



**PPHA 35578**

**Qualitative Methods for International Policy and Development**

**Dr Mareike Schomerus**

**Monday 9 – 10.20 am/ Wednesday 9 – 10.20 am (Room: Keller 0023)**

**Course description**

Qualitative research offers policy makers multifaceted, nuanced and rich insight into the issues they are seeking to impactfully address with their policies. A qualitative perspective helps to draw out complexities and connections that help identifying the trade-offs that come with all policy choices. Practical knowledge on how to conduct qualitative research, to evaluate it for its rigour, to assess what it can contribute to policy debates, and to package it for highest impact and evidence uptake are crucial skills in the policy sphere.

**Aims of the course and learning outcomes**

The aim of the course is to equip students with the knowledge and practical skills needed to conduct and interpret qualitative research and evaluate the strength of the empirical findings. It does so by getting deep into the question of what makes good qualitative research and how it can be translated for better policies—and then asking students to design their own qualitative research project. This means students will apply learnings about qualitative inquiry, drafting a research design as well as collecting, analysing and packaging qualitative data. Specifically, the course aims to

- sensitize students to different knowledge philosophies so that they are able to recognize how different types of policy-relevant knowledge are created, and how such knowledge can be utilised to assess claims regarding the strength of evidence;
- equip students with skills needed to critique qualitative research for its rigour and assess trade-offs between quantitative and qualitative research;
- introduce students to a range of qualitative research methods and assess their applicability to different research questions;
- familiarize students with examples of qualitative studies on issues relevant to international development policy.

By the end of the course, students will be able to

- evaluate the rigour of qualitative research;



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- compare applicability of different types of qualitative research for different research questions and purposes;
- recognize the role of qualitative research in public policy and analyse policy implications of qualitative research findings;
- design a qualitative research project and apply qualitative research methods.

### Who is this course for?

This course is for students without prior experience of qualitative research, or for students who might have experience conducting formative qualitative research in preparation of quantitative research. The course is explicitly designed to act as a learning accompaniment to quantitative courses students might have taken at Harris, with the aim to broaden students' exposure to how issues they might have encountered in quantitative classes at Harris are reflected in qualitative research, and how qualitative knowledge helps broaden and nuance their perspective on the complexity of an issue.

In addition to training students in analytical skills, this course is committed to being a practicum through application of the methodological knowledge needed to conduct qualitative research, from choosing a research question, assessing what type of design works best, how to collect the data, how to analyse and present it and what steps are necessary for theory formation. Students will work on their own research project in weeks 4 - 9.

But, above all else, this course is for students who are curious about the world around them, who want to understand how to better address complex problems, and who love observation as well as hearing people's stories about the lives they lead.

### Design of the course

The course is designed to make qualitative research come to life by being hands on, with a short, often reflective, assignment each week. These assignments are the building blocks for the final research assignments. More detail on the assignments can be found in the weekly schedule; how they are graded is outlined below in the section on assignments. The class schedule marks whether assignments are part of the overall participation grade or whether they will form a separate part of students' grades.

### About your instructor

Mareike Schomerus, (PhD, London School of Economics and Political Science) is Vice President at the Busara Center in Nairobi. She was formerly Director of Programme [Politics and Governance](#) at ODI in London (formerly Overseas Development Institute), and Research Director of the [Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium](#) (SLRC), also at ODI. At Busara, she heads the Center's work that links behavioral science, governance, fragility and violent conflict. She is a widely published researcher with a body of work on violent conflict, political contestation and peace processes in South Sudan and Uganda and across borders, as well as behavioral mechanisms in post-conflict recovery, for which she has developed



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a body of work on the '[mental landscape](#)' of lives in or after situations of violence conflict. In addition to conducting and leading academic research, she has conducted applied research for a wide range of international organisations. She is the co-editor of two volumes (on [African secessionism](#) and [South Sudan's borderlands](#) (Palgrave Macmillan 2020, 2013) and author of the monographs *The Lord's Resistance Army: Violence and Peacemaking in Africa* (Cambridge University Press 2021) and *Lives Amid Violence: Transforming Development in the Wake of Conflict* (Bloomsbury, forthcoming 2022).

## **Administrative information**

### **Class meeting time and location**

The class meets in person Monday and Wednesday (9 – 10.20am) in Keller 0023. Typically, Mondays will be devoted to introducing the material for the week; Wednesdays will be seminar- or workshop style. Attendance is mandatory on both Mondays and Wednesdays; students need to notify the instructor of absences.

### **Office Hours and how to contact me**

You can contact me through Canvas or on my email [t-9marei@uchicago.edu](mailto:t-9marei@uchicago.edu). My office hours will be on Wednesdays (in person, in the Piazza 11am – 12:30pm) and Thursdays 4 – 5.30pm (virtual, on Zoom, details will be shared on Canvas). I will post a sign-up sheet on Canvas.

### **Assignments and assessment**

Students' grade will be made up of the following:

**Short assignments graded (30%):** There will be three (very) short assignments. These are designed to support students in working towards their final research paper, but they will be graded as stand-alone contributions. These short assignments will require students to reflect on readings or learnings and apply them to their research design.

***Due dates for short assignments: April 8, April 15, April 29***

**Research paper (45%):** The final research paper of no more than five pages in length will consist of an outline of the research question; research design with brief justification of case selection, theoretical approach (including brief literature overview) and methods; preliminary insights from sample interviews and suggested policy-relevant preliminary findings. A detailed template will be provided. Students should endeavour to discuss their approach with me at least once during office hours.

***Due date: May 27***

**Class Participation 25% (15% attendance and class participation; 10% weekly assignments marked as 'participation'):** Students are expected to attend lectures and actively contribute to seminar discussions,



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maybe at times taking the lead in the discussions. In addition, 10% of the participation grade will be drawn from the short weekly assignments that are marked as 'participation'. These will not be individually marked, but used to provide an insight into students' engagement with the class material. They will also help guide feedback discussions during office hours.

**Due dates: Participation assignments: April 1, April 22, May 6, May 13, May 20**

All assignments should be submitted as soft copies via Canvas in 12-point font with a standard margin of about one inch/2.5 centimeters. All assignments are graded on a curve, using the standard Harris grading scale. Assignments that are longer than the stated page limit will have points deducted for each page that overruns the page or paragraph limit. The reason why this is such a strict policy is because particularly in the policy world, people's tolerance for reading beyond expected length is very limited, so learning how to be succinct is part of this course. Late submissions will be subject to deduction of one half-grade per day. If you are running into problems, do come and talk to me.

### Readings

Weekly readings are split into two categories:

- **Core readings** cover the week's substantive learning.
- **Qualitative reading theme readings** cover issues that might be familiar to students from other courses they have taken at Harris; these are chosen to introduce students to how such themes have been covered in qualitative research. These readings broaden the students' perspective on what we can learn from research, but also act as inspiring examples while students are designing their own research. The qualitative reading theme reading lists can be quite long to accommodate different student interests, but students are only expected to ***pick at least one reading*** from the qualitative reading theme list each week. You are of course more than welcome to read them all.

With the exception of the books, most readings listed here are available through electronic or library access. Core readings that are not as easy to find will be uploaded to Canvas for ease of access.

### Books

Three books will accompany us throughout the course: A methods textbook, a short and readable book that unpacks the epistemological underpinnings of knowledge, and an entertaining and helpful book on scholarly writing that might well become your companion for life. Different chapters are assigned in appropriate weeks, but particularly the textbook will serve as a reference throughout. All these books are readily available to be purchased in hard or electronic copies. The books are:

Creswell, John W. & Cheryl Poth (2018) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches*. 4th ed. .Washington, D.C.: Sage.

Nagel, Jennifer (2014) *Knowledge: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.



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Sword, Helen (2012) *Stylish academic writing*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

## **Course outline**

### **Week 1 (March 28): Tell a story, prove a point: The role of qualitative research in public policy**

The course's introductory week focuses on the relationship between policy and qualitative research. Using examples of policies, we examine for what policy issues qualitative research is best suited and what level of scientific evidence it can provide in the eyes of a policy-maker committed to evidence-based policy. We will identify how policies might benefit from problem-driven research and assess qualitative research as a tool that can help in identifying and evaluating implementation challenges.

#### **Core readings**

Creswell, John W. & Cheryl Poth (2018) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches*. 4th ed. . Washington, D.C.: Sage.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Maxwell, Joseph A. (2019) The value of qualitative inquiry for public policy. *Qualitative Inquiry* 26(2): 177-186.

*BASIC CONCEPTS from Sociology and Anthropology - Tools to think with.*

[https://ocw.mit.edu/courses/anthropology/21a-245j-power-interpersonal-organizational-and-global-dimensions-fall-2005/study-materials/basic\\_conc.pdf](https://ocw.mit.edu/courses/anthropology/21a-245j-power-interpersonal-organizational-and-global-dimensions-fall-2005/study-materials/basic_conc.pdf).

#### **Qualitative reading theme: good policy intentions and complex connections**

The thematic readings offer examples of policies gone wrong despite good intentions, or highlight the complexity of an environment in which policies are implemented.

Ames, Morgan G. (2019) *The Charisma Machine: The Life, Death, and Legacy of One Laptop per Child*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Introduction, Chapters 3 and 4, Appendix B.

Bates, Robert H. (not dated) Talk for The International Coffee Conference Place.

Munk, Nina (2013) *The Idealist: Jeffrey Sachs and the quest to end poverty*. New York, NY: Anchor Books. Part 1 and 2

#### **Assignment 1 (participation): Who am I?**



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Write four paragraphs to introduce yourself. Structure this introduction using some of the concepts introduced in the 'Basic concepts from sociology and anthropology' reading. You could, for example, talk about your culture and how it has been shaped or how it has shaped who you are. What are your values? What are the norms by which you live your life and how did they come to be? How do you think about your current role or identity? In what social structures did you grow up? Write the assignment providing a level of information that you are happy for others to read as we will use these in class.

**Due date: April 1**

### **Week 2 (April 4): Who creates the world as we know it? Philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research**

The second week delves into the question of how we know what we know and how this links to the kind of insights that can be gathered from qualitative research. We unpack how research findings are shaped by epistemologies, ontologies and methodologies and look at traditions of qualitative inquiry and what advantages or disadvantages they have. We then compare qualitative approaches to quantitative approaches to address how insights derived from small-n studies can deliver rigorous evidence and how other challenges of quantitative research (such as generalisability or replicability) might play out in qualitative research.

#### **Core readings**

Creswell, John W. & Cheryl Poth (2018) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. 4th ed. . Washington, D.C.: Sage.

Chapter 2: Philosophical Assumptions and Interpretive Frameworks.

Nagel, Jennifer (2014) *Knowledge: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chapters 1 – 4 (Introduction, Scepticism, Rationalism and empiricism, The Analysis of Knowledge)

Mahoney, James & Gary Goertz (2006) A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research. *Political Analysis* 14(3): 227-249.

Jaynes, Gerald D., David E. Apter, Herbert J. Gans, William Kornblum, Ruth Horowitz, James F. Short, Gerald D. Suttles & Robert E. Washington (2009) The Chicago School and the roots of urban ethnography: An intergenerational conversation with Gerald D. Jaynes, David E. Apter, Herbert J. Gans, William Kornblum, Ruth Horowitz, James F. Short, Jr, Gerald D. Suttles and Robert E. Washington. *Ethnography* 10(4): 375-396.

#### **Qualitative reading theme: Chicago Life**

This week's qualitative reading theme offers you a lot of choice. It is a celebration of the diverse history of qualitative research in and on Chicago, the birthplace of the Chicago School of Ethnography (1917 - 1942), which produced research classics and, in its time, set the methodological debate on ethnography. The inhabitants of the city of Chicago have been the subject of many types of qualitative research since.



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Below is a selection of Chicago School of Ethnography classics (you'll recognise those from the publication date) and more recent work, including some recent PhD theses. Pick a topic that interests you and lose yourself in the descriptions and method discussions. Some of these are books or book-length, so you might want to pick and choose a few chapters or read the whole book.

Allemana, Michael (2020) *"Will You Still Be Mine?": Memory, Place, Race and Jazz on Chicago's South Side Chicago*: Department of Music, University of Chicago.

Aspholm, Roberto R. (2020) *Views from the streets: The transformation of gangs and violence on Chicago's South Side*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Cressey, Paul Goalby (1921) *Taxi-Dance Hall: A sociological study in commercialized recreation and city life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ewing, Eve L. (2018) *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago's Southside*. London: Trentham Books.

Gems, Gerald R. (1996) *The Neighborhood Athletic Club: An Ethnographic Study of a Working-Class Athletic Fraternity in Chicago, 1917-1984*. *Colby Quarterly* 32(1): 36-44.

Halstead, Tyler (2019) *American Mecca: Examining Today's Nation of Islam among Black Muslims on Chicago's South Side*. Theological and Cultural Anthropology Eastern University.

Heintz, Nathan (2018) Gaming Evidence: Power, Storytelling and the "Colonial Moment" in a Chicago Systems Change Project. *Ethnographic Praxis in Industry Conference Proceedings* 2018(1): 566-590.

Lu, Xing (2001) Bicultural Identity Development and Chinese Community Formation: An Ethnographic Study of Chinese Schools in Chicago. *Howard Journal of Communications* 12(4): 203-220.

Penaloza, Lisa (1998) Just doing it: A visual ethnographic study of spectacular consumption behavior at Nike Town. *Consumption Markets & Culture* 2(4): 337-400.

Straussman, Jason (2019) Freedom on earth: an ethnographic study of Hyde Park's University Church. *Advocate's Forum*.

Stuart, Forrest (2020) *Ballad of the Bullet: Gangs, Drill Music, and the Power of Online Infamy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Thrasher, Frederic Milton (1929) *The Gang: A study of 1,313 gangs in Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Venkatesh, Sudhir (2008) *Gangleader for a day: A rogue sociologist takes to the streets*. New York: Penguin Press.

*Note:* If you read Venkatesh's gripping book, you might be keen to look at the other papers he produced from his research. Because they sit in an entirely different academic discipline the book and the paper together are a great example of how different research methods conducted in parallel can produce very different outcomes: Levitt, Steven D. & Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh (2000) An Economic Analysis of a Drug-Selling Gang's Finances. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 115(3): 755-789.



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Wilson, David (2021) People as infrastructure politics in global north cities: Chicago's South Side. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*: 23996544211004165.

Zaimi, Rea (2020) *Reconfiguring racial regimes of ownership: vacancy and the labor of revitalization on Chicago's South Side*. Geography, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

**Assignment 2 (graded): Experiences, arguments, evidence: Learnings from research on Chicago**

For this week's assignment, you will choose one of the studies from the qualitative reading theme on Chicago and write up some reflections (no more than two pages). Your reflections should cover the following: What did the author want to find out? Why did the author choose the method they did and how convinced are you by that choice? How is the data presented? What are the main findings of the study? Does the author develop a theoretical argument from the findings? What do you consider strengths and weaknesses of the study in terms of clarity of question, method, data, presentation?

**Due date: April 8**

**Week 3 (April 11): You just ask questions--any questions! Research design and ethics**

This week focuses on research design and how each step of the research design needs to be developed with ethical challenges in mind. We will focus on different approaches to qualitative research, dispel the myth that qualitative research is just a matter of asking open-ended questions of a few people, and grapple with possible shortcomings of a chosen design and how to mitigate those. We will also look in detail at ethical implications of qualitative research and the behaviour of the qualitative researcher, who often spends considerable time interviewing people about challenging experiences in their lives.

**Core readings**

Creswell, John W. & Cheryl Poth (2018) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. 4th ed. . Washington, D.C.: Sage.

Chapter 3. Designing a Qualitative Study; Chapter 4. Five Qualitative Approaches to Inquiry; 6. Introducing and Focusing the Study

Nagel, Jennifer (2014) *Knowledge: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chapter 5 (Internalism and Externalism).

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai (2021, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition) *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books.

Chapters 2 and 3 (Research through imperial eyes; Colonizing knowledges).

Stanley, Liz & Bogusia Temple (2008) Narrative methodologies: subjects, silences, re-readings and analyses. *Qualitative Research* 8(3): 275-281.

Keikelame, Mpoe Johannah & Leslie Swartz (2019) Decolonising research methodologies: lessons from a qualitative research project, Cape Town, South Africa. *Global Health Action* 12(1): 1561175.



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**Qualitative reading theme: participation and inclusion**

This week's qualitative reading theme offers examples of the kind of studies that the proposed qualitative approaches produce. The studies are focused on the themes of participation and inclusion, unpacking the experiences that lie behind the experience and reality of marginalisation.

Creswell, John W. & Cheryl Poth (2018) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. 4th ed. . Washington, D.C.: Sage.

Appendix D. A Grounded Theory Study—"Developing Long-Term Physical Activity Participation: A Grounded Theory Study With African American Women"

Kurian, Nomisha & Kevin Kester (2019) Southern voices in peace education: interrogating race, marginalisation and cultural violence in the field. *Journal of Peace Education* 16(1): 21-48.

Loubere, Nicholas (2018) Indebted to development: microcredit as (de)marginalisation in rural China. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 45(3): 585-609.

Messiou, Kyriaki (2006) Understanding marginalisation in education: The voice of children. *European Journal of Psychology of Education* 21(3): 305.

Nyabola, Nanjala (2018) *Digital Democracy, Analogue Politics: How the Internet Era is Transforming Politics in Kenya*. London: Zed. Part 2: Digital Politics

**Assignment 3 (graded): Who am I (reprise)?**

Return to your week 1 assignment and rewrite it in two ways: Develop a research question about yourself, using one of the social concepts from week 1 that has most resonance for you. Then explain which of the qualitative approaches we studied this week would be most appropriate to answer this research question about yourself. Justify your use of method and develop a paragraph in which you outline why the chosen approach is the best for the study of you (two pages in total).

In addition, please browse the University of Chicago research ethics website to familiarise yourself with the kind of questions that an ethical review board would ask of research involving humans. You can start a submission on the website to take yourself through the process (but don't submit it). Please come to class prepared to discuss anything you noticed about this process. The relevant websites are:

<https://aura.uchicago.edu//>

<https://sbsirb.uchicago.edu/>

**Due date: April 15**

**Week 4 (April 18): How to convince the public: qualitative research for policy**

This week we return to the question of how qualitative research is used in a policy process. Research tends to be influential for policy if it offers a rigorous and widely-relatable theory—but how is such a



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theory derived from qualitative research? We also examine the role of qualitative research to evaluate the impact of a policy and identify obstacles to policy uptake, and how to use the language of research to reach into practice.

**Core readings**

Irwin, Neil (2017 (March 17)) What if Sociologists Had as Much Influence as Economists? *The New York Times* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/17/upshot/what-if-sociologists-had-as-much-influence-as-economists.html>).

Nagel, Jennifer (2014) *Knowledge: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
Chapter 6 (Testimony).

Sallee, Margaret W. & Julee T. Flood (2012) Using Qualitative Research to Bridge Research, Policy, and Practice. *Theory into Practice* 51(2): 137-144.

Smit, Brigitte (2003) Can Qualitative Research Inform Policy Implementation? Evidence and Arguments from a Developing Country Context. *FQS Social Research* 4(3).

Timmermans, Stefan & Iddo Tavory (2012) Theory Construction in Qualitative Research: From Grounded Theory to Abductive Analysis. *Sociological Theory* 30(3): 167-186.

**Qualitative reading theme: perceptions and framing**

This week's theme focuses on how framing and representation influence how an issue is understood. Qualitative research is particularly well-suited to highlight the role of perceptions and the following studies do just that.

Creswell, John W. & Cheryl Poth (2018) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. 4th ed. . Washington, D.C.: Sage.  
Appendix C. A Phenomenological Study—"Cognitive Representations of AIDS"

Paris, Roland (2002) Kosovo and the Metaphor War. *Political Science Quarterly* 117(3): 423-450.

Philips, Mira & Geetha Mayadunne (2016) *Perceptions of livelihood services delivery: A study of fisher communities in post-war north and east of Sri Lanka*. London: Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium.

Schomerus, Mareike (forthcoming 2022) *Lives Amid Violence: Transforming Development in the Wake of Conflict*. London: Bloomsbury.

Chapter 5: Vertical columns of accelerated air: The mental landscape

**Assignment 4 (participation): What do you want to know?**

From this week onwards, all assignments will focus on developing your research project. Using insights you have gained on life in Chicago, issues that interest you, or your own position and experience, go on a research topic hunt. Walk around your neighbourhood with the aim to identify something that you want to know about the people in it. Read local news sites to see whether there are any current hot



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topics. Note down three ideas (one paragraph each), covering the research question, justification why you find the question interesting, what broader insights you hope to get from pursuing that question and identifying who could be your research subject.

**Due date: April 22**

**Week 5 (April 25): Taking a step back: Other things to think about when reading and designing qualitative research: Culture, discourse and the self**

When designing qualitative research, it is necessary to pay attention to a whole lot of other things in addition to a good research question, research design and research ethics. This week, we will focus on a number of key elements that shape how research turns out, or that help position a piece of qualitative research more meaningfully in an ongoing debate. We will focus on time and temporality, discourse, the role of document analysis, identifying bias as well as unpacking positionality and how this might shape research dynamics.

**Core readings**

This week is quite heavy on the core readings, but it is possible to pick a few to cover the concepts that you have by now identified as being most interesting to you or most relevant to your research project.

Bowen, Glenn A. (2009) Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. *Qualitative Research Journal* 9(2): 27-40.

Büthe, Tim (2002) Taking Temporality Seriously: Modeling History and the Use of Narratives as Evidence. *American Political Science Review* 96(3): 481-493.

Henrich, Joseph; Steven J. Heine & Ara Norenzayan (2010) The Weirdest People in the World? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 33(2/3): 61-83.

Lund, Christian (2014) The ethics of fruitful misunderstanding. *Journal of Research Practice* 10(2).

Stuart, Forrest (2018) Reflexivity : Introspection, Positionality, and the Self as Research Instrument – Toward a Model of Abductive Reflexivity. In: Colin Jerolmack & Shamus Kahn (eds) *Approaches to Ethnography: Analysis and Representation in Participant Observation*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

**Qualitative reading theme: Identity**

This week is about identity, a concept that is prominent in much quantitative and qualitative inquiry. Some of these readings focus on ethnic identity; others are a broader inquiry into how to unpack the complicated notion of identity through qualitative research.

Creswell, John W. & Cheryl Poth (2018) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. 4th ed. . Washington, D.C.: Sage.



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Appendix B. A Narrative Research Study—"Living in the Space Between Participant and Researcher as a Narrative Inquirer: Examining Ethnic Identity of Chinese Canadian Students as Conflicting Stories to Live By"

Stone, Robalyn & Michael Young (2009) The Content and Intersection of Identity in Iraq. In: Alastair Iain Johnston; Rawi Abdelal; Rose McDermott & Yoshiko M. Herrera (eds) *Measuring Identity: A Guide for Social Scientists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (237-249).

Schomerus, Mareike (forthcoming 2022) *Lives Amid Violence: Transforming Development in the Wake of Conflict*. London: Bloomsbury. London: Bloomsbury.

Chapter 6: A satellite image of the neighbourhood: Why who you are matters

Yousfi, H  la & Chahrazad Abdallah (2020) Crisis ethnography: emotions and identity in fieldwork during the Tunisian revolution. In: Raza Mir & Anne-Laure Fayard (eds) *The Routledge companion to anthropology and business*. New York, NY: Routledge (433-450).

**Assignment 5 (graded):**

This week asks you to focus your research project. Please write a research design (no more than three pages), also called a research blueprint. This needs to include your research question, what key concepts you will link this to and what the broader implications of your findings might be, what methodological approach you have chosen, what data you will gather and how, and a preliminary set of up to ten interview questions. These interview questions should be resolutely qualitative in character: Open-ended and asked with a clear sense of what the narrative answers you might get will contribute to your process of answering your research question.

**Due date: April 29**

**Week 6 (May 2): When you look deeper, what are you seeing?**

This is quite a technical week, focused on many aspects of conducting your research study. We will particularly zoom in on techniques and tricks for data collection and how to counter the common urge in qualitative research to ask a lot of questions without much focus. We will work in class with some of your suggested interview questions from last week's assignment to get a sense of whether questions might need adjustments and for what reasons.

**Core readings**

Creswell, John W. & Cheryl Poth (2018) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. 4th ed. Washington, D.C.: Sage.

Chapters 6. Introducing and Focusing the Study; 7. Data Collection; 11. "Turning the Story" and Conclusion

Nagel, Jennifer (2014) *Knowledge: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.



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Chapter 7 – 8 (Shifting Standards?; Knowing about Knowing).

Pugh, Allison J. (2013) What good are interviews for thinking about culture? Demystifying interpretive analysis. *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 1(1): 42-68.

**Qualitative reading theme: social relations and cultural practices**

This week's qualitative reading theme unpacks different approaches to studying social relations and culture through qualitative research—both topics have been a driving force of much ethnographic research, but both are also prominent policy-relevant themes, as many programmatic interventions aim to build good social relations while embedding development into existing cultural practices. With Clifford Geertz and Becker et al, you will also be introduced to classic pieces of cultural anthropology.

Becker, Howard S., Blanche Geer, Everett C. Hughes & Anselm L Strauss (1977) *Boys in white: Student culture in medical school* New Brunswick, NJ/ London: Transaction publishers.

Creswell, John W. & Cheryl Poth (2018) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. 4th ed. . Washington, D.C.: Sage.

Appendix F. A Case Study—"Relational Underpinnings and Professionalism—A Case Study of a Teacher's Practices Involving Students With Experiences of School Failure"

Geertz, Clifford (1977) Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight. In: *The Interpretation Of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.

Pendle, Naomi R. (2020) The 'Nuer of Dinka money' and the demands of the dead: contesting the moral limits of monetised politics in South Sudan. *Conflict, Security & Development* 20(5): 587-605.

Ungruhe, Christian & James Esson (2017) A Social Negotiation of Hope: Male West African Youth, 'Waithood' and the Pursuit of Social Becoming through Football. *Boyhood Studies* 10(1): 22-43.

Singh, Abhigyan, Alex T. Strating, N. A. Romero Herrera, Hylke W. van Dijk & David V. Keyson (2017) Towards an ethnography of electrification in rural India: Social relations and values in household energy exchanges. *Energy Research & Social Science* 30: 103-115.

**Assignment 6 (participation): Refining your interview approach**

Based on this week's feedback and learning, write up ten revised interview questions and elaborate why you have revised them the way you did. Please add a brief interview schedule: Who will you interview, when and under what conditions? Confirm that they are available and happy to be interviewed, detailing how you have asked them for informed consent. Schedule at least three interviews to take place in the week between class in week 6 and 7, so that you can benefit from this week's feedback, but are able to conclude interviews in time for discussion in week 7.

**Due date: May 6.**



## Week 7 (May 9): Becoming an empirical story teller

This week focuses on how to analyse qualitative data and on the craft of writing it up to deliver a coherent and readable set of rigorous research findings, using the power of good research writing. We will first develop different ways to code your qualitative data, adjusting the process according to your research methodology and approach. We will think about different formats your write up can take and what are useful tricks to present this research in the most effective way.

### Core readings

This week is the first time we are turning to Helen Sword's book on stylish academic writing. Despite what the somewhat dry title suggests, this is a highly readable analysis of how academic language can fall short of delivering the best impact. You might not be able to read the whole book this week, but I would propose that you browse the chapters to see which interest you most—and then continue to use the insights from this book for the rest of your writing career.

Creswell, John W. & Cheryl Poth (2018) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. 4th ed. . Washington, D.C.: Sage.

Chapter 9. Writing a Qualitative Study

Gilgun, Jane F. (2005) "Grab" and Good Science: Writing Up the Results of Qualitative Research," *Qualitative Health Research* 15: 256-262.

Sword, Helen (2012) *Stylish Academic Writing*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

### Qualitative reading theme: violence

The study of violence is a prominent theme, particularly in international development policy. Below are four very different qualitative approaches that might help to contextualise some of the quantitative studies you might have read on violence.

Bogner, Artur & Gabriele Rosenthal (2014) The "Untold" Stories of Outsiders and Their Significance for the Analysis of (Post-) Conflict Figurations. Interviews with Victims of Collective Violence in Northern Uganda (West Nile). *FQS Social Research* 15(3).

Kadivar, Mohammad Ali & Neil Ketchley (2018) Sticks, Stones, and Molotov Cocktails: Unarmed Collective Violence and Democratization. *Socius* 4: 2378023118773614.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy (1992 ) *Death without weeping: The violence of everyday life in Brazil*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Chapter 6: Everyday Violence: Bodies, Death, and Silence

Schomerus, Mareike (2021) *The Lord's Resistance Army: Violence and peacemaking in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chapter 4: Am I an animal? Identity, rules and loss in the Lord's Resistance Army.



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**Assignment 7: Coding your data (participation)**

Using insights from class discussions, develop a method for coding your data and briefly describe it in no more than a page. Elaborate on how your key will help you to situate your interview data within the concepts you are using and how it will guide you towards gaining an answer to your research question.

**Due date: May 13**

**Week 8 (May 16): Making it count: qualitative research and impact**

As you are starting to write up your research, we are returning to the question of how to make qualitative research relevant for policy. A number of themes more commonly discussed regarding quantitative research will become prominent this week, such as how qualitative research can offer validation and reliability—which in quantitative research is primarily achieved through conducting large-n studies. We will spend some time looking back at week 2 to recognize how certain kinds of epistemologies have come to dominate policy debates.

**Core readings**

Creswell, John W. & Cheryl Poth (2018) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. 4th ed. . Washington, D.C.: Sage.

Chapter 10. Standards of Validation and Evaluation

Swedberg, Richard (2016) Before theory comes theorizing or how to make social science more interesting. *The British Journal of Sociology* 67(1): 5-22.

**Qualitative reading theme: ingroups and outgroups**

This week looks at a prominent research theme in quantitative behavioural science: the question of how ingroups and outgroups are constructed and how these constructions shape interaction, behaviour and policy outcomes.

Creswell, John W. & Cheryl Poth (2018) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. 4th ed. . Washington, D.C.: Sage.

Appendix E. An Ethnography—“British-Born Pakistani and Bangladeshi Young Men: Exploring Unstable Concepts of Muslim, Islamophobia and Racialization”

Gobbo, Francesca (2004) Cultural Intersections: The Life Story of a Roma Cultural Mediator. *European Educational Research Journal* 3(3): 626-641.

Henry, Annette (2015) ‘We especially welcome applications from members of visible minority groups’: reflections on race, gender and life at three universities. *Race Ethnicity and Education* 18(5): 589-610.



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Meade, Rachel (2020) Populism from the bottom up: Ethnography from Trump's U.S. and Kirchner's Argentina. In: Amit Ron & Majia Nadesan (eds) *Mapping Populism: Approaches and Methods*. New York: Routledge.

Vickers, Margaret H. (2007) Autoethnography as Sensemaking: A Story of Bullying. *Culture and Organization* 13(3): 223-237.

### **Assignment 8 (participation)**

Write a one-paragraph abstract of your research paper, summarizing its main argument, its method and implications for the debate in which you are situating your findings.

**Due date: May 20**

### **Week 9 (May 23): Putting it all together: Views, narratives, learning and policy tools**

This is the week when many of our learnings from this course come together: we will revisit theoretical views on the relevance of different types of research, as well as re-examine dominant research philosophies and how these have shaped theoretical debates and policy discourse. We will reflect on learning from the experience of designing research, choosing interviewees and questions, coding the data, and reflecting on the researcher's positionality.

#### **Core readings**

This week is deliberately very light on core reading to allow you to catch up on crucial pieces of reading you might have missed as you prepare for your final assignment.

Erickson, Frederick (2009) Four Points Concerning Policy-Oriented Qualitative Research. In: Norman K Denzin & Michael D Giardina (eds) *Qualitative Inquiry and Social Justice: Toward a Politics of Hope*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Raadschelders, Jos C. N. (2011) The Future of the Study of Public Administration: Embedding Research Object and Methodology in Epistemology and Ontology. *Public Administration Review* 71(6): 916-924.

#### **Qualitative reading theme: causality**

The question of causality drives much quantitative research; within qualitative research causality is less of a goal since it is much more difficult to establish. One way to deliver qualitative research that seeks to unpack causality is through interdisciplinary work. The list below offers two examples of interdisciplinary work that grapple with causality and two theoretical discussions on interdisciplinary research and the search for causality.

Rigterink, Anouk S. & Mareike Schomerus (2017) The fear factor is a main thing: How radio influences anxiety and political attitudes *Journal of Development Studies* 53(8): 1123-1146.



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- Roth, Wendy D. & Jal D. Mehta (2002) The Rashomon Effect: Combining Positivist and Interpretivist Approaches in the Analysis of Contested Events. *Sociological Methods & Research* 31(2): 131-173.
- Ruffa, Chiara & Matthew Evangelista (2021) Searching for a middle ground? A spectrum of views of causality in qualitative research. *Italian Political Science Review/Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica*: 1-18.
- Thaler, Kai M. (2015) Mixed Methods Research in the Study of Political and Social Violence and Conflict. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*: 1-18.

**Assignment 9/ Final paper (graded):**

The assignment this week is your final research paper. It should be no more than five pages in length. Some of the building blocks of the paper are drawn from assignments of previous week. The paper should be structured as follows:

- Abstract
- Introduction highlighting relevance of research question to current debates/ literature
- Emerging argument
- Elaboration of research question
- Research methodology and implemented methods
- Limitations
- Preliminary findings,
- Conclusion with possible policy implications.

***Due date: May 27***

**University policies and where to get help**

**Pass/ Fail option**

Students who wish to take the course pass/fail rather than for a letter grade must use the Harris Pass/Fail request form (<https://harris.uchicago.edu/form/pass-fail>) and must meet the Harris deadline, which is generally 9am on the Monday of the 5th week of courses. Students who take the course pass/fail must attend class meetings and turn in all assignments, achieving marks on assignments that are overall commensurate with at least a C- letter grade.

**General policies**

By attending course sessions, students acknowledge that:



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- They will not: (i) record, share, or disseminate University of Chicago course sessions, videos, transcripts, audio, or chats; (ii) retain such materials after the end of the course; or (iii) use such materials for any purpose other than in connection with participation in the course.
- They will not share links to University of Chicago course sessions with any persons not authorized to be in the course session. Sharing course materials with persons authorized to be in the relevant course is permitted. Syllabi, handouts, slides, and other documents may be shared at the discretion of the instructor.
- Course recordings, content, and materials may be covered by copyrights held by the University, the instructor, or third parties. Any unauthorized use of such recordings or course materials may violate such copyrights.
- Any violation of this policy will be referred to the Area Dean of Students.

#### Resources available to students

**The University and the Harris School offer a comprehensive set of resources for student support which can be found [here](#), including [student health services](#).** If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, remote counseling services are available. Student Counseling Service (SCS) urges you to attend to your mental wellbeing and to reach out to them for support during these challenging times. All SCS services are covered by the Student Life Fee, and there is no additional cost for students to access their services. See <https://wellness.uchicago.edu/mental-health/student-counseling-service-spring-quarter-faq/>. Students seeking new services/resources can call 773.702.9800 during business hours (Monday–Friday 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.) and ask to speak with a clinician. **Students needing urgent mental health care can speak with clinicians over the phone 24/7 by calling the SCS at 773.702.3625.**

The Harris School itself also provides both academic and non-academic support services for students. These resources are described (and links provided) via the Canvas site *Harris Student Handbook*, which all Harris instructors can access.

#### Academic Integrity

All University of Chicago students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic Integrity and honesty. Among other things, this means that students shall not represent another's work as their own, use un-allowed materials during exams, or otherwise gain unfair academic advantage.

- The University's policies regarding academic integrity and dishonesty are described [here](#). It is contrary to justice, academic integrity, and to the spirit of intellectual inquiry to submit another's statements or ideas as one's own work. To do so is plagiarism or cheating, offenses punishable under the University's disciplinary system. Because these offenses undercut the distinctive moral and intellectual character of the University, we take them very seriously.
- The Harris School's policies are available in the *Harris Student Handbook* Canvas site.
  - The *Academic Honesty and Plagiarism* section expresses the main principles.



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- Detailed guidelines for more specialized student work (e.g., problem sets including computer code) are offered in the section titled *Harris Integrity Policy for Problem Sets Involving Code*.
- Harris's specific procedures for handling suspected violations of these policies are available in the section *Harris Procedures for Allegations of Plagiarism, Cheating, and Academic Dishonesty* and are also re-produced as an Appendix to this document.
- All students suspected of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Harris Dean of Students for investigation and adjudication. The disciplinary process can result in sanctions up to and including suspension or expulsion from the University. Other penalties for violations could be imposed instead, alone or in combination, most notably that students will receive a grade of 0 on the exam or problem set in question as well as the next lowest problem set grade. This will often result in the student earning a failing grade in the course.
  - The student will receive a grade of 0 on the exam or problem set in question and cannot earn higher than a B- in the course, regardless of their performance on other assignments and exams.
  - At the instructors' discretion, the student may receive a failing grade for the course regardless of their performance on elements of the course.
  - Students found in violation of academic dishonesty will receive a failing grade in the course.
  - The student will receive a grade of 0 on the assignment or exam in question (subject to the discretion of the instructor).
  - The student may be asked to re-do the assignment or retake the exam (without credit) to ensure that the student has learned how to properly cite sources or demonstrate that he or she has command of material covered.

### Disability Accommodations

The University's policies regarding students with disabilities are available [here](#). Students who have disability accommodations awarded by the University Student Disability Services Office should inform the Harris Dean of Students office by the end of the first week of class. The Harris Dean of Students Office will work with the student and instructor to coordinate the students' accommodations implementation.

Harris students are not required to submit their accommodations letter to the instructor. Students from other divisions in the University must submit their accommodations letter to either the instructor or the Harris Dean of Students Office.

Students who do not yet have formal accommodations in place but who feel they need accommodations on a temporary or ongoing basis should contact the Harris Dean of Students Office or Student Disability Services.



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It is also worth noting that teaching in a remote environment may generate other questions and issues related to providing accommodations to students with disabilities. Some suggestions are available [here](#).

### Diversity and Inclusion

The Harris School welcomes, values, and respects students, faculty, and staff from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, and we believe that rigorous inquiry and effective public policy problem-solving requires the expression and understanding of diverse viewpoints, experiences, and traditions. The University and the Harris School have developed distinct but overlapping principles and guidelines to insure that we remain a place where difficult issues are discussed with kindness and respect for all.

- The University's policies are available [here](#). Specifically, the University identifies the freedom of expression as being "vital to our shared goal of the pursuit of knowledge, as is the right of all members of the community to explore new ideas and learn from one another. To preserve an environment of spirited and open debate, we should all have the opportunity to contribute to intellectual exchanges and participate fully in the life of the University."
- The Harris School's commitments to lively, principled, and respectful engagement are available [here](#): "Consistent with the University of Chicago's commitment to open discourse and free expression, Harris encourages members of the leadership, faculty, student body, and administrative staff to respect and engage with others of differing backgrounds or perspectives, even when the ideas or insights shared may be viewed as unpopular or controversial." We foster thought-provoking discourse by encouraging community members not only to speak freely about all issues but also to listen carefully and respectfully to the views of others.

### Appendix: Full Harris Academic Integrity Procedures

#### Harris Procedures for Allegations of Plagiarism, Cheating, and Academic Dishonesty

##### First Violation

If a student is accused by an instructor or teaching assistant of plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty, the student will be summoned to meet with the Dean of Students and the instructor. In the meeting, the student and instructor both present information about the situation. If it is determined by the instructor and the Dean of Students that the student has, in fact, plagiarized or cheated, the following sanctions will be imposed for the first violation:

- The student will generally receive a grade of 0 on the assignment or exam in question. Please note that grading decisions are fully at the discretion of the instructor, who may decide to impose harsher grade penalties.
- The student may be asked to re-do the assignment or retake the exam (without credit) to ensure that the student has learned how to properly cite sources or demonstrate that he or she has command of material covered.



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- A formal letter of finding is sent to the student stating that the student has been found in violation of the code of academic honesty and what the sanctions were. The letter, along with any evidence presented, is archived in Harris Student Affairs records until the student graduates if the student has no other violations.
- Students found in violation of the academic honesty policy are not permitted to withdraw from the course to avoid grade penalties from the instructor.
- In cases where plagiarism or academic dishonesty is egregious, the case may be referred to the Area Disciplinary Committee even on a first offense. The Dean makes all decisions about which cases will go before the Area Disciplinary Committee.

### **Second Violation**

If a student who has already been found in violation academic dishonesty is again accused of academic dishonesty, the case will be sent to the Harris Area Disciplinary Committee. Details about the Area Disciplinary Committee procedures can be found in the [University Student Manual](#). Information about the first violation, including the formal letter of finding any evidence, will be presented to the Area Disciplinary Committee, along with evidence of the current allegation. If the student is found in violation of academic honesty a second time, the Area Disciplinary Committee can assign sanctions including transcript notes, disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion from the University.

### **Academic Dishonesty Appeals**

If a student has been found in violation of academic honesty and does not believe that either the finding or the sanction is fair or correct, the student has the right to appeal the finding by requesting a hearing from the Area Disciplinary Committee. More information about the Area Disciplinary Committee is available [here](#).