

Somewhere Over the (Methodological) Rainbow? Tourism and ‘Qualitative Research 4.0’

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Workshop Goal

This workshop will explore our hopes, dreams, and desires for embracing qualitative research in a critical tourism studies. Moving well beyond positivist, early-moment and conventional forms of qualitative research, this session will work with participants to ‘imagine forward’ (Lather, 2013) – to talk and think about better ways to bring/practice/embed qualitative method, methodology and approach into our work as critical tourism scholars.

In addition to your experiences as our workshop participants, we will draw on and be guided by the insights of key qualitative social scientists (e.g., Denzin & Lincoln, 2018) and education theorists (Lather, 2013; Lather & St Pierre, 2013), as well as on some of our own thinking in this space (Hollinshead, 2004, 2016; Jamal & Hollinshead, 1999; Wilson & Hollinshead, 2015; Wilson, Mura, Sharif, & Wijesinghe, 2019). Together, we will discuss what ‘qualitative’ might look like as we engage with post-disciplinary and even post-qualitative ways of becoming - and practicing as - qualitative researchers.

Patti Lather’s (2013) concept of ‘QUAL 4.0’, which she contemplates in her paper on methodology in the 21st century, can provide a useful framework for our discussion:

QUAL 4.0 is [where]...researchers, who, weary of a decade of defending qualitative research and eager to get on with their work, again imagine and accomplish an inquiry that might produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently. This inquiry cannot be tidily described in textbooks or handbooks. There is no methodological instrumentality to be unproblematically learned. In this methodology-to-come, we begin to do it differently wherever we are in our projects. Here, the term “post-qualitative” begins to make a certain kind of sense... (p. 635)

Following on from an introductory presentation by Erica and Keith, we will then imagine 3 scenarios - or arenas - where we might ‘begin to do qualitative methodology differently’, and where we as critical tourism scholars can work more openly to resist the binds of positivism, pragmatism and expectations of hegemonic instrumentalism. Here, we can talk about what qualitative research means to us and how we might encourage ‘plural knowability’ (Hollinshead, 2016), rather than be told what qualitative research ‘should’ be and what it should look, feel and read like.

The 3 Scenarios

1. ‘Doing’ Qualitative Research

Here, we might talk about our research aims and goals, as well as the paradigmatic, ontological, epistemological and methodological ‘choices’ we make. We can also talk about our relationships with our research participants, and matters of voice, authority and power in qualitative research.

2. ‘Writing’ Qualitative Research

Here, we could discuss the joys and challenges of how we write, present and voice our qualitative projects, papers and studies.

3. 'Supervising' Qualitative Research

And here, we might engage with such questions such as: how do we advise our research students in the messy art of qualitative research? What methodological playfulness do we encourage in our students? Also, we might speak here of our experiences of supervising or examining theses where differing advice is provided to students, that expects a more conventional type of approach. We welcome current research students to voice their thoughts also on 'being supervised' in qualitative tourism studies.

References

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