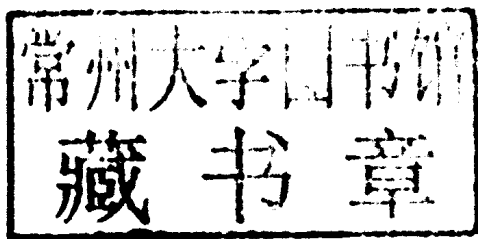


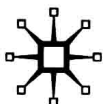
Qualitative Research for Physical Culture

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Qualitative Research for Physical Culture

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Preface: The 7Ps of Qualitative Research

Purpose of the book

Physical culture as a field includes several scholarly disciplines, such as adaptive physical activity, dance studies, leisure studies, outdoor education, physical cultural studies, physical education, recreation, sport development, sport history, sport management, sport pedagogy, sport philosophy, sport policy, sport and exercise psychology, and the sociology of sport. All of these disciplines have utilised qualitative methods to examine various expressions, experiences and structures of the physical. Like the field of physical culture, qualitative research includes multiple research designs, methods and ways of presenting this type of research. These different, sometimes contradictory and messy, understandings of what counts as good qualitative research can be extremely confusing for students and scholars. This book is designed to aid qualitative researchers in negotiating some of these meanings as they take their journeys through the research process. To make sense of this multiplicity and to offer guidance for researchers and students across the interdisciplinary field of physical culture, we have structured the book based on our experiences as teachers and researchers of **designing, doing, and disseminating** qualitative research. To make further sense of the qualitative research process, we have divided it into **7Ps: Purpose, Paradigms, Process, Practice, Politics of Interpretation, Presentation and the Promise** of qualitative research. Below we explain the structure of the book in more detail.

The first 3 Ps – **Purpose, Paradigms and Process** – relate to the design of the research process. By this, we mean the plan and structure of the qualitative research project.

Purpose: Why should a researcher engage in qualitative research? To map, to critique or to create social change? What are the ethical considerations? What kinds of qualitative research are meaningful?

Paradigms: What specific parameters does the qualitative researcher choose for the research project? Post-positivist, humanist, poststructuralist/modern?

Process: How does a qualitative research project look? Each project should include some form of to include an introduction, literature review, method section, analysis/discussion and conclusion.

Because the collection of empirical material and its interpretation are difficult to separate, we have combined the next 2 Ps – **Practices** and **Politics of Interpretation** – together in a set of chapters that outline common methodological practices and ways in which to interpret empirical material in qualitative physical culture studies.

Practice and the Politics of Interpretation: Interviewing: What are different types of interviews? How are they used? How are they analysed?

Practice and the Politics of Interpretation: Textual Analysis: What are the different types of textual analyses? How are they used? How are they analysed?

Practice and the Politics of Interpretation: Narrative Analysis: What is narrative analysis? How is it practised? How is empirical material from narratives analysed?

Practice and the Politics of Interpretation: Field Methods: What are the different types of field methods? How are they used? How is empirical material from field methods analysed?

The final 2Ps – **Presentation** and **The Promise** – consider the process of writing and disseminating qualitative research. Further, we consider how to judge qualitative research and to what standards the work should be held.

Presentation: What are the different ways of writing-up qualitative research results? What are the various ways in which qualitative research can be **presented** to diverse audiences – dissertation committee, grant bodies, journal editorial board, established conventions of academic research, communities outside of academia.

The Promise: What is good quality qualitative research? Given that qualitative research includes multiple ways of approaching, understanding and conducting research, what are the multiple criteria by which to judge the quality of such research and how to choose between such criteria.

How to use this book

While the 7Ps offer a general pathway through the journey of qualitative research, researchers with different levels of experience engage in qualitative research for multiple reasons. Consequently, while the 7Ps approach aims to map out an entire research project in a comprehensive

manner, certain components of the text will be more valuable for some readers, while other sections more useful for others. It is important to note that all the 7Ps are interrelated, but some might take precedence over others during certain qualitative projects. In addition, researchers at different points of their research careers might find different Ps more relevant.

The undergraduate researcher who embarks on a qualitative research project for the very first time, may find it relevant to start with the process (Chapter 3) of doing research to gain an overarching picture of what a research project may look like and how it could be constructed. In addition, these researchers might focus on learning how to practise the different qualitative methods (or practices) (Chapters 4–7) before engaging in a discussion of the different paradigmatic approaches.

The more experienced graduate researchers will need to have a greater understanding of how their research is philosophically grounded within the parameters of certain paradigmatic approaches. They could, thus, attend more closely to the discussion in Chapter 2 and consider how the methodological practices, the interpretation of the empirical material and the judgement of their work are underpinned by the paradigmatic considerations.

Given that the field of physical culture is informed by many different academic disciplines, a researcher wishing to be introduced to the logic of qualitative methodologies may well focus on the discussion of paradigms in Chapter 2 and their connections to various methodological practices (Chapters 4–7). Seasoned academics already familiar with the structure of qualitative research might consider such aspects of qualitative research as employing previously unfamiliar forms of qualitative methods or using alternative forms of writing style (Chapter 8). Meanwhile, researchers interested in the political purpose (see Chapter 1) of their project would likely address the various links between the purpose and the promise to which their work might be held (Chapter 9). Finally, as this book is offered as a teaching tool for various research methods courses, it should provide an invaluable tool for researchers to guide their students.

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Michael Silk: There are a number of colleagues and students with whom I have had healthy debate concerning research methodology. Professor Ann Hall stimulated this interest seventeen years ago when I took her 'research methods' class at the University of Alberta. Since then, colleagues, especially, John Amis, David Andrews and Anthony Bush, and former and current graduate students such as Perry Cohen, Jess Francombe, Andrew Grainger and Josh Newman have ensured that continued discussion about the philosophy of research is kept alive. I owe a considerable debt to those who have produced the numerous research texts and articles that provide the basis for this book; the work of Norman Denzin continues to inspire. There are a number of groups of students who have endured previous drafts of this text and provided invaluable feedback. In part, the text of this book comes out of the final year 'Undergraduate Research Seminar' students in the Department of Education at the University of Bath. Finally, and as ever, my wife Jennie and my daughter Nancy put up with me during the inspiring (and not so inspiring!) moments involved in producing this text.

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Part I

Design

In this section, we address three of the 7 Ps of qualitative research: **Purpose, Paradigms and Process**. Chapter 1 focuses on the *purpose* of research. For example, we ask readers to consider why they are planning to engage in qualitative research. Who will be influenced by the results? What kind of qualitative research is meaningful? We also consider the ethics of conducting qualitative research. In Chapter 2, we consider the role of *paradigmatic approaches* to qualitative research in physical culture and what the paradigmatic parameters mean for the research process. It is likely that qualitative researchers will find themselves carefully negotiating paradigmatic boundaries when defining the purpose and practice for their research. We then introduce the actual *process* of doing physical cultural research in Chapter 3.

1

The Purpose of Research in Physical Culture

In this chapter, we will

- Introduce the term qualitative research;
- Introduce the term physical culture;
- Discuss the possible purposes for qualitative research in physical culture;
- Discuss the ethical conduct of qualitative research in physical culture.

Within this chapter we offer an entry point into the conduct of qualitative research by focusing on the ***purpose*** of qualitative research. Why is this work important? What will it say that has any value? Is this project meaningful, and if so, to whom? The purpose of research will frame its design, practice and presentation. Qualitative researchers may undertake a piece of research to convince policy makers, to alter public opinion, to drive consumption of a product, to provide evidence on an issue, to expose instances of injustice, to offer competing voices or points of view, to interrogate taken-for-granted ideas or assumptions, to save lives, to make people 'better' (physically, socially), or to advance understanding of a particular phenomenon. While we do not value one purpose over another, it is important to have a clear purpose that will guide the researcher through the entire conduct of the research. Before it is possible to define a purpose, it is important to understand the terms 'qualitative research' and 'physical culture'.

Understanding qualitative research

Qualitative research has evolved over several decades across several scholarly disciplines. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln observe that