CHAPTER

2 Historical Overview of Qualitative Research in the Social Sciences

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Abstract

Qualitative research does not represent a monolithic, agreed-upon approach to research but is a vibrant and contested field with many contradictions and different perspectives. In order to respect the multivoicedness of qualitative research, we will approach its history in the plural—as a variety of *histories*. We will work polyvocally and focus on six histories of qualitative research, which are sometimes overlapping, sometimes in conflict, and sometimes even incommensurable. They can be considered as articulations of different discourses about the history of the field, which compete for researchers' attention. The six histories are: (1) the conceptual history of qualitative research, (2) the internal history of qualitative research, (3) the marginalizing history of qualitative research, (4) the repressed history of qualitative research, (5) the social history of qualitative research, and (6) the technological history of qualitative research.

Key Words: qualitative research, history of science, social history, phenomenology, hermeneutics, sociology, technology

History writing is not just about charting the past but also about prospects for the future. There is no doubt that one's way of depicting the past is greatly important for how the future will unfold. This holds for human history in general but is perhaps particularly true for a contested field such as qualitative research. For decades, especially in the years following the rise of positivist social science in the mid-twentieth century, qualitative research methods were considered of little value, and some even deemed them unscientific. Fortunately, this situation has been changing in recent years, and while disciplines such as social anthropology and communication studies have always been open to qualitative inquiry (and have even been built around them in the case of ethnography), disciplines in the health sciences and psychology are now rediscovering their roots in qualitative studies of human lives and social phenomena. Most social sciences such as sociology and political science lie somewhere between an unproblematic acceptance of and mild hostility toward qualitative inquiry, with huge local differences concerning openness toward qualitative research.

In this chapter, we do not seek to articulate *the* history of qualitative research in the social sciences, as this could easily monopolize one interpretation of the past with unfortunate consequences for the future. Qualitative research does not represent a monolithic, once-and-for-all, agreed-upon approach to research but is a vibrant and contested field with many contradictions and different perspectives. In order to respect the multivoicedness of qualitative research and inquire into its past in a way that is more congenial to a qualitative stance, we will present a variety of *histories* (in the plural) of qualitative research in the social sciences. Some of these histories are quite well known to insiders of the field,

while others may be more surprising and perhaps even provocative. One thing to be avoided is writing the historical narratives as *Whig history*, presenting the development of qualitative research as necessarily progressing towards enlightenment and liberation. There is still a tendency among some qualitative researchers to present their methods of inquiry as inherently more humane and liberating than the "objectifying" measures of quantitative researchers. This, we find, is a myth—which sometimes goes by the name "qualitative ethicism" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005)—but it is a myth that may be understandable as qualitative researchers here and there feel marginalized and have been looking for solid arguments to justify their practices. The marginalization of qualitative research, however, is possibly itself another myth that we will challenge in the multiperspectival histories to be unfolded in this chapter.

History writing in any field presupposes that it is possible to delineate and delimit the field whose history one is interested in recounting. This is a significant problem in qualitative research, so this gives us one further reason to approach the matter in terms of histories in the plural. We are aware that interesting accounts of the historical development of qualitative research exist, such as Denzin and Lincoln's useful depiction of the so-called "eight historical moments" in the development of qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). We believe, however, that there are too many separate qualitative histories in the different social science disciplines and too little overall cumulative development for us to dare attempt a grand narrative of the history of qualitative research.

To repeat our basic point, history writing is not just about the past but also about the present and the future. When one knows how something came to be, one will often know what it presently is, and one will have a powerful voice in determining how it will develop in the future. In what follows, we will work polyvocally and focus on six histories of qualitative research, which are sometimes overlapping, sometimes in conflict, and sometimes even incommensurable. They can be considered as articulations of different discourses about the history of the field, which compete for researchers' attention. The six histories are: (1) the conceptual history of qualitative research, (2) the internal history of qualitative research, (3) the marginalizing history of qualitative research, (4) the repressed history of qualitative research, (5) the social history of qualitative research, and (6) the technological history of qualitative research.

Obviously, these histories represent *our* selection. They are not representative or exhaustive of *all* possible histories about qualitative research, and others would undoubtedly have cut the historical cake differently. Therefore, ironically, this chapter with its preselected histories might itself become a subject of qualitative scrutiny. As in all qualitative research, it remains a fundamental premise that different aspects of reality are salient for different researchers, but as always, this should be considered a virtue rather than a vice. It enables us to celebrate the richness of a past that allows us to reflect upon it from so many different angles, giving us so many different interpretations. Not all histories, however, are given equal space in our account. With some of them, we tell a short story, perhaps offering a novel perspective, while with others, we recount a longer and more elaborated story. This goes in particular for the second internal history of qualitative research, concentrating in some detail on giants such as Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, Blumer, Goffman, and Garfinkel. We have been guided in our selection by an ambition to understand the development of qualitative research as more than a pure history of ideas. We will argue against this form of idealism, which looks at theories and paradigms in abstraction from broader social, cultural, political, and technological forces; and we will try to show that it has often been exactly such forces that have been pushing qualitative research forward (or, in some cases perhaps, backward). This, of course, should not be thought of as rendering qualitative research invalid, for no forms of research exist in a historical vacuum, but it should instead enable qualitative researchers now and in the future to understand the complexities of their practices better.

The Conceptual History of Qualitative Research

Our first history is a basic conceptual history of the term "qualitative research." While the term itself is much younger than one should think, the adjective "qualitative" has a longer history. Medieval philosophers of scholasticism distinguished *qualia* (the qualities of things) from *quanta* (the quantities) hundreds of years ago, and, with modern philosophy from the seventeenth century onwards, empiricist philosophers like John Locke argued that there are different kinds of qualities: primary qualities were thought to be independent of observers and are for example extension, number, and solidity. Secondary qualities, on the other hand, were thought to be produced as effects in observers such as colors, tastes, and smells. Modern philosophers—those who worked in the post-medieval

world (Descartes, Locke, Hume, etc.)—confined the secondary qualities to the subjective mind, since the new natural scientists (Galileo, Newton) had seemingly demonstrated that objective reality is nothing but matter in motion. The book of nature is written in the language of mathematics, Galileo said, implying a metaphysics of quantities as the primary reality. A new subjective/objective dichotomy thus arose, relegating human experience and all the sounds, sights, and smells that we live with to the realm of the subjective. In many ways, today's qualitative researchers still struggle with this issue and are sometimes accused of being unscientific due to the significance of subjectivity in their endeavors, having inherited the problem of objectivity versus subjectivity in large parts from seventeenth century metaphysics.

Not all philosophers after Locke, or scientists after Galileo and Newton, were satisfied with the division of the world into "objective" primary qualities (that can be studied scientifically) and "subjective" secondary qualities. There is a great difference, Goethe would argue in 1810 in his *Theory of Colors*, between studying colors in terms of Newtonian optics and in terms of human experience, and although the latter cannot reasonably be reduced to the former, it does not mean that it is any less important or amenable to systematic scientific studies. As an example of a field of human experience, Goethe argued that our understanding of colors has suffered greatly from being understood in terms of mechanical optics (see Robinson, 2002, p. 10), and one can read his theory as an early *qualitative* study of the phenomenology of colors (see also Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008, for a reading of Goethe as a phenomenologist *avant la lettre*).

Moving from discussing the term "qualitative" to "qualitative *research*," we may note that it was only quite late in the twentieth century that qualitative research became a self-defining field of inquiry, although researchers had been employing similar methodologies before. In his book on writing up qualitative research, Harry Wolcott (2009) reminds us that, "Prior to the past three or four decades, not much had been written about field methods" (p. 80), and, he continues, "As best I recall, the phrase 'qualitative research' was rarely (never?) heard in the 1960s. Of what had been written earlier, outside their respective academic disciplines, the same few references and the same few illustrative studies were cited almost to the exclusion of all others." (p. 80). He mentions Bronislaw Malinowski's introduction to his 1922 classic *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* and William F. Whyte's 1943 *Street Corner Society*, both of which were first and foremost ethnographies—and only secondarily methodologies treatises. Prior to around 1970, researchers in sociology and anthropology would look to such classics for inspiration rather than to specific methodological handbooks on "qualitative research."

Wolcott's memories seem to be corroborated by a search in contemporary scientific databases. A general search in all databases of the Web of Knowledge, Science Citation Index Expanded (which contains articles that date back to 1899 from all sciences) reveals that the term "qualitative" was widely used from 1900 but *only* in natural sciences such as chemistry. Even today, qualitative analysis remains an important sub-discipline in chemistry (working with the analysis and classification of chemical compounds) alongside the quantitative sub-disciplines of this science. The first article that appears in a broad search is from 1900 and bears the title: "On the qualitative separation of nickel from cobalt by the action of ammonium hydroxide on the ferricyandies" by Browning and Hartwell. If one excludes the natural and technical sciences, then the term "qualitative" appears in early psychological papers—for example, "A qualitative analysis of tickling—Its relation to cutaneous and organic sensation," published in 1908, and "Some qualitative aspects of bitonal complexes" from 1921, both appearing in the *American Journal of Psychology*. These texts belong to the psychology of perception and come quite close to physiology (or "psychophysiology" as it was called). The term "qualitative" in the early twentieth century was thus quite closely connected to natural science disciplines such as chemistry, physiology, and the psychology of perception and appeared much later in the social sciences as such. According to Karpatschof (2010), who has studied the emergence of qualitative methods within the social sciences, the term is hardly used until 1970, which is a kind of historical take-off point, after which there is an exponential growth in the discourse of qualitative methods in the social sciences. This has continued to the present day, and we have recently witnessed a veritable boom of qualitative research in the human and social sciences, which is not just seen in the output of research publications that employ qualitative methods, but especially in the numerous methodology books that are published every year. As an example, if one takes a look at most catalogues from academic publishing houses and scans the pages of new titles within disciplines such as sociology, the

amount of new qualitative research titles will often greatly outnumber the new titles within quantitative methodology.

The question then becomes: Why did a need arise around 1970 for qualitative research to define itself as such in the social sciences, often antagonistically in relation to what it is *not* (i.e. quantitative research)? Why at this particular point in time? After all, books employing interviewing and fieldwork had been published earlier in the twentieth century but without invoking the qualitative-quantitative binary. And why do we find in recent decades a need to overcome this distinction again, witnessed, for example, in the wave of so-called "mixed methods?" There are no simple answers to these questions, but it seems likely that the general growth in knowledge production in the latter half of the twentieth century, with a new "knowledge economy" and increased significance of techno-scientific knowledge, pushed researchers to identify with specific traditions of knowledge production. Karpatschof (2010) has argued that social anthropologists have always used qualitative methods because they have as a rule studied "traditional societies," whereas sociologists have more often used quantitative methods because they have studied modern or "serialized" societies with demographics that easily lend themselves to quantitative studies. We may speculate that qualitative research gains in importance after 1970 with the emergence of postmodernity, signaling a new dynamic, multiperspectival, and emergent social complexity that cannot easily be captured with the use of quantitative methods (we return to this idea when we address the social history of qualitative research below). Also, with the disputes around positivism as a philosophy of science, which began in the middle of the century, a need arose to signal that one can work systematically and methodically without subscribing to the tenets of positivism, and here the term "qualitative research" came in handy. Another way of expressing this argument has been put forward by Jovanovic (2011), who has argued that in order to fully understand the emergence and development of qualitative approaches, one needs to put the historical trajectory of the quantitative–qualitative divide under scrutiny. As Jovanovic points out, qualitative research is much more than just methods, procedures, and techniques. It is in fact an entire a worldview. Qualitative research thus may entail an understanding of human beings and the world that is fundamentally different from quantitative research and therefore "a plausible positioning of qualitative research in the history of social sciences and in its social context requires a historical reconstruction of the processes by which the quantitative-qualitative distinction has become an intellectual as well as a social tool" (Jovanovic, 2011, p. 4). In conducting a reconstruction of the socio-historical processes that laid the grounds for the emergence of modern science—a process that is labeled "the quest for certainty"—Jovanovic illuminates some of the very important processes in both the emergence of qualitative research as well its re-emergence in the late 1960s and 1970s. All in all, it was seemingly a mix of political and philosophical discussions that would drive the development of qualitative research forward, as we will see further reflected in the different histories that follow.

The Internal History of Qualitative Research

There are many—at times conflicting—schools of thought, traditions, paradigms, and perspectives included under the heading of "qualitative research." Moreover, it seems as if the realm of what is defined as "qualitative research" is constantly expanding (Flick, 2002). Telling the internal history of qualitative research means articulating how the history looks to dedicated qualitative researchers from inside the field. We will unfold this history by emphasizing three philosophical foundations of qualitative research: (1) the German tradition of *Verstehen* (Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Gadamer) leading to different hermeneutic perspectives such as Geertz in anthropology, (2) the phenomenological tradition (Husserl) leading to different phenomenological research methods, and finally (3) the North American traditions of pragmatism, Chicago sociology, Goffman's dramaturgical approach, symbolic interactionism, and ethnomethodology that in different ways remain important to current concerns in the social sciences. We will also briefly address ethnographic fieldwork as an approach that cuts across most of the paradigmatic differences in qualitative inquiry.

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is the art of interpretation and thus fundamental to much if not all qualitative research. Originally, with Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768– 1834), hermeneutics was developed as a methodology for interpreting texts, notably biblical texts (see Brinkmann, 2005). There was at the time a pressing need to find a way to understand the scriptures correctly. With Wilhelm Dilthey (1833– 1911) in the late nineteenth century, hermeneutics was

extended to human life itself, conceived as an ongoing process of interpretation. Dilthey developed a descriptive psychology, an approach to understanding human life that was fundamentally different from how the natural sciences work. We *explain* nature through scientific activity, Dilthey said, but we have to *understand* human cultural and historical life. A life, as the hermeneutic philosopher Paul Ricoeur said a century after Dilthey, "is no more than a biological phenomenon as long as it has not been interpreted." (Ricoeur, 1991, p. 28). And qualitative researchers are (or should be, according to the hermeneutic approach to human science) in the business of understanding the interpretations that already operate in people's lives, individually and collectively, which is in effect to interpret a range of interpretations (as we touch upon below, sociologist Anthony Giddens once referred to this as one aspect of a "double hermeneutics"; 1976).

The dichotomization of *Erklären* and *Verstehen* has been very influential in separating quantitative from qualitative research, with the implication that explanation is about bringing individual observations under a general law (this is known as the covering law model of scientific work; see Hempel, 1942), while understanding is something more particularistic that rests on the specific qualitative features of the situation in which someone acts. There is a difference, for example, between explaining the movements of objects in space by invoking laws of nature as articulated in physics and understanding why someone decided to do something at a particular moment in that person's life. In the latter case, Dilthey would say, we need to understand the particularities of that person's life, and putative universal laws of human behavior are of little use. The situations and episodes studied by qualitative researchers are, like historical events, most often unique in the sense that they only happen once. For that reason, it is not possible to bring them under universal laws.

Martin Heidegger's (1889–1976) *Being and Time* from the early twentieth century is often cited as the work that inaugurated a shift from Dilthey's life hermeneutics to what Heidegger would call "ontological hermeneutics" (Heidegger, 1927). The question of Schleiermacher's methodological hermeneutics had been, "How can we correctly understand the meaning of texts?" The epistemologically oriented hermeneutics from Dilthey had asked, "How can we understand our lives and other people?" But ontological hermeneutics—or "fundamental ontology" as Heidegger also called it (p. 34)—prioritizes the question: "What is the mode of being of the entity who understands?" (Richardson, Fowers, & Guignon, 1999, p. 207). *Being and Time* aims to answer this question and can thus be said to be an interpretation of interpreting, or a philosophical anthropology, which has been formative in relation to much qualitative research in the hermeneutic tradition.

Heidegger's name for the entity that understands is *Dasein*, and the being of *Dasein* is unlike the being of other entities in the universe. Physical entities such as molecules, tables, and chairs are things that have categorical ontological characteristics, whereas human beings, or *Dasein*, are *histories* or *events* and have what Heidegger called existentials as their ontological characteristics (Polkinghorne, 2004, pp. 73–74). These are *affectedness* (Befindlichkeit) (we always find ourselves "thrown" into situations where things already matter and affect us), *understanding* (Verstehen) (we can use the things and episodes we encounter in understanding the world), and *articulation* or *telling* (Rede) (we can to some extent articulate the meanings things have) (Dreyfus, 1991). In short, humans are creatures that are affected by what happens, can understand their worlds, and communicate with others, and together, these features can be said to comprise an interpretative qualitative stance in human and social science research.

For Heidegger and later hermeneuticists such as Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002) and the contemporary philosopher Charles Taylor, understanding is not something we occasionally do—for example, by following certain procedures or rules. Rather, understanding is, from the hermeneutic perspective, the very condition of being human (Schwandt, 2000, p. 194). We always see things *as* something, human behavior *as* meaningful acts, letters in a book *as* conveying some meaningful narrative. In a sense, this is something we do, and hermeneutic writers argue that all such understanding is to be thought of as interpretation, and it is exactly this process that interpretative social science aims to engage in. To study culture is, in Clifford Geertz' words, to study "a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (Geertz, 1973, p. 89). When seeking to understand the cultural symbolic system, the qualitative researcher should engage in "thick description," Geertz said, that captures the contextual features that render any individual action or event meaningful. The researcher interprets members

of a culture, who already operate with more or less implicit self-interpretations of their own actions. This, however, should not be understood as implying that people normally make some sort of mental act in interpreting the world. "Interpretation" here is not like the mental act of interpreting a poem, for example. It is not usually an explicit, reflective process, but rather, in the Heideggerian tradition, seen as something based on skilled, everyday modes of comportment (Polkinghorne, 2004; Packer, 2011). This also means that many hermeneutic qualitative researchers have been skeptic about "method" as the way to understanding other people (which is one goal of qualitative inquiry). Instead, they argue, we understand others by spending time with them and talking to them, and this cannot be put into strict methodological formulas.

The idea of *reflexivity*, which is central to much qualitative research, has also been articulated within hermeneutic philosophy. Interpretation depends on certain *pre-judices*, as Gadamer famously argued, without which no understanding would be possible (Gadamer, 1960). Knowledge of what others are doing and of what our own activities mean "always depend upon some background or context of other meanings, beliefs, values, practices, and so forth." (Schwandt, 2000, p. 201). There are no fundamental "givens," for all understanding depends on a larger horizon of non-thematized meanings. This horizon is what gives meaning to everyday life activities, and it is what we must engage with as we do qualitative inquiry—both as something that can break down and necessitate a process of inquiry, and as something that we can reflexively try to make explicit in an attempt to attain a level of objectivity (in the sense of objectivity about subjectivity). The latter is often referred to by qualitative methodologists as making one's pre-understandings or pre-judices explicit. Gadamer said:

> In fact history does not belong to us; we belong to it. Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society, and state in which we live. The focus of subjectivity is a distorting mirror. The self-awareness of the individual life is only a flickering in the closed circuits of historical life. *That is why the prejudices of the individual, far more than his judgments, constitute the historical reality of his being.* [Gadamer, 1960, pp. 276–277]

Gadamer argues that this makes the condition of human and social science quite different from the one we find in the natural sciences "where research penetrates more and more deeply into nature" (Gadamer, 1960, p. 284). In the human and social sciences, there can be no "object in itself" to be known (p. 285), for interpretation is an ongoing and open-ended process that continuously reconstitutes its object. The interpretations of social life offered by researchers in the human and social sciences are an important addition to the repertoire of human self-interpretation, and influential fields of description offered by human science, such as psychoanalysis, can even affect the way whole cultures interpret themselves. This means that "social theories do not simply mirror a reality independent of them; they define and form that reality and therefore can transform it by leading agents to articulate their practices in different ways" (Richardson, Fowers, & Guignon, 1999, p. 227). Like the pragmatists would say (see the section "North American Traditions" later in this chapter), social theories are tools that may affect and transform those agents and practices that are theorized. Thus, Giddens (1993, pp. 9–13) has used the term "double hermeneutics" to describe the idea that social science implies researchers interpreting the knowledge (or interpretations) of research participants and that the findings of social scientists (i.e., concepts and theories) continuously re-enter and reshape the social worlds that they describe. Others, such as Kenneth Gergen (2001) have conceptualized this as "generative theory," thus connecting hermeneutic ideas with contemporary forms of social constructionism within qualitative inquiry.

In short, hermeneutics is one of the most important philosophical traditions to have informed qualitative inquiry. Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p. 13) simply refer to the many qualitative paradigms, ranging from constructivism and feminism to cultural studies and queer theory, as *interpretative* paradigms, thus stressing this legacy from hermeneutics.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is, in one sense, a more specific philosophical tradition that informs qualitative inquiry, but, in another sense, it can be used in to encompass almost all forms of qualitative research. Phenomenology in the general sense is the study of *phenomena*—in other words, of the world as it appears to experiencing and acting human beings. A phenomenological approach will insist on taking human experience seriously, in whichever form it appears. According to Amedeo Giorgi, a leading phenomenological psychologist who concentrates

on phenomenology in the more specific sense, it is "the study of the structure, and the variations of structure, of the consciousness to which any thing, event, or person appears" (1975, p. 83).

As a philosophy, phenomenology was founded by Edmund Husserl around 1900 and further developed as an existential philosophy by Martin Heidegger (who was also counted among the hermeneuticists above), and then in an existential and dialectical direction by Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. The subject matter of phenomenology began with consciousness and experience, and was expanded to include the human life world and to take account of the body and human action in historical contexts by Merleau-Ponty and Jean-Paul Sartre (see Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008, on which the following is based). The goal in Husserlian phenomenology was to arrive at an investigation of essences, or to describe the essential structures of human experience from a first person perspective. Phenomenology was then a strict descriptive philosophy, employing the technique of *reduction*, which means to suspend one's judgment as to the existence or nonexistence of the content of an experience. The reduction is today often pictured as a "bracketing," an attempt to place the common sense and scientific foreknowledge about the phenomena within parentheses in order to arrive at an unprejudiced description of the essence of the phenomena (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008, p. 27). So, a phenomenologist can study the experience of any human phenomenon (e.g., the experience of guilt) without taking a stand on the issue whether the phenomenon is real, legitimate, or illusory (e.g., one can study guilt as an experienced phenomenon without discussing whether there is a reason to feel guilt in a given situation or whether it is correlated with this or that neurochemical process or physiological response). The subject's experience is the important phenomenological reality.

The important concept of the life world eventually became central to Husserl. He introduced the concept in 1936 in *The Crisis of the European Sciences* (Husserl, 1954) to refer to the intersubjective and meaningful world in which humans conduct their lives and experience significant phenomena. It is a pre-reflective and pre-theorized world in which phenomena appear as meaningful before they become subject to theoretical analysis. If the whole range of experienced phenomena did *not* appear in the life world, there would be no reason to investigate them scientifically, for there would in a sense be nothing to investigate. For phenomenologists, there is thus a primacy of the life world as experienced, since this is prior to the scientific theories we may formulate about it. This was well expressed by Merleau-Ponty:

> All my knowledge of the world, even my scientific knowledge, is gained from my own particular point of view, or from some experience of the world without which the symbols of science would be meaningless. The whole universe of science is built upon the world as directly experienced, and if we want to subject science itself to rigorous scrutiny and arrive at a precise assessment of its meaning and scope, we must begin by re-awakening the basic experiences of the world of which science is the second order expression. [Merleau-Ponty, 1945, p. ix]

Using a metaphor, we can say that the sciences may give us maps, but the life world is the territory or the geography of our lives. Maps make sense only on the background of the territory, where human beings act and live, and should not be confused with it. Phenomenologists are not against scientific abstractions or "maps," but they insist on the primacy of concrete qualitative descriptions of experience—of that which is prior to maps and analytic abstractions.

Today, phenomenological approaches have branched and proliferated in many directions within qualitative inquiry. There are specialized phenomenological approaches within psychology (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003) and anthropology (Jackson, 1996), for example, and in sociology, phenomenology was introduced primarily through the writings of Alfred Schütz and later his students Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, whose approach heavily influenced some of the North American traditions mentioned in the following section.

North American Traditions

Apart from the characteristically Continental European traditions, a number of traditions developed on the North American continent during the twentieth century that in important ways supplemented, consolidated, and expanded the focus from hermeneutics and phenomenology. Many of these at the time novel, theoretical perspectives are still today very much alive on the American continent and elsewhere. These qualitatively inspired traditions that saw the light of day particularly in the US during the twentieth century are often described as "microsociology," "social psychology," or the "sociologies of everyday life" (see Jacobsen, 2009).

One of the most influential, significant, and lasting internal stories of qualitative research has its roots in the pragmatic philosophy that developed

on the North American continent in the latter part of the nineteenth century and which later spread also to the European continent. *Pragmatism* is a philosophical tradition that is concerned with the practical outcomes of human action and which is therefore also concerned with the use value of science and the practical evaluation of "truth." Truth, for the pragmatists, is always something that finds its expression in practical circumstances (an instrumental view of truth) and thus is not a pre-established, fixed, substantial, or sedimented dimension of knowledge. Contrary to representationalist theories of science, pragmatism is distinctly non-representative; the purpose of scientific practice is not to represent reality as it is, but rather to allow humans to understand and control the world they are part of through knowledge. The key protagonists of pragmatism in the early years were Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, John Dewey, and George Herbert Mead. Each contributed in his own way to the development of pragmatism, not as a coherent whole, but rather as a new perspective on science, democracy, and education. Specifically, pragmatism supports an empirical—as opposed to a theoretical or scholastic—perspective on science. It is in the practical utility of knowledge that science ultimately stands its test. As James once insisted:

> A pragmatist turns his back resolutely and once and for all upon a lot of inveterate habits dear to professional philosophers. He turns away from abstraction and insufficiency, from verbal solutions, from bad a priori reasons, from fixed principles, closed systems and pretended absolutes and origins. He turns towards concreteness and adequacy, towards facts, towards action and towards power. . . . It means the open air and possibilities of nature, as against dogma, artificiality and the pretence of finality in truth. (James, 1907, pp. 30–31]

Early on, pragmatists were particularly critical of the prevalence of behaviorist science, according to which human beings were seen as mechanically responding to stimuli from the outside. Instead, pragmatists proposed that humans are meaning-seeking subjects who communicate through the use of language and constantly engage in reflective interaction with others. According to pragmatic philosophers, human beings are therefore concerned with the situational, the practical, and the problem-solving dimensions of their lives. This also goes for social scientific endeavors. In his book *How We Think*, John Dewey developed a five-step research strategy or investigation procedure—sometimes also referred to as "abduction" (according to Peirce as a supplement to the approaches of deduction and induction)—according to which the investigator follows five steps towards obtaining knowledge. First, there is the occurrence of an unresolved situational problem—practical or theoretical—which creates genuine doubt. Second, this is followed by a specification of the problem in which the investigator might also either systematically or more loosely collect data about the problem at hand. Third, the investigator—now equipped with a specification of the problem—by way of his creative imagination introduces a hypothesis or a supposition about how to solve the problem. Fourth, the proposed hypothesis is now being elaborated and compared to other possible solutions to the problem, and the investigator based on reasoning carefully considers the possible consequences of the proposed hypothesis. Finally, the hypothesis is put into practice through an experimental or empirical testing by which the investigator checks if the intended consequences occur according to expectations and whether the problem is solved or not (Dewey, 1910). This research strategy thus starts out with genuine puzzlement and ends with problem solving.

Intéressant pour illustrer la démarche de recherche

In general, pragmatists therefore have been concerned with what they term "practical reasoning"; they are thus preoccupied with knowledge that has some practical impact *in* and *on* the reality in which it is used. Knowledge is active, not passive. Without privileging any specific part of the methodological toolbox, with its emphasis on abductive procedures, pragmatism has proved very useful particularly in explorative qualitative research as a framework for practice- and problem-oriented investigation, and pragmatism has for instance inspired researchers working within the so-called "grounded theory" perspective (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)—in fact one of the first self-denoted and systematically described qualitative methodologies—in which the purpose is to create workable scientific knowledge that can be applied to daily life situations. In recent years, sociologists, philosophers, and others have begun to take up pragmatism after quite a few years of absence from the intellectual agenda. There is thus mentioning of a "revival of pragmatism" in the new millennium (Sandbothe, 2000) that, for example, is evident in the works of Richard Rorty and Richard Sennett, just as French sociologist Luc Boltanski and his colleagues have heralded a pragmatic turn within French social theory, and within German sociology Hans Joas has been one of the key exponents of pragmatist-inspired social science.

Pragmatism heavily influenced the founding of the discipline of sociology on the North American continent. The official "date of birth" of sociology is often regarded as the opening of the first sociology department at the University of Chicago in 1892. The *Chicago School of Sociology* during the first decades of the twentieth century was instrumental in developing the discipline in general and "members" such as Robert E. Park, Florian Znaniecki, and William I. Thomas were particularly prominent in advancing a specifically qualitative stance in sociology. As such, and due to their inspiration from pragmatism, the Chicago sociologists were not keen on theoretical refinement in itself, believing sociology should be an empirical science and not a scholastic endeavor. As Park said, "We don't give a damn for logic here. We want to know what people do!" Knowing "what people do" thus became a trademark of the Chicago sociologists, and a range of empirical studies from the early twentieth century illustrate the prevalence of qualitative approaches and methods such as document analysis, interviews, and participant observation. The Chicago sociologists were keen to get out and study social life directly, often by use of participant observation. The purpose was to create conceptual apparatuses and theoretical ideas based on empirical material. Inspired by pragmatist notions about the use-value of science, Robert E. Park wanted sociology through empirical research to be part of public discussions, debates, and politics as a crucial part of modern democratic society. According to him, sociologists should leave the library and their offices and go out and "get the seat of their pants dirty in real research," as he once told his students (Park in Lindner, 1996, p. 81). Moreover, some of the early Chicago sociologists—Jane Addams, for example—also pioneered social work and action research and wanted to use sociology to promote social reform. By using the city of Chicago—a city with a population size that increased tenfold in less than one hundred years—as an empirical laboratory for all sorts of investigations, the sociologists explored—and still explore—city life as a concrete environment for understanding more encompassing social changes and transformations. In general, the Chicago School has throughout the years been characterized by a distinct qualitative and ethnographic orientation, focusing on studying people in their natural surroundings (the city), being critical of non-empirical research and theory, and being driven by a desire to uncover and understand patterns of human interaction. As Martin Bulmer pinpointed:

> [All the Chicago sociologists were] in some ways empiricists, keen upon the use of hypotheses and experimental verification. . . . Axioms, postulates, rational deductions, ideas and ideals are all deemed valuable when they can be made to function in actual experience, in the course of which they meet with constant modification and improvement. . . . All display the attitude of enquirers rather than of expositors of absolute knowledge; their most confident affirmations are expressed in a tone that shows that they do not regard them as final. [Bulmer 1984, p. 32]

Despite their preference for qualitative methods, Chicago sociologists have used any kind of material available for studying social life. Thus there are different strands within the Chicago School: the human ecology strand, the (dis)organization strand, the social psychology strand, and the action research strand used especially within social work. Each of these strands has prioritized different methodological approaches, theoretical understandings as well as different outcomes of research, but common to all has been an intense interest in qualitative empirical work. Some of the most prominent classic and today still-often-quoted studies conducted by Chicago sociologists during the early years were Harvey W. Zorbaugh's *The Gold Coast and the Slum* (1929), Clifford R. Shaw's *The Jack-Roller* (1930), Paul G. Cressey's *The Taxi-Dance Hall* (1932) and *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1918–1920) by William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki. Common to these otherwise methodologically different studies—respectively using participant observation, document analysis on letters and diaries, and interviewing and official statistics—were their interest in knowing what people do in particular situations and circumstances and to uncover the types of activities often taking place on the outskirts of society: deviance, crime, subcultures, and the like. In the first half of the twentieth century, Chicago sociology thus functioned as a pioneer in promoting a distinctly qualitative mentality that was later superseded by other institutions (Harvard and Columbia) and other methodological preferences but which is still today a vital force in American sociology.

Building on the insights from the early Chicago School of sociology (often referred to as the "first generation of Chicago Sociology"), several sociologists and social anthropologists—some of whom were themselves students of the early Chicagoans—during the 1940s and onwards began to develop the idea of *symbolic interactionism*, sometimes more

broadly described as *interactionism*. What began as a distinctly North American project later spread to the European continent. Some of the early proponents of symbolic interactionist social science with a strong emphasis on qualitative methods were Charles H. Cooley, Everett C. Hughes, Erving Goffman, Howard S. Becker, Herbert Blumer, and Norman K. Denzin—with Blumer responsible for originally coining the term "symbolic interactionism," which he admitted was a "barbarous neologism" (Blumer, 1969). Symbolic interactionism often refers to the social philosophy of George Herbert Mead as the founding perspective, which was later developed, refined, and sociologized by others. Mead was a central force in the development of pragmatism. Symbolic interactionism is based on an understanding of social life in which human beings are seen as active, creative, and capable of communicating their definitions of situations and meanings to others. According to Blumer, there are three central tenets of symbolic interactionism: (1) humans act toward things on the basis of the meanings they that the things have for them, (2) the meaning of such things is derived from or arises out of the social interaction that one has with one's fellows, and (3) these meanings are handled in and modified through an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters (Blumer 1969, p. 2). As is obvious from this, symbolic interactionists are concerned with how humans create meaning in their everyday lives and in how, as the term "symbolic interaction" indicates, this meaning is created and carved out through interaction with others and by use of various symbols to communicate meaning. As Blumer stated on the methodological stance of symbolic interactionism:

> Symbolic interactionism is a down-to-earth approach to the scientific study of human group life and human conduct. Its empirical world is the natural world of such groups and conduct. It lodges its problems in this natural world, conducts its studies in it, and derives its interpretations from such naturalistic studies. If it wishes to study religious cult behavior it will go to actual religious cults and observe them carefully as they carry on their lives. If it wishes to study social movements it will trace carefully the career, the history, and the life experiences of actual movements. If it wishes to study drug use among adolescents it will go to the actual life of adolescents to observe and analyze such use. And similarly with respect to other matters that engage its attention. Its methodological stance, accordingly, is that of direct examination of the empirical social world. [Blumer, 1969, p. 47]

Blumer argued for the development of "sensitizing concepts"—as opposed to "definitive concepts"—to capture social life theoretically; such concepts "gives the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances" (Blumer, 1954, p.7). Symbolic interactionism does per definition not privilege any specific methods or research procedures—anything capable of capturing human meaning making through symbolic interaction in everyday life and capable of providing sensitizing concepts will do. However, historically, due to its close association with Chicago sociology, symbolic interactionists have primarily worked with a variety of qualitative methods and used these to discover, represent, and analyze the meaning-making processes involved in human interaction is a variety of contexts. Although a branch of symbolic interactionism under the auspices of Manford Kuhn began to develop at the University of Iowa (the "Iowa School" as opposed to the "Chicago School" of Blumer and others) that prioritized more positivistic aspirations and used quantitative methods and experimental research designs, symbolic interactionism is to a large degree associated specifically with qualitative research, privileging the careful observation (and particularly *participant* observation) of social life in concrete and often naturally occurring circumstances (Manis & Meltzer, 1978). Today, symbolic interactionism is still very much alive and kicking—through conferences, book series, and a journal devoted to studies in symbolic interaction—and is an active part of American sociology and elsewhere, although the originality and initially provocative ideas of the pioneering protagonists of symbolic interactionism have gradually waned throughout the years.

One of the main proponents of interactionism was Erving Goffman, who throughout his career, which started at the University of Chicago in the early 1950s, gradually developed a perspective to study the minutiae of social life that still today is one of the most quoted and used within contemporary social research. Goffman in many ways personified qualitative social science in the mid-twentieth century due to his particular topics of interest as well as his specific means of investigating them. Goffman's main preoccupation throughout his career was to tease out the many miniscule and often overlooked rituals, norms, and behavioral expectations of the social situations of face-to-face interaction between people in public and private places—something

that at the time was often regarded with widespread skepticism by more rigorously oriented social researchers. This was indeed a time when the center of intellectual development and priority within the social sciences on the American continent had gradually shifted from the University of Chicago in the earlier parts of the twentieth century to Harvard University and Columbia University at mid-century with a concomitant shift from qualitative and particularly ethnographic methods to much more experimental, quantitative, and statistical methods. Not surprisingly, Goffman is often described as a maverick with his impressionistic and to some extent obscure approach to research methodology and ways of reporting his findings. Like one of his main sources of inspiration, Georg Simmel, Goffman keenly used the essay as a privileged means of communicating research findings, just as other literary devices such as sarcasm, irony, and metaphors were part and parcel of his methodological toolbox. Goffman was particularly critical of the use of many of the methods prevalent and valorized in sociology at his time. For instance, against the preference for statistical variable analysis and the privilege of quantitative methodology, he once stated:

> The variables that emerge tend to be creatures of research designs that have no substance outside the room in which the apparatus and subjects are located, except perhaps briefly when a replication or a continuity is performed under sympathetic auspices and a full moon. Concepts are designed on the run in order to get on with setting things up so that trials can be performed and the effects of controlled variation of some kind or another measured. The work begins with the sentence "we hypothesize that…," goes on from there to a full discussion of the biases and limits of the proposed design, reasons why these aren't nullifying, and culminates in an appreciable number of satisfyingly significant correlations tending to confirm some of the hypotheses. As though the uncovering of social life were that simple. Fields of naturalistic study have not been uncovered through these methods. Concepts have not emerged that re-ordered our view of social activity. Understanding of ordinary behavior has not accumulated; distance has. [Goffman, 1971, pp. 20–21]

Instead, Goffman opted for an unmistakable and distinctive qualitative research strategy aimed at charting the contours and contents of the all too ordinary and ever-present but nevertheless scientifically neglected events of everyday life. His work was characterized by an apparent methodological looseness that consciously and stylistically downplayed the importance of his own findings but which covered over the fact that his work actually uncovered heretofore empirically uncharted territory. Many of the titles of his books thus contained consciously diminutive subtitles such as "reports," "essays," or "microstudies" that gave the impression, however mistaken, that it should not be taken all too serious. Goffman willingly admitted on what others might have regarded as a dubious research strategy:

> Obviously, many of these data are of doubtful worth, and my interpretations—especially some of them—may certainly be questionable, but I assume that a loose speculative approach to a fundamental area of conduct is better than a rigorous blindness to it. [Goffman 1963, p. 4]

In his work, Goffman relied heavily on all sorts of empirical material. He conducted interviews with housewives; he explored an island community through in-depth ethnography; he investigated the trials and tribulations of patient life at a psychiatric institution by way of covert participant observation; he performed the role as a dealer in a Las Vegas casino in order to document and tease out the gambling dimensions of human interaction; he listened to, recorded and analyzed radio programs; and he more or less freely used any kind of qualitative technique, official and unofficial, to access the bountiful richness of social life. Despite his reliance on a varied selection of empirical input (or what he termed "slices of social life"), throughout his career, Goffman gradually developed and refined a unique research methodology by way of various metaphors intended to capture and highlight specific features of everyday life interaction. Goffman's perspective on qualitative research therefore is often referred to as "dramaturgy" because his main and most popular metaphors was the theatrical analogy in which he—in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*—in detail described social interaction *as if* it was a performance made by actors on a scene (Goffman, 1959).

However, Goffman's metaphorical cornucopia was much more than mere dramaturgy. He also invented and refined other metaphorical schemas: "The ritual metaphor" (looking at social life *as if* it was one big ceremonial event), "the game metaphor" (investigating social life *as if* it was inhabited by conmen and spies), and "the frame metaphor"

(concerned with showing how people always work towards defining and framing social situations in order to make them meaningful and understandable). All these different metaphors concentrated on the very same subject matter—patterns of human interaction, or, put in another way, social life at the micro level—and each metaphor spawned a spectacular number of analytical terms and sensitizing concepts, many of which today are household concepts in the social sciences (just think of "stigma," "impression management," "labeling," or "framing"). Moreover, they served as useful devices in which to embed the aforementioned varied empirical material, thereby giving it shape, meaning, and substance. Goffman's perspective later inspired new generations of sociologists in particular and qualitative researchers in general who have used him and his original methodology and colorful concepts to study a variety of conventional as well as new empirical domains such as tourist photography, mobile phone communication, and advertising (see, e.g., Jacobsen, 2010).

Ethnomethodology is another important tradition in the internal history of qualitative research that simultaneously builds on and extends the perspective provided by pragmatism, interactionism, and the dramaturgical work of Goffman. Like Goffman, ethnomethodologists take an interest in studying and unveiling the most miniscule realm of human interaction, and they rely on the collection of empirical data from a variety of sources in the development of their situationally oriented sociology. Ethnomethodology was initially a project masterminded by American sociologist Harold Garfinkel who in *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (1967) outlined the concern of ethnomethodology as the study of the "routine actions" and the often-unnoticed methods of meaning making used by people in everyday settings (hence the term *ethnomethodology* meaning "folk methods"). These routine activities and the continuously sense-making endeavors were part and parcel of the quotidian domain of everyday life (described by Garfinkel, in the characteristically obscure ethnomethodological terminology, as the "immortal ordinary society") that rest on common-sense knowledge and practical rationality. Inspired by the phenomenological sociology of Alfred Schütz as well as to some extent also the functionalism of Talcott Parsons, Garfinkel concerned himself with a classic question in sociology: how is social order possible? But instead of proposing abstract or philosophical answers to this question or proposing "normative force" as the main arbiter between people, Garfinkel—as a kind of "phenomenological empiricism" (Heap, 1980)—set out empirically to discover and document what people actually do whenever they encounter each other. True to the general pragmatist and interactionist perspective, ethnomethodologists rely on an image of human actors as knowledgeable individuals who through such activities as "indexicality," the "etcetera principle" and "accounts," in Ludwig Wittgenstein's terminology, "know how to go on." Social reality and social order are therefore not static or pre-given—rather they are the active outcome or "accomplishment" of actors' local meaning making amidst sometimes bewildering, confusing, and chaotic situations. As Garfinkel stated on the purpose and procedures of ethnomethodology—phrased in typical tortuous ethnomethodological wording:

> Ethnomethodological studies analyze everyday activities as members' methods for making those same activities visibly-rational-and-reportable-for-all-practical-purposes, i.e. 'accountable', as organizations of commonplace everyday activities. The reflexivity of that phenomenon is a singular feature of practical actions, of practical circumstances, of common sense knowledge of social structures, and of practical sociological reasoning…I use the term 'ethnomethodology' to refer to the investigation of the rational properties of indexical expressions and other practical actions as contingent ongoing accomplishments of organized artful practices of everyday life. [Garfinkel, 1967, p. vii, p. 11]

According to ethnomethodologists, there are many different methods available to tease out the situational and emerging order of social life that is based on members' methods for making activities meaningful. Ethnomethodology is, however, predominantly a qualitative tradition that uses typical qualitative methods such as interviews and observation strategies for discovering and documenting what goes on when people encounter everyday life, but they also like to provoke our ingrained knowledge of what is going on. Thus, in classic Durkheimian-inspired fashion, one particularly opportune ethnomethodological way to find out what the norms and rules of social life really are and how they work is to break them. For example, Garfinkel invented the "breaching experiments" aimed at provoking a sense of disorder in the otherwise orderly everyday domain so as to see what people do to restore the lost sense of order. Of these "breaching experiments" or 'incongruence

procedures"—that Garfinkel asked his students to perform—he wrote:

> Procedurally it is my preference to start with familiar scenes and ask what can be done to make trouble. The operations that one would have to perform in order to multiply the senseless features of perceived environments; to produce and sustain bewilderment, consternation and confusion; to produce the socially structured affects of anxiety, shame, guilt and indignation; and to produce disorganized interaction should tell us something about how the structures of everyday activities are ordinarily and routinely produced and maintained [Garfinkel, 1967, pp. 37–38]

Garfinkel, his colleagues, and students throughout the years performed a range of interesting studies—of courtroom interaction, jurors' deliberations, doctors' clinical practices, transsexuals' attempts at "passing" in everyday life, piano players' development of skills and style, medical staffs' pronunciation of patients' deaths, police officers' craft of peace keeping, pilots' conversation in the cockpit —aimed at finding out how everyday life (and particularly work situations) is "ordinarily and routinely produced and maintained" by using breaching experiments, but also less provocative methods. Later, ethnomethodology bifurcated into a "conversation analysis" strand on the one hand and what has been termed "conventional ethnographical ethnomethodology" on the other. Common to both strands has been a concern with uncovering the most meticulous aspects of human interaction—non-verbal and verbal. Just as Garfinkel studied the natural patterns of interaction in natural settings (the living room, the courtroom, in the clinic or elsewhere), so conversation analysts studied natural language (but also professional jargon) as used by people in ordinary circumstances. For instance, conversation analysts, such as Harvey Sacks and Emanuel Schegloff, intimately studied and analyzed the minutiae of turn-takings, categorizations, and sequences of verbal communication in order to see how people through the use of language create meaning and a coherent sense of what is going on. Characteristic of both strands of ethnomethodology is the strong reliance on qualitative research methods aimed at capturing and detailed describing the situational and emerging character of social order. In fact, ethnomethodologists strongly oppose positivistic research procedures aimed at producing universal "truths" or uncovering "general laws" about society and instead opt for a much more mundane approach to studying the locally produced orders and thoroughly episodic and situational character of social life (see, e.g., Cicourel, 1964). In a typical provocative respecification of Schütz's classic dictum, Garfinkel thus suggested that we are all sociologists, because we constantly search for meaning. The means and methods of inquiry of professional sociologists are thus not all that different from the various ways ordinary people in everyday life observe, inquire, or talk to one another. This is a principle shared with the hermeneutic strand, which was addressed earlier.

Most of the North American traditions mentioned here can be covered by the label of "creative sociologies" (Morris, 1977) because they first of all regard human beings as creative actors capable of and concerned with creating meaning in their lives, and secondly because they emphasize creative qualitative approaches to capture and analyze those lives. As Monica B. Morris recapitulated on these creative sociologies:

> The basic assumption underlying the 'creative' approaches to sociology are: that human beings are not merely acted *upon* by social facts or social forces; that they are constantly shaping and 'creating' their own social worlds in interaction with others; and that special methods are required for the study and understanding of these uniquely human processes. [Morris, 1977, p. 8]

These "special methods" have predominantly been varieties of qualitative methods. Common to most of the North American creative sociologies is also a distinct microsociological orientation aimed at mapping out and analyzing the distinctly quotidian dimensions of social life and society. Besides the various traditions that we have chosen to delineate as part of the internal story of qualitative research, we can also mention the important insights from social semiotics, existentialism, critical everyday life sociology, cultural studies, sociology of emotions, interpretive interactionism, and more recently actor-network theory that, however, will not be presented here.

A final tradition that can be mentioned, but which we will not analyze in detail here, is the tradition originating with structuralism in the first half of the twentieth century—the linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure and the structural anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss, for example, which eventually

developed into post-structuralism in the latter half of the century in the hands of figures such as Michel Foucault, a French philosopher and historian of ideas, who is among the most referenced authors in the social science as a whole. Structuralism was based on the idea that language is a system of signs whose meaning is determined by the formal relations between the signs (and not with reference to "the world") and post-structuralism pushed this idea further by arguing that the system is constantly moving and in flux, which is why, as Jacques Derrida (the leading exponent of deconstruction) would say, meaning is endlessly "deferred." In relation to qualitative research, we should say that Foucault (and to a lesser extent Derrida) was a significant inspiration for many forms of discourse analysis, which today exist in many different variants. One variant is heavily inspired by Foucault and an awareness of power relations in social worlds (e.g., Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008), while Discursive Psychology as another is not closely associated with Foucault or post-structuralism, but originates in the aforementioned ethnomethodology and conversation analysis (Sacks, Schlegoff), which was mentioned earlier (see Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori, 2011).

Ethnography

Before concluding this internal history, it is appropriate with a note on the early trade of anthropological and sociological ethnography, which cuts across the different philosophical paradigms discussed previously. In anthropology, Bronislaw Malinowski, who held the first chair in social anthropology at the London School of Economics, is together with Franz Boas, one of the founders of American cultural anthropology, considered as the pioneers of ethnographic fieldwork. Contrary to the armchair anthropology and "anthropology of the verandah" conducted by earlier members of the discipline, and thus in a situation in which there was practically no professional discourse on field work practice and experiences, Malinowski insisted on and practiced fieldwork methods of the kind that is performed by today's ethnographers. Conducting his famous study of the culture of the Trobriand Islanders, he stayed and lived among the natives for a period of almost three years. Inspired partly by psychologist Wilhelm Wundt, Malinowski conceptualized culture as a kind of toolbox containing the specific tools and means that people use in order to satisfy their needs. This functionalistic understanding had, of course, certain methodological implications. In order to obtain an adequate understanding of the culture under scrutiny and the functional meaning of its various elements, Malinowski introduced at least three important principles that still appear among the most important requirements of anthropological fieldwork. First, the researcher should live in the community and among the people that are being studied; second, the researcher should learn the specific language of the community and not rely on interpreters who might add a distance between researcher and community; third, researchers should participate and observe at the same time (participant observation) (Kristiansen & Krogstrup 2012).

In contemporary textbooks on anthropological fieldwork methods, Malinowski's study among the Trobriand Islanders is mentioned as a paradigm example, and generations of anthropological scholars have conducted fieldwork employing the principles laid out by Malinowski in the first decades of the twentieth century. And, as it has been indicated earlier in this chapter, anthropological fieldwork methods have been embraced by scholars from many other social science disciplines, especially sociology. The important point to be learned here is not necessarily the specific principles of ethnographic research per se, but the idea that ethnographic fieldwork should be considered among the important roots of qualitative research and thus that the development of ethnographic fieldwork by pioneers such as Malinowski and Boas in anthropology, and Robert E. Park, Ernest Burgess and Nels Anderson in (Chicago) sociology was triggered by a conception of the world as culturally pluralistic and diversified, which in turn called for the development and refinement of methods and procedures suited for grasping pluralities of the contemporary social world.

The Marginalizing History of Qualitative Research

After this tour de force through the internal history of qualitative research focusing on intellectual forerunners, theoretical paradigms, and methodological developments, let us turn to another way of describing the rise of qualitative research. It is difficult to understand current discussions in qualitative journals and handbooks without taking into account a widespread experience of not just studying the marginalized (something qualitative researchers often take pride in doing), but also of qualitative researchers themselves being marginalized as a research community. Several decades ago, Fritz Machlup (1956)

insisted that the social sciences as a whole suffered from an "inferiority complex" because the knowledge they could provide lacked the accuracy, law-like character, value-freedom and rigor of "real" science (such as natural science). Although this might be nothing less than a caricature of the social sciences in general and qualitative research in particular, perhaps qualitative sociologists, in this respect, may have suffered from an even more strongly felt inferiority complex than, for example, their colleagues working with statistics, surveys, or quantitative data analysis because qualitative sociology—almost per definition—has been seen by others and sometimes also by its own proponents as being opposed to the principles of "real science." As Stephen Jay Gould once asked, "Why do we downgrade . . . integrative and qualitative ability, while we exalt analytical and quantitative achievement? Is one better, harder, more important than the other?" (Gould in Peshkin, 1993, p. 23). There is little doubt that during the decades in the mid-twentieth century, qualitative research lived a rather shadowy and marginalized existence and was regarded with some suspicion (Mottier, 2005). These were the decades of the "orthodox consensus" (Giddens, 1976) within the social sciences, relying heavily on positivistic research methods, a behaviorist image of man and a general functionalist theoretical foundation. Only later did we witness a revival or renaissance of qualitative research (Gobo, 2005). However, there is also little doubt that some qualitative researchers—for example, Goffman—consciously sought out such a marginalized position vis-à-vis prevailing positivistic research methods that in many ways not only gradually helped changing the game regarding the validity or applicability of certain research methods, but also made some qualitative researchers almost immune to critique from colleagues working within more quantitative or statistical traditions. As reported by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, "qualitative researchers are called journalists or soft scientists. Their work is termed unscientific or only exploratory or subjective. It is called criticism, and not theory, or it is interpreted politically, as a disguised version of Marxism or secular humanism" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 7). While there is some truth to this, we believe that much of the marginalization history of qualitative research is based on a myth. For example, the classical positivists, as Michell (2003) has recently demonstrated, were not against qualitative research, so when qualitative researchers distance themselves from positivism, they most often construct a straw man and rarely, if ever, go back and read what early positivists such as Comte, Schlick, or Carnap in fact had to say about research and human experience.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2008) have even asked if the time has come to rehabilitate the classical positivists, perhaps in order for qualitative researchers to counter the marginality myth. It is noteworthy that August Comte (1798–1857) was responsible for founding both positivist philosophy and the science of sociology. His positivist philosophy reacted against religious dogma and metaphysical speculation and advocated a return to observable data. Émile Durkheim was another early sociologist who was influenced by positivist sociology and gave penetrating qualitative analyses of social phenomena. Positivism had in general a significant influence on culture and the arts of the nineteenth century, inspiring a move from mythological and aristocratic themes to a new realism, depicting in detail the lives of workers and the bourgeoisie (for some of this history, particularly in the British context, see Dale, 1989). In histories of music, Bizet's opera *Carmen*, featuring the lives of cigarette smugglers and toreadors, has been depicted as inspired by positivism, and Flaubert's realistic descriptions of the life of Madame Bovary can likewise be considered as a positivist novel. Impressionist paintings sticking to the immediate sense impressions, in particular the sense data of pointillism also drew inspiration from positivism. The founder of phenomenological philosophy, Husserl, was even led to state that if positivism means being faithful to the phenomena, then we, the phenomenologists, are the true positivists!

It is no doubt true that many qualitative researchers have felt marginalized because of what they feel is a threat from the positivist philosophy of science. But if one goes back to Comte, and even to twentieth century "logical positivists" like Carnap and Schlick, one finds a surprisingly great methodological tolerance instead of the oft-insinuated hostility towards qualitative methods (Michell, 2003). The threat to qualitative methods has not come from a philosophy of science, but from research bureaucracies and funding agencies, witnessed, for example, in the recent movement towards "evidence based practice" in the professions, which impend on the possibilities of conducting qualitative studies. As we will argue in the next section with reference to Latour (2000), it seems clear that the natural sciences are full of qualitative studies, which is further

indication that qualitative researchers have no reason to feel inferior or marginalized in relation to their peers, who employ methods normally associated with the natural sciences.

The Repressed History of Qualitative Research

As we have seen in the internal history of qualitative research, in some disciplines such as sociology, qualitative approaches have been "out in the open" for decades and remain so today. However, for other disciplines the situation has been quite different, and it is this that we wish to highlight by briefly telling what we call the "repressed" history of qualitative research. This analysis pertains to psychology in particular, but it may also be relevant for other disciplines. Psychology was born as a science, it is said, in 1879 when Wilhelm Wundt established the first psychological laboratory in Leipzig. Wundt then began to conduct psychological experiments, but he also inaugurated the tradition of *Völkerpsychologie*, a cultural-historical approach of studying human life through customs, myths, and symbols, somewhat along the lines suggested by Dilthey in the hermeneutic tradition addressed above. So Wundt both initiated a tradition of experimental psychology, which has since become the mainstream approach, using quantitative measures, but also a long qualitative tradition in psychology. The qualitative tradition, however, has been forgotten by the official journals and handbooks of psychology to an extent that makes it resemble repression.

The case is that many "founding fathers" in psychology that today are not particularly associated with qualitative research in fact based their work on exactly that. It has likely been seen as embarrassing to textbook writers to include such figures as Freud and Piaget among qualitative researchers, since qualitative research has not figured among the respectable methods of the science of psychology. Psychology has been described by Sigmund Koch as unique among the sciences in having decided on its methods before defining its subject matter (see Robinson, 2001). Psychology has had, as its subject matter, something almost as elusive as the soul (i.e., the mind, which is an entity that psychologists have never been able to agree on). It has been defined as inner experience, outer behavior, information processing, brain functioning, a social construction, and many other things. But instead of agreeing on the subject matter of their discipline, the majority of psychologists have since the mid-twentieth century constructed their science as a science of numbers in an attempt to emulate the natural sciences. There is something like a "physics envy" running through the history of psychology and related disciplines, which has implied an exorcism of qualitative research. The reader can try for herself to locate a standard textbook from psychology and check whether qualitative research is mentioned. The chance is very high that qualitative methods are not mentioned at all. Bruno Latour, an anthropologist who has actually entered into and observed research behavior in natural science laboratories, concludes laconically, "The imitation of the natural sciences by the social sciences has so far been a comedy of errors" (Latour, 2000, p.14). It is a comedy of errors chiefly because the natural sciences do not look at all like it is imagined in psychology and the social sciences. The natural sciences like physics, chemistry, biology, zoology, and geology are not built around statistics but often around careful qualitative descriptions of their subject matters. It can even be argued that such fields as paleontology rests on interpretative methods (Rorty, 1982). Anatomy and physiology are qualitative disciplines in large parts, describing the workings of the body, and it can—without stretching the concept too far—be argued that Darwin was a qualitative researcher, adept at observing and interpreting the natural world in its qualitative transformations.

If this analysis is valid, it means that qualitative research in psychology—as in most, if not all, human and social sciences—looks much more like natural science than is normally imagined and is much older than usually recognized. Here we can mention not just Wundt's cultural psychology, but also William James' study of religious experience, Freud's investigations of dreams and his clinical method more broadly, Gestalt psychologists' research on perception, Piaget's interviews with children, Bartlett's studies of remembering, and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the body. These are routinely addressed in psychological textbooks—after all they have all been formative of the discipline—but their *qualitative research methods* are almost always neglected or repressed. The history of interviewing as a qualitative research method is closely connected to the history of psychology (especially in its clinical and therapeutic variants), and some of this history is told in this book's chapter on qualitative interviewing. Suffice it here to say that interviewing became a method in the human and social sciences with Freud's psychoanalysis around 1900, and we refer the reader to the interview chapter for the details.

Although Freud's status as a theorist of the mind has been much debated in recent years, perhaps his main contribution—simultaneously using the conversation as a knowledge-producing instrument *and* as a "talking cure"—remains as relevant as ever. This makes it even stranger that Freud and the other psychological pioneers have been repressed as *qualitative* psychologists from the mainstream of the discipline. It is hard to imagine that psychology and similar sciences could have achieved their relatively high impact on society had they not employed what we call qualitative methods to zoom in on significant aspects of human and social life.

The Social History of Qualitative Research

Like all forms of social science, qualitative research exists in social, economic, cultural, and historical contexts, and must be understood in relation to these. Taking this as a point of departure, it makes good sense that qualitative research experienced a renaissance from the late 1960s onwards. On a basis of a somewhat Western-biased or ethnocentric worldview, the 1960s can be considered as a starting point for some major changes in life forms, social institutions, and the whole social fabric of society. As Gordana Jovanovic (2011) has argued, the legitimacy of some of the apparently solid social institutions such as the marriage and the family were questioned, and a more pluralistic and differentiated picture began to appear in terms of social groups, and new social movements making claims in favor of the environment, global peace, and women's and student's rights emerged. Together with the already existing critique of positivism and a universal rational method put forward by scholars such as Paul K. Feyerabend (1975), these changes, Jovanovic argues, spurred the belief that traditional natural science and causally oriented research models were inadequate in terms of studying and understanding these new forms of social life. Therefore there was a need to develop approaches that could uncover the meanings and nature of the unexpected and apparently provocative, disturbing, and oppositional social phenomena:

> In these altered social circumstances, in which views concerning both science and the position of science had changed, it became possible to pose different research questions, to shift the focus of research interests, to redefine the research situation and the role of its participants—in a word, conditions were created for what histories of qualitative methods usually describe as the 'renaissance' of qualitative research. [Jovanovic, 2011, p. 18]

In other words, changes in life forms, world views, and cultural practices were constituent of the re-emergence of qualitative research on the scientific scene in the 1960s and 1970s. And as we have touched upon earlier in this chapter (see section "The Internal History of Qualitative Research"), to some extent this re-emergence of qualitative research (at least among some of the early Chicagoans) has been associated with emancipation and with a practical use of social and human science knowledge in favor of underprivileged groups in society. Such history writing, however, unveils only one specific aspect of the interconnectedness of qualitative research on the one hand and the social fabric on the other.

The social history of qualitative research has not yet been written, but it should also approach its development in another way, namely as deeply related to management and industrial organizations (cf. the famous Hawthorne study that involved interviews with thousands of workers with the aim of increasing productivity) and also advertisements and commercial research (focus groups, consumer interviews, etc.). From a Foucauldian perspective, qualitative research does not just spring from the countercultural and emancipatory movements of the 1960s and 1970s but may also have become part of the soft and hidden forms of power exertion in the confessional "interview society" (Atkinson & Silverman, 1997), and—contrary to its self-understanding—qualitative research may quite often function as a tool in the hands of the powerful (cf. the use of focus groups for marketing and political purposes).

As discussed by Brinkmann and Kvale (2005), the focus of the economies of Western societies has shifted from efficient production of goods to customers' consumption of the goods produced. What is important is no longer to make products as stable and unfailing as possible, but rather to make markets by influencing buyers through marketing. Henry Ford is supposed to have said that customers could get the Model T in any color they wanted, as long as they preferred black, but in today's post-Fordist economy, such standardization is clearly outdated. What is important today is not just the quality of the product, but especially its style, the story behind it, the experiences it generates, and what it reveals about the owner's self-in short, its hermeneutic qualities. Products are sold with inbuilt planned

obsolescence, and advertisements work to change customers and construct their desires continually in order for new products to find new markets. Softer, more concealed forms of power gradually replace the bureaucratic structures of industrial society with its visible hierarchies and governance through reward and punishment.

To begin writing the recent social history of qualitative research, we may note how, in consumer society, soft qualitative research has been added to the repertoire of social science methodologies, often superseding the bureaucratic forms of data collection in standardized surveys and quantitative experiments. While a textbook on quantitative methodology may read like a manual for administrators and engineers, qualitative guidebooks read more like manuals for personnel counselors and advertisers, stressing emotions, empathy, and relationships. Although qualitative methods are often pictured as progressive and even emancipatory, we should not overlook the immersion of these methods in a consumer society, with its sensitivity towards experiences, images, feelings, and lifestyles of the consumers (Kvale, 2008). The qualitative interview, for example, provides important knowledge for manipulating consumers' desires and behavior through psychologically sophisticated advertising. One of the most significant methods of marketing in consumer society is—not surprisingly—qualitative market research. More than a decade ago, it already accounted for $2 billion to $3 billion worldwide (Imms & Ereaut, 2002), and according to one estimate, 5 percent of all British adults have taken part in market research focus groups. Although a major part of qualitative interviewing today takes place within market research, the extensive use of qualitative research interviews for consumer manipulation is hardly taken into account in the many discussions of qualitative research and its emancipatory nature.

Concluding on the sketchy social history of qualitative research, we may return to the sociology department at University of Chicago, which has been mentioned already as an important institution in terms of nurturing qualitative research in a variety of forms from the late 1920s. We have not, however, reflected on the socio-historical conditions that might explain why the emergence of qualitative research approaches emerged exactly here at this specific time. In our view, there seem to be a least two answers to this admittedly complex question. First, the sociology department was initially uniquely crowded with intellectuals who were influenced by pragmatic and interactionist thought, by Continental (particularly German) thinking stressing description and understanding before causal explanation, and also by journalism, by ecology models, and essayistic writing. At the same time, there was a strong spirit of wanting to link sociological research with engagement in social issues and social reform (Abbott, 1999; Bulmer, 1984). Second, the early Chicagoans' initial interest in immigrants, patterns of urban development, crime, and the general social dynamics of city life stimulated scholars such as Thomas, Znaniecki, Park, and Burgess to develop and employ research strategies that were different from the quantitative ones (see Jørgensen & Smith, 2009). One might say that the study of the complexity of new city life craved methodological considerations and research strategies that made the qualitative perspective come in handy. Thus in order to understand and grasp the cultural complexities of immigrant communities, the social worlds of marginalized people, and the segmentation of cities in distinctive zones, these researchers were somehow bound to employ and advance qualitative methods and techniques such as biographical research, fieldwork, and mapping.

The Technological History of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research indeed depends on human beings observing, interacting with, and talking to each other, but its history has also been driven by technological developments. It is difficult to imagine qualitative research as we know it today without the invention of the portable tape recorder, and later digital recording devices, and also the whole range of software that enables computer-assisted analyses of qualitative materials. The development of these technologies has created new opportunities and possibilities for researchers in regard to collecting, managing, and analyzing qualitative data (Schwandt, 2001, p. 27). However, not only have qualitative researchers adopted and made direct use of different technological devices in the research process, technological advances have also spurred new qualitative approaches and methods. The technological history of qualitative research, we contend, is thus a history of researchers making use of technological artifacts not specifically or purposely developed for qualitative research, of revising their methods in response to technological innovation, and of the development of technologies specifically designed for research purposes. We briefly summarize this technological

history by examining the ways that technological innovations have transformed and developed both the collection and the analysis of qualitative data.

Data Collection

Just as technological inventions have affected the general history of mankind in a variety of ways, technological innovations have triggered a number of major changes or shifts in the history qualitative research and methodology. The first, and admittedly trivial, technologically driven shift was brought about by advances in transportation technology. In the very early days of anthropology (i.e., before Malinowski's groundbreaking works in the Trobriand Islands), anthropologists typically relied on secondhand materials gathered by others such as documents, travel logs, and reports written by colonial officials, missionaries, participants in scientific expeditions, or travelling salesmen. Unsurprisingly, this production of knowledge about cultures and social groups (later known as "armchair research") without ever meeting or interacting with them has later been criticized for lacking authenticity and thus for drawing conclusions on the basis of insufficient or inadequate data (Markle, West, & Rich, 2011). However, as transportation technology improved and made long-distance travelling easier and affordable, anthropologists began to travel around the globe and to practice what has become known as fieldwork, thus immersing themselves in the lives of the people under study, interacting with them, and taking part in their practices and producing data on site. In some cases, these traveling scholars brought with them new technologies such as travel typewriters and typed field notes while staying in the field. At this early stage of qualitative research, qualitative researchers invested massive energy in recording data. Researchers conducting interviews or doing observations often made handwritten summaries of interviews or conversations or wrote detailed field notes in their notebooks. At this point, a great deal of the researcher's work consisted of making records of her experiences in the field, or simply to produce data and make them storable.

This situation was dramatically changed by the invention and use of audio recorders. The introduction of these devices in the practice of qualitative research also constitutes a substantial methodological advance since they made it possible for researchers to collect and record information from observations or from interviews simultaneously. Being able to record information as an integrated part of the data-gathering process enabled researchers to collect larger piles of data and to dedicate more efforts to the process of analysis. Furthermore, the fact that researchers could record conversations with participants, have them transcribed, and thus be able to return to them *as they actually appeared* constituted a major methodological progress. The process of making transcripts, and the following reading and re-reading, enabled the researcher to familiarize herself with the data in a completely new way (Gibbs, Friese, & Mangabeira, 2002). The making of transcripts gradually has become conceived of as an integral part of the qualitative research process since the intense listening to recordings makes the researcher aware of subtle and taken-for-granted dimensions in the participant's talk that researchers without recordings "would routinely fail to notice, fail to remember, or be unable to record in a sufficient detail by taking hand-written notes as it happened" (Rapley, 2007, p. 50).

In a somewhat similar way, photographic technology has had an impact on qualitative research. The use of photography as an aspect of qualitative research goes back to the early works of Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead and their photographic ethnography of Balinese character (1942). Bateson and Mead's photographic report has achieved a landmark status among anthropologists and, although their innovative work was greeted with some puzzlement (Jacknis, 1988), the use of photographs has become popular not only within a special branch of anthropology but among a much broader community of qualitative researchers working within the field of visual methods (see Collier & Collier, 1986; Harper, 2012; Pink, 2007).

Still another shift was brought about by video recording and analysis (Gibbs, Friese & Mangabeira, 2002). Digital technologies have opened up new ways of collecting, managing, and analyzing qualitative data. The use of video recordings have been employed within a broad field of qualitative studies, and since it allows the researcher to re-observe situations over and over again and thus discover new facets and aspects of their structure and processes, this technology appears among the standard data-collecting techniques in qualitative research. The most recent qualitative methodological innovations have been catalyzed by the development of the Internet. Not only has the Internet made it possible to collect data in new ways, it has also created new forms of sociability, which in turn have catalyzed the development of existing qualitative methods.

The E-Interview represents one such example of how modern information and communication

technology have spurred innovative data collecting processes. E-Interviewing may be found in a variety of forms, but basically it entails a researcher and a research participant (or a group of participants) communicating through a sequence of e-mails involving questions and answers. As such, E-Interviewing appears similar to conventional e-mail communication and thus is quite different from face-to-face interviewing, where interviewer and interviewee interact directly in a real-time social encounter. Obviously (and to some extent similar to telephone interviewing, which of course is another technologically facilitated data-collection technique), such Internet-based data collection has some advantages: it is cost-effective since it eliminates travel and transcription expenses, it makes it possible to interview people who would not have accepted to participate in a face-to-face interview, and it may provide opportunities for accessing data that would have been difficult to obtain through direct face-to-face interaction (Bampton & Cowton, 2002). Thus some qualitative researchers, such as Holge-Hazelton (2002), have found that, in researching sensitive and personal topics using E-Interviews, there was a remarkable lack of inhibition among participants as rapport was quite easy to establish. On the other hand, being a distanced, asynchronous form of interaction, the E-Interview provides no access to the non-verbal and tacit signs that are highly valuable in terms of managing the interview process and thus in improving the quality of data collecting (Bampton & Cowton, 2002).

Whereas technological innovations and new devices have been adapted by social scientists, thereby facilitating the use of well-established research strategies and methods, technological inventions do, of course, also lead to or mediate new forms of social life, which in turn may call for a rethinking of common textbook methods. One illustrating example is found within ethnography. Traditional ethnographic techniques cover a variety of procedures that may assist the researcher in her face-to-face dealings with people, be it individual human beings or groups of people. However, as more and more social interactions unfold on the Internet or are otherwise mediated by information technologies, ethnographers and other qualitative researchers have been urged to adapt their strategies to the nature of these rapidly developing online social worlds.

Robert V. Kozinets is a pioneer in the field of adapting traditional ethnography procedures (of entrée, collecting data, making valid interpretations, doing ethical research, and providing possibilities for participant's feedback). Extending the strengths of ethnographic methods to series of qualitative studies of online communities, he coined the term "netnography" to grasp the special trade of ethnographic study on online communities. In the words of Kozinets (2002, p. 62), this approach "is a new qualitative research methodology that adapts ethnographic research techniques to study the cultures and communities that are emerging through computer-mediated communications." Netnography, then, exemplifies how technology affects the nature of social life and how, in turn, qualitative researchers adapt to new and emerging forms of sociability by rethinking and extending well-established techniques and procedures. Netnographies have been conducted in a variety of online communities in order to grasp their specific meanings and symbolisms. One recent example is O'Leary and Carroll's study (2012) of online poker subcultures in which netnography proved to be a useful and cost-effective method of providing insight into the social ecosystem of online poker gamblers and specific attitudes pertaining to this community.

Data Analysis

Not long ago, management and analysis of qualitative data typically involved (and often still does) an overwhelming amount of paperwork. Qualitative researchers buried themselves in their handwritten field notes, interview transcripts, or other documents. Trawling systematically through their material, researchers marked chunks of data and organized these bites of data in more or less complicated index systems, drew models of emerging analytical patters, discovered data that challenged the emerging conceptual framework, and ended up, in most cases, with a final report, dissertation, or research paper. For today's qualitative researchers, this caricature lacks an important dimension: the computer and often also various types of data analysis software.

As pointed out by Raymond Lee & Nigel Fielding (2004), the launch of the first generations of word-processing programs was a great help to most qualitative researchers. These programs made it possible to store, edit, systematize, and modify collected materials in a far more effective and less time-consuming way. Qualitative researchers no longer had to make large piles of photocopies in which chunks of text were marked or cut out and placed in separate holders since the new word-processing packages provided very useful

searching, copying, cutting, and pasting facilities. Similarly, conventional database programs (such as Microsoft Access) found their way into the realm of qualitative research supporting the analysis of interviews and other qualitative materials (Myer, Gruppe, & Franz, 2002).

In the early 1980s, the first generation of qualitative analysis programs was introduced (Weitzman 2000, p. 804). These types of programs, which have later been referred to as CAQDAS, or Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (Lee & Fielding, 1995), facilitated direct coding of the data and subsequent searches in the coded material. Later versions of these first generations of CAQDAS allowed for quick assessments of overlapping or inter-relating concepts, retrieval of data on specific themes from participant with assigned with specific attribute values (Lee & Fielding 2004). Obviously, such facilities support the more sophisticated and conceptual work of qualitative research since they enable the systematic investigation of emergent patterns and relationships in the data. These later generations of programs that assist more complex and interpretive analytic tasks have been termed "theory builders" since they contain tools and procedures that support the development of theoretical schemes and conceptual frameworks. Some of these programs also support collaborative qualitative research processes allowing members of a research team to merge their analytic work in an integrated project and similarly for assessing quality measures such as inter-coder reliability. Furthermore, some packages support the integration of various kinds of digitized qualitative data such as photographs, video recordings, and rich text files, and some also contains tools for coding not only in textual data but directly in digitized speech and video recordings.

The introduction of computer-technology in the processes of collecting, managing, and analyzing qualitative data has triggered important discussions in the research community on the nature of qualitative research and on the limitations and potentials offered by these new technologies. A core issue in these debates has been the possible (and perhaps non-reflected) ways that technology impacts on the practice of qualitative research and analysis (Buston, 1997). In terms of data analysis software, technological skeptics have expressed concerns that most software packages stimulate a specific (code-based) analytic strategy (Seidel, 1991)—that the widespread use of CAQDAS eventually may result in an unhappy homogenization and convergence towards a certain type of analysis and even towards a new kind of data management orthodoxy (Barry, 1998; Coffey, Holbrook, & Atkinson, 1996; Welsh, 2002); that use of computers and software packages creates a distance between researcher and data and prevents the researcher from immersing herself in the data (Roberts & Wilson, 2002); and finally that many software packages are somewhat incompatible with the ambiguous nature of qualitative data and thereby pose a threat to the holistic nature of qualitative research (Kelle, 1995; Mason, 2002; Weaver & Atkinson, 1994). On the other hand, technological optimists (e.g., Richards & Richards, 1994) do not neglect the potential pitfalls of non-reflexive use of CAQDAS, but emphasize how software packages enable management and analysis of large pools of qualitative data, and that CAQDAS provides procedures for rigorous and transparent analytic work and thus potentially for enhancing the quality of qualitative research. Similarly, optimists also argue that, although the quantitative tools in analysis software may be used recklessly, sensible use may provide the researcher with a quick and thought-stimulating overview of characteristic patterns or indicate possible relations or hypotheses to be explored. The powerful search engines at the heart of most CAQDAS packages are also effective tools for improving the validity of analysis, which is also the case concerning the visualizing or model building facilities with direct data access. Although this somewhat exaggerated polarization between technological skeptics and optimists is grounded in the nature and specific features of the available software packages, the different positions often also reflect some more fundamental differences in terms of qualitative methodology approaches. Researchers within the phenomenological tradition that emphasize the subjective understanding and interpretation of behavior and verbalizations often tend to view CAQDAS more negatively than qualitative researchers working within the paradigm of grounded theory, content analysis, or other approaches that may profit from the coding and quantification tools available in many programs (Berg, 2003, p. 266).

From this technological history, it appears that technological advances have transformed and advanced key elements in the practice of qualitative research (i.e., collecting, managing, and analyzing data). Technological developments (sometimes carried out by qualitative researchers themselves in collaboration with technicians and computer engineers) have broadened the methodological repertoire of qualitative researchers and have brought about new ways of gathering, managing, and analyzing

data. Thus technological innovations have changed and transformed the practical tasks of qualitative research as well as its scope and potentials. Due to technological development, qualitative researchers today spent less time recording and producing data than they did a few decades ago, just as new ways of working with and looking at data became possible with the launch of analysis software and when audio and video recordings enabled the researcher to store and return to situations as they originally appeared. The technological history of qualitative research thus reminds us that qualitative researchers continually reflect on and adjust their methods not only to fit the actual phenomenon under study, but also to a broader milieu of cultural factors such as technological innovations (Markle, West & Rich, 2011).

Concluding Thoughts About the Future

It would be no exaggeration to conclude that, during the last decades, the broad church of qualitative research has reached a strong position within the human and the social sciences. As our six histories have suggested, different social, cultural, material, intellectual, and technological changes have spurred the emergence of new qualitative methods and innovations of well-known and celebrated approaches. Furthermore, strong efforts to describe and delineate qualitative procedures and research guidelines (in textbooks and qualitative curricula at universities) within the variety of approaches from grounded theory, content analysis, interaction process analysis, discourse analysis, and others have contributed to the relative success and widespread acceptance of qualitative research as "real science" in the research community as well and in the public sphere. As qualitative researchers, we of course welcome this situation. However, it might be fruitful to consider the possible, often neglected side effect of this "scientification" of qualitative research. Almost twenty years ago, Valerie Janesick warned qualitative researchers against the pitfall that cultivating and outlining procedures of qualitative methods could result in researchers losing sight of the subject matter and thus gradually undermining the potential of qualitative research. Like others, she referred to this tendency as "methodolatry" that she designated:

> a combination of method and idolatry, to describe a preoccupation with selecting and defending methods to the exclusion of the actual substance of the story being told. Methodolatry is the slavish attachment and devotion to method that so often overtakes the discourse in the education and human service fields. [Janesick, 1994 p. 215]

Whether methodolatry in the qualitative research community is interpreted as an expression of some sort of "physics envy" among qualitative researchers, or as an adjustment of qualitative research to the public demand for evidence-based knowledge (which often is confused with positivist and experimental studies), the consequences of such qualitative methodological fetishism might be detrimental for qualitative research. Psychologist Kerry Chamberlain has discussed how privileging questions of method over all other important questions pertaining to the research process deprives qualitative research its distinctive characteristics as a creative, flexible, interpretive enterprise with a strong critical potential. If qualitative research is confused with categorizing and illustrating talk, instead of interpreting and theorizing the contents of it, and if qualitative researchers uncritically adopt conceptions of validity and reliability from positivism and fail to acknowledge the ideological base of the trade, we will compromise essential aspects of our historical legacy (Chamberlain, 2000) and perhaps even the raison d'être of qualitative research.

We make no claim that methodolatry is standard among qualitative researchers. However, we have registered that discussions of such tendencies have emerged within several subfields of qualitative research. Some (e.g., Steiner 2002) have even concluded that the majority of qualitative research could be characterized as "scientistic" due to its concern with generalizability, objectivity, and rationality. Others have used George Ritzer's (2008) McDonaldization thesis to argue that we are witnessing a McDonaldization of qualitative research. According to Ritzer, the cultural process of McDonaldization is characterized by efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control—all of which seem to favor standardized methodologies in qualitative research. Nancarrow and colleagues have concluded the following about the impact of McDonaldization on qualitative research:

> Just as McWorld creates 'a common world taste around common logos, advertising slogans, stars, songs, brand names, jingles and trademarks' [...], the qualitative research world also seems to be moving towards a common world taste for an instantly recognisable and acceptable research method that can be deployed fast. [Nancarrow, Vir, and Barker, 2005, p. 297]

With this risk in mind, we find it appropriate to remind ourselves of the core values and

characteristics of qualitative research. Privileging method over the subject matter of research and developing rigid methodological straitjackets will not bring qualitative research closer to "the royal road of scientificity" (Lather, 2005 p. 12), but rather the opposite. Only by reminding ourselves of our historical legacy and embracing the unpredictable, flexible, and messy nature of qualitative research can we practice, develop, and fertilize our trade.

Taking a look into the future of qualitative research necessarily involves a reflection on the possible lines of development within the field of computer-assisted qualitative research. Since technological advances keep a steady pace and since qualitative researchers continuously seek out the potential of newly available research technologies, innovations that strengthen the nature and widen the scope of qualitative research are to be expected. In the early 2000s, it was still considered an open question whether the development of voice-recognition software could lead to computer-supported interview transcription (Flick 2002, p. 17). At present, however, some voice-recognition software packages have transcription modes and speech-to-text modes that support the transformation of (certain kinds) of talk into text. Although the speech-to-text software still needs some improvement in order to free research assistants or secretaries from the work of transcription, reaching this goal is not at the forefront of the innovative efforts put forward by the proponents of computer-facilitated qualitative research. The cutting-edge developments of CAQDAS seem to point at new and interesting directions. One emerging and promising field is the integration of geographical information systems with the use of CAQDAS. Lately, qualitative researchers such as Fielding & Cisneros (2009) and Verd & Porcel (2012) have described how data from Geographical Information System (GIS) could be integrated in software packages supporting qualitative analysis. Thus Verd & Porcel applied a form of qualitative GIS in a study of an urban transformation project in the city of Barcelona in order to investigate the social production of urban space. And in addition to opening a completely new strand of qualitative urban research (or perhaps more correctly revitalizing the urban sociology of the early Chicagoans by adding new data and technologies) that stimulates a new form of sensitivity towards the spatial dimensions of social world, such creative synthesis of GIS technology and CAQDAS has added new concepts to the vocabulary of qualitative research such as geocoding or georeferencing, or "the type of information processing that consists in the geographical localization and placing of qualitative material such as photographs, field notes, text fragments of documents and any other information." (Verd & Porcel, 2012, paragraph 14). The CAQDAS trend in qualitative research can be seen as aligned with the scientistic push for standardization, but it can also be looked upon in a more balanced way. Although uncritical use of CAQDAS admittedly might fuel processes of methodolatry (stimulating the technical side over the interpretive side), there still seems to be strong potential in using CAQDAS to strengthen the qualitative investigation of some forms of audio-visual data (such as video data) or data sources (geographical and spatial) that until recently have been used primarily by quantitative social researchers. The fruitful mixing of qualitative analysis software with seemingly non-qualitative data rests on the creative and imaginative work of qualitative researchers that dare challenge traditional conceptions such as the sharp demarcations of qualitative and quantitative research. This might be an example of a more general development related to the whole mixed-methods movement.

Other contemporary qualitative researchers argue that we need to move in the exact opposite direction of methodolatry. The traditions that are prevalent in the *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by Denzin and Lincoln, favor a more political, even activist, attitude to qualitative research, which is based on ethical values of care and community (rather than validity and reliability) and employs aesthetic means (e.g., borrowed from literature and the arts) to favor social justice. Today, the tension between those on the one hand who seek to use qualitative methods to do "normal science" (in a Kuhnian sense) and employ standardized formats to communicate their findings, and those on the other hand who experiment with non- and even anti-methodological approaches (e.g., drama, poetry, autoethnography) is central to the field of qualitative research. The time might have come to ask if there is anything that holds the many different practices together that go by the name "qualitative research"—other than the name itself. Some scholars give a negative answer and go so far as to argue that we are—or should be—in a position of "post" qualitative research (St. Pierre, 2011), meaning that the term has lost its rhetorical force and simply freezes inquiry rather than setting our thinking free. Others (e.g., Hammersley, 2011) find that the current fragmentation and experimentation in qualitative research risks rendering qualitative research

redundant in the eyes of society. A field with so much inner tension might not be taken seriously.

Our goal in this context is of course not to settle this discussion once and for all. As the historical contributions presented in this chapter demonstrate, qualitative research represents a range of rich and vibrant approaches to the study of human lives and social phenomena. As we have seen in this chapter, the term itself—qualitative research—is barely 100 years old, and we are confident that if the term is no longer useful, then researchers of the future will have to invent other concepts to designate the process of studying our social and personal worlds. That it is worthwhile and necessary to study ourselves as human beings, with all the qualitative characteristics of our experiences and actions, seems to be as true as ever. And the fact that the landscape of qualitative research is extremely variegated might not be too surprising given the complexities of the subject matter.

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