







## 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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|             |   |  |   |   |
|-------------|---|--|---|---|
| 10-11.10    | <b>WELCOME and INTRODUCTION</b><br><b>JENNY HATCHARD, JULIE GORE, ABBIE JORDAN &amp; BRYAN CLIFT</b><br>CB 2.6  |  |   |   |
|             | <b>KEYNOTE PRESENTATION</b><br><b>SARA DELAMONT, CARDIFF UNIVERSITY</b><br>Truth is not linked to Political Virtue: Problems with Positionality<br>CB 2.6                         |  |   |   |
| 11.10-11.30 | <b>Tea/Coffee Break</b><br>CB Level 2 Foyer   |  |   |   |
| 11.35-12.20 | <b>SESSION 2</b>  |  |   |   |
|             | <b>Session 2A:</b><br><b>Multiple Methods in Reflexive/Positional Processes</b><br>Chair: Sarah Moore<br>CB 2.6   | <b>Session 2B:</b><br><b>Positionality In The Field</b><br>Chair: Abbie Jordan<br>CB 3.11  | <b>Session 2C:</b><br><b>Professional Identity in Methodology</b><br>Chair: Nashwa Ismail<br>CB 3.15              | <b>Session 2D:</b><br><b>Positionality in Ethnography</b><br>Chair: Dawn Mannay<br>CB 3.16  |
|             | <b>'We're part of the courts, but independent': Power dynamics and ethics in government research</b><br>Mansoor Mir, <i>Ministry of Justice – HM Courts and Tribunals Service</i> | <b>Pride or prejudice? The role of ethnicity and culture in the mental health and professional development of medical students</b><br>Diana Bass, <i>University of Exeter &amp; Kings College London</i> | <b>Interviewer v moderator: Where do I sit?</b><br>Shona McIntosh, <i>University of Bath</i>                      | <b>A new materialist approach to ethnography</b><br>Diana Teggi<br><i>University of Bath</i>  |
|             | <b>The construction of the 'trans-national researcher'</b><br>Sundeep Mangat, <i>University of Roehampton</i>   | <b>Liberate or incarcerate? Multipositionality and its effects in the field</b><br>Kathy Dodworth<br><i>University of Edinburgh</i>  | <b>Power and positionality in the supervisory relationship</b><br>Charlotte Wilson, <i>Trinity College Dublin</i> | <b>Researcher's guilt: Confessions from the darker side of ethnographic research</b><br>Elizabeth Mamali<br><i>University of Bath</i> |



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| SESSION 4 |   |  |   |   |
|-----------|---|--|---|---|
|           |   |  |   |   |
|           |   |  |   |   |
|           |   |  |   |   |
|           | <p><b>Session 4A:</b><br/> <b>Gendered and Gendering Positionalities 2</b><br/>                     Chair: Abbie Jordan<br/>                     CB 2.6</p>   | <p><b>Session 4B:</b><br/> <b>Locating a Shifting Sense of Self</b><br/>                     Chair: Jenny Hatchard<br/>                     CB 3.11</p>  | <p><b>Session 4C:</b><br/> <b>Beyond Participants as Points of Data</b><br/>                     Chair: Shona McIntosh<br/>                     CB 3.15</p>   | <p><b>Session 4D:</b><br/> <b>Identity Issues in the Reflexive Process</b><br/>                     Chair: Julie Gore<br/>                     CB 3.16</p>  |
| 2.40-3.40 | <p><b>Producing accountable and situated knowledge on gender and migration through situated positioning</b><br/>                     Rumana Hashem<br/> <i>University of East London</i></p>                                      | <p><b>Being an outsider on the inside, or an insider on the outside: Betwixt and between</b><br/>                     Andrea Lacey<br/> <i>Bournemouth University</i></p>  | <p><b>An African indigenous search for self in research</b><br/>                     Rebecca Ng'ang'a<br/> <i>Daystar University</i></p>  | <p><b>The "I" in fibromyalgia</b><br/>                     Nicole Brown, <i>University College London</i></p>   |
|           | <p><b>Reflexivity and researcher position of a straight cis white man studying misogyny on Twitter</b><br/>                     Daniel Gray<br/> <i>Cardiff University</i></p>  | <p><b>Exploring embodied academic identity: Boundaries of research</b><br/>                     Jennifer Leigh<br/> <i>University of Kent</i></p>  | <p><b>'You're one of us now': Kinship and affect in a Premier League football club</b><br/>                     Sarah Gilmore, <i>University of Exeter</i><br/>                     Nancy Harding, <i>University of Bath</i></p>  | <p><b>The role of reviewer reflexivity: reflections from systematic reviews that incorporate qualitative evidence synthesis</b><br/>                     Rebecca Rees, <i>University College London</i></p> |
|           | <p><b>A man in women's studies research: Privileged in more than one sense</b><br/>                     Sergio A. Silverio<br/> <i>University College London</i></p>  | <p><b>A childless woman researching breastfeeding overtly and covertly: positionality, research relationships and a changing sense of self</b><br/>                     Aimee Grant<br/> <i>Cardiff University</i></p> | <p><b>Researcher positionality when using multiple techniques of qualitative data collection to facilitate participation in research focusing on sensitive subjects</b><br/>                     Jennifer Heath, <i>University of the West of England (UWE)</i><br/>                     Heidi Williamson, <i>UWE</i><br/>                     Lisa Williams, <i>Chelsea and Westminster Hospital</i><br/>                     Diana Harcourt, <i>UWE</i></p> | <p><b>Digital (auto)ethnographies: studying one's own community online</b><br/>                     Milena Popova, <i>University of the West of England</i></p>   |
| 3.45-4.30 | <p><b>CLOSING RECEPTION AND NETWORKING</b><br/>                     CB Level 2 Foyer<br/>                     The Organising Committee are delighted to invite you to stay for a drinks reception at the end of the Symposium</p> |  |   |   |



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## TRAVEL INFORMATION

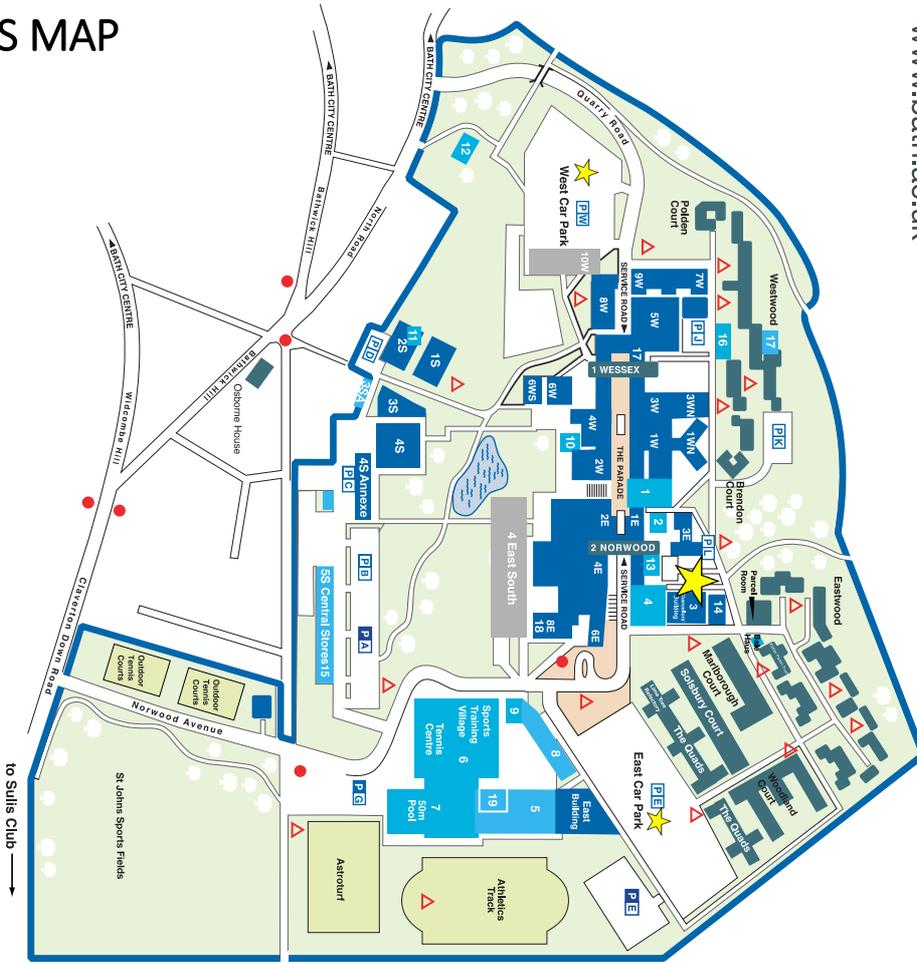
The Symposium will be held in the Chancellors' Building at the University of Bath. The Building is centrally located on the campus (please see Campus Map, next page), close to the bus terminus and East Car Park. On the day of the Symposium we will have signs posted around campus directing attendees toward 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  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>4W</b>  | CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION                          |
| <b>4W</b>  | Vice-Chancellor's Office                        |
| <b>WH</b>  | University Secretary's Office                   |
| <b>WH</b>  | Admissions                                      |
| <b>WH</b>  | Registry  |
| <b>WH</b>  | Finance Office                                  |
| <b>WH</b>  | International Office                            |
| <b>WH</b>  | Student Records & Examinations                  |
| <b>4W</b>  | Student Services Centre                         |
| <b>WH</b>  | Human Resources                                 |
| <b>4W</b>  | Graduate Centre                                 |
| <b>4W</b>  | Corporate Communications Services               |
| <b>4W</b>  | Development & Alumni Relations                  |
| <b>4E</b>  | Architectural & Civil Engineering               |
| <b>4S</b>  | Biology & Biochemistry                          |
| <b>2S</b>  | BUCS  |
| <b>9W</b>  | Chemical Engineering                            |
| <b>1S</b>  | Chemistry                                       |
| <b>1S</b>  | Computer Science                                |
| <b>1W</b>  | Computer Science                                |
| <b>3E</b>  | Economics                                       |
| <b>1W</b>  | Education                                       |
| <b>2E</b>  | Electronic & Electrical Engineering             |
| <b>1W</b>  | Education                                       |
| <b>2E</b>  | Politics, Languages and International Studies   |
| <b>3W</b>  | School of Management                            |
| <b>4W</b>  | Mathematical Sciences                           |
| <b>4E</b>  | Mechanical Engineering                          |
| <b>1S</b>  | Natural Sciences                                |
| <b>3S</b>  | Natural Sciences                                |
| <b>5W</b>  | Pharmacy & Pharmacology                         |
| <b>7W</b>  | Pharmacy & Pharmacology                         |
| <b>3W</b>  | Physics   |
| <b>2S</b>  | Psychology                                      |
| <b>1W</b>  | Health  |
| <b>3E</b>  | Social & Policy Sciences                        |
| <b>6WS</b>   | Sport & Exercise Science                        |
| <b>20-23</b>   | Sport & Exercise Science                        |
| <b>WH</b>  | Division for Lifelong Learning                  |
| <b>1</b>   | Library - Security and Enquiries                |
| <b>2</b>   | Chaplaincy Centre                               |
| <b>3</b>   | Charcellors' Building                           |
| <b>4</b>   | Founders Sports Hall                            |
| <b>5</b>   | Athletics throws & jumps/Modern Pentathlon      |
| <b>6</b>   | Sports Training Village/Sports Café             |
| <b>7</b>   | 50m Swimming Pool                               |
| <b>8</b>   | The Edge  |
| <b>9</b>   | Arts Lecture Theatre                            |
| <b>10</b>  | University Hall                                 |
| <b>11</b>  | Computer Centre (BUCS)                          |
| <b>12</b>  | Medical Centre                                  |
| <b>13</b>  | Student Centre, Union Shop                      |
| <b>14</b>  | Estates Office                                  |
| <b>15</b>  | Central Stores, Goods Received, Landscape       |
| <b>16</b>  | West Accommodation Centre                       |
| <b>17</b>  | Westwood Nursery                                |
| <b>18</b>  | Centre for Power Transmissions & Motion Control |
| <b>19</b>  | Applied Biomechanics Suite                      |
| <b>WH</b>  | The Fresh Grocery Store                         |
| <b>8W</b>  | DPS (Design Imaging and Print)                  |
| <b>WH</b>  | Post Office, Banks & Shops                      |
| <b>2W</b>  | The Parade Bar, Level 1 Café                    |
| <b>2W</b>  | Claverton Rooms                                 |
| <b>4W</b>  | 4West Café                                      |
| <b>WH</b>  | Careers Advisory Service                        |
| <b>1E</b>  | ICA   |
| <b>ACCOMMODATION</b>                                 |   |
| <b>Norwood House</b>                                 |   |
| <b>Polden Court</b>                                  |   |
| <b>Westwood</b>                                      |   |
| <b>Brendon Court</b>                                 |   |
| <b>Eastwood</b>                                      |   |
| <b>Marborough Court</b>                              |   |
| <b>Solsbury Court</b>                                |   |
| <b>Woodland Court</b>                                |   |
| <b>Osborne House</b>                                 |   |
| <b>City Bus Service</b>                              |   |
| <b>Fire Assembly Points</b>                          |   |
| <b>Parking: Pay &amp; Display and Permit Holders</b> |   |
| <b>Parking: Permit Holders only</b>                  |   |



## **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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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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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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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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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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MANNAY, DAWN (Session 1D)

Cardiff University

### Emotion, Positionality and the Researcher: Negotiating the Telling and Silencing of Trauma in Relational Interview Encounters

We have agency over our own interpretations of events and are not victims of our own biographies (Iantaffi, 2011), yet the 'specificity of place and politics has to be reckoned with in making an account of anybody's life, and their use of their own past' (Steedman, 1986, p. 6). Therefore, reflecting on the emotional lifeworld of the research encounter can be particularly useful for exploring the intricacies of shared meanings and moving beyond the narrowness of what we might expect to know or find. This paper draws on what is felt in the interview encounter to explore issues of familiarity, positionality, fear and the researcher's need to fix and repair, even though this is impossible. The paper draws on a qualitative research study with mothers and their daughters involving creative methods and repeat interviews. The participants were not simply research 'subjects'; rather they entered into relational conversations that produced the interview accounts. The paper focuses on one such relational encounter, reflecting on the sharing of trauma, appropriation, amelioration, silencing and helplessness. It documents the ways in which I have negotiated the sharing of traumatic accounts without being able to fix or repair their causes, and how I struggled to listen to recollections without trying to appropriate, accentuate or ameliorate their affective resonances. The absent 'I' in much academic writing claims authority and silences the presence of the researcher. This paper argues that rather than projecting their own worldview as 'objective', and in this way to naturalising it, researchers should reflect on and make clear the presence of the 'I'; engaging with their positionality and the emotionality of qualitative relationships.

McINTOSH, SHONA (Session 2C)

University of Bath

### Interviewer v Moderator: where do I sit?

How do different methods oblige researchers to adjust their activity in relation to their research participants? This paper will reflect on how interviews and focus groups require different positioning of the researcher, how this affects the way the research activity is carried out and, inevitably, interpretation and findings. To do so, I will share my experience of interviewing and moderating focus groups, conducted as part of a current, funded project into the enduring impact of a non-academic element of an International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme: 'The enduring impact of Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS)'. It is argued that methods, selected to meet different research aims, affect researchers' nearness to/distance from research participants and results.

When engaged in the one-to-one activity of interviewing, a researcher aims to encourage participants to share personal views. In the technique of 'active interviewing' (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995), the etymological origins of the English word from the French *s'entrevoir* are understood literally. Seeing each other positions the researcher/interviewer as engaged in a joint knowledge-production exercise and positions the researcher at the heart of the research product. However, in order to leave space for a range of participants' views on the research issues to be expressed, a focus group moderator occupies a more peripheral position and knowledge unfolds in the group discussion correspondently to pre-planned guidelines (Morgan, 1998). Touching briefly on the different historical origins of the two methods (Lee, 2010; Platt, 2001), the presentation will address

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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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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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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 approaches<sup>1</sup> question two tenets of ethnographic fieldwork, interviewing<sup>2</sup> 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 its 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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the in-between-ness of my role and the experiences encountered and subsequent feelings of excitement, tension, frustration and confusion. This not only highlights the importance of time for reflection through the process of research, but a call to qualitative researchers for greater transparency in reporting research experiences. I present my experience on this journey of becoming, compounded by transition from PhD candidate to Early Career researcher. This transition has presented unique challenges in relation to power and positionality. I argue that the act of openly sharing research experiences is an integral component of our continuous professional development and ability to develop resilience as researchers. I explore the identity challenges of living and communicating two worlds, through a split practitioner-academic lens, concluding with a framework for the reporting of researcher experience without separation from method, and this combined with the necessary practice of reflexivity. I argue that a reflexive account of experience becomes an integral part of method. 'To acknowledge particular and personal locations is to admit the limits of one's purview from these positions. It is also to undermine the notion of objectivity, because from particular locations all understanding becomes subjectively based and forged through interactions within fields of power relations' (Narayan, 1993: 679). As with the nature of research interactions cannot be prior planned of which the effects can only be acknowledged in retrospect as a course of experience. Therefore through the research process relationships change rapidly over time as too does the strength of identity dependent on those relationships.

WILSON, CHARLOTTE (Session 2C)

Trinity College Dublin

### **Power and positionality in the supervisory relationship**

In qualitative research the researcher is often beholden to consider their own positionality, whether this be trying to bracket off their own experience and self, or whether it involves integration of their position within the research. When the researcher is a student this is complicated by the involvement of a supervisor. The supervisor has their own positionality, but it might be in the interaction of the two people that positionality becomes most complex. The interaction between any two researchers risks positionality blindness, where the similarities between the two researchers are over-looked and therefore they do not give rise to reflection; or over-emphasis of positionality, when the differences between the two researchers are so salient that reflection upon them is easy and inevitable. In the situation where the two researchers are a supervisor and supervisee issues of power make negotiating these complexities more difficult.

This reflective paper describes some of the factors that facilitate or hinder the exploration of positionality in supervision of qualitative research. Some of these may be characteristics of the supervisee such as their existing reflective capacity, their awareness and exploration of their positionality in general, and their willingness to engage in exploration of their own experiences within a supervisory relationship. There may also be factors within the supervisor that facilitate reflection on positionality. Supervisors' own awareness of their own positionality, not only in relation to the topic being researched, but also in relation to their supervisee and the supervisor-supervisee relationship, may facilitate exploration of positionality in the relationship and this may impact the research. Supervisors' expertise and authority in qualitative research may help supervisees trust that this personal part of the research is important and valuable. Experience of supervising a variety of students may facilitate a set of supervisory strategies that may help students feel comfortable exploring these issues. And finally, experience developing trusting relationships

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with supervisees where personal issues are OK to talk about, may give supervisors confidence in addressing these issues within appropriate boundaries.

WONG, KEN (Session 1B)

Cardiff University

### **Theorising Dialogic Reflection: Being the Researcher and the Researched**

This paper is a reflection on the methodological considerations that were integral to my Ph.D. study on dialogic reflection, a process where students engage in reflective conversations with their peers about their experience. Fourteen post-graduate diploma occupational therapy students and I formed two action research groups for this Co-operative Inquiry. We concluded that dialogic reflection is an artistic method of enquiry about the world that embraces multiple perspectives and vulnerability.

This research had challenged me intensely in many ways, especially on my thoughts on the nature of enquiry and my position as a researcher and a participant in a Co-operative Inquiry. Co-operative Inquiry is based on epistemic participation, where researchers develop knowledge by getting involved as participants, and political participation, where participants are involved in the decision-making process of the research. The students who took part in my research were therefore considered my co-researchers.

Epistemic participation required me to acknowledge the fact that I had prior knowledge and preconceptions about the topic of this research. These initial ideas about the topic thus impacted the way I had approached the research. Epistemic participation was not easy as it is the antithesis to some writings about qualitative research where the researcher is expected to distance himself/herself from the researched. Furthermore, it encouraged me to reveal personal experiences to my participants which was at times rather uncomfortable.

Political participation was not straightforward either. Despite considering the students as my co-researchers, this research took on different meanings for us. At some points of the research, I found myself treating my co-researchers as participants instead. Nonetheless, I had included my co-researchers in the methodological considerations where feasible.

This paper challenges certain ideas about qualitative research and where the researcher belongs in the research process. It argues that the researcher is a knower as much of an enquirer, hence there is value in involving the researcher in the study as a participant. Conversely, the participant has a crucial role to play in developing a study about himself/herself. By reflecting on our understanding of the world, we can better understand our position as qualitative researchers.

YOUNG, JENNY (Session 3A)

Edinburgh Napier University

### **Reflecting on the influence of gender in a female interviewer male interviewee relationship**

Researchers can reflexively evaluate interviews through different lenses. In this discussion my lens is gender. It is suggested that gender is not something we are but something that is constructed or

