

Toward a Methodology of Chance: On Obstacles to Research and Their Advantages

Jonathan Yahalom

University of California, Los Angeles and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Los Angeles, California

This article presents an argument about the advantages of embracing obstacles that arise while conducting research. Through analysis of specific obstacles encountered during research on family caregiving for Alzheimer's disease in Oaxaca, Mexico, this article makes a case for what is termed *methodological agility*, an approach for how qualitative inquiry invites the use of research instruments to accommodate to the contingencies of a given field site. In Oaxaca, methods inspired by focus group interviewing and constructivist theory were engendered to respond to cultural and linguistic obstacles encountered during the collection of data and an underlying epistemological dilemma. In so doing, this article illustrates how the unique obstacles to conducting research are advantages in themselves, opportunities for researchers to strengthen methodological rigor by directly addressing, embracing, and resolving the broader structures that contextualize the data they seek to acquire.

Keywords: qualitative research methods, focus group interviewing, cross-cultural research, Oaxaca, Alzheimer's disease

Qualitative psychology is celebrated for its capacity to attend to the richness of human experience. In contrast to quantitative methods that focus on the measurable observations one is able to draw of the world (measures of frequency and correlation), qualitative inquiry emphasizes depth to address what is being studied of the world and how it is experienced (Wertz, 2011a). For clini-

cians like myself, it matters that the frequency of mental health consultations among a given population is falling (a quantitative finding), but equally important is understanding of why individuals make that decision—whether due to finances, surrounding stigma, misunderstanding of services, or other factors.

That qualitative research strives to attend to the details of human experience is well known. Perhaps less appreciated in the literature is its *methodological agility*. What I mean by this term is the way in which the very goals of qualitative inquiry necessitate the use of research instruments to accommodate to the contingencies of a given field site rather than forcing the field site to conform to instruments. This term and its relevance to research practice draw on an important theoretical–procedural distinction: *methodology* (the underlying theoretical orientation to a given research project) is distinct from and importantly informs the use of *research methods* (the procedures used to acquire and analyze data).¹ This article defends theoretical methodological agility as it provides an

Jonathan Yahalom, Department of Psychiatry, University of California, Los Angeles, and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Los Angeles, California.

The Duquesne University Institutional Review Board approved the research conducted in this article (Protocol 2014-02-18). This study was funded through generous financial support offered by McNulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts of Duquesne University.

I thank Ruthellen Josselson, Mary Gergen, Leswin Laubscher, Roger Brooke, and Elizabeth Fein; Paola Sesia and Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, La Biblioteca de Investigación Juan de Córdova; the University of California, Los Angeles Chicano Studies Research Center; Taurino Alejandro Mendoza Martínez, Janet Chavez Santiago, and the many other individuals who contributed toward this study.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Jonathan Yahalom, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 11301 Wilshire Boulevard, Building 401, Los Angeles, CA 90073. E-mail: jjahalom@ucla.edu

¹ I thank an anonymous reviewer to an earlier version of this article for pointing out this important distinction.

important condition for procedural methodic agility. The methodological valuing of agility allows one to be ready to be methodically agile on the ground, prepared to encounter and embrace unexpected circumstances while conducting research.

I anticipate that many qualitative researchers implicitly leverage methodological agility as evidenced through the methods they come to adopt. In ethnographic terms, [Wacquant \(2011\)](#) described a strategy of tracing the circulation of a given research topic wherever it might appear, among different actors and contexts, akin to what [Packer \(2010\)](#) described as conducting a “regional ontology” and [Marcus \(1995\)](#) described through conducting multisite ethnography to accommodate to geographically complex topics of inquiry. [Lather and Smithies \(1997\)](#) described a “methodology of getting lost” to account for the way in which conducting qualitative research challenged preformulated assumptions and approaches to understand human experience; [Kamberelis and Dimitriadis \(2005\)](#) similarly depict researchers as *bricoleurs* who use whatever they find at hand for the services of conducting research; and [Yanchar, Gantt, and Clay \(2005\)](#) called for a “critical methodology” that would destabilize methodological dogmatism in the service of innovation based on epistemological difficulties. Last, and perhaps most pertinent to this article, [Slaney and Tafreshi \(2018\)](#) defended the idea of a “methodological pragmatism” that encourages researchers to view methods as a set of “tools” to draw on based on their usefulness rather than a perspective of methods that researchers are committed to on the basis of previously decided theoretical positions.

The sense of methodological agility I wish to defend in this article might be descriptive of qualitative inquiry, and investigators are likely aware of how research methods are often adapted to meet research needs. But with the few aforementioned exceptions, rarely is this aspect of qualitative research discussed. In this article I seek to highlight the way in which agility is not simply a secondary characteristic of conducting research—and not simply a matter of employing various research methods—but rather is epistemologically foundational to the very nature of qualitative research itself. The broad thesis in this article is that the unique obstacles to conducting research are advantages in themselves, invitations for researchers to

strengthen design rigor by directly addressing, embracing, and resolving the broader structures that contextualize the data they seek to acquire. Doing so not only fosters greater analytical reflexivity (the importance of which is articulated by [Walsh, 2003](#)), but also helps furnish a key aim of qualitative research: the disclosure of human experience as it is constituted within a given time and place, and how any data itself is a product of that contingency.

Through illustration of the obstacles posed in accessing data for research on Alzheimer’s disease caregiving in Oaxaca, Mexico ([Yahalom, 2016, 2019a](#)), this article demonstrates how methodological agility allows for the development of a research approach to collect data that is constituted in and reflexively aware of the complex, nuanced experience of participants’ everyday lives. This contrasts with standard rationalist views of research that posit that data can be acquired about people’s experience that is objective and preformulated, something that would surface irrespective of context ([Belzile & Öberg, 2012](#)). Since the constructivist turn, most research in qualitative psychology has posited that data about people’s experience arises from within or in response to a specific context ([Berger & Luckmann, 1967](#); [Farnsworth & Boon, 2010](#); [Hacking, 1999](#); [Holstein & Gubrium, 2012](#); [Marková, Linell, Grossen, & Salazar Orvig, 2007](#)). Simply put, individuals come to express themselves differently—and have different experiences—depending on the environment they find themselves in. People change what they say and experience based on power imbalances ([Anyan, 2013](#); [Elwood & Martin, 2000](#); [Jakobsen, 2012](#); [Wilkinson, 1998b](#)), social stigma ([Goffman, 2009/1974](#); [Yahalom, 2019b, Yahalom, 2020](#)), social norms ([Narayan, 2013](#)), and more. As this article will describe, obstacles experienced while conducting research represent an additional dimension to the social context that qualitative researchers must study. Hence, instead of viewing obstacles as something to be overcome during research, this article posits that it is through directly working with obstacles that qualitative depth is achieved.

Admittedly, the type of agility I wish to defend is particularly vexing for qualitative research. This approach appears to run out of sync with much of what qualitative research is known for—namely, its theoretical depth and self-reflexivity. Yet the field’s strength in being

theoretically informed has also paradoxically contributed to expose a certain weakness. Qualitative researchers have embraced theory as a means to reflexively appreciate the contingency and depth of data—to apply a hermeneutics to interpret data and read, as it were, between the lines. But this undeniable strength runs the risk of choosing methods that adhere to theoretical consistency, and not methods that directly respond to the pragmatics of inquiry. Yes, qualitative research has developed what Wertz (2011b) referred to as a practice-based approach to pluralism, with a panoply of methods from which one chooses to answer a given research question. This array of available methods is not typically viewed as a set of available options during research, but rather it is viewed as choices to be made before research begins. This is perhaps why Fairclough (2013) described qualitative research as “theory-driven” and also why Gergen (2018) makes a broader appeal to understanding its importance by attending to underlying theoretical assumptions concerning ontology, epistemology, and morality. Of course, these assumptions matter, and the field’s success in addressing them unquestionably represents why qualitative research is able to attend to dimensions of human experience that other approaches cannot. Yet overworking one strength risks underserving another. So much of qualitative work is informed by theory such that research runs the risk of being driven and dictated by it. Being methodologically agile involves being theoretically informed while remaining flexible to meet the contingencies of circumstance and chance.

The importance of methodological agility and why it deserves greater recognition in arenas like this journal is perhaps best illustrated by three well-known dilemmas facing the field. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) succinctly portrayed the difficulties that concern qualitative research as a “triple crisis of representation, legitimation and praxis” and how these dilemmas are the paradoxical consequences of the strengths of being a theoretically informed, socially engaged discipline (p. 19). Since the postmodern turn, qualitative researchers have faced difficulties in how to represent data within an intellectual tradition that attends to contingency, and how to conceptualize that representation as a product of a given time and place. This dilemma is well articulated by Clifford (1986), who rather pos-

itively referred to ethnographic and qualitative data as “true fictions,” an oxymoron that reminds researchers that they are striving for the truth about human experience while recognizing that the truth is always partial, in flux, and contested (pp. 7–8). Concurrently, the crisis of legitimation involves what Said (1978) called the *politics of othering*, the way one is able to research and write about other people without slipping into a tendency that reinstates dangerous, colonizing power dynamics (see also England, 1994; Fine, 1994; Habermas, 1975). And most pertinent to the topic of this article, the crisis concerning praxis involves how researchers are able to develop methods that attend to another person’s experience, as a distinct other, in the sense Levinas (1969/1992, 1974/1998) had in mind, which is a sense of “otherness” or “alterity” that refers to another person’s differences that escapes the framework of one’s own understandings (see also Yahalom, 2017, 2019a). Otherness in this regard unsettles, ruptures, and challenges preconceived understandings and beliefs. Encountering another human being as other involves seeing that person with traits that are not static and definite but are dynamic and undefined—they point to the human agent whose whole exceeds the sum of its parts. And this description of otherness is precisely what remains so difficult to capture in research that is oriented with the opposite goal—namely to define, operationalize, and explain. To this point, Fabian (2014) has alleged that the majority of qualitative researchers (anthropologists included) work with methods that overlook the cultural differences they paradoxically intend to study. “The failure of anthropological discourse,” Fabian wrote, “has been a failure to recognize the epistemological significance of alterity” (p. 178).

These three issues are crises only to the extent that qualitative research is defined by a rich theoretical self-reflexivity. Only a tradition that prides itself on self-reflection and theoretical sophistication could recognize the nature and importance of these difficulties. Yet insofar as qualitative research is premised on attending to the other, then its methods must address and be informed by encounters with the other—and not just be the conceptual derivatives of a given theoretical orientation. That is why one way to begin resolving this set of crises is to be found not necessarily through more theoretical devel-

opments, but rather through a more honest engagement with otherness as it manifests in concrete research praxis, including the obstacles to research that come to surface. We need a methodology that allows for procedural agility. This article seeks to articulate how adopting methodological agility might resolve central issues to the field. It shows why the spirit of qualitative inquiry invites attention to how research methods are optimally developed through a methodological stance that values agility, one that remains flexible on the ground, in the process of encountering data itself.

Introducing the Field in Oaxaca and Related Obstacles to Research

This approach on embracing obstacles to bolster research integrity was developed through the course of conducting fieldwork on Alzheimer's disease caregiving in Oaxaca, Mexico (Yahalom, 2016, 2019a). The project initially sought to understand how family caregivers from an indigenous community cared for and were impacted by elders living with Alzheimer's disease. This topic was inspired through multiple and overlapping rationales. First, researching progressive memory loss associated with Alzheimer's disease would provide an important vista for understanding implicit values and assumptions regarding selfhood (see also Ballenger, 2006; Braun & Browne, 1998; Danely, 2015; Henderson & Henderson, 2002; L. Cohen, 1998; Leibing, 2002; Post, 2000; Sabat, 2018; Sabat & Harré, 1992; Traphagan, 1998). And second, conducting this project in another cultural setting—in Oaxaca, where social cohesion is viewed to be endangered by participation in national and global economies—would articulate how selfhood and social cohesion are maintained in contemporary, industry-developing settings (see also Duncan, 2018; Ochs & Kremer-Sadlik, 2015; Stephen, 2007, 2013; Weaver, 2018). Through 2 years of preparing for fieldwork (including gaining institutional review board-approval, studying Spanish, reviewing relevant research literature, and arranging two local academic affiliations), this yearlong ethnography was designed with a constructivist research framework inspired by Serge Moscovici (2000, 2008), and a Foucaultian methodology inspired by researchers in discourse analysis (e.g., Kendall & Wickham,

1998; McMullen, 2011; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wood & Kroger, 2000). The plan was to conduct interviews with individual family caregivers about their experience attending to elders with Alzheimer's disease, and to further assess how this experience is representative of contemporary life.

Known for its culinary and craft traditions, the state of Oaxaca is located in southern Mexico and is home to 16 indigenous groups and respective languages. The state features 34% of Mexico's total indigenous-speaking populations, making it at the time of research the state with the highest proportion of indigenous-language speakers (INEGI, 2014). In addition to community-specific legal codes, clothing, and foods, language is a critical marker of indigenous identity. Zapotec is the most popular non-Spanish language in the state, with 450,000 speakers. Yet most communities practice community-specific dialects that distinguish themselves from others, often with significant differences that render intercommunity communication difficult.

At the time of research Oaxaca was one of the poorest states in Mexico (second to Chiapas), with more than 66% of the state's population living in poverty and 28% meeting criteria for extreme poverty (CONEVAL, 2012). Indigenous Mexican communities, including ones in Oaxaca, have extended histories of economic, legal, and social discrimination that continue to impact experience today (see Knight, 1990; Lewis, 2006; Stephen, 2013). Mexican neoliberal policies that were implemented during the 1980s have also exacerbated these social disparities (Haber, Klein, Maurer, & Middlebrook, 2008). With the goal to create more fluid economic exchange across borders, privatize and deregulate industries, and reduce government spending in social programs, Mexico's economic role has grown in the global sphere—but at a cost to the regions that did not (or could not) join. Across Mexico, indigenous experienced these neoliberal trends as a larger campaign to jettison local traditions (Katzenberger, 1995). Joining the global economy meant adopting national and international (nonindigenous) languages, adhering to foreign legal customs, migrating, and more generally replacing forms of life once centered on communal solidarity and subsistence farming for those premised on social independence and capital gain.

Within this setting, the community of Teotitlán del Valle (hereafter referred to as *Teotitlán*) was chosen as a principle site of research. This rural 5,500 Zapotec-speaking member community is one of the most known in Oaxaca. It is on the standard tourist circuit for its woven *tapetes* (“rugs”), a craft that has distinguished the community since the Aztec conquest during the 14th century (Stephen, 2005). Teotitlán is located in Oaxaca’s Central Valleys, a site whose physical location and economic positioning place it at the symbolic intersection between two idealized lifestyles: “traditional” life indexed to local heritage that draws upon notions of local custom and communal solidarity, and “modern” life indexed to Oaxaca City, Mexico City, California, and other external sites where textile merchants and migrants come to embrace forms of life represented by global capitalism and social independence.

Review of relevant literature helped prepare for fieldwork, yet certain obstacles rendered the project doubtful from the outset. First, challenges pertaining to positionality—the ways in which participants view the researcher, and the researcher views participants (Bell, Caplan, & Karim, 2013)—led to significant hurdles to access. Typically, when researchers approach a site, they are viewed in terms of social categories salient to that community (Harrington, 2003, p. 607). Hence, in contrast to the hospitality given to tourists who visit Teotitlán to learn about and purchase textiles, doing research in this community caused initial confusion. I was “that *gringo*” interested in forgetfulness and aging that most people knew about but few felt comfortable discussing. The mixture of warmth and restraint I was initially given upon arrival was no doubt a result of this reality. I was perceived to be a consumer, like the countless other tourists who visit Teotitlán interested in buying rugs, and it was difficult to redefine this social stance to engender talk about some of the more intimate aspects of people’s lives.

Second, social norms and language practices created significant barriers to approaching the field. In comparison to U.S.-based settings, arriving to Oaxaca quickly revealed how locals consider themselves in context to their families. Much like other ethnographers, I came to realize that in Oaxaca the household, not the individual, was considered the primary social unit (J. Cohen, 2004; Murphy & Stepick, 1991; Nor-

get, 2006). This entailed that it would be more ecologically valid to collect data on households as a whole, but it went contrary to my initial plans to study individuals about their personal caregiving experiences.

Language posed a similar, albeit larger obstacle. The large majority of residents spoke Spanish, yet Zapotec was the preferred language in the community, spoken in the household and often used to differentiate private family life from formal public life. In her important ethnography on women in Teotitlán, Stephen (2005) described how language practices are also representative of shifting generational and economic trends, with a growing number of younger residents preferring to speak in Spanish, in contrast to most elders who experience difficulty sustaining deep conversation in this language. Further embedded within these local language practices, there exists what Desai and Potter (2006) termed a “cultural contingency of conversation norms” that an outsider to the community would fail to understand, let alone notice (see also Esposito, 2001). In addition to the challenges of learning the Zapotec specific to the Teotiteco community, conversation norms go beyond basic language proficiency and point toward the implicit cultural fabric that constitutes people’s everyday experience. For example, the Zapotec word *anim*, roughly translates to mean “soul.” Yet this word is used specifically to describe a soul of the deceased; a different word, *garlieng*, is used to describe the soul of a living person. A distinct cultural worldview became apparent in these idioms, and it became clear that inquiring about familial responsibility, the afterlife, and other dimensions of personhood would be more challenging than simply “translating” from one language to another.

Third, despite arriving to Oaxaca with the intent to study Alzheimer’s disease, a startling reality further challenged this project. Alzheimer’s disease was said to not locally exist. Much like Sontag (2001), who described how certain illnesses are imbued with moral claims, my attempt to study Alzheimer’s disease highlighted how local stigma impacts the caregiving experience (for similar claims in other settings see Ballenger, 2006; L. Cohen, 1998). In Oaxaca, locals professed to be vaguely familiar with Alzheimer’s disease but alleged that it was something that existed elsewhere, outside of the

community. As one acquaintance very early in fieldwork stated, “People do not have Alzheimer’s disease because they don’t need to worry about paying the rent and other [forms of] stress experienced over there.” It became clear that what was “over there” meant what existed outside the idealized norms of the community, for individuals who embraced alternative norms associated with life in industrialized settings such as Oaxaca City, Mexico City, or the United States. This statement became a refrain during fieldwork—not only among laypersons, but also endorsed by community leaders, traditional healers, and biomedical doctors. Alzheimer’s disease was understood as a modern condition that carried stigma, and locals simply avoided talking about.

Last, this project not only faced obstacles from the outside—due to factors in Oaxaca—but also from within, due to epistemological reasons. Intending to conduct interviews was a standard choice in qualitative research, but upon further reflection this also revealed an important theoretical dilemma. Interviews are at once understood to arrive at the subjective or personal experience of participants, but it is also recognized that interviews are also shaped by the event of being researched. People change what they say and how they say it, based on surrounding circumstances (Marková et al., 2007; Wilkinson, 1998b). Hence, conducting interviews would overlook the way that language is not a channel that directly transmits facts about subjective experience, but is rather more accurately understood as a joint production between speakers (Suchman & Jordan, 1990). Language is a co-constructive process, and something that shapes experience itself. As Packer (2010) wrote, “the interviewee’s subjectivity [and what is expressed during the interview] is an *effect* of the . . . interview, not a preexisting, independent personal experience that is the content expressed in what is said” (p. 99). In this way, I came to recognize that the contingency that unavoidably surrounds research data needed to be addressed and accounted for within the methods used, and not as something acknowledged as a reflective afterthought.

Attempting to study a medical condition whose stigma I represented coming from the United States, faced with significant linguistic and cultural barriers, as well as unsettled problems from within my own research discipline all

represented important obstacles that needed to be addressed. Yet it was precisely through identifying and responding to these obstacles—working with them, and not against them—that this project came to acquire data that was deep, constituted within and oriented to the alterity that qualitative research so celebrates.

Embracing the Other Through Methodological Agility

Since Geertz (2000/1971) famously described the study of culture as an act of hermeneutics and culture as a text to be interpreted, and later ethnographers like Clifford (1986) went further to consider how all cultures are “seriously contested codes and representations,” the notion of culture and the study of how culture manifests have highlighted a certain underlying contingency inherent to social life. This a theme championed by the social constructionists who have argued that people’s experiences and behaviors are shaped by and responsive to the surrounding social world (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Hacking, 1999; Holstein & Gubrium, 2012; Marková et al., 2007).

I arrived in Oaxaca intent on studying how broader culture shaped Alzheimer’s disease caregiving, but my own presence as a researcher—and the inherent obstacles I encountered during research—inevitably shaped those cultural horizons and impacted how people viewed and talked about their experience. Recognizing this reality led to appreciation that my very presence was part of the cultural landscape I sought to understand. Yet through operating within a certain methodological agility, this did not need to constitute a “problem” to be resolved but rather an obstacle that could be embraced. I realized that embracing obstacles would inform the very nature of the data I sought to collect. Anthropologist Wilk (2006) provocatively wrote of a more encompassing, albeit related topic, when he asked if it could be that “there is something about globalization itself that produces local culture?” and Wilk continued on to state that, “[w]e have been so convinced that colonization and globalization are forces of homogenization . . . that it takes a real effort to switch gears and consider this possibility” (p. 10). Wilk’s point about culture being paradoxically constituted by external, ho-

mogenizing forces led to my own recognition that the obstacles to my research did not require being resolved as much as they invited being embraced, and that doing so highlighted that these obstacles were an inextricable part of the contingency I sought to understand. This sentiment is the foundation for the type of methodological agility I am defending in this article.

Border Crossing

A preliminary first step involved hiring a research assistant to respond to basic linguistic barriers. However much preparation was initially done to conduct interviews in Spanish—and despite the fact that I came to formally study Zapotec once in Oaxaca—being able to hold conversations with individuals about intimate dimensions of their lives required finding a way to incorporate the nuances of Zapotec within the interview structure. People spoke Spanish in public—to foreigners—but Zapotec was the language used between family members, and almost exclusively preferred by older adults. I needed to find a way to gain access to Zapotec family conversations about aging and dementia, and so sought to partner with a translator.

At best, translators provide *conceptual equivalence*, which is the most accurate explanation of a given word or phrase that makes sense within the researcher's broader cultural world (Temple & Young, 2004; see also Jandt, 2017; Larkin, Dierckx de Casterlé, & Schotsmans, 2007; Squires, 2009). Temple (2002) further articulated this perspective by using the term “cross-language research” to describe the complexities of translation. Temple correctly pointed out that translators do not operate objectively, producing one-to-one correspondence of meanings, but rather “produce texts from their own perspectives” (p. 846). Much to Wilk's point about external factors paradoxically constituting what one comes to observe of a given culture, Temple raised awareness as to why it is problematic to assume that a translator could somehow capture or represent culture from a purportedly objective and neutral standpoint. The translator is a direct participant in the acquisition and shaping of data, and it is mistaken to believe that working with a translator somehow provides unmediated access to other people's lives. Instead, translators facilitate

what Temple and Edwards (2008) referred to as *border crossing*. Every researcher is unavoidably circumscribed within specific sociocultural “borders” that distinguish them from participants. Temple and Edwards correctly pointed out that beyond the act of working between different languages, translators provide the more significant value of navigating across borders, serving as an implicit liaison between distinct social worlds.

Through a complicated social and professional network, I began to develop prior to beginning fieldwork in Oaxaca, I was introduced to a local resident in Teotitlán known for his work translating for a microfinance organization. Early on, it was clear that a partnership with this individual would help facilitate the type of border crossing that would be critical to successfully carry out the project. Well beyond his fluency in English, Spanish, and Zapotec, my research assistant helped establish a way for the research project and me, its investigator, to be accepted into the community. This strategy drew on what Srivastava (2006) termed the “multiple positionalities” that are implicitly involved in research, how investigators are viewed as embodying various traits that can be leveraged for the purposes of connecting with participants (p. 212). In the case of Oaxaca, partnering with this research assistant rendered me and the project into categories residents would accept. Strangers whom I would later come to know said that they initially viewed me with skepticism, but later came to associate my research project and me with my assistant. They sensed that because this local was willing to place his trust in me, others could as well, rendering the project into social categories salient to the community.

One of the first decisions we collaboratively made—an instance of border crossing—was to abandon investigating Alzheimer's disease. In contrast to wrestling with the reality of the field—that every local initially stated that Alzheimer's disease did not exist locally—our partnership highlighted how embracing this perspective would be crucial to inviting people to participate in the study. So, instead of seeking participants to talk about Alzheimer's disease, we strategized to inquire about symptoms of forgetfulness among elders. The Zapotec word *rienlá'az* (to forget) became our catchword and was distinguished from *raguenlá'az*, which was

a potentially more stigmatized term that refers to one's forgetfulness of people. This allowed initial recruitment to proceed with less cause for alarm.

This decision not only helped resolve a critical issue about access, but more allowed for a unique approach to data collection that embraced otherness. It developed procedural sensitivity for a distinction used locally to articulate a critical difference regarding types of forgetting, the importance of memory, and to safeguard against falling into what Kleinman (1988) termed the "category fallacy" of reifying one's own understanding of illness in a different cultural setting with alternative understandings. In contrast to settings that prioritize memory for the way it allows people to function independently, embracing this distinction in Oaxaca revealed how memory is valued for its function of keeping individuals together, with forgetfulness representing a threat to that value. As one caregiver said of the way memory is locally valued, "It's important because we have kids and I have a husband. I can't even imagine that I could forget that I have children or forget that I have a husband." The severe forgetfulness associated with Alzheimer's disease came to represent the felt tensions and anticipated threats associated with modern social change (for similar perspectives see Braun & Browne, 1998; Danely, 2015; Henderson & Henderson, 2002; L. Cohen, 1998; Leibing, 2002; Post, 2000; Traphagan, 1998).

Focus Group Interviewing

Whereas acknowledging and working with local perceptions was helpful, this was not enough to arrive at methods that would invite participants to speak. It was necessary to gain insight into how age-related forgetfulness was experienced and cared for, the way its representation was constituted within broader cultural dynamics and how this representation was somehow responsive to those dynamics. I sought to understand the qualitative depth of people's lives—not simply solicit forced-response, yes–no answers. So, I needed to find a way to develop methods that would be sensitive to the subtle social dynamics that defined this Zapotec-speaking, family-centered community. Recognizing that Zapotec was spoken at home, that individuals understood themselves in con-

text to their families, and that the community viewed my very presence as a stigmatized symbol of social change led to a decision to make my role as a researcher more peripheral and less active. I needed to gain access to Zapotec family conversations about caregiving, aging, and dementia, and to do so in a way that was not stymied by the stigma associated with these topics. To do so, I leveraged methods from the focus group research tradition.

Instead of structuring interviews to elicit data between researcher and participant (thereby exacerbating the challenges encountered early in fieldwork), focus groups provided another option to maximize group dynamics, minimize my interaction as researcher, and make in-group discussion the data was collected. This is the virtue of focus group interviewing, a technique that observes the dynamics of a cohort of people (typically between 5 and 10 individuals) as they respond, contest, and negotiate perspectives about a given topic among each other. Broadly defined, "A focus group study is a carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment" (Krueger, 2009, p. 2). Traditionally, focus groups have been used to poll individuals about their perceptions and attitudes toward consumer products, and are more commonly utilized in marketing research (Cox, Higginbotham, & Burton, 1976; Merton, Lowenthal, & Kendall, 1990). Feminist and social researchers have also used focus groups as an interviewing technique because of their collaborative and sociocultural sensitive qualities: by focusing on group discussion instead of researcher-participant discussion, focus groups address implicit power imbalances and accommodate to the importance of social interaction in collectivistic settings (Jakobsen, 2012; Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005; Madriz, 1998; Ryan, Al Sheedi, White, & Watkins, 2015; Wilkinson, 1998b). As such, researchers have adopted focus groups for studying how people interact through shared and contested understandings of life experience—putting into perspective what Wilkinson (1998a) termed "collective sense making" (p. 186; see also, Belzile & Öberg, 2012; Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, 2001; Halkier, 2010; Marková et al., 2007). Used in this way, focus groups do not produce data that somehow represent a collection of individual perspec-

tives, but rather produce group-level data on shared, contested, and socially produced understandings and experiences through involvement in the group itself (Jakobsen, 2012; Wibeck, Dahlgren, & Öberg, 2007).

Implementation of focus group techniques occurred organically—through a methodological stance that embraced agility and valued the challenges inherent to fieldwork. Because households were viewed as the primary social unit, we strategized to interview entire households in Zapotec about different facets of their caregiving experience. The overall goal was to maximize household discussion to witness how attitudes about caregiving and forgetfulness were socially negotiated.²

A main way to maximize discussion and minimize the impact of stigma was to remain on the periphery. So, I trained my research assistant to take primary lead in interviewing. This occurred through his overall education about the nature of the study, presented in a manner that was relevant to his life as member of the community: as I initially explained it, this study was about understanding the experience of caregiving families to better serve elders, their families, and the broader community. Our collaboration was bolstered through the development of an interview guide, with open-ended questions to be discussed among family caregivers in attempt to elicit agreed upon and divergent opinions (Billig, 1996; Krueger, 1997). Inspired by Myers (1998) who views the moderator's role as avoiding closure within group discussion, my assistant positioned me as an obvious outsider to the community who needed to have things explained. Although this raised greater visible awareness of me, this strategically limited my actual participation in the group discussion. It led to me being used as a conversational foil—related to perceptions of the exterior “modern” world and it being viewed as a cause of Alzheimer's disease.

Establishing this basic approach led to my research assistant to wait for me to initiate basic questions, and then for him to subsequently hold in-depth conversations with participants. Through ongoing training, he developed insight regarding when to ask probing, follow-up questions—asking for clarification, questioning why a decision was made, or requesting more detail regarding how things are experienced—and then briefly summarized answers to me to main-

tain the flow of conversation. Though there were certainly times when I felt we misunderstood each other, I came to appreciate that the way he interpreted my questions and how the topics that were discussed with family members were perhaps more valuable than having my questions directly answered. For example, whereas at one point I initially wanted to know whether one case of forgetfulness signified that an elder had changed his personality, my assistant inquired whether forgetfulness caused limitations to the work the elder was able to perform. From my perspective, character change is different than work functionality; but this conflation highlighted how my own conception of personhood was culturally distinct and overlooked local emphasis on productivity in a setting that was increasingly prioritizing this trait. Apart from seeking to better understand these differences, they were not negotiated or explained to the research assistant. To do so would be to reinforce colonial tendencies to “educate” participants when, in fact, I was seeking to be educated about their experience; rather, differences were viewed as an additional set of data to better understand the community.

The nature of the groups assembled and topics discussed could be conceptualized through three different, albeit overlapping sectors: a family level group of individual family members as they conversed among each another; a community-level group of one family as it discussed caregiving to another member of the community (my research assistant); and a global-level group of the community as it conveyed its broader experience to me, a guest from abroad. Together, these three dimensions and their surfacing during interviews capture what Sandra Jovchelovitch identified as the methodological power of focus groups: a perspective of “a thinking society in miniature” (quoted in Wibeck, Dahlgren, & Öberg, 2007). As is dis-

² Of course, as described in the preceding text for, focus groups have traditionally been used as a research method that gathers a group of strangers to discuss a particular topic. People presumably feel less accountable and free to speak their perspectives due to a greater sense of anonymity. The use of focus groups in this project is significantly different: in comparison to a group of strangers, the group consists of family members who respond at once to a neighbor within the community and a stranger to it. This certainly changes the nature of group dynamics and is discussed in greater detail subsequently.

cussed in greater detail shortly, emphasizing social context is an important contrast to eliciting information about private experience (as if it were constant and somehow transcends the broader social world) and, for this reason, represents an epistemological strength of focus group interviewing (Carey & Smith, 1994; Puchta & Potter, 2004). Of course, this approach is limited to the extent that individuals feel uncomfortable talking about certain topics in front of other people, yet it also highlights the way those topics are negotiated and how that negotiation has an impact on everyday experience.³

These three group dimensions captured implicit social dynamics in Oaxaca as families reinforced notions about household cohesion, as the community assembled to address new challenges, and as each of these efforts was performed in the broader context of a modern, globalized world. Consider the following interview excerpt with a caregiving family who attended to an elder with moderate symptoms of forgetfulness. This excerpt occurs toward the interview's end, well after our project has been presented as studying "forgetfulness" among elders, and when we wanted to inquire more about community specific perceptions of Alzheimer's disease.

Research assistant: I explained earlier [that he is interested in aging and forgetfulness]. He's a psychologist and [he's also interested] in Alzheimer's disease. Have you heard about that disease?

Family in unison: Yes.

Caregiving wife: Some people have told me that he has that disease.

Caregiving Son 1: But I think that if he did have that disease, he wouldn't be able to do anything else, because I have heard that people with Alzheimer's are just gone, just sitting, and forget about every-

thing. But him [the forgetful elder], I see that he still remembers. . . . Because, the way I see it, if he had Alzheimer's he wouldn't do what he does, he would just be sitting down and staring.

Only after strategizing to make use of the important local perceptions of forgetfulness, my research assistant positions me as a foreigner to the community with an interest in Alzheimer's disease. Here we have a local community interacting with me, a foreigner. At the same time, the family also unifies (constituting a group that responds to member of the community and guest to their home): they confirm that, yes, they have heard of Alzheimer's disease. Yet individual members of the family simultaneously contest one another's perspective. Although the elder's wife acknowledges that some people have suspected Alzheimer's disease might be the cause of her husband's forgetfulness, her son states that this is insufficient to explain the symptoms he has observed in his father. He hints at local representations that Alzheimer's disease is a severe condition that involves total forgetfulness: It debilitates elders to the point that they merely sit and stare. And this condition, he later comes to say, is understood to be the cause of the stress that people endure in

³ Through the course of a year of fieldwork partnering with this research assistant and other activities pertinent to this study, in Teotitlán we interviewed twenty-two family caregivers for elders living with dementia across nine households (comprising more than fifteen hours of recorded interviews conducted in Zapotec). After each interview, we met to translate and transcribe audio recordings, typically before moving on to the next. This provided another opportunity to reflect on how to improve our technique. We met at the assistant's home or mine, in front of two computers—one for him to control the audio, and another for me to transcribe. This process was arduous and sometimes amounted to more than ten hours spent transcribing for every 1 hr of recording. Yet it was significantly informative. Transcribing not only gave me a chance to unpack what occurred during interviews—to witness the way caregiving was discussed by family members and the research assistant—but it also provided an opportunity to further question a member of the community about the broader significance of the data we were gathering (see also McLellan, MacQueen, & Neidig, 2003).

nontraditional, capital-driven lifestyles—something that he does not believe has impacted his own father.

Acquiring data through focus group interviewing, and more generally adopting a methodologically agile sensibility, highlighted the qualitative depth of human experience and the social dynamics that constitute it. This approach brought to focus the way age-related forgetfulness is viewed as a new and modern condition, and how modernity is represented through encounters with the “global” world. This was evident throughout encounters with caregivers but was made explicit in the ways that caregivers attempted to manage the impressions other people had of them. In the same interview as above, an illuminating discussion arose on the topic of hygiene in the context of the way caregivers are blamed for elders’ forgetfulness.

Caregiving Son 2: I’ve even talked to people his age, and I talk to them and tell them about him. And some of them have talked to him. And at the end the often tell us that we do not take care of him properly.

Caregiving Son 1: The way people view elders is determined by how they think their children are taking care of them.

Caregiving wife: I tell him to change his clothes.

Caregiving Son 1: And a lot of people criticize us, the way we take care of him. Because that’s the way it seems from the outside. We’re the ones that do not take care of him the way we’re supposed to. And that’s the way people in town are. They do not know what’s really going on. And every-

thing that’s happening inside they cannot see. And sometimes we [the community] tend to criticize, and we do not understand how things really are.

Qualitative researchers have long noted how positionality impacts generation of data, how perceptions of the researcher must be carefully understood in order to appreciate data in the context of participants’ lives (Henry, 2003; Srivastava, 2006). The above excerpt would not be fully intelligible without appreciation for how positionality conducting this research manifests in Oaxaca. The family is discussing the ways in their own positionality has impacted them—first, how neighbors have understood their father’s forgetfulness to be caused by negligent family members failing to provide adequate care and, second, about their self-awareness in the way they are perceived by the researcher and the research assistant. This is the only way to make sense of the caregiving wife’s interjection that she does, in fact, encourage her husband to change his clothes and how the broader family comes to defend themselves against accusations of being negligent. These dynamics shed important light on the social conditions that shape the meaning and experience of Alzheimer’s disease, as well as families’ efforts to provide care. In this way, focus group interviews provide opportunity to witness these dynamics emerge, and to remain sensitive to positionality as a means to understand them. In this case, positionality concerns perceptions of those individuals conducting interviews as well as surrounding neighbors. These are the people participants have in mind and the people who shape what participants say and how they say it.

Equally important is how the methods used in this approach resolve a key dilemma in research theory. Focus group interviews and awareness of positionality not only helped provide access to data in a setting that otherwise would have made that data inaccessible, but also responded to a dilemma concerning the epistemology that underlies research. As discussed above, there exists a major inconsistency in research theory: in contrast to the assumption that conducting interviews provides access to a person’s expe-

rience, a simultaneous recognition exists that the interview itself changes what people say and how they experience a given topic. Packer (2010) has perhaps best articulated this epistemological inconsistently through his description of the way speech is a joint production and how the process of using speech in research interviews is contingent upon—or “an effect of”—surrounding circumstances (p. 99; see also Suchman & Jordan, 1990). Yet the approach taken in this study helps resolve this dilemma by sidestepping it altogether. Instead of seeking to gain information about a participant’s experience (an impossibility according to this strict reading of constructivist theory), focus group interviewing helps reposition data as being about social interaction—among members of households, a research assistant who was a resident of the community, and myself as a foreigner to the community. Viewing data as being about context—and not somehow working through context to arrive at an alleged kernel of experiential truth—at once allows us to maintain a constructivist perspective about social influence, while it also enables the collection of data that is as informative about social interaction as it is attentive to the alterity inherent to it.⁴

Concluding Remarks

We have been seeking [what is said to be] otherwise than being from the beginning, and as soon as it is conveyed before us it is betrayed in the said that dominates the saying which states it. A methodological problem arises here . . . , whether one can at the same time know and free the known of the marks which thematization leaves on it. . . .—Emmanuel Levinas (1974/1998, p. 7)

Qualitative research takes pride in being “qualitative”—that is, oriented to the unique details of another person’s experience, attuned to those particular dimensions of *quality*, as the word is defined by standard dictionaries: “a distinctive attribute or characteristic possessed by someone or something.” All this is to say, qualitative research is premised on what is distinct, other, and transcendent of what one already knows, believes, or sees. Being a qualitative researcher entails being aware of colonization tendencies (Clifford, 1986; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Said, 1978). We must take seriously these implications. As Levinas reminded us in the preceding excerpt, we must recognize that the otherness of human experi-

ence we seek to study is not contained in pre-formulated theory but through human encounters that rupture theory; not in distilled concepts about experience, but through attention to the dynamics that give rise to those encounters. To do justice to another person’s experience involves going beyond static categories and pre-formulated ideas to appreciate otherness and the human agency of the other—this is what Levinas gestured to remain “otherwise than being,” otherwise than reductionistic thematized concepts, traits, or research findings that one mistakenly purports to discover, master, and understand. In this sense, what remains otherwise than being is what remains dynamic and fluid, contingent, and responsive to the ever-changing social world that situates qualitative research data.

Encountering otherness in this sense implies being challenged. It necessitates adaptation, and it presupposes being perplexed. “Anthropology has always been vexed about the question of vulnerability,” wrote Behar (1996, p. 5). And what is observed of one discipline ought to be considered for the boarder field of qualitative inquiry: that studying the other means not knowing in advance how to proceed; it means not having a fixed roadmap prior to landing on the ground; it means encountering an irresolvable vulnerability. The otherness encountered in the case of Oaxacan caregivers is testimony to this point. Far from being the product of methods developed prior to the commencement of research, otherness was made manifest through the course of conducting research itself, through being challenged, surprised, and vulnerable. The otherness encountered during research was achieved through embrace of the challenges of

⁴ There exists a commonly observed theoretical rift between phenomenological approaches (that, generally defined, aspire to obtain data about a participant’s lived experience) and constructivist approaches (that attend to the broader social and cultural factors that situate experience). Yet, the two are not necessarily at odds. Appreciating that lived experience is shaped by—and adaptive to—context is not only sensible, but also unavoidably truthful. Conversely, to study the meaning and impact of context, one must attend to personal, lived experience. In this light, constructivism and phenomenology need not be seen as existing at odds but can be appreciated as theoretical allies: together they provide data that is closer to being epistemically whole. I thank an anonymous reviewer to an earlier version of this article for this thoughtful observation.

conducting research and with a certain procedural agility in responding to them.

This article is a call for supplementing the strengths already known of qualitative research: In addition to theoretical rigor and self-reflexivity, we benefit from methodological agility. In part, research is “qualitative” to the extent that it encounters research obstacles and remains committed to incorporate them through methods that provide a response. To be sure, the implications of the methodological agility I have defended in this article do not point toward a naiveté—they do not suggest one approaches a field site with little sense of direction or purpose. Rather, they point to a methodological sensibility—a willingness—to adapt to that field site depending on what is encountered. Methodological agility requires serious training about different research approaches—developing a methodic tool belt—with awareness of varying methods and their advantages and limitations, and an understanding of the implications of how the methods adopted shape the data acquired. This perhaps is more demanding than preparations for research that enumerate concrete procedural steps prior to encountering participants or arriving to a field site. Rather, it requires attention to contingency, it demands flexibility, and it builds appreciation for what makes challenge and chance distinctively and qualitatively other.

References

- Anyan, F. (2013). The influence of power shifts in data collection and analysis stages: A focus on qualitative research interview. *Qualitative Report*, 18, 1–9. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol18/iss18/2/>
- Ballenger, J. F. (2006). *Self, senility, and Alzheimer's disease in modern America: A history*. Baltimore, MA: Johns Hopkins University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/book.3237>
- Behar, R. (1996). *The vulnerable observer: Anthropology that breaks your heart*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2654305>
- Bell, D., Caplan, P., & Karim, W. J. (Eds.). (2013). *Gendered fields: Women, men and ethnography*. New York, NY: Routledge. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9781315002866>
- Belzile, J. A., & Öberg, G. (2012). Where to begin? Grappling with how to use participant interaction in focus group design. *Qualitative Research*, 12, 459–472. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1468794111433089>
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1967). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. New York, NY: Anchor.
- Billig, M. (1996). *Arguing and thinking: A rhetorical approach to social psychology*. New York: Cambridge University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2074146>
- Bloor, M., Frankland, J., Thomas, M., & Robson, K. (Eds.). (2001). *Focus groups in social research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781849209175>
- Braun, K. L., & Browne, C. V. (1998). Perceptions of dementia, caregiving, and help seeking among Asian and Pacific Islander Americans. *Health & Social Work*, 23, 262–274. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/hsw/23.4.262>
- Carey, M. A., & Smith, M. W. (1994). Capturing the group effect in focus groups: A special concern in analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 4, 1552–1557. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/104973239400400108>
- Clifford, J. (1986). Introduction. In J. Clifford & G. Marcus (Eds.), *Writing culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography* (pp. 1–26). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Cohen, J. H. (2004). *The culture of migration in Southern Mexico*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Cohen, L. (1998). *No aging in India: Alzheimer's, the bad family, and other modern things*. Berkeley: University of California Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/california/9780520083967.001.0001>
- CONEVAL. (2012). *Pobreza y rezago social: Indicadores de pobreza, Oaxaca 2010* [Poverty and social disadvantage: indicators of poverty, Oaxaca 2010]. Mexico City, Mexico: Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social. Retrieved from <https://www.coneval.org.mx/>
- Cox, K. K., Higginbotham, J. B., & Burton, J. (1976). Applications of focus group interviews in marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 40, 77–80. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/002224297604000117>
- Danely, J. (2015). *Aging and loss: Mourning and maturity in contemporary Japan*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2005). The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 1–43). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Desai, V., & Potter, R. (Eds.). (2006). *Doing development research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781849208925>
- Duncan, W. L. (2018). *Transforming therapy: Mental health practice and cultural change in Mexico*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.
- Elwood, S. A., & Martin, D. G. (2000). “Placing” interviews: Location and scales of power in qual-

- itative research. *The Professional Geographer*, 52, 649–657. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/0033-0124.00253>
- England, K. V. (1994). Getting personal: Reflexivity, positionality, and feminist research. *The Professional Geographer*, 46, 80–89. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.0033-0124.1994.00080.x>
- Esposito, N. (2001). From meaning to meaning: The influence of translation techniques on non-English focus group research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 11, 568–579. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/104973201129119217>
- Fabian, J. (2014). *Time and the other: How anthropology makes its object*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7312/fabi16926>
- Fairclough, N. (2013). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language* (2nd ed.). Harlow, UK: Pearson. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9781315834368>
- Farnsworth, J., & Boon, B. (2010). Analysing group dynamics within the focus group. *Qualitative Research*, 10, 605–624. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1468794110375223>
- Fine, M. (1994). Working the hyphens: Reinventing self and other in qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research* (pp. 70–82). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Geertz, C. (2000). Deep play: Notes on the Balinese cockfight. In L. Crothers & C. Lockhart (Eds.), *Culture and politics* (pp. 175–201). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan. (Original work published 1971) http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-62397-6_10
- Gergen, K. J. (2018). Qualitative Psychology and the New Pluralism. In B. Schiff (Ed.), *Situating qualitative methods in psychological science* (pp. 62–71). New York, NY: Routledge. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9781351136426-5>
- Goffman, E. (2009). *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster. (Original work published 1974)
- Haber, S. H., Klein, H. S., Maurer, N., & Middlebrook, K. (2008). *Mexico since 1980*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511790683>
- Habermas, J. (1975). *Legitimation crisis* (T. McCarthy, Trans.). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Hacking, I. (1999). *The social construction of what?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Halkier, B. (2010). Focus groups as social enactments: Integrating interaction and content in the analysis of focus group data. *Qualitative Research*, 10, 71–89. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1468794109348683>
- Harrington, B. (2003). The social psychology of access in ethnographic research. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 32, 592–625. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0891241603255677>
- Henderson, J. N., & Henderson, L. C. (2002). Cultural construction of disease: A “supernormal” construct of dementia in an American Indian tribe. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology*, 17, 197–212. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1021268922685>
- Henry, M. G. (2003). “Where are you really from?": Representation, identity and power in the fieldwork experiences of a South Asian diasporic. *Qualitative Research*, 3, 229–242. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/14687941030032005>
- Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J. F. (2012). *The self we live by: Narrative identity in a postmodern world*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- INEGI. (2014). *An approach to Mexico* (4th ed.). Aguascalientes, MX: Aguascalientes Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía. Retrieved from <https://en.www.inegi.org.mx/>
- Jakobsen, H. (2012). Focus groups and methodological rigour outside the minority world: Making the method work to its strengths in Tanzania. *Qualitative Research*, 12, 111–130. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1468794111416145>
- Jandt, F. E. (2017). *An introduction to intercultural communication: identities in a global community*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Kamberelis, G., & Dimitriadis, G. (2005). Focus groups: Strategic articulations of pedagogy, politics and inquiry. In N. K. L. Denzin, S. Yvonna (Ed.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 887–907). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Katzenberger, E. (Ed.), (1995). *First world, ha, ha, ha!: The Zapatista challenge*. San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books.
- Kendall, G., & Wickham, G. (1998). *Using Foucault's methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Kleinman, A. (1988). *Rethinking psychiatry: From cultural category to personal experience*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Knight, A. (1990). Racism, revolution, and indigenismo: Mexico, 1910–1940. In R. Graham (Ed.), *The idea of race in Latin America, 1870–1940* (pp. 71–113). Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Krueger, R. A. (1997). *Developing questions for focus groups*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Krueger, R. A. (2009). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Larkin, P. J., Dierckx de Casterlé, B., & Schotsmans, P. (2007). Multilingual translation issues in qualitative research: Reflections on a metaphorical process. *Qualitative Health Research*, 17, 468–476. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1049732307299258>

- Lather, P. A., & Smithies, C. S. (1997). *Troubling the angels: Women living with HIV/AIDS*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Leibing, A. (2002). Flexible hips? On Alzheimer's disease and aging in Brazil. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology, 17*, 213–232. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1021278405228>
- Levinas, E. (1969/1992). *Totality and infinity: An essay on exteriority* (A. Lingis, Trans.). Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-009-9342-6>
- Levinas, E. (1974/1998). *Otherwise than being: Or beyond essence* (A. Lingis, Trans.). Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-94-015-7906-3>
- Lewis, S. E. (2006). The nation, education, and the 'Indian problem' in Mexico, 1920–1940. In M. K. Vaughan, L. Stephen (Ed.), *The eagle and the virgin: Nation and cultural revolution in Mexico* (pp. 176–195). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Madriz, E. I. (1998). Using focus groups with lower socioeconomic status Latina women. *Qualitative Inquiry, 4*, 114–128. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/107780049800400107>
- Marcus, G. E. (1995). Ethnography in/of the world system: The emergence of multi-sited ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 24*, 95–117. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev.an.24.100195.000523>
- Marková, I., Linell, P., Grossen, M., & Salazar Orvig, A. (2007). *Dialogue in focus groups: Exploring socially shared knowledge*. London, UK: Equinox. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/applin/amm042>
- McLellan, E., MacQueen, K. M., & Neidig, J. L. (2003). Beyond the qualitative interview: Data preparation and transcription. *Field Methods, 15*, 63–84. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1525822X02239573>
- McMullen, L. (2011). A discursive analysis of Teresa's protocol: Enhancing oneself, diminishing others. In F. Wertz, K. Charmaz, L. McMullen, R. Josselson, R. Anderson, & E. McSpadden (Eds.), *Five ways of doing qualitative analysis: Phenomenological psychology, grounded theory, discourse analysis, narrative research, and intuitive inquiry* (pp. 205–233). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Merton, R. K., Lowenthal, M. F., & Kendall, P. L. (1990). *The focused interview: A manual*. Florence, MA: Free Press.
- Moscovici, S. (2000). *Social representations: Explorations in social psychology* (G. Duveen, Ed.). Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Moscovici, S. (2008). *Psychoanalysis: Its image and its public* (D. Macey, Trans., & G. Duveen, Ed.). Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Murphy, A. D., & Stepick, A. (1991). *Social inequality in Oaxaca: A history of resistance and change*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Myers, G. (1998). Displaying opinions: Topics and disagreement in focus groups. *Language in Society, 27*, 85–111. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0047404500019734>
- Narayan, U. (2013). *Dislocating cultures: Identities, traditions, and third world feminism*. New York, NY: Routledge. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9780203707487>
- Norget, K. (2006). *Days of death, days of life: Ritual in the popular culture of Oaxaca*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Ochs, E., & Kremer-Sadlik, T. (2015). How postindustrial families talk. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 44*, 87–103. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-102214-014027>
- Packer, M. (2010). *The science of qualitative research*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511779947>
- Post, S. G. (2000). *The moral challenge of Alzheimer disease: Ethical issues from diagnosis to dying* (2nd ed.). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/book.20623>
- Potter, J., & Wetherell, M. (1987). *Discourse and social psychology: Beyond attitudes and behaviour*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Puchta, C., & Potter, J. (2004). *Focus group practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781849209168>
- Ryan, J., Al Sheedi, Y. M., White, G., & Watkins, D. (2015). Respecting the culture: Undertaking focus groups in Oman. *Qualitative Research, 15*, 373–388. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1468794114524220>
- Sabat, S. R. (2018). *Alzheimer's disease and dementia: What everyone needs to know*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Sabat, S. R., & Harré, R. (1992). The construction and deconstruction of self in Alzheimer's disease. *Ageing & Society, 12*, 443–461. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/s0144686x00005262>
- Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York, NY: Vintage.
- Slaney, K. L., & Tafreshi, D. (2018). Quantitative, qualitative, or mixed? Should philosophy guide method choice? In B. Schiff (Ed.), *Situating qualitative methods in psychological science* (pp. 27–42). New York, NY: Routledge. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9781351136426-3>
- Sontag, S. (2001). *Illness as metaphor and AIDS and its metaphors*. New York, NY: Picador.
- Squires, A. (2009). Methodological challenges in cross-language qualitative research: A research review. *International Journal of Nursing Studies, 46*, 277–287. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2008.08.006>

- Srivastava, P. (2006). Reconciling multiple researcher positionalities and languages in international research. *Research in Comparative and International Education, 1*, 210–222. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/rcie.2006.1.3.210>
- Stephen, L. (2005). *Zapotec women: Gender, class, and ethnicity in globalized Oaxaca* (2nd ed.). Durham, NC: Duke University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1215/9780822387510>
- Stephen, L. (2007). *Transborder lives: Indigenous Oaxacans in Mexico, CA, and Oregon*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1215/9780822389965>
- Stephen, L. (2013). *We are the face of Oaxaca: Testimony and social movements*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1215/9780822377504>
- Suchman, L., & Jordan, B. (1990). Interactional troubles in face-to-face survey interviews. *Journal of the American Statistical Association, 85*, 232–241. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01621459.1990.10475331>
- Temple, B. (2002). Crossed wires: Interpreters, translators, and bilingual workers in cross-language research. *Qualitative Health Research, 12*, 844–854. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/104973230201200610>
- Temple, B., & Edwards, R. (2008). Interpreters/translators and cross-language research: Reflexivity and border crossings. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 1*, 1–12. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/160940690200100201>
- Temple, B., & Young, A. (2004). Qualitative research and translation dilemmas. *Qualitative Research, 4*, 161–178. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1468794104044430>
- Traphagan, J. W. (1998). Localizing senility: Illness and agency among older Japanese. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology, 13*, 81–98. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1006566300463>
- Wacquant, L. (2011). Habitus as topic and tool: Reflections on becoming a prizefighter. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 8*, 81–92. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2010.544176>
- Walsh, R. (2003). The methods of reflexivity. *The Humanistic Psychologist, 31*, 51–66. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08873267.2003.9986934>
- Weaver, L. J. (2018). *Sugar and tension: Diabetes and gender in modern India*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Wertz, F. J. (2011a). Introduction. In F. J. Wertz, et al. (Eds.), *Five ways of doing qualitative analysis: Phenomenological psychology, grounded theory, discourse analysis, narrative research, and intuitive inquiry* (pp. 1–12). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Wertz, F. J. (2011b). The qualitative revolution and psychology: Science, politics, and ethics. *The Humanistic Psychologist, 39*, 77–104. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08873267.2011.564531>
- Wibeck, V., Dahlgren, M. A., & Öberg, G. (2007). Learning in focus groups: An analytical dimension for enhancing focus group research. *Qualitative Research, 7*, 249–267. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1468794107076023>
- Wilk, R. (2006). *Home cooking in the global village: Caribbean food from buccaneers to ecotourists*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781350047686>
- Wilkinson, S. (1998a). Focus group methodology: A review. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 1*, 181–203. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13645579.1998.10846874>
- Wilkinson, S. (1998b). Focus groups in feminist research: Power, interaction, and the co-construction of meaning. *Women's Studies International Forum, 21*, 111–125. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0277-5395\(97\)00080-0](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0277-5395(97)00080-0)
- Wood, L. A., & Kroger, R. O. (2000). *Doing discourse analysis: Methods for studying action in talk and text*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Yahalom, J. (2016). *Social dimensions of Alzheimer's disease among caregivers in Oaxaca, Mexico*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University.
- Yahalom, J. (2017). Levinasian caregiving: Dementia and the other-in-between. *Philosophy in the Contemporary World, 24*, 51–62. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5840/pcw20172415>
- Yahalom, J. (2019a). *Caring for the people of the clouds: Aging and dementia in Oaxaca*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Yahalom, J. (2019b). Pragmatic truths about illness experience: Idioms of distress around Alzheimer's disease in Oaxaca, Mexico. *Transcultural Psychiatry*. Advance online publication. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1363461519847304>
- Yahalom, J. (2020). Social Factors of Health-Seeking Behavior: On Medical Treatment for Elders With Dementia in Oaxaca, Mexico. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*. Advance online publication. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0022167819899591>
- Yanchar, S. C., Gantt, E. E., & Clay, S. L. (2005). On the nature of a critical methodology. *Theory & Psychology, 15*, 27–50. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0959354305049743>

Received May 28, 2019

Revision received November 25, 2019

Accepted March 29, 2020 ■