus of considerable work on researcher reflexivity and field relationships. This paper addresses the changing nature of my sense of self over a period of five years of researching breastfeeding. During this time, I have used multiple qualitative research methods, including in-depth interviews, visual methods, data mining from the internet, overt ethnography on hospital wards and covert ethnography in urban settings. When I began researching motherhood, using interviews and focus groups to understand how breastfeeding support services were performing, I did not self-identify with the participants, who

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were generally financially comfortable middle-class white women, and undertook little emotion work. This was largely based on my position as a white woman from a working class background; the babies around me had been bottle fed; I had not seen a woman breastfeed until I was 22 (and she was Asian). I have continued to research motherhood, and particularly breastfeeding, as my income has become more stable and I have become more middle class, exposing me to babies being breastfed regularly.

Using extracts from fieldnotes, I consider my positionality in three phases which I refer to as: student, equal and expert. First as an outsider, where I received regular education from participants about the everyday work of mothering, I consider myself as a student of motherhood. At this point, participants were clearly expert. Second, as an experienced researcher of this topic, who was able to provide a safe space for the discussion of emotive subject area, and no longer needed to be taught the basics, I felt that I was an equal in terms of discussing motherhood and mothering. Finally, I consider my positionality to be that of an expert in breastfeeding, and thus I amend my interview technique to ensure my positionality leaves space for women to describe their own experiences. I consider this changing positionality in relation to: expertise drawing on the sociology of knowledge, emotional labour and identity.

GRAY, DANIEL (Session 4A)

Cardiff University

Reflexivity and researcher position of a straight cis white man studying misogyny on Twitter

The involvement of men, particularly heterosexual men, in feminist and feminist-informed areas of research has quite rightly been subject to much critique from feminist scholarship. As a heterosexual, cisgender (performing my gender in accordance with the sex assigned at birth), white male researcher I am in a position of privilege in society, one that has dominated academic scholarship. As such it is important to avoid (knowingly or unknowingly) reproducing in my own research the same perspectives and issues which have been subject to so much critique by feminist scholarship.

Choosing to study and critique (through critical discourse analysis) misogynistic and sexist language online has been central to my undergraduate and postgraduate projects, through to my current PhD thesis. Despite this significance in my education, my motivations for pursuing this topic and my subjective relation to it have only recently become a serious focus of my research. In addressing this absence I have tried to engage with my position in a reflexive way which addresses it in relation to my methodological and analytical perspectives, and to my actual study. Here I will present observations from this process, using my own example to show why this is important for male researchers engaged in gender-incongruous studies, and how it can be done in a way that adopts a critical perspective.

This paper has several aims, the foremost being the exploration of how my position, subjectivity and identity relate me to my topic area and the work I have tried to carry out. To put it plainly: what are the issues and implications of a male researcher investigating a topic that relates so intimately with the experiences of women? How can I account for this in a way that informs my study and analysis? How can I do justice to people who may be affected in my research?

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Furthermore, I will argue that critical research such as mine requires explicitly critically reflexive approaches to researcher positionality, extending the critique of patriarchal social relations to one's own role in the reproduction of those relations: transforming it into a political "Striking back at oneself" (Žižek, 2004, p.5). The exploration of my positionality can and should be treated as a moral and ethical exercise, situated within a wider critique of patriarchal and heteronormative systems, and of sexism as an ontology (Dahl, 2015, p.54).

HASHEM, RUMANA (Session 4A)

University of East London

Producing Accountable and Situated Knowledge on Gender and Migration through Situated Positioning

Knowledge is relative and it should be contextualised based on this notion that the researcher's subjective position provides access to 'new knowledge', if not an 'ultimate truth'. This being the methodological position, I argue, a qualitative researcher can produce methodologically innovative and accountable knowledge in any subject. Drawing on two qualitative studies – a completed doctoral research which examined the gendered aspects of a 27-year ethno-nationalist conflict in South-east Bangladesh, and a small-scale ongoing civic engagement project with migrants and refugees in London – this paper discusses how I, as a feminist-activist and migrant-researcher from the global south engaged with the topics and the participants of my research. I demonstrate that my subjective position in relation to gender, class, ethnicity and nationality helped me to design the research questions, thereby enabling an intersectional and multilayered analysis of the data collated through semi-structured and open-ended interviews. I illustrate also how my positionality has shaped "the conception and enactment" of the investigations. As will be discussed, through engaging a dialogical and a critical narrative approach to interviews, I have gathered diverse data which represent many contradictions and subtle differences which exist in a culturally different historical location, and which were interpreted from a situated positioning. Throughout the discussion, I seek to reflect on the ways in which I, as an author, am present within the text, and the ways that positionality differs from quantitative notions of bias. In line with the conditions of a narrative, I demonstrate, both enquiries reveal the contradictions, misrecognised and dissimilar narratives of power relations between different groups of men and women, gendered violence against minority women, resistance, belonging, manipulation and legitimacy of people to nationalist projects and in ethnically constructed conflict. My intention is, as I shall argue in this paper, to unravel the complexity of the issues, those complexities which cannot be accounted for with one single frame, and which need to be recognised as non-coherent and paradoxical as people's positionality. The sense of belonging and complex positionalities of my participants can only be grasped by a 'situated gaze', which differs from quantitative notions of "bias" as it encompasses all of the above issues and does not diminish the notion of relative, new and accountable knowledge to impartial or dispassionate knowledge.

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HEATH, JENNIFER (Session 4C)

WILLIAMSON, HEIDI

University of the West of England

WILLIAMS, LISA

HARCOURT, DIANA

Adult Burns Unit, Chelsea and Westminster Hospital

Considering Methodological Relations: Researcher positionality when using multiple techniques of qualitative data collection to facilitate participation in research focusing on sensitive subjects

The identities of researchers and participants shape research and have potential to impact upon the process. Identities are formed via our perceptions of others and the way we expect to be perceived by them. Through recognition of our preconceptions, we presume to gain insights into how we might approach research and seek engagement from participants. This abstract describes a piece of research investigating a sensitive topic, using multiple techniques of qualitative data collection to facilitate participation.

Often researchers use only one interview technique within a single study; however, it is increasingly common for a variety of interview methods to be employed within a project. Qualitative data was collected from 12 participants regarding their choice of interview technique (face-to-face, Skype, telephone or email) in a wider study investigating their experiences of supporting their child following a burn injury.

Results indicated that participant decisions were determined by personal convenience, their belief in their ability to be open with the researcher despite potential upset caused by the topic, their ability to get a “feel” for the researcher, and concern about giving adequate depth in responses. It was concluded that flexibility regarding the ways in which participants can take part in qualitative research may improve participant access to research and response-rate. However, it is also important to consider what role the positionality of the researcher plays, and how it might influence interactions with participants. For example, here a clinical psychologist within burns was studying parents’ opinions of support in burns care. Some participants may have experienced the process as therapeutic, but issues of power or preconceived ideas may have affected the validity or trustworthiness of the data.

In this research, it was important to facilitate engagement so that parents felt able to discuss sensitive issues; however, it is important to recognise potential risks to both participants and researchers. Risks require ethical management through adequate signposting to appropriate support for participants and the resources to support researchers, with time between interviews for debriefing. Therefore, it is also important to consider how multiple aspects of a researcher’s identity might be used in different research spaces.

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HICKMAN, STEPHEN (Session 1A)

University of Exeter

Field with confidence

For fieldworkers conducting face-to-face interviews as part of ethnographic research, 'prior assumptions', 'situational behaviour' and the incumbent researchers overall positioning are a critical feature of 'the relational context' for 'constructing interpretations of informant responses' (Jorgenson, 1995, p. 210). Qualitative social science researchers must be particularly attentive to positionality because it is a core aspect of their practice (Cheng et al., 2017).

The stimuluses, assumptions and interrelationships that constitute the distinctiveness of a given social situation denote ones positionality (Finlay 2002). This dynamic raises key questions about how positionality affects scholarly practice and the construction of knowledge from research.

My own experience of qualitative research is that field work can be a complex endeavour, where I need to 'contribute to knowledge about what is going on in the world, and yet I am positioned too' as an 'employee' (Casey, 1995 p. 204). Such an absence of clarity becomes potentially awkward if I then overstate the distance between the corresponding positions of my informants and myself as the author of the ethnography.

By considering the extent to which I was positionally self-aware whilst conducting a longitudinal field study of a collective of commercial shellfish merchants (my informants), I contrast two positioning strategies; the 'half-hidden pose' and a stance which is 'more artful and tricky' (Van Maanen, 2011, p. 133).

The half-hidden pose is akin to the traditional field worker orientation of questioner – questioned (Jorgenson, 1995). This strategy positions the researcher relatively more comfortably as mere observer ready for, discovery and seizure (Banks, 2001) - telling by seeing and speaking on behalf of their informants (Van Maanen, 2011). The second, trickier passage requires greater awareness of the intimacy of the situation in an attempt to 'establish a co-presence' (Banks, 2001, p. 96). Each of these positional strategies hold quite different authorial consequences. The aim is to better understand how positionality affects research practice, but more specifically in my context how the use of photographs and photo-elicitation became a mechanism for creating a space for interpreting content together. I refer to this slightly less comfy space as a vestibule of occupational empathy. I discuss how this approach helped during writing to negotiate a 'tale of two cultures' – my own and my informants (Van Maanen, p. 138).

HODGES, AMIE SCARLETT (Session 1D)

Cardiff University

The positional self and researcher emotion: sibling positions destabilised in the context of Cystic Fibrosis

Aim - This paper will discuss how the positional self and prior experiences can influence the emotional self within the research journey, for example, being a sibling and losing a sibling. It explores the researcher's emotional experience when working with children and their families, with a specific focus on the influence of the researcher presence and the sibling equilibrium.

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Methodology/approach – The work draws on the dramaturgical social interactions encountered in qualitative research, which explored the experiences of siblings living in the context of cystic fibrosis. The study used narrative inquiry and creative participatory methods to elicit sibling stories and provide insight into their worlds.

Findings – There will be a reflection on specific situations encountered on entering, engaging in and leaving the field where the sibling positioning was destabilised, this had a significant emotional impact. Sibling vignettes will be presented along with a discussion of how reflective metaphorical expression can be applied as a method of processing and coping with the research context.

Originality/Value – I argue that the positional self and prior experiences can influence the emotional self within the research journey, and that reflective metaphorical expression can be used as a strategy to process thoughts and gain greater understanding of a situation as well as to provide an emotional release for the researcher. It also suggests that conducting research over a longer time period, as opposed to one visit, can be beneficial in terms of participant and researcher emotional and positional transition.

ILYES, EMESE (Session 1A)

City University of New York

Belly Songs: How an exploration of positionality can expand what counts as knowledge, what wisdom is honored

This paper, and accompanying video, drawing on ethnographic and autoethnographic research, is an invitation to begin to recognize and celebrate the permeable, porous, flexible boundaries between bodies and selves. Psychology, driven by the illusion of cool rationality, can limit what is understood as wisdom and what counts as knowledge, performing academic erasure that ripples into other aspects of the world. In this presentation, I offer, in addition to my paper inquiring into positionality, a video in which I flirt with ways of knowing that do not privilege word and text. I dip into stories in my belly (to quote a poem from Etheridge Knight) to trouble the line between political and personal, between affect and academia. This reflective work stems from my critical psychological research examining the lived experience of the category of individuals categorized as intellectually disabled. In this autoethnographic inquiry into positionality, I reference my research about institutional violence and oppression related to individuals classified as intellectually disabled. With the non-textual component, I want to make palpable the affective wisdom that is woven into my academic self, an integral aspect of my own ethical commitments. With this way of visualizing knowledge, honoring wisdom, I want to rupture binaries such as ‘silence and voice’, ‘worthy and unworthy’, ‘able and disabled’ and imagine a new moral imperative to be adopted into our definition of capacity, knowing, and being. I want to collectively imagine a world that understands knowledge as not something limited to text but celebrates embodied truths and felt brilliance. I want to imagine a psychology that revels in our inescapable embeddedness.

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JAEDE, RICCARDO (Unable to attend)
London School of Economics and Political Science

The ethical modality of ‘declassing’ among elite Communist cadres and the political economy of reflexivity

My doctoral research in Social Anthropology approaches urban inequality in India by focusing on the reflexivity and subjectivities of middle class and high caste Marxists in Kolkata. I seek to understand the contestation and reproduction of poverty and inequality by investigating the ways in which Marxist intellectuals and activists view and engage with questions of poverty and inequality, and how they reflect and work on their own subject positions. My work will be based on 18-24 months of ethnographic fieldwork in a Kolkatan slum to study elite Marxist activists bottom-up, and contributes to the anthropology of ethics, social movements, and class relations.

I will first approach their self-fashioning emically and focus on ‘declassing’, an idea and practice that entails the renunciation of class and caste privileges, and the worldviews associated with them, in order to transform one’s own ‘bourgeois’ subjectivity into a new, revolutionary one that can lead the oppressed ‘from within’. Declassing also involves a range of self-reflective and self-critical exercises which are premised on the production of a mind that lends itself to self-examination in the first place.

I will then combine this phenomenological perspective with an interrogation of the political economic context of the activists’ reflections on positionality. For instance, declassing is also a notion that originated in the very upper middle class and high caste political modalities that it renounces. The particular visions of a caste-less, classless society that are aspired and practiced, then, are the product of the imagination of certain middle class and high caste segments of that society. Finally, the ability to engage in activism in the first place results from and is sustained by a certain political economy.

My research on ‘knowing oneself’ and ‘the oppressor within’ is an exercise in both learning *about* and *from* my interlocutors. Critical self-reflection must address, among others, the fact that my interest in extreme poverty may be an example of a wider cultural and disciplinary shift from the ‘exotic other’ to the ‘suffering other’, apart from being part of a wider history of white people’s concern with the trope of poverty in India.

LACEY, ANDREA (Session 4B)
Bournemouth University

Being an outsider on the inside, or an insider on the outside: Betwixt and between.

I am a Doctor of Professional Practice student at a university in the south of England. This paper provides a narrative account of my personal journey trying to understand and identify my positionality within qualitative research. This on-going and reflexive process pre-dates the start of my doctoral journey and will continue long after it finishes as I engage with further qualitative research.

When I started my doctoral studies I was already working as a lecturer at the same university and was a member of the mental health nursing team where I was a personal tutor for two groups of

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MACHT, ALEXANDRA (Session 1D)

Oxford Brookes University

Growing as a feminist researcher while reflecting on a comparative qualitative study with involved fathers

In studying gender as a feminist, writing from the heart becomes a political gesture. In this paper I present some of my methodological reflections on the process of researching involved fatherhood, based on comparative qualitative interviews with 47 Scottish and Romanian fathers. Accurately capturing emotions in family life is difficult. This could be due in part to the constraints of academic rigour in framing the everyday messiness of emotions, but as well due to the methods used to record the fleeting and changing rhythm, occurrence and intensity of emotions as they are lived out by family members. I reflect in this paper on how I have tried to enhance my qualitative data through the use of a reflexive diary and work within methodological constraints, by looking at how fathers understand and experience love for their children. My research interest stems as well from my personal story, connected to these two locations that represent the place of my birth (Romania) and of my work (Scotland). I analyze in this paper how these have left a mark on my research. Travelling in between these two places I encountered models of 'doing family' that are relatively distinct from each other, and which have shaped differently the ways in which the project evolved and how I re-imagined the social world of fathers. Along the way, I found that it was increasingly difficult to maintain 'objectivity' when faced with the subjective experiences of my participants, as my personal memories of my Romanian working-class father and distinct family life from the Scottish environment in which I was working, rose to the surface asking for inclusion and interpretation. I kept a reflexive diary where I recorded how the factual and the imaginative have blended, and have transformed the methodology, making it more emotionally engaging. In this process, I found that there is a thin and blurred line between academic rigour and personal interpretation.

MAMALI, ELIZABETH (Session 2D)

University of Bath

Researcher's Guilt: Confessions from the Darker Side of Ethnographic Research

A reflexive approach to qualitative research seeks to uncover structures of inequality in the research encounter. On the surface, it would seem that ethnographic methods provide the conditions to alleviate this methodological instrumentalism. This paper contests this premise. By employing a confessional account, it demonstrates how ethnographic work fails in its collaborative potential when in an urban context researchers experience the syndrome of the colonizer who exploits a tribe in the name of an agenda irrelevant to the tribe itself, often one of career building or serving the knowledge economy.

Drawing from insights in an ethnographic enquiry in an arts charity, I narrate the guilty experiences that arise when researchers reproduce a culture of commodifying informants. This is exemplified through personal narrations on the use of impression management tactics that generate an illusion of mutuality in fieldwork, alternating with more authentic instances of co-participation.

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the assumptions underpinning the way the two activities were planned for my project, including an informal comparison of conducting remote, in-person and hybrid focus groups. Reflections on the relation of researcher experiences to the generation and interpretation of research knowledge will include the extent to which certain methodologies invite data and researchers to 'belong' to each other and implications for data analysis, findings and authorship.

MIR, MANSOOR (Session 2A)

Ministry of Justice – HM Courts and Tribunals Service

'We're part of the courts, but independent': Power dynamics and ethics in government research

How are the power dynamics of a research interview affected by factors such as the provision of incentives, where and how we engage with participants, or the language that we use to describe them and ourselves?

The justice system is currently undergoing widespread change and reform. Government researchers attached to the HM Courts and Tribunals Service change programme are responsible for engaging with those who come into contact with (or work within) the courts, and ensuring that the delivered reforms take account of the needs and experiences of these users.

This presentation will draw on recent research projects involving semi-structured interview and focus groups with potentially vulnerable users in the areas of immigration and asylum, and public law cases in the family courts. The differing power dynamics that can operate in the context of such research will be explored, including the ways in which researcher sought to acknowledge, ameliorate, and reflect on these.

The particular challenge of being a researcher who works for the same organisation that the participant may have had a distressing or disempowering experience of will be considered. The distinct but similarly complex dynamics that can operate when interviewing staff themselves, judges, or legal professionals will also be explored.

The presentation will conclude with a consideration of how best practice in the areas of research design, ethics, safeguarding, and analysis is being shared across and beyond government departments.

NATHA, AYOUSHE (Session 3A)

University of Witwatersrand

Exploring female offenders' discursive constructions of themselves and their crimes.

The primary aim of this study was to examine female offenders' self-constructions of their subject positions as offenders and their crimes. The aim was explored through discourses of gender and social norms that were embedded in institutional practices and societal realities. Through semi-structured interviews, the findings yielded from the study indicated the discourses that these offenders used to construct themselves as perpetrators, or alternatively to reject this position. This research adds to changing political and ideological positions and challenging ideas of what

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constitutes a female perpetrator through the production of counter-knowledge. My self-reflexivity section was focused on my positionality as a female researcher in relation to my participants and the context in which the research was conducted. Being familiar with the literature on this topic, I had a sense of the type of information I would receive. However, there was a great dissonance within myself as I realise that there was a fine line between viewing their narratives as information to be collected for my study and acknowledging that these narratives were their lives. Participants narratives were often inconsistent but this was not problematic under the paradigm of social constructionism. I was not looking for objective truths but rather the self-perception of how participants discursively spoke about themselves and their crimes. I often identified these women as 'offenders' in which I had presupposed a construction upon them in stating that they have already accepted themselves as offenders, thus falling into the trap of confirming the discourses that I set out to critique. My role was viewed as that of a 'pastorial' power in which I guided participants into a 'confessional' space in order to allow them to define themselves as a particular type of subject, as identified through a specific discourse through the process of self-exploration. Being of a similar age and sex as the participants demystified my moral and normative claims around what it is to be a female at this age and my views on the sanctity of human life. In other words, the similarities we shared also highlighted the distinctive differences that are rooted in contextual factors.

NG'ANG'A, REBECCA (Session 4C)

Daystar University

An African indigenous search for self in research

Reflecting on my position in a study process in Africa could feel like a pull between selecting what is comfortable and squeezing into what would make one's findings valid. This paper brings out the difficulties that face a novice researcher in identifying how one belongs in several layers. The paper looks into the my consciousness of world-view that is submerged with another worldview because of history of cross cultural interaction, the question that the I sought to study and the need to have position in the research process. In selecting James Carey theory on cultural approach explanation of communication as transmission and communication as involvement required Paulo Freire theory of pedagogy of the oppressed as an explanation of positioning the study. The paper also looks to the concept of belonging in relation to aspects of culturally ascribed aspects of how we belong while investigating transformative communicative acts of aboriginal Kenyans, the life story that has to depend on what one chooses to remember and is not fixed to the past but is dynamic. The position and philosophy of my two supervisors, the scope of exploring the views and memory of individual participants who were more powerful in that some were PhD holders, in addition to my beliefs and desire to seek that would transform my community, the context of the study. The paper looks into positionality in seeking to understand the communication that would result in a more even transformation of the society required exploration of individual identity through life story interviews, the discomfort I faced in having my proposal accepted, the discomfort of interviewing older and highly respected societal members, and the difficulties in having the findings accepted. The paper also addresses how I interacted directly with each of the participants, the discomfort of choosing how to behave and how to be part of the conversation. The problematizing of the sense of belonging is more critical in relation to the data and the continuing conversations following the findings. Reflecting on how one belongs to the study remains an ongoing process.

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OWEN, CRAIG (Session 1C)

St. Mary's University

“Fred, I’m not going to force you to have pseudonym”: Reflecting on an ethical co-performance event.

From my experience as an ethnographer, I have found the concept of co-performance useful in helping to make sense of my diverse fieldwork relationships. Conducting research into the performance of masculinities in dance classes, the concept of co-performance helped me to make sense of how I presented the research differently to different people in different contexts, and how I negotiated my identity as a dancer, ethnographer and academic. Co-performance also allowed me to conceptualise the research process as a series of ongoing dialogue and ethical performance events, wherein “different voices, world views, value systems and beliefs...have a conversation with one another” (Conquergood, 1985:9). In this paper, I explore issues relating to ethical co-performance by examining the most problematic ethical issue in my research, namely, maintaining the anonymity of the people, places and groups I conducted research with. Conducting interviews with dancers who wanted their real names to be included in the final text; publishing over a thousand research photographs on Facebook; and promoting my research through various public media channels; my ethnographic approach fundamentally challenged the standard ethical procedure for upholding a blanket policy of anonymity. Ultimately, then, this paper seeks to add to the quiet yet growing set of voices that are problematizing the prevailing orthodoxy surrounding anonymity.

PAPIEZ, KINGA (Session 3B)

University of Bath

Eyes Wide Shut – reflections of a blind insider on qualitative migration research

This paper reflects on empirically grounded researcher positionality and its influence on my interviews with 55 Polish migrants in the UK and their follow-up analysis. I argue that the researcher’s migration experience, gender, and the interviewees’ language (migrants’ slang) can impact qualitative migration research if not considered carefully. In particular, I propose the concept of a blind insider to articulate the complex relationship between the researcher seen as an insider and other participants of the fieldwork, and to show how initial thoughts were shaped by the actual work. In doing so, I highlight the way in which researcher, may “move” from an absolute insider to so called the blind insider during the research process. The concept of the absolute insider initially positions the Polish researcher totally inside the Polish community in the UK because of cultural, linguistic, ethnic, religious, and migration similarities. The notion of the blind insider is created to highlight significance of blindness regarding socio-economical and linguistic differences between the researcher and the interviewees’ experience of migration that become recognised/visible during the fieldwork. I also emphasise that such change of researcher’s position from assumed insider to blind insider is partly made possible through chosen methodological approach i.e. grounded theory. However, such blindness does not make the researcher an outsider for the interviewees due to similar cultural and national background, which in turn helps to engage with the participants’ migration experiences and thus interpret the collected data. The author’s empirically derived reflection acknowledge the changing researcher’s position during the research conducted from “inside” the migrant community.

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PARRY, BENJAMIN (Session 1B)

University of Birmingham

Positionality in a community-based intervention for homeless young people.

Determining positionality is a dynamic and evolving process involving self-reflective practices to critique and question one's approach to a research-specific context. Articulating such processes provides transparency to, and disclosure of one's self in, the research process. In this presentation I depict how positionality has influenced my interaction with, and interpretation of, the research context, participants, and process in my first experience of community-based, mixed methods research. The aim of my research is to provide new insights into ways of improving the mental and physical well-being of homeless young people through an intervention grounded in positive psychology and delivered through sport psychology techniques. The nature of the research presented novel challenges and opportunities, transitioning from undergraduate experiences of controlled experiments with willing students, to real-world, action-based research with homeless young people. Conducting mixed methods research presented the challenge of balancing notions of objectivity through a positivistic lens, with juxtaposing views of trustworthiness shaped by an interpretivist paradigm. Reading around these concepts was merely the start of my understanding; it was the first-hand experience of the research and broadening my understanding of the related social inequalities that led to more informed conclusions and questions. Consequently, I found pragmatism to be most closely aligned with my desire to produce research in the pursuit of social justice, and demonstrated a philosophical stance that accommodated flexibility and adaptability in methodology. The approach allowed me to embrace the complexities of community-based research by using of different research methods to capture conflicting and confirmatory depictions of the intervention, convey personal experiences, and disseminate the research to range of audiences. Through reflexive practices (e.g., field notes and discussions with the research team) I was mindful of how my positionality evolved throughout the data collection and analysis processes, and how my personal views shaped the narrative through which it is portrayed. Amid growing interest within the field of sport psychology of working with disadvantaged populations, articulating positionality in research will support transparency in all aspects of the research process, but also capture how researchers overcome the complexities of working with these populations.

POPOVA, MILENA (Session 4D)

University of the West of England

Digital (auto)ethnographies: studying one's own community online

In this paper I examine the twin methodological challenges of studying a community which exists predominantly in online spaces and which I myself am a part of.

Traditional approaches to ethnography conceptualise the role of the researcher in relation to the researched in terms of three key factors: the level of openness of the setting, the level of openness of the researcher about their role, and their level of participation. Mediated settings such as online communities pose a number of challenges to these ways of thinking about researcher roles, as all three key factors, and particularly the researcher's positionality, acquire new characteristics through mediation. An already existing relationship with the community of interest also raises additional concerns about the role of the ethnographer.

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Finally, discussions regarding how I crafted my own reflexive stance and how I repositioned myself away from positivist indicators of quality i.e. validity and reliability, towards notions of trustworthiness, resonance and credibility, are presented.

REES, REBECCA (Session 4D)

University College London

The role of reviewer reflexivity: reflections from systematic reviews that incorporate qualitative evidence synthesis

Background: Qualitative evidence syntheses (QES) use systematic methods to seek out and make sense of qualitative research findings in existing research, including studies of people's accounts of their views and experiences. They can help us understand conditions, behaviours and interventions from the perspectives of people such as patients and carers. QES are sometimes used, along with those estimating the effects of interventions, as part of decision-making processes for policy and practice. The concepts used in peoples' accounts of their lives, however, are hugely varied and not always well defined. The same is true for the concepts that are presented as findings in qualitative studies. QES therefore requires reviewers to interpret primary research studies. This interpretation, it is argued, is potentially influenced by reviewers' own experiences and views, so researcher backgrounds can potentially influence the shape and content of QES findings. Qualitative researchers often aim to explore the perspectives that they bring to their work and consider the influence their perspectives might have on their research, but accounts of this reflexivity in systematic reviews are scarce. Emphasis in these accounts appears to be given to notions of objectivity, validity and bias, but there has been no discussion of the potential for and challenges of positionality in the methodological systematic review literature.

Objectives: To explore the potential value and feasibility of reflexive practice and positionality within systematic reviews that use QES.

Methods: Members of our review team considered the arguments related to reflexivity in its various forms. Using individual interviews and reflective team meetings we captured our ideas about the perspectives that were brought to a number of review projects. We reflected on the time and other resources required to make reflexivity discussions and activities feasible and useful.

Results and Conclusions: We present an overview of the main points in our reviews at which reflexivity was identified, and was found to be useful and/or a challenge, as well as the possible value of reflexivity for others working in systematic review teams.

RIVERS, LIZ (Session 3C)

University of Bath

Emotional reflexivity – just another way of 'managing' emotion?

The process of reflexivity can be viewed as a continual means of evaluating researcher positionality, which in turn acknowledges the impact on meaning construction (Berger, 2015). Rather than simply reflecting on research practice, reflexivity goes deeper where researchers not only question

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supposed truths from participants, but continually construct meaning through interactions and an ‘unsettling’ of taken-for-granted assumptions (Cunliffe, 2003; Pollner, 1991). Considering the emotional response of the researcher is a suggested part of being reflexive, questioning what is triggering particular feelings/responses to participant accounts, leading to further depth of exploration (Hubbard et al., 2001). However, attention to date on how researchers deal reflexively with their emotions has been underplayed (Holmes, 2010; Munkejord, 2009). Researchers tend to neglect their own emotions in organisational research, even where the topic of study is the emotions of the participants themselves (Gilmore and Kenny, 2015). This paper draws attention to emotional reflexivity in such a case, where the research question explores how Human Resource (HR) practitioners experience and give meaning to emotions in their working lives. This qualitative study, taken from the pilot study for my doctoral work, is located in a subjectivist position and adopts a social perspective to emotion, where emotions signify meaning in the social world (Bericat, 2016).

Reflexivity has been offered as a way of ‘handling’ or ‘managing’ emotions when carrying out research (Hubbard et al., 2001; Munkejord, 2009). The ‘management’ of emotion in organisational research privileges rationality, and is often studied from a functionalist perspective of control (Bolton, 2005). My participants’ narratives elicited my emotions as their accounts evoked past experiences from my prior career as an HR practitioner. In adopting a reflexive position during data collection, I noticed and noted my emotional reactions to narrative interviews when using participant-led photo-elicitation methods, collated vignettes exposing past experiences, and captured my experiences on camera. The contribution of this paper is to explore how emotions influence our work as researchers, highlighting the positionality of the researcher through the subjective experience of emotional expression in the research encounter; in a study aiming to expose the same of its participants in their working lives.

SILVERIO, SERGIO (Session 4A)

University College London

A man in women’s studies research: Privileged in more than one sense.

For the purposes of this paper I shall focus on two analyses arising from my thesis data collected as part of an Integrated Masters of Psychological Sciences. I designed a research question to examine ‘femininity’ in relation to ‘never-married’ status in older women, interviewing twelve women born in-or-before 1966. After transcribing the semi-structured interviews verbatim, I used Grounded Theory Analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), whereby transcripts were coded to develop initial categories, leading to theme development. I planned to have no a priori assumptions of the data or population, developing instead: robust, layered, thematic concepts through iterative coding and constant comparison (Glaser, 1992), which could then be framed within existing literature (Strauss, 1987). The first analysis focussed on gender identity; the second on social networks.

Re-reading the data, I became increasingly aware of how I was reading the data, and in what ways it could be read. I am a straight, white, educated male, researching female psychology. Influenced by Beauvoir’s (1949/2011) suggestion that “women become” and by Bem’s (1974) “psychological androgyny” work, was it also true the hegemonic, heteronormative, patriarchal lens of our society was so ingrained, it had simply remained unseen? It was possible these interpretations women’s gender identity may have gilded (or perhaps tarnished) my questioning. I asked whether this had

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made my research less valid. My answer was “no”, but I felt my analytical position must be clarified within subsequent discussions or conclusions.

I can now elaborate on how I positioned myself amongst my participants’ voices; learning I could not easily silence my own voice, but could set it aside and utilise it as an analytical lens, which could be later defended. It was important for me to be entrenched in my qualitative data and it would have been wrong of me not to give space to my own interpretations, which could later be contested or supported. Overall, I accepted I have certain privileges, and as a researcher, those are often amplified, but I was also incredibly privileged to be so openly accepted by my participants and by the audiences to whom I have presented this work.

SMYTH, SIOBHAN (Unable to attend)

National University of Ireland

Non-Participant Observations: Exploring the Use of Psychosocial Interventions in an Irish Context.

Background: This study sought to explore appropriately trained mental health nurses experiences of using psychosocial interventions (PSI) in their care of persons with a mental health problem. The aim of this paper is to discuss the use of non-participant observations in exploring the topic and in particular, provide reflections on the role of positionality in this research, following the completion of the qualitative research project.

Methodology: Consistent with the goal of understanding experience, a multiple case study methodology comprising four cases guided the study, which was situated within an interpretive paradigm. However, the nature of qualitative research sets the researcher as the data collection instrument. In reflecting on the research experience, the researcher noticed something regarding their position as insider as a fellow student during the research process.

Findings: The observational data highlighted issues that the researcher might otherwise not have noticed. Not only did this researcher have to be mindful about the influence of their positionality had on the research process, the researcher had to be forthright in communicating their positionality with participants.

Conclusions: Now that the researcher has taken the time to reflect upon their experiences with their own positionality in the qualitative research study, this researcher is now more mindful of some important things to consider when using observations as a data collection method. Transparency of positionality and the intents as a researcher are now central to their research efforts going forward.

TEGGI, DIANA (Session 2D)

University of Bath

A new materialist approach to ethnography

This paper asks how new materialist onto-epistemologies (Braidotti, 2013) reshape our understanding of researchers’ positionality in ethnography.

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This paper draws on the feminist strand of new materialism developed in the works of Karen Barad (2007), Rosi Braidotti (2013, 2006) and Donna Haraway (1988, 1991). Feminist new materialist approaches¹ question two tenets of ethnographic fieldwork, interviewing² and writing: 1) the generation and presentation of knowledge as from the point of view of the ‘studied subject(s)’, and 2) the erasure of researchers’ subjectivity in the process of knowledge-production (see Maso, 2014, p. 138; Stanley, 2014, p. 100).

Positivist research paradigms, having major currency in the social sciences, induce qualitative researchers to obliterate themselves from their research output, even if they are part of it. The concepts of intra-action (Barad, 2007) and situated knowledges (Haraway, 1988) provide the grounds for the epistemological, ethical and political legitimacy of knowledges marked by positionality and co-produced through the (inevitably) asymmetrical social relations occurring in the field. This stance demands of and entitles researchers to be accountable for the power structures that shape the researcher/research participant(s) interactions (Foley, 2002). It also prompts researchers to be self-reflexive of the affective and emotional entanglements with their own research (Hockey, 2007; Valentine, 2007; Watts, 2008; Woodthorpe, 2011).

I will argue for a feminist new materialist approach to ethnography, and its potential to foster the insurrection of subjugated knowledges (Foucault, 2010), based on a meta-analysis of my research with institutionalised older adults living and dying in care homes. My M.A. dissertation at Humboldt University, Berlin (2016) was in fact the ethnography of an English nursing home for the aged. The focus of the ethnography lied on residents’ experience of living the last phase of their lives in institutional permanent care and with dependency, disability and chronic illnesses. To engage in conversation with the residents made me aware of the issues surrounding the neutrality, objectivity and detachment usually required of researchers.

VICKERY, ALEXANDRA (Session 3A)

Cardiff University

“Is this a chat-up line?”: A young female researching men’s mental health.

] In the context of health, particularly mental health, men’s help seeking and coping behaviour has previously been neglected within academic literature. Recently though, in both academia and the wider media, how men engage with and manage their mental health is becoming a central issue. This paper draws on PhD research that explores men’s experiences of distress in regards to their help-seeking, coping and daily management. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with two sample groups of men: men from the general population and men who have accessed support groups. Being a young female, as a researcher I was conscious of my positionality and it’s potential to create challenges from the beginning of the recruitment process, right through to the analysis and writing up of the data. This gendered power dynamic present in the male-female, researcher-researched relationship informed the way I recruited participants, how and where the interview took place, the ways in which questions were asked and also how I continually interpreted the data during the thematic analysis. Arendell (1997) asks, is a woman studying men a ‘low status stranger’ and positioned by participants into a subordinated position? In this paper, I will draw on such questions and present issues regarding my relationship to the work and how I could begin to understand the male experience of mental health as a young female. I will also discuss some challenges that arose during the recruitment of men from the general population from local, ‘typically’ male institutions (such as pubs, football clubs etc.) and how this subsequently influenced

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the interactions that took place during the one-to-one interviews. Preliminary findings suggest that masculinity is still very much present in the men's accounts of their experiences, yet masculine identities are adapted in a more flexible way in order to open up and engage with others around them as a means of successfully coping with distress. Again, when in engaging in masculinity theories during the analysis process I was aware of the ways in which my position could potentially shape the interpretation of the data and also the production of masculinity itself.

VOUGIOUKALOU, SOFIA (Session 3C)

Cardiff University

'When research wears us out': examining the emotional labour of qualitative health research and the interplay between professional and lived experiences

Within the health and social professions, there are established ways of acknowledging and dealing with the emotional impact of clinical and therapeutic work. There is established work 'secondary traumatic stress' (Leinweber and Rowe 2008), 'emotional labour' (Smith 1992, 2011), 'burnout' (Maslach and Jackson 1986) and 'vicarious traumatisation' (Sabin-Farell and Turpin 2003). This is less so the case in qualitative health research despite the fact that researchers also work with vulnerable individuals who have often been through life-threatening health conditions and through interviewing or ethnographic work get close to these experiences too. This could be due to the competitive nature of research funding, research projects being finite in length and difficult to set up, researchers working on different topics throughout their career and the pressure to meet the project objectives within tight timeframes. In this paper, I will discuss the emotional labour of research using two examples of researching cancer patients experiences while caring for a close relative undergoing cancer treatment and researching paediatric cancer professionals' experiences of teenage and young adult palliative care while caring for an infant. These examples blur the boundaries between the professional, patient and the public experiences thus challenging dichotomies that are so prevalent in framing health research; who belongs in which category is not always clear-cut. I argue that the emotional labour of qualitative health research is significant and its management is a skilful process that is acquired through experience. Acknowledging and managing the emotional labour of research and the value of researchers' lived experiences (or lack of) needs to be better acknowledged and institutionally supported.

WATERS, HUGH (Session 1C)

University of Exeter

Walking the empirical tight rope: insights from an action research journey

I present my purview on a dual practitioner-academic identity during a large research project, requiring my seconded employment to the organizational site of study, but also to maintain membership in my academic community. In this work I take the position of the indigenous-outsider someone who 'has experienced high levels of cultural assimilation into an outsider or oppositional culture' but remains connected with his or her indigenous community' (Merriam et al, 2001: 412). Here the indigenous referenced as my belonging to the academic community and the oppositional culture of emersion to facilitate action in the organization as the site of study. This article explores

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'done' denoting an action or performance. Consequently, the research interview is an occasion for enacting gender. Through consideration of a study on men's experiences of caring for their partner with cancer this paper aims to explore the influence of gender on the interactions between the researcher and the researched. In particular, given the sensitive research topic the intersection between gender and the topic under discussion was explored. Participants interviewed to date (n=4) are between 50-65 years old, married and supporting their wife through their diagnosis of breast cancer.

Gender was examined in terms of how it shaped the researcher-researched relationship both before and during the interview. I approached each interview with some apprehension that the men may find it difficult to talk at length about a sensitive subject. When they did openly share their stories I reflected on the strategies I used to build rapport. I also considered whether the feminine construction of the 'good listener' encouraged their candidness. In the narratives I co-constructed with my participants dominant constructions of masculinity were observed with the men referring to anger, being the protector and trying to 'remain strong'. Yet, all were moved to the point of tears as their story unfolded. This appears to reflect a socio-cultural context in which they are positioning themselves as 'manly' men. Yet, due to the influence of a female interviewer they perhaps feel they can display vulnerability. In summary, interviewers and interviewees may present themselves as gendered subjects and perform in ways consistent with this identity. Reflexivity is valuable in helping examine how gender affects both the interview dynamics and the interpretation of data.