Call for Papers for a special issue on the

Practices of Qualitative Research

In recent years, a growing number of scholars are studying the daily routines and epistemic practices surrounding qualitative research and its methods. Among the foci of these studies are ethnographic perspectives on ethnographic field work, analyses of data sessions in qualitative research teams, or the micro-dynamics in specific methodological schools of qualitative research.

This special issue will build on this work and present a collection of recent studies on the daily routines and epistemic practices of developing, applying, and modifying qualitative methods. In doing so, it contributes to at least three lines of contemporary scholarship:

(a) Reconstructing the specific practices of qualitative inquiry offers a new angle to debates on reflexivity. It emphasizes that reflexivity is not only a methodological standard (Macbeth, 2001), but the researchers' involvement with topics and research participants is inscribed into their research via practices (Mruck et al., 2002; Kühner et al., 2016). Moreover, a focus on practices can help us understand the micro-dynamics of what we do in qualitative research, how we do it, and which kind of data and analyses these practices bring about (Blakely and Moles, 2017; Silverman, 2017). Understood as a contribution to 'reflexive methodology,' the special issue can also help to improve and develop existing methodologies.

(b) The special issue can advance current debates in science studies and the sociology of scientific knowledge that are interested in knowledge practices in the social sciences (Benzecry and Krause, 2010; Camic et al., 2011; Law and Ruppert, 2013; Greiffenhagen et al., 2011). So far, these debates have concentrated on practices like reading, writing, and theorizing (Abend, 2008; Abbott, 2016; Swedberg, 2016; Mears, 2017), while epistemic methods have only been of interest for individual studies (Law, 2004; Michaels, 2004; Deville et al., 2016). The special issue will facilitate a better understanding of knowledge practices that refer to procedures or quality criteria of qualitative inquiry.

(c) Across these two debates runs a third line of scholarship with a critical agenda, highlighting issues of academic and societal power in social research (Go, 2017; Williams et al., 2017). To this body of literature, the special issue offers a systematic – and practice-focused – inquiry of how qualitative methods are embedded in and reproduce (or transform) power relations (Anyan, 2013; Kvale, 2006; Palmer et al., 2017).

The notion of methods in qualitative research comes in different degrees of standardization. While some approaches promote a rather rigid and prescriptive view of method as the correct application of rules for the systematic interpretation of data, others develop or refine methods

through situated practices in specific research settings. Across this spectrum, we are interested in all practices that refer to procedures or quality criteria of qualitative research for methodological justification. These practices can be found in all stages of research and in a broad variety of social settings, such as fieldwork, data sessions, seminars, conferences, as well as non-academic environments. All of these practices involve the bodies of researchers and research participants, many of them rely on technological equipment such as recording devices, coding software, screens for video analysis, etc. Moreover, the collection and interpretation of empirical material is always situated in specific spatial and architectural settings.

Contributions to this special issue can address, but are not confined to, the following questions:

- Which practices of *producing* and *analyzing* data can we find in different areas of qualitative research? How are they connected to different kinds and notions of "*data*"?
- How are these epistemic practices and their products *communicated* to academic or non-academic audiences? How do they relate to practices of writing, reading, and presenting qualitative research?
- Which epistemic practices are employed in the *teaching* of qualitative research, and how are the practices of qualitative methods explicated to novices in the field?
- What is the role of *local* and *trans-local cultures* in research groups, departments, associations, or other kinds of networks for the epistemic practices employed there? How do power relations in these groups or in the field relate to epistemic practices?
- How do practices of *qualitative and quantitative methods* relate to each other? Which epistemic practices are employed in "mixed methods" studies or other projects that combine the two?
- How can the study of epistemic practices support *reflexivity* in qualitative research? Can it unlock new sources for the study of social phenomena, and what can it teach us about the scopes and limits of qualitative research?

The special issue welcomes contributions investigating these and other questions in a contemporary or historical perspective, both theoretically and empirically. We are looking for papers from both members and non-members of the field of qualitative research. Abstracts of the selected contributions will be proposed as a special issue of an English language journal that is leading the debate on qualitative methodologies in social research. Please send abstracts of no more than 500 words by **October 25, 2018** to

Julian Hamann (julian.hamann@lcss.uni-hannover.de) and

Andrea Ploder (ploder.andrea@berkeley.edu)

References

Abbott A. (2016) The Demography of Scholarly Reading. *The American Sociologist* 47: 302-318.

Abend G. (2008) The Meaning of 'Theory'. *Sociological Theory* 26: 173-199.

Anyan F. (2013) The Influence of Power Shifts in Data Collection and Analysis Stages: A Focus on Qualitative Research Interview. *The Qualitative Report* 18: 1-9.

Benzecry CE and Krause M. (2010) How Do they Know? Practicing Knowledge in Comparative Perspective. *Qualitative Sociology* 33: 415-422.

Blakely H and Moles K. (2017) Interviewing in the 'interview society': making visible the biographical work of producing accounts for interviews. *Qualitative Research* 17: 159-172.

Camic C, Gross N and Lamont M. (2011) Social Knowledge in the Making. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Deville J, Guggenheim M and Hrdličková Z. (2016) Practising Comparison. Logics, Relations, Collaborations. Manchester: Mattering Press.

Go J. (2017) Decolonizing Sociology: Epistemic Inequality and Sociological Thought. *Social Problems* 64: 194-199.

Greiffenhagen C, Mair M and Sharrock W. (2011) From Methodology to Methodography: A Study of Qualitative and Quantitative Reasoning in Practice. *Methodological Innovations* 6: 93-107.

Kühner A, Ploder A and Langer PC. (2016) European Contributions to Strong Reflexivity. *Special Issue of Qualitative Inquiry* 22.

Kvale S. (2006) Dominance Through Interviews and Dialogues. *Qualitative Inquiry* 12: 480-500.

Law J. (2004) *After Method. Mess in Social Science Research,* London, New York: Routledge.

Law J and Ruppert E. (2013) The Social Life of Methods: Devices. *Journal of Cultural Economy* 6: 229-240.

Macbeth D. (2001) On 'Reflexivity' in Qualitative Research: Two Readings, and a Third. *Qualitative Inquiry* 7: 35-68.

Mears A. (2017) Puzzling in Sociology: On Doing and Undoing Theoretical Puzzles. *Sociological Theory* 35: 138-146.

Michaels M. (2004) On Making Data Social: Heterogeneity in Sociological Practice. *Qualitative Research* 4: 5-23.

Mruck K, Roth W-M and Breuer F. (2002) Subjectivity and Reflexivity in Qualitative Research I. *Special Issue Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung* 3.

Palmer J, Pocock C and Burton L. (2017) Waiting, power and time in ethnographic and community-based research. *Qualitative Research* 18: 416-432.

Silverman D. (2017) How was it for you? The Interview Society and the irresistible rise of the (poorly analyzed) interview. *Qualitative Research* 17: 144-158.

Swedberg R. (2016) Before theory comes theorizing or how to make social science more interesting. *The British Journal of Sociology*: DOI: 10.1111/1468-4446.12184.

Williams M, Sloan L and Brookfield C. (2017) A Tale of Two Sociologies: Analyzing Versus Critique in UK Sociology. *Sociological Research Online* 22.