



Edited by

Gry Espedal · Beate Jelstad Løvaas
Stephen Sirris · Arild Wæraas

Researching Values

Methodological Approaches for Understanding Values Work in Organisations and Leadership

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1

Researching Values in Organisations and Leadership

Gry Espedal, Beate Jelstad Løvaas, Stephen Sirris,
and Arild Wæraas

The Complexity of Research on Values

Values are essential to understand but difficult to define. As any set of acts in everyday work is value-driven (Askeland et al., 2020), values can be understood as ‘that which is worth having, doing, and being (i.e., normative goods or “ends”)’ (Selznick, 1992, p. 60). However, if you ask organisational members to define their values or elaborate on their organisation’s values, they often have problems answering. If you ask them to define the values that are important to them on a personal level, their answers will most likely be quite divergent and not necessarily reflect their employer’s official core values.

In short, although values are desirable, they can also be multiple, diverse, abstract, tacit, hidden, temporary and conflicting. This curious

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nature of values makes them notoriously difficult to research in practice. And yet, because they are so important for actions, practice, decisions, policies and communication on both individual and organisational levels, having a solid methodological basis for doing research on them seems to be exactly what is needed in order to advance insights into their significance. Values research could, for example, provide in-depth insights into social order (Scott, 2013) and social needs (Selznick, 2008). It could bring out fruitful discussions of identity, ‘ethos’ and the purposive institutional work of leaders and organisational members. It could reveal how values emerge and dwindle, which values carry moral weight in decisions and interactions, which values enter into conflict with each other and with what consequences and how values are affected by other causal forces (Kraatz et al., 2020).

Accordingly, the purpose of this book is to provide an overview of research methods and approaches for doing research on values in organisational settings that could enable such insights. The research question of this book is as follows: *How can research on values in organisations and leadership be conducted?* The chapters seek answers to this question by addressing different ways to identify and elicit values, offering practical guidance and examples of how to research values and values work and showing how discussions in the philosophy of science underpin important assumptions in values research.

Overall, a large and diverse body of research on values will be reflected in this book. The contributors come from disciplines such as sociology, leadership studies, organisational research and public administration. While some parts of this literature emphasise how values guide, constrain and provide meaning to individual and organisational behaviour (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004; Vaisey, 2008), other studies address changes in values resulting from macro-level reforms and trends (Hebson et al., 2003; Kernaghan, 2000; Reynaers & Paanakker, 2016; Selznick, 1957/1983; van Wart, 1998). Additionally, scholars have discussed conflicts that can arise between values in specific institutional settings (de Graaf et al., 2016; de Graaf & Paanakker, 2015; Goodsell, 1989; van der Wal et al., 2011). Taking a practice perspective, researchers have also begun to explore values work (Askeland et al., 2020; Daskalaki et al., 2019; Fayard et al., 2017; Gehman, 2021; Gehman, Trevino & Garud, 2013;

Vaccaro & Palazzo, 2015; Wright et al., 2017) or the practices that articulate and accomplish what is normatively right and wrong, good and bad in organisations.

This variation in theoretical approaches will be evident in the following chapters. Despite the variation, however, the contributions to this book share an important common grounding in qualitative research designs. Doing qualitative research is a complex endeavour. In general, through qualitative research, we study the characteristics or traits of given phenomena. Qualitative research methods can help assess the impact of policies or give insight into people's individual and collective experiences. They can also help evaluate service provisions and the exploration of little-known behaviours (Grbich, 2012). Doing qualitative research means shuttling between proximity and distance (Repstad, 2009). It includes a movement between the long lines and the small details, with the long lines often being tangible in the details and the details in the long lines. More importantly, qualitative research methods are ideal for studying values. Although quantitative approaches are well-established in large-scale comparative studies of values (Hofstede, 2001), qualitative approaches hold benefits over quantitative approaches when it comes to capturing the more subtle and tacit aspects of values as they relate to tension, conflict, identities, expressions, practices, work and processes. Methods and approaches for acquiring insights into these important aspects of values constitute the main focus of this book.

Key Concepts and Questions in This Book

The literature on values and values-related matters in organisations and leadership comprises at least six decades of research. Considering the insights that this research has provided not only into values but also into the methods for studying values, the time has come to take stock of the most common research methods and consider their merits and limitations. But, what do we mean by methods? Rather than favouring one single method for studying values in organisations, this book presents a variety of them, variously referred to by the authors as methodology, method, strategy, technique or approach. No attempt will be made here

to provide an overall framework for the book that clarifies the meaning of these concepts and their relational differences, as they often are used interchangeably. We note, however, that methodology is the more basic and overarching theoretical concept. Referring to the general research strategy that outlines how research is undertaken, it is a rationale for the research method and the lens through which the analysis occurs (Howell, 2012). Thus, it impacts the choices in the research process by grouping together a combination of methods, strategies, techniques and approaches used to enquire into an empirical phenomenon (Duffy & Chenail, 2009; Greenbank, 2003). A methodology for researching values, for example, could involve action research, discourse analysis, case studies, field research and theory generation. It could also involve the development of other approaches and strategies that are not as clearly associated with a known method but which could still draw on a number of well-known methods such as interviews, observations and document analysis.

Accordingly, in this book, some chapters describe established single methods or techniques for collecting and analysing data related to values. Others describe cutting-edge approaches and strategies they have specifically developed or relied on to reveal important aspects about values that have remained overlooked. Regardless of the approach, however, the chapters will demonstrate the characteristics and merit of the methods or approaches. They will explain the settings in which a method is appropriate, thereby answering the question of when a given method should be used. By doing so, the chapters provide practical guidance for selecting suitable methods for studying values and ways of carrying out data analysis on values. Contributions come from different scholars from Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, the Republic of South Africa, Spain and Scotland, all of them engaged in different ways of doing values research.

Important questions for this book will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- How can various research methodologies inform our understanding of values and values work in organisations?

- What are the epistemological and ontological assumptions associated with research on values?
- How can different methods elicit and enable our understanding of values?
- How have these approaches enabled or hindered our understanding of values in organisations?
- How are different methods for data collection adequate for the study of values?
- How are different methods for data analysis appropriate for researching values?

Overview of the Chapters in This Book

A key concept related to knowledge building is identifying a study's position within the philosophy of science and its relation to ontology and epistemology. Ontology means the theory of the nature of *what is*, which in social science concerns the nature and knowledge of social reality (Delanty & Strydom, 2003, p. 6). Epistemology refers to the fundamental branch of philosophy that investigates the possibility, limits, origin, structure, methods and validity of knowledge (Delanty & Strydom, 2003), which can be viewed as the relationship between the inquirer and the known (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The assumption we have of values influences the research process. Values can be described as standards of right and wrong behaviour, but they can also be in a constant process of reformulation and reassessment as we in organisations continually modify our practices and make small innovations in which things are done. Considerations of this kind are ontological (Bryman, 2016). They invite us to consider the nature of values as social phenomena. As for epistemological issues, the stance that the researcher takes on the experience of values has implications for the way in which the research is conducted.

Much research on values has been placed within the positivist and quantitative paradigm, describing how values are structured and

measured and investigating the impact values have on perceptions and decisions (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998). However, values are also researched within a hermeneutical and constructivist paradigm. As researchers, we have to assess the possibilities and viability of different methodologies to answer research questions. Research on values and values work in organisations is intractably connected to the research question and will be followed by methodological reflections.

This book has three parts. Part I has a particular focus on methodological approaches to researching values, linking philosophy of science to research methods for the study of values and values work. Part II presents different methods for collecting data, followed by different methods for analysing data. In Part III, we present various empirical projects and issues related to and exemplifying values research.

In this first chapter, we introduce you to the field of researching values as well as the content of the book. In the second chapter, Beate Jelstad Løvaas links philosophy of science to research methods in studying values and values work by mapping the field of how research on values in organisations has been conducted. By linking the aim and research question with design and methods, Jelstad Løvaas presents a brief overview of quantitative and qualitative approaches that have been used to study explicit and implicit values in organisations. In the third chapter, Annette Leis-Peters identifies how definitions and conceptualisations can contribute to the development of the empirical research of values. She explores the different ways to define values with the help of selected projects. In the fourth chapter, intentionality and agency are addressed by Thomas Andersson, along with how they can be understood in relation to values and values work. There is a challenge connected to what extent people are aware of values that influence their actions and the values work they are involved in, in addition to what extent they are aware of relations/conflicts between values that are imposed on them (e.g., from an employer) and personal values, which will be discussed. In Chap. 5, Dag-Håkon Eriksen and Marta Strumińska-Kutra explore the concept of *phronesis* (practical wisdom) to enable research that goes beyond the three traditional research goals of exploration, description and explanation. When applied to research activity, the concept of practical wisdom opens

possibilities for combining theoretical knowledge, reflecting on values and improving practice, constituting a type of values work. In Chap. 6, Gjalte de Graaf and Hester Paanakker unearth values and value conflicts in the public realm. By elaborating two different and related research strategies that have successfully been adopted in different empirical studies, they describe how to study values in their context.

In Part II, we aim to provide new methodological insights to investigate values and values work. One focus concerns how the aims of research afford specific methods for collecting and analysing data. This section illuminates how to use different analytical techniques such as interviewing, observation and shadowing, as well as different research strategies, such as how to use thematic analysis, discursive analysis and narrative approaches when researching values.

In Chap. 7, Gry Espedal discusses how organisational values and values work can be investigated through a constructivist and qualitative process of research interviews. The research interview is presented as a form of inter-viewing and of together-seeing and as a place for connectedness and co-interpretation. In Chap. 8, Stephen Sirris, Tone Lindheim and Harald Askeland provide insights into how participant observation and shadowing are relevant methods for studying practices and how they can be used for collecting data in studies on values work. They discuss how these methods offer insights into the core dimensions of values practices by means of granulated in situ and in vivo data.

In Chap. 9, Arild Wæraas explains how thematic analysis can be used to make values emerge from texts. The chapter presents a five-step approach to thematic analysis of values: (1) assigning codes, (2) generating themes, and if possible (3) organising themes, (4) identifying aggregate dimensions and (5) making visual representations of codes and themes. In Chap. 10, Benedicte Maria Tvetter Kivle and Gry Espedal discuss the identification of values through discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is here presented through three traditions with different theoretical and methodological connotations: structural-semantic discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis and discursive psychology. In Chap. 11, Gry Espedal and Oddgeir Synnes suggest a narrative approach to exploring values and values work. A narrative approach can garner in-depth

information on organisational activities, identity, sense-making and change, depending on the narratives involved and the analysis of the content, aim and structure of the narratives. In Chap. 12, Stephen Sirris discusses the importance of reflexivity, referring to an examination of the connections between the researchers and the research. The chapter conceptualises role reflexivity as researchers' capacity to identify, account for and manage their roles before, during and after data collection.

Providing valid and reliable knowledge is essential and the overall goal when doing research. Validity is regarded as one of the strengths of qualitative research (Creswell, 2014) and indicates that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by applying certain procedures. In Chap. 13, Tone Lindheim presents participant validation as a procedure to enhance the trustworthiness of the study. This implies that the researcher in different ways presents the data material or the preliminary analysis to the informants to validate and assess interpretations. This chapter shows how participant validation addresses as well as raises ethical concerns.

In Part III, we present different practical cases and how they have studied values and values work. In Chap. 14, Nina Kurlberg seeks to address how the perspective of institutional logic can contribute to research on values in organisational practice. Drawing on empirical research conducted within an international faith-based relief and development organisation in the UK, the argument advanced in this chapter is that it is the 'telos' of each institutional logic in action within the organisation that shapes the values in operation within organisational practice. In Chap. 15, Anne Marie Reynaers goes beyond the often normative debate on the desirability of public-private partnerships (PPPs) to describe how a multiple qualitative case study approach that analyses how actors in PPPs give meaning to public values in practice can be applied to assess the extent to which public values are safeguarded in PPPs. In Chap. 16, Isaias Ezequiel Chachine presents how values-based participatory action research as a community-engaging research methodology can emphasise values, participation, mutual understanding and common action as methods of enquiry. An 'ethics of regard' is presented as a 'regard-based enquiry', which insists that the way in which values are understood impacts participatory decision making and research implementation.

Challenges to Future Research Methods

The methods and approaches presented in this book are arguably well suited for studying values in most contexts. However, although no one can tell exactly what the future will hold, we anticipate that the current knowledge of appropriate methods for values-related research in organisations can be challenged by trends not addressed by the chapters of this book. Increased use of digital technology has implications for data collection procedures (i.e., remote audio and video), for multi-modal data analysis (of text, audio, video) and for relevant ethical aspects when conducting research in a digital world, such as general data protection and privacy regulations (GDPR).

Values-related research on digital technology in organisational settings is still in its infancy but is clearly an area that can be expected to grow in importance (Mittelstadt et al., 2016). However, it is not yet clear which research methods are suited for such research. Notoriously tricky to observe in general, values become even more difficult to observe when they exist in computerised technology. This technology is not always accessible to researchers because organisations may not want to give researchers access to their technology, meaning that researchers will have to settle with addressing the values that informants say were put into the system or are implied by the outcomes of its use, rather than the values that are actually embedded in the mathematical code of the system. Furthermore, even if the technology was accessible, understanding exactly which values are embedded in it probably would require a type of technical competence not possessed by most organisational and management researchers.

With the increased use of digital organisational solutions and practices, the portfolio of relevant methods for values-focused organisational research needs to be expanded beyond qualitative data collection and analysis. Typical methods for data collection, such as qualitative interviews and observations, can be used to assess the ethical implications of technology. They can also be used to study at least some aspects of the processes of implementing algorithms. Different methods for analysing qualitative data for these processes, such as narrative and thematic

analysis, can also be applied (Sztandar-Sztanderska & Zielenska, 2020). However, to cope with the values-laden ‘black box’ of algorithms, methods that examine how values are given a de facto mathematical representation and configured in relation to desired outputs will be essential. As a result, there is a need for at least one more book on the methods of researching values.

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Part I

Methodological Approaches to Researching Values



2

Values at Work: Mapping the Field Through the Lens of Methodological Approaches

Beate Jelstad Løvaas

Introduction

Although values are not directly observable and often difficult to research, they play an important role in guiding action and in providing meaning and purpose (Kraatz et al., 2020). Values are also considered a central source of personal and institutional identities. The growing interest in values among organisational scholars has increased attention on how to research values. Given the significance of values in everyday practices in organisations, it is important to consider how values can be researched.

The first aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of how different methods for studying values have been applied. By mapping the field of work-related values or values in relation to work (in other words, values at work), this chapter presents the various methods that have been used in research on values in modern work organisations. A distinction is made between explicit and implicit values, and the following question is

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addressed: *How are studies on explicit and implicit values in organisations and leadership conducted?*

Explicit values refer to values as captured by verbal expressions; they are conscious valuations expressed by individuals, groups or organisations. The explicit values of an organisation, such as those expressed in core values or mission statements, are officially expected to guide actions. In this way, explicit values, also called ‘values for practice’, are intentional (Aadland & Askeland, 2017). When someone is asked how they would behave in a certain situation, the answer is usually their explicit or espoused values (Argyris & Schön, 1978). However, explicit values may or may not be expressed in actual practices, as other values may govern the actions of an individual or organisation. An example of an explicit value study is one concerning how and to what extent core values are practised and expressed in an organisation.

Implicit values are nonverbal and embedded in actions. They are tacit and may be hidden from the conscious mind. In order to make implicit values explicit, reflections upon practices can serve as an entry point to make values plausible from actions through sense-making processes (Aadland, 2010). Most likely, such reflections will reveal the ambiguous nature of values and the plurality of interpretations of both a given action and the value that it expresses (Sirris, 2020). As such, it is important for researchers to remember that values are in the eyes of the beholder. Research intended to identify values from actions that are more or less unconsciously expressed is an example of an implicit value study.

Implicit values embedded in actions may or may not be compatible with the explicit values an organisation expresses in its core values or mission statements, as members of an organisation may have their own values that do not necessarily coincide with those of the organisation. When implicit values unconsciously expressed through actions are not congruent with the explicit values of an organisation, reflection may inspire the organisation to adjust its practices and to re-enforce or redefine its explicit values. Thus, if the purpose of a research project is to adjust or improve practices, what research methods are suitable? Selecting appropriate methods for a given research aim or a specific research question is an important competence for researchers. In order to investigate how studies of explicit and implicit values in organisations are conducted—from the

perspective of the organisation and its members—this chapter goes ‘behind the scenes’ by exploring when, why and in which settings specific designs and methods are used.

The second aim of this chapter is, therefore, to investigate the link between the purpose of the research and the methodological choices made at the different stages of research, such as choices of research design, research methods for collecting data and research methods for analysing data. Thus, the chapter focuses on empirical research. Reflection refers to, in short, paying ‘serious attention’ (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009, p. 9). Reflection on methodological choices is crucial for providing valid and reliable knowledge, which is the overall goal of research. Furthermore, conducting research is about making *choices* throughout the research process, as well as doing *systematic* work and analyses. Findings and conclusions in research rely heavily on the methodological decisions made by the researchers. By linking the aim of research with research methods, the chapter seeks to equip researchers with the information necessary to select suitable methods for data collection and data analysis. Such a discussion can help in the development of a diverse set of research methods that, in turn, will influence research findings and nurture different ways of theorising, thus widening and deepening our understanding of the world (Zilber, 2020).

The chapter is divided into three parts. First, an overview of values research through the lens of methodological approaches is presented. The different conceptual understandings of values are not explored (see Chap. 3 in this volume by Leis-Peters for an elaboration on different understandings of value constructs) nor are the functions of values investigated, such as how values guide action or provide meaning and purpose. An underlying assumption is that values play an important role in guiding action (Kraatz et al., 2020). Rather, in order to fulfil the first aim of the chapter, the focus is on the variety of research methods that have been used when researching values, with an emphasis on empirical research. Second, attention is given to linking the purpose of a research project with the methodological choices made at different levels, thus fulfilling the second aim of this chapter. Third, reflections are offered on the future direction of research on values in organisations, and the possible use of mixed methods approaches is discussed.

Researching Values: A Brief Overview

This overview maps the field of values research in organisations through the lens of methodological approaches. The large and diverse body of literature on values is grounded in the fields of sociology, psychology and ethics, as well as in leadership research and organisational studies, among others. As values operate at multiple levels in society, they are studied at different levels, such as at the individual, group, organisational and societal levels. Cross-level links are also studied, for example, between personal values and organisational or professional values.

Studying Explicit Values Using Quantitative Approaches

Quantitative approaches are well established as useful for researching explicit values, and they have a long tradition of being used in values studies. Quantitative research is often distinguished from qualitative research by the fact that quantitative research uses numbers rather than words (Creswell, 2014). Quantitative approaches to studying values at an individual level typically try to understand what is important to people (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998). Personal values are often measured using self-reported surveys in which values are ranked according to their importance using Likert scales. Individual work values can also be measured and then clustered into groups (Dose, 1997; McDonald & Gandz, 1992). To establish value systems or value orientations, the Competing Values Framework (Cameron et al., 2014) separates values into four quadrants using the dimensions of flexibility versus stability and external versus internal focus. The four dimensions of leadership orientations in this framework are create, collaborate, control and compete. The World Value Survey measures aggregated values along the two dimensions of traditional versus secular–rational values and survival versus self-expression values (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). There have also been large-scale studies comparing cultures at the societal level (Hofstede, 2001; House et al., 2004). For example, the dimensions used in the GLOBE project (House

et al., 2004) measure cultures and value orientations across societies and are used in cross-cultural management studies.

Organisational values research has also relied upon the value theory by Schwartz (1994), which consists of ten value types: achievement, benevolence, conformity, hedonism, power, security, self-direction, stimulation, tradition and universalism (Quaquebeke et al., 2013). These ten value types form four higher-order value types: self-transcendence, conservation, self-enhancement and openness to change. These higher-order types, in turn, represent two dimensions of value conflict: One dimension contrasts conservation with openness to change and the other contrasts self-enhancement with self-transcendence. This structure has been studied extensively and shares similarities with the Competing Values Framework mentioned above.

Cross-level links between the values of individuals and organisations are researched by measuring value congruence (Edwards & Cable, 2009). The effect of these links on, for example, organisational commitment and performance have also been investigated (Finegan, 2000).

So far, this brief overview has given attention to the study of explicit or espoused values using quantitative approaches, noting that explicit values are measured as individual or collective preferences and that the values can be ranked or grouped into clusters. There have also been mentions of studies measuring the fit between personal and organisational values.

While quantitative studies can help assess and map people's preferences and values individually or collectively, qualitative research can give deeper insight into people's individual or collective experiences and their actions. In the 1990s, fewer qualitative value studies in organisations were done compared to the number of quantitative studies on the subject, but the number of qualitative value studies has increased in recent years (Aadland & Skjørshammer, 2017).

Studying Implicit Values Using Qualitative Approaches

When researching *implicit values*, qualitative approaches are considered appropriate because they can capture tacit and subtle aspects of values

(e.g., Brigstocke et al., 2017). Therefore, in order to identify values from action, implicit values are typically studied qualitatively.

Topics that are addressed in the large and diverse body of qualitative value studies include value conflicts (De Graaf & Paanakker, 2015; De Graaf, 2021), values related to individual identities (Sirris, 2019) and organisational identities (Wæraas, 2010), as well as how values emerge (Espedal, 2019) and how values are maintained (Wright et al., 2017). Taking a practice perspective, researchers have begun to explore values work, which involves value-related actions in everyday work (Askeland et al., 2020; Gehman et al., 2013; Vaccaro & Palazzo, 2015). Methods such as observation and interviews are favoured for studying value practices. For example, a process study on how professional values are maintained in an organisation combined observation as the main primary data source with interviews and archival data (Wright et al., 2017). A qualitative leadership study investigating how leaders contribute to the articulation of the identity and profile of the organisation also applied a combination of methods: observation, interviews and analysis of policy documents (Askeland, 2014). Furthermore, studies on leadership in practice have undertaken various case study designs using a combination of qualitative approaches (e.g., Askeland, 2015), and a study on individual identities utilised a combination of interviews and observation (Sirris, 2019). A new trajectory within the domain of values research in organisations focuses on the processes whereby values emerge (Espedal, 2019, 2020; Gehman et al., 2013), in which a combination of qualitative approaches has also been applied.

Studying Explicit and Implicit Values Using Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

As described above, explicit values are mainly studied quantitatively in order to measure individual or collective preferences. However, at an organisational level, previous studies have investigated explicit values with qualitative approaches in terms of core value statements in the public sector (e.g., Wæraas, 2010) and the for-profit sector (Falkenberg, 2006). Another example is a study exploring how core values are

interpreted and translated into specific guidelines (Wæraas, 2020), which is an example of a qualitatively study investigating explicit values.

When studying implicit values, qualitative approaches are usually applied. Since values are embedded in things such as thinking, talking and acting, they cannot be researched on their own. Thus, action and practices serve as access points for studying values. Van Deth and Scarbrough (1995), however, questioned the possibility of identifying values through action: “As we cannot presume a direct relationship between values and behaviour, we cannot use behavioural data to infer values” (p. 31). However, Aadland (2010) developed a participatory method for determining values from actions through group reflection and sense-making processes.

Table 2.1 provides an overview of the different research methods used in organisation and leadership values research. The empirical studies included in the table were selected in order to ensure the inclusion of a variety of research designs and research methods used for collecting and analysing data.

The table shows that a combination of different qualitative data sources is used in values research, such as combining observation with interviews. Furthermore, the table shows that questionnaires are applied when mapping people’s preferences or measuring the person–job fit of values (quantitative approach). However, studies combining qualitative and quantitative approaches in values research have been given less attention. In line with a recent literature review of values research in health organisations (Aadland & Skjørshammer, 2017), only 5 out of 154 studies combined quantitative and qualitative approaches, action research was rarely applied, and only 2 out of the 154 studies applied an experimental design.

Based on Table 2.1, Fig. 2.1 shows how explicit and implicit values are studied by applying quantitative and qualitative approaches. Each of the four quadrants provides examples of different types of values research.

Explicit values are mainly studied quantitatively in order to map individual or collective values or to measure the degree of value congruence (see the lower left quadrant of Fig. 2.1). Studies on explicit values with qualitative approaches (upper left quadrant) involve exploring how the core values of an organisation are practised or expressed in actions or, for

Table 2.1 Types of methods used for collecting and analysing data in values research

Reference	Aim of research/ research questions	Approach	Methods for collecting data	Methods for analysing data	Type of study/ research design	Type of values research	Level of analysis
Gehman et al. (2013)	How do values practices emerge, and how are they performed over time?	Qualitative	Observation Interviews Archival sources	Process of synthesis, narrative	Longitudinal design/ process study	Values work	Organisational practices
Askeland (2015)	Compared managerial roles and practice in faith-based welfare organisations	Qualitative	Observation Interviews Archival data	Thematic analysis Analysis of policy documents	Case study design	Values work	Individual
Aadland and Skjørshammer (2012)	Investigated how to sustain institutional identity in a context of change	Qualitative	Critical group reflection and observation	Critical discourse analysis	Participatory action research	Implicit values	Organisational

Løvaas and Vråle (2020)	What is the significance of group reflection?	Qualitative	Focus group interviews	Thematic analysis	Intervention study	Values work	Individual
Finegan (2000)	Explored the relationship between personal values, organisational values and organisational commitment	Quantitative	Questionnaire	Statistical analyses (regression analyses)	Cross-sectional design	Explicit values	Cross-level study

example, investigating how core values are translated or interpreted into specific guidelines (Wæraas, 2020). Studying values practices and dilemmas (upper right quadrant) involves identifying values embedded in actions, thus making implicit values explicit. The researcher must clarify for whom values become explicit, whether it is for the researcher or the participants, through sense-making processes. When aiming at identifying values or value orientation quantitatively (lower right quadrant), statistical analysis, such as exploratory factor analysis, is useful.

When it comes to implicit and explicit values related to action, the behaviours of an individual can be conscious and guided by explicit values. Alternatively, such actions are more or less unconsciously performed, representing implicit values. Thus, values in use or in action can be either explicit or implicit: Values that govern action can be embedded in the action and yet not interpreted or verbally expressed (implicit values), or values governing actions can be expressions or outcomes of intended and explicit values. With the blurred boundaries between explicit and implicit values related to action, some qualitatively values studies could be placed in between the explicit and implicit values quadrant in Fig. 2.1.

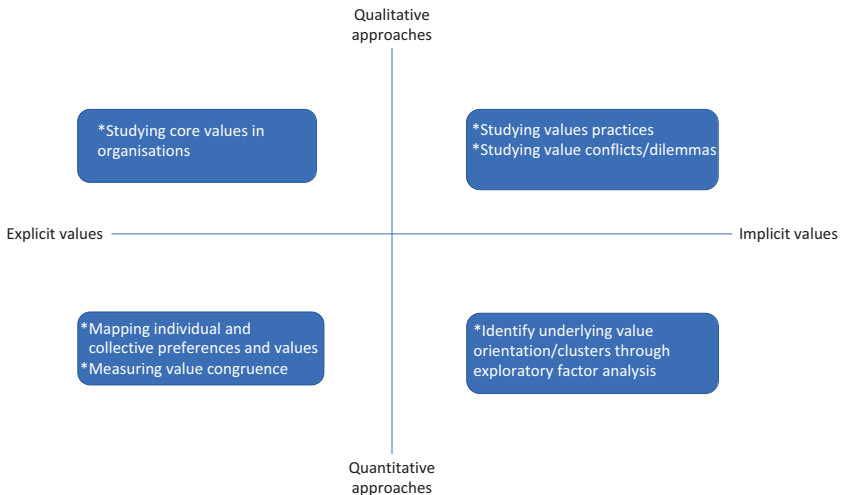


Fig. 2.1 Researching explicit and implicit values by applying quantitative and qualitative approaches

Philosophical Underpinnings for Qualitative and Quantitative Research

Methodologically, the rationale and philosophical underpinnings for qualitative and quantitative approaches differ in their ontological and epistemological assumptions. Generally speaking, qualitative studies take advantage of *interpretive* and *constructivist* forms of enquiry with a subjective view of reality. In contrast, quantitative studies apply the assumptions from *empiricism* (post-positivism included), where reality is viewed objectively and with a focus on the observable and measurable (Bryman, 2016; Smith, 1998). When researching values, a quantitative study seeks to discover the world as it is by measuring pre-defined (explicit) values. In qualitative value research, such as studying implicit values, values are not pre-defined. Rather, hidden and implicit values can evolve and be an outcome of reflection processes (e.g., Aadland, 2010). As such, methods used to elicit values range from deductive approaches that use pre-defined (explicit) values that are rated, ranked or evaluated, to inductive approaches which seek to identify values or to develop an understanding of values (Brigstocke et al., 2017).

These two approaches hold different underlying assumptions. Quantitative approaches assume that values exist objectively, can be pre-given and can be measured. Qualitative approaches challenge the pre-existence of values and highlight the active role of individuals in constructing the values. Hence, 'social reality is an ongoing accomplishment of social actors rather than something external to them and that totally constrains them' (Bryman, 2016, p. 30). How, then, does the researcher handle these different underlying assumptions? What is the order of components, and which choice comes first for the researcher: the conviction to one paradigm, starting with the philosophy of science followed by choices of methods? Or can the philosophy of science be used interchangeably, depending on the purpose of the study and the research questions? We will return to these questions in the next part of the chapter, linking aim with methodological choices.

Linking Research Aim with Methodological Choices

Selecting appropriate methods for a given research purpose or a specific research question is an important competence for researchers. The second aim of this chapter is to investigate the link between a study's purpose and the chosen research method or methods. How does the researcher choose between the suitable methods available? The first phase of this requires reflecting and elaborating on the purpose of the research. Figure 2.2 provides an overview of the different types of research purposes that guide choices in research design and the choices of research methods at a lower and more specific level. Research methods and designs lean towards a diverse set of philosophical approaches, as described above and as shown in Fig. 2.2.

This book puts an emphasis on linking research questions to methods of collecting and analysing qualitative data. For specific elaborations, see Chap. 7 in this volume on interviews (by Espedal), Chap. 8 on observation (by Sirris, Lindheim and Askeland) and Chap. 5 on critical group

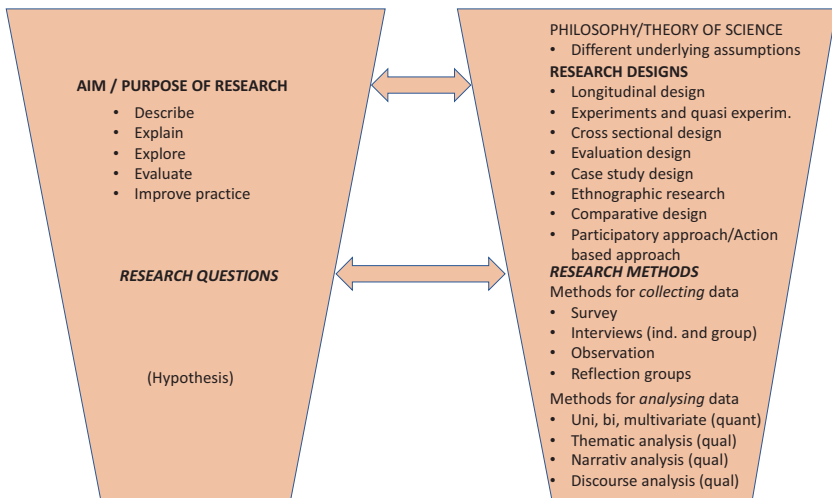


Fig. 2.2 Linking research aims and methodological choices at different levels

reflection (by Eriksen and Struminska-Kutra). These chapters provide examples of linking aim and research questions with methods for collecting data. When it comes to the link between research question and methods for analysing data, see Chap. 9 in this volume for thematic analysis (by Wæraas), Chap. 10 for discourse analysis (by Kivle and Espedal) and Chap. 11 for narrative research (by Espedal and Synnes). Analysis of quantitative data is not covered in this volume but is included in Fig. 2.2 to give the broader picture.

To provide practical guidance for researchers, an overview of the link between the purpose of a research project on values and the methodological choices made at different levels is presented below.

The aim or purpose of a research project can be to describe, explain, explore, evaluate, compare or improve practice, among others. Different aims benefit from the use of different research designs (Fig. 2.2), including longitudinal, cross-sectional and case study designs. If the purpose of a study is to *describe* in terms of mapping personal values among a population at a certain point in time, a cross-sectional design is suitable, choosing a survey/questionnaire as a method for data collection and univariate analysis for analysing the data (quantitative approach). An example of this type of research is conducted by Wennes and Busch (2012). If the purpose is to *explain*, such as to determine whether the independent variable has an influence on the dependent variable (cause and effect), experiments and quasi-experiments are considered a suitable design. However, research on values in organisations is seldom experimental studies (Aadland & Skjørshammer, 2017).

When the purpose of research is to *explore* an issue or understand a phenomenon, a case study design offers an appropriate framework for in-depth studies and investigations (qualitative approaches). Often, a combination of qualitative data sources is then applied. Table 2.1 gives an example (Gehman et al., 2013), where the aim was to explore how value practices emerge and how they are performed over time. In that study, a longitudinal/process design was applied and different qualitative approaches were used for data collection, including observation, interviews and archival data sources. While cross-sectional designs mainly rely on quantitative data, in-depth case study designs use qualitative data.

With longitudinal designs, it is possible to collect both quantitative and qualitative data.

If the aim of a research project is to *improve practice*, a participatory approach seems suitable, as working with practitioners/participants will help the researcher discover ways of improving practice. Furthermore, the use of a reflection group can be an appropriate method for collecting data in such a project, and sense-making processes and discourse analysis can serve as a method for analysing data. Depending on time and resource availability, a combination of data collection methods, such as group reflection and observation, may also serve the purpose of the study. Hence, the choice of methods is not solely based on the aim or purpose of the study but also based on pragmatic considerations.

At a lower and more concrete level, research questions can also guide the choice of research methods (Fig. 2.2). Take, for example, the following research questions: How are core values practised or expressed in an organisation? How do leaders and employees experience value conflicts? Both questions imply the use of qualitative approaches, such as observation (when studying practices) and interviews (when investigating experiences). Or consider this research question: To what extent do organisational leaders and members value autonomy, respect, quality and relatedness as important at their workplace? This question would benefit from a quantitative approach, as 'to what extent' suggests mapping the organisation by sending out a questionnaire to a large number of respondents and measuring the importance of the values autonomy, respect, quality and relatedness.

It is worth noting that research questions are not the only clues to the appropriate choice of research methods; the words used in a research question also offer hints. Take the example of the word 'how' and the phrase 'to what extent'. 'How' is not sufficiently answered by numbers (quantitative) but would benefit from richer descriptions and text (qualitative), and 'to what extent' can be measured in numbers; for example, the importance of the value respect can be measured on a scale from 1 to 7. If the mean score is 6, it could be claimed that organisational members 'to a large extent' consider autonomy at work as important. These examples and the description above show that being conscious about research aims, research questions and even choices in wording will guide the

researcher towards suitable research methods. On the left side of Fig. 2.2, hypotheses are specifications developed from research questions and are proposed (mostly) in quantitative studies. Based on theoretical, empirical or logical argumentation, hypotheses are tested using a deductive approach (Bryman, 2016).

To sum up, in order to investigate how studies of explicit and implicit values in organisations are conducted, we have travelled ‘behind the scenes’ by linking the aim of a research project with the methodological choices made at different levels, exploring when and in which settings different designs and methods are suitable.

Mixed Methods Research as a Way Forward

This chapter indicates that most research on values is investigating either explicit values with quantitative approaches or implicit values with qualitative approaches. In what ways have these applied research methods enabled or hindered our understanding of values at work? While the quantitative studies help us assess and map people’s values individually or collectively, such as individual work values, organisational values, professional values and leadership values, qualitative research can give deeper insight into people’s individual or collective experiences, processes and value practices. Explicit and implicit values are often studied separately using either quantitative approaches or qualitative approaches, which may hinder a broader and deeper understanding of the complex value construct and its relevance for practice. Where should we go from here? The following section discusses the use of mixed methods as a possible avenue for future research on values in organisations and leadership. A mixed methods approach can increase our understanding of explicit and implicit values and allow for investigation of the link between them.

Mixed Methods Values Research

Mixed methods research involves collecting, analysing and interpreting qualitative and quantitative data in response to research questions. The

core assumption of this type of enquiry is that ‘the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of the research problem than either approach alone’ (Creswell, 2014, p. 4). In addition, the combination of quantitative and qualitative data (mixed methods) allows for a broader and deeper understanding of complex human phenomena (Doyle et al., 2016). When using one method or a narrow set of research methods when studying values, there is a risk of ending up with a narrow set of results. Low-variety methods, such as using only quantitative approaches, could introduce the danger of oversimplification. Qualitative methods produce rich and detailed data that can be used to generate ‘thick descriptions’ (Siehl & Martin, 1988, p. 79) of values. These types of data allow for paradoxes and contradictions to be explored. On the other hand, quantitative approaches are useful for comparisons across and within organisations at various points in time, in addition to mapping value orientation and measuring value congruence.

The aim of values research is, among others, to identify and detect values as explicit, implicit or in combination, making a mixed methods approach reasonable. In values research, using a variety of methods enables results that may deepen our understanding of values in organisations. Mixed methods research has advanced significantly over the last few decades, ensuring that the weaknesses of each method are minimised. When researching values in organisations, mixed methods research allows for investigating explicit and implicit values in a research programme as well as the link between them (Fig. 2.3). Although some values studies have applied a mixed methods approach, the use of mixed methods in values research is limited (Aadland & Skjørshammer, 2017).

Another argument in favour of the use of mixed methods in values research is related to the state of prior theory. Whereas mature literature is well served with quantitative approaches and nascent literature calls for qualitative research, the intermediate state of literature is considered well suited by a mix of both approaches (Edmondson & Mcmanus, 2007). Regarding the state of values research in organisations, the study of explicit values has had a long relationship with quantitative approaches, whereas, as stated above, qualitative value studies have recently increased in numbers.

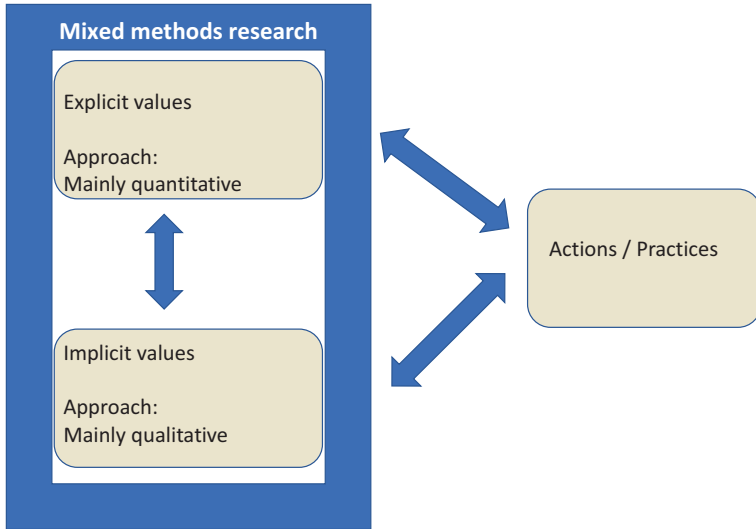


Fig. 2.3 The role of mixed methods research in bringing together studies on explicit and implicit values related to actions

Different types of mixed methods research designs exist. *Convergent parallel mixed methods* is a design in which the researcher collects quantitative and qualitative data at roughly the same time to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. *Explanatory sequential mixed methods* design usually consists of quantitative research followed by a qualitative data collection phase. This design is considered explanatory because the quantitative results are further explained with qualitative data. *Exploratory sequential mixed methods* design occurs in the opposite sequence to explanatory design: a primary qualitative phase builds into a quantitative data collection. This design can be used, for example, to develop new measurement instruments where the qualitative phase identifies unknown variables and the quantitative phase serves to test an instrument or to generalise the qualitative results for a wider population (Creswell, 2014).

Mixed methods research allows for both pre-determined and emerging methods, open-ended and closed-ended questions, as well as analysis of text and statistical analysis, and the researcher makes inferences across

both quantitative and qualitative databases. Hence, mixed methods values research can bring together studies on explicit and implicit values related to practice (Fig. 2.3; note the arrow bringing together research on explicit and implicit values). This approach may increase our understanding of the role values play in the actions and practices of organisations. The following examples of types of value research illustrate this point. When the aim is to investigate value congruence between individuals and organisations or to study the link between explicit values and action, both quantitative and qualitative approaches can be applied. Explicit values can be studied quantitatively when investigating value congruence, the match between the organisation and individuals or *to what extent* there is a link between explicit values and action. Explicit values may also be investigated qualitatively by exploring *how* the core values of an organisation are expressed or practised in action. Based in actions (the right side of Fig. 2.3), implicit values can be identified and become explicit, for example, by reflection processes (qualitative approach) which in turn may improve practice. While quantitative studies can help assess and map people's preferences and values individually or collectively or map value congruence, qualitative research can give deeper insight into people's individual or collective experiences and value practices. These purposes can be combined in mixed methods research. Thus, the mixed methods approach to the research of values in organisations allows for the investigation of both explicit and implicit values as well as the link between them. Figure 2.3 integrates the information about qualitative and quantitative approaches when studying implicit and explicit values from Fig. 2.1 with the linking of purpose and methodological choices, as shown in Fig. 2.2. Figure 2.3 also shows the role of mixed methods in values research related to action. Research designs such as longitudinal designs (see Fig. 2.2) may include both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Other types of mixed methods research may involve mixing designs, such as mixing case study designs using qualitative approaches with cross-sectional designs using quantitative approaches.

Challenges Related to Mixed Methods Research

How can researchers mix methods when the paradigms in which they are based differ in their ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions? As described, there are differences in philosophical assumptions between the paradigm of empiricism (post-positivism included) and the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm. Empiricism views values as objective and measurable, whereas the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm views values as evolving and constructed through sense-making processes by social actors/individuals. Schultz and Hatch (1996) presented strategies for working with multiple paradigms, pointing at paradigm interplay as a strategy for crossing paradigms.

Others welcome an alternative paradigm that embraces a plurality of methods and assumptions. Pragmatism is a frequently identified paradigm for researchers using mixed methods (Doyle et al., 2016). Pragmatism is also regarded as a way to bridge science and morality (Kraatz et al., 2020) and is an appropriate paradigm for action research. On a philosophical level, pragmatism supports the view that both quantitative and qualitative approaches advance knowledge production. On a practical level, the researcher must choose the best method for answering the research questions while maintaining a balance between subjectivity and objectivity. The paradigm of pragmatism supports the view that although qualitative and quantitative approaches are distinct, they can work together, allowing the researcher to freely choose the best methods to answer the research questions (Doyle et al., 2016). A relevant question in this regard is where the research questions come from, which is not discussed further in this chapter.

Another critical issue in mixed methods research concerns what to do about divergent findings, since most researchers strive for congruency between qualitative and quantitative data, which strengthens the validity and reliability of their research. Inconsistencies between the two sets of findings can occur when, for example, anonymous methods in the quantitative phase and non-anonymous methods in the qualitative phase lead to different responses, especially when investigating sensitive issues. Divergent findings can also have a theoretical explanation and may lead

to the collection of additional data in order to resolve the discrepancy. In this way, divergent findings can uncover and refine new theories and insights (Doyle et al., 2016).

Conclusion

The chapter intended to establish an overview and serve as a road map to the current methods used in studies on values in organisations and leadership. The main insights of this chapter are that explicit and implicit values are usually studied separately using quantitative approaches (such as surveys/questionnaires) for explicit values and a combination of qualitative methods to identify implicit values. While quantitative studies can help assess and map people's preferences and values individually or collectively, qualitative research can provide deeper insight into people's individual or collective experiences and value practices.

Future studies on values work may benefit from the use of mixed methods research approaches that can increase the understanding of and bring together studies on explicit and implicit values related to action. In this way, a mixed methods approach may open up prospects for research on values in organisations. Mixed methods values research also gives an opportunity for greater interdisciplinary collaboration, which is highly relevant for researching values that are grounded in disciplines like psychology, sociology, leadership studies and organisational research. Well established and often neglected is the importance of how specific methodological approaches bear practical as well as theoretical implications, and the need for exploring the interplay between method and theory more deeply is highlighted by Zilber (2020).

An ongoing reflection on methodological choices, such as paying attention to and being conscious of the link between research aim and research methods, will result in more informed choices about methods and, thus, the nurturing of diverse ways of conducting research. In turn, this will open up space for new fields of research, subsequently widening and deepening our understanding of the world.

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3

Definitions as Initial and Final Point of Values Research? Searching for Mysteries in Research Projects About Values in Organisational and Leadership Studies

Annette Leis-Peters

Introduction

Values resound in all areas of society, particularly in times of crisis and political and social tension. Many politicians and leaders believe that good, common values can keep together communities, societies, and even transnational organisations like the European Union (EU). This makes values not only a frequent element in political speeches but also a popular focus area in research calls aimed at helping politicians solve complex problems in increasingly diverse societies. Values research has been and still is politically prioritised and one field where researchers in social sciences and humanities can at least get closer to the funding sums that are common in natural sciences. Therefore, it is not surprising that there are numerous projects, both bigger and smaller, often focusing on

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values in relation to something else, like welfare, leadership, public services, civil society, and much more. This would suggest that the last decades have refined conceptual discussions about values that are important to consider in future empirical values research.

Alvesson and Kärreman (2011) ask researchers to look for mysteries or paradoxes when theorising empirical (qualitative) data. This challenge is particularly interesting in the field of values research, which has shifted its focus from normative to empirical research in line with what has been described as the empirical turn (e.g., Thome's 2003 research). By the middle of the last century, it would have been natural to delve into philosophical, theological, or even phenomenological reflections and to contribute with refined normative approaches when doing a values study. Since then, it has become increasingly common to explore values in empirical studies. This can easily be tested by searching the concept of "values" in the EU research result database Cordis (<https://cordis.europa.eu/en>). One of the most well-known examples is the huge longitudinal World Value Survey (WVS), which was initiated in the 1980s and has now completed its seventh wave with the prospect of continuing with more waves during the coming decades (see, e.g., Inglehart, 2018). However, empirical studies are not a byword of a lack of conceptualisation. Even the most inductive studies presuppose basic theoretical understandings of the studied phenomenon.

The interest in having a closer look into the use of value definitions in organisational and leadership studies arose from a retrospective amazement about research projects on values that the author was involved herself. Some directed surprisingly little attention to defining values, even though values were one of the key concepts in these empirical projects. Following Alvesson and Kärreman's (2011) approach, this observation can be made a starting point for mystery solving in at least two respects. On the one hand, one could look for the mysteries in empirical values research that trigger such a potential lack of definitions. On the other hand, one could try to understand the mystery of disinterest in conceptualisations and definitions in empirical studies about values. Based on this, the overarching question of this chapter is, thus, how can value definitions affect the methodological design of empirical research about values in the field of organisational and leadership studies. The chapter

contributes to the discussion about the preconditions for empirical value research that is also raised in Beate Jelstad Løvaas' (2021) chapter about the connection between research purpose and choice of methods and in Thomas Andersson's (2021) chapter that raises the perspectives of intentionality and agency in relation to values and ponders how these can be taken into consideration in empirical values research.

A Plea for More Definitions

As a master's or PhD student or a researcher working with an empirical study, one will probably recognise their supervisor's or colleagues' demand to make a theoretical contribution. But theorising in social empirical research is a complex endeavour (Merton, 2007). Alvesson and Kärreman (2011) agree with other social researchers that restricting theory use to hypothesis testing, which is common in the natural sciences, is problematic in empirical social research. They base their claim on one of the main criticisms of positivistic research approaches, namely that all scientific conceptualisations are necessarily insufficient due to limitations in language and in the imagination and consciousness of single researchers when studying social phenomena. At the same time, Alvesson and Kärreman argue that the limitations of theory should not result in a helpless retreat into the impossibility of theorising empirical social research and suggest that researchers should see the empirical material "as a potential dialogue partner, leading to questioning, doubting, and problematizing the existing/dominant expectations and frameworks" (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011, p. 119). This quote illustrates how cautiously they describe theorising activities in qualitative social research and avoid all technical terms that could imply the risk of being lumped together with naive empiricist research that tends to use elementary definitions and hypotheses.

When reading methods literature, the attitude of demarcation from a simplified usage of theory is prevalent among many social researchers. Nevertheless, they do not emphasise definitions either. It is hard to find the keyword "definition" in the headings or index lists of comprehensive textbooks of qualitative social research (cf. Bryman, 2016 or Silverman, 2020). However, protest has recently been lodged against the definition

abstinence in social research. US sociologist Richard Swedberg criticises that definitions “seem to be marginal to the sociological enterprise” (Swedberg, 2020, p. 431) and states that there also exists no knowledge about how sociologists use definitions (Swedberg, 2020, p. 441). Without denying the risk of “poor” definitions and the impossibility of creating an ideal definition, he claims that introducing definitions can lead to better analysis. Swedberg’s general claim can easily be applied to the field of value research, which shows both how difficult it is to create proper definitions and how important it is to get a better conceptual understanding of multi-faceted social phenomena like values. As the editors of this book state in the introduction chapter, values are essential to understand but difficult to define. Askeland points to the same dilemma when giving an overview of value constructions in various disciplines and concluding that the conceptualisations of values remain “somewhat ambiguous and taken for granted” (Askeland, 2020, p. 16). Sirris (2020) underlines that values are necessarily in the eye of the beholder and are thus fluid and fixed at the same time when discussing the role of core values in values work. In other words, values are one of those areas where sociological/scientific definitions and everyday definitions overlap or mix. Swedberg considers these kinds of overlaps to be important for the blurriness of key concepts in social research that hinder a clear sociological analysis (Swedberg, 2020, p. 435). All this makes values research a good case for studying the need for definitions in empirical social research.

Of course, this chapter will not consist of an endless chain of (value) definitions. Its aim is to highlight the connection between value definitions and the possible methodological designs of empirical value research in organisational and leadership studies. It starts with the assumption that each values study, whether it be a master’s thesis or an international research project, needs to consider and reconsider its conceptualisation of values. Since the researchers’ preconceptions of values will affect the values research in any case, it is only academically honest to use definitions to make their own understandings explicit and reflect on them. Based on Flick’s (2011) model for the design of qualitative research projects (p. 176), the chapter suggests three steps in the research process that open up work with and the reflection on definitions. Two examples of values

research will be used as illustrations of how definitions can influence these three steps and thus the entire research design.

The first example is the GLOBE Project, a large, long-term international empirical research project that puts the connection between values and leadership on the agenda. Since its beginnings as a paper-and-pen-based survey in 70 countries in the late 1960s and 1970s, GLOBE has grown considerably into a hub that offers both material and points of connection for several hundred researchers and a research-based consultancy service for leaders in international and intercultural settings (<https://globeproject.com/>). The selected publication representing the project in this chapter is one of its large research reports, the second edition of the book *Culture's Consequences* (Hofstede, 2001), which was edited for the first time in 1980. This book can be considered to belong to the pre-GLOBE Project phase and has, unlike many later publications from the project, a clear character as a research report. The publication covers the results from the early surveys in the multinational business organisation IBM and relates them to other relevant studies about values, culture, and leadership.

The LIVAP project differs in both size and setup from the GLOBE project. It has been developed within the framework of the master's programme in values-based leadership at Diakonhjemmet University College (later VID Specialized University) based on the observation that many master's students were interested in the same issues (leadership in practice) and that new knowledge that transcends the contribution of limited and contextual studies can be gained by analysing these individual studies under a larger theoretical umbrella. This framework was called the Leadership in Practice (LIP) project and comprised about 25 master's theses. The theoretical canopy was further developed by establishing a research group focusing on leadership and institutional values work in practice (LIVAP) that in the beginning mainly consisted of teachers in the above-mentioned master's programme (Askeland, 2017). The LIVAP project is closely linked to the editors of this volume, so this chapter will resonate well with other contributions to the edited volume at hand. The major outcomes of the LIVAP project are four PhD theses of Harald Askeland (2016), Stephen Sirris (2019), Gry Espedal (2019), and Tone Lindheim (2021) and an edited volume (Askeland et al., 2020) and a

textbook (Aadland & Askeland, 2017). In particular, one of the PhD theses is interesting from the perspective of defining values and using the definitions in different steps of the research process (Espedal, 2019). Espedal studies values work in a faith-based healthcare institution in Norway.

To illuminate the aim of the chapter, namely, to highlight the connection between value definitions and the research design in the field of organisational and leadership studies, the selected two examples will be analysed with the help of the following three sub-questions in the next sections of the chapter: (1) How do the two examples define values? (2) How do the value definitions affect the research design of these two projects and in particular their sampling? (3) In what ways do the value definitions become part of the result presentations of the two examples? The analysis is not meant as research on its own, but as an illumination of the points that the chapter makes as a contribution to methodology in values research.

How to Define Values?

Swedberg's challenge of paying more attention to definitions in sociological or social phenomena research leaves a value researcher with the question of how to deal with the complicated task of constructing a meaningful value definition that has the potential to improve the quality of the analysis of the empirical material. Swedberg makes clear that stipulative definitions are preferred in sociological research. Unlike lexical or ostensive definitions, which are often based on everyday language, stipulative definitions provide the opportunity to sharpen the focus on and highlight certain aspects, which again can contribute to the development of conceptualisations (Swedberg, 2020, p. 433).

However, definitions of values tend to be not only at the intersection between everyday language and scientific-analytical language but also between normative and empirical approaches to research. Against this background, the distinction between substantive and functional definitions that are common in the field of religious studies and theology could also be useful for value research (Verwiebe, 2019). Substantial definitions

concentrate on what values are, while functional definitions explore how values work (Guhin, 2014, p. 586). In the analysis of the two projects, we will investigate whether value definitions are used and what character they do have.

The GLOBE project is based on an elaborated theoretical model of the differences between cultures and how they can be understood and made visible in large international surveys. Both values and cultures are defined as belonging to what Hofstede calls for the mental programme of people that expresses itself on universal, collective, and individual levels. Hofstede defines that values “can refer to *the desired* or to *the desirable*” (2001, p. 1) and measures them by asking for preferences in quantitative questionnaires. Hofstede’s main theoretical interest in values is to create a model that helps him measure culture. Values thus become central in his model of cultural manifestations, which ranges from symbols, over heroes, to rituals and values, which are situated at the very core of the model. At first glance, this definition seems rather unspecific and broad and neither functional nor substantial. At the same time, such a simple definition can serve as a plain operationalisation of values as manifestations of culture that can be formulated as questions to which the respondents of questionnaires can agree and disagree. Based on this, he developed a complex system of questions related to leadership cultures, with which he measured values by asking respondents to evaluate statements as desirable or not desirable. Hofstede’s definition is not substantial as it does not differentiate between what makes values good or bad. In contrast, it could be understood as functional, as it starts from the preunderstanding that values function as preferences or wishes regarding how leadership should be conducted.

Espedal is inspired by institutional theory when she defines values as “the sayings and doings in organizations that articulate and accomplish *the desirable* in relevance to right and wrong action and behavior” (2019, p. 47). Her definition has both substantial and functional elements. The functional part of her definition understands values as “the desirable” that can be captured in written or oral expression and actions of organisations. By adding the categories of “right or wrong,” a normative element is included in Espedal’s value definition. This opens up a reflection about

the substance or content of the values that she empirically observes in her study and for a normative evaluation of them.

The two examples illustrate that different value definitions make different research designs and different analyses possible. Stipulative value definitions facilitate empirically based reflections about what aspects should be taken into consideration when researching values. A certain degree of elaboration regarding the definition enables a potentially richer reflection about values. Only definitions with substantive elements allow for normative considerations.

Contact Sites for Definitions in Value Research

All research, if normative or descriptive, if quantitative or qualitative, is related to earlier knowledge. In presentations of empirical research, the theory chapter usually has the task of indicating and explaining this connectedness. Moreover, theoretical and conceptual preunderstandings typically affect all the stages and processes of social research, irrespective of whether the studies have chosen a deductive, inductive, or abductive approach. This can, for example, be illustrated by Flick's model of components of research designs for qualitative research consisting of eight elements (translated by the author): research aim, research question, selection (or sampling), presentation, resources, methods, theoretical frame, and generalisation (2011, p. 177). Transferred to our two example studies, each of Flick's components could be discussed regarding how it is affected by the implicit or explicit value definition on which the study is based. Below, we will discuss the relevance of value definitions for the methodological design by having a closer look into how the two example studies handle two of Flick's components. More specifically, we will ask how they relate the selection of data or sampling and the generalisations (i.e., the presentation of the results at the end of the study) to the value definitions that they present. The example of the two studies can be easily translated into any empirical values study with which one might work.

The Connection Between Value Definition and Sampling

Bryman claims that all sampling in (qualitative) research has to be purposive or purposeful but that there is a difference between those research designs in which the criteria for the sampling units are decided on and fixed before the data collection starts and those in which these criteria can be negotiated and changed during the process of data collection (2016, p. 410). Based on the distinctions of Teddlie and Yu (2007) and Hood (2007), Bryman illustrates how fixed or open criteria can affect the research process.

In Teddlie and Yu's "Taxonomy of sampling techniques for social and behavioural sciences" (2007, p. 78), the differentiation between sequential and non-sequential sampling is a sub-category in the purposive sampling type, while they also mention three other types of sampling. Non-sequential purposive sampling strategies are, according to them, samplings that aim at achieving "representativeness or comparability" or at studying "special or unique cases," while the four sub-categories of purposive sampling are "theoretical sampling," "confirming or disconfirming cases," "opportunistic sampling," and "snowball sampling" (p. 81). Purposive, sequential sampling approaches are often put at the same level as qualitative research designs, but Teddlie and Yu's typology clarifies how quantitative, non-sequential approaches are purposeful as well. While values (work) research ranges from large, representative studies to small data sets based on limited case studies or opportunistic sampling, purposeful sampling applies to all these different research designs.

Nevertheless, the link between theory and sampling is clearest in the purposive sampling technique of theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling is mostly discussed as an approach that has emerged from the grounded theory tradition and is characterised as having a contingent process of data collection, in contrast to a priori definitions that guide the sampling (Hood, 2007, p. 157). Flick describes theoretical sampling as research that aims to generate theory through empirical data (Flick, 2011, p. 158). It is a process where data collection, coding, and analysis take place in parallel. What data will be collected next depends on the analysis

of the data that has been collected earlier. In theoretical sampling, both the scope and the characteristics of the collected data are not defined beforehand. The data collection is completed when a kind of theoretical saturation has been achieved. For the field of values research, this would mean that the analysis of the empirical material is not beforehand based on a specific concept or definition of values but rather develops new, empirically based concepts and definitions. One way of interpreting such a research process would be that value definitions must be the result of an empirical study that started without any conceptualisation when selecting the empirical material. However, one could ask if it is possible to select any empirical data about values without having any preliminary value definitions in mind. At least Alvesson and Kärreman (2011) seem to have a type of pre-conscious definition in mind when asking the researchers to go into dialogue with the empirical research material, since any dialogue presupposes a kind of pre-conception for both dialogue partners.

Therefore, we must explore the connection between sampling and value definitions by analysing the ways in which the data collection in the GLOBE study and Espedal's PhD project are purposeful and based on their earlier introduced value definitions.

Within the model of the GLOBE study, the value definition does not primarily affect the selection of who is chosen as the provider of empirical data (i.e., of the respondents), but how of the empirical data is collected (i.e., through agree and not agree questions in a questionnaire). The theoretical definition of values permeates the values-related questions in the questionnaire that was created in the 1960s and developed further after this (Hofstede, 2001, p. 467ff.). Seen from Alvesson and Kärreman's critical reflections about the connection between theoretical concepts in the form of simplified hypotheses or definitions on the one hand and empirical data on the other hand, Hofstede's study can be described as a typical example of quantitative empirical research that, in similarity to other quantitative values studies, tests hypotheses about values that are in turn based on a simplified functional value definition.

Espedal's methodological approach is closely related to her value definition, even though her main interest is values work and not values in themselves. Her sampling follows in many ways what Flick describes as

theoretical sampling. She describes her research design as a triangulation of observation, interviews, and document analysis conducted in different phases and linked with a narrative approach. The whole research process is motivated by the aim of getting a better understanding of values according to her initial definition, with both functional and substantial elements. The sample of the empirical material is thus not specified beforehand, but it is open-ended and influenced by the research. Completing her data collection does not mean for her to accomplish a certain number of interviews and observations but to reach a level where she concludes that she has enough empirical material to answer her research question. There is a direct connection between the open-ended sampling of the project and her value definition, which integrates functional and substantial elements, thus allowing her to consider both the function and content of the values that she finds in her material.

The GLOBE study and Espedal's PhD project are two distinctive research projects with very different value definitions. While Hofstede's research starts from a simple functional value definition that allows him to study values through preferences in agree-not-agree questionnaires, Espedal's definition combines both functional and substantial elements to capture both the normative and the descriptive dimensions that are constitutive for values work, that is, values *for* practice or values *in* practice (Askeland & Aadland, 2017). Even though their value definitions obviously differ, the two studies have in common the sampling process is closely linked to the value definitions. This indicates that when planning research about values, it is very likely that the sampling will be affected by (conscious or unconscious) value definitions.

Value Definition in Writing Up the Research: The Final Section

Making a research project accessible to other researchers by writing up its framework, decisions, and results and discussing them is not a favourite topic in textbooks in social research. While dozens of pages are devoted to single approaches for data collection and analysis, the issue of presenting the whole study in a consistent text, be it a report, a thesis, or an

article, is often only given comparably few pages at the end of the books; see, for example, Bryman (2016, pp. 661–684) or Silverman (2020, pp. 421–489). Even less attention is given to writing the conclusion or final section of a research publication. This is noteworthy since academic readers usually start by reading the introduction and the conclusion when accessing new research.

Concluding a study usually means returning to its starting points and evaluating how the research project ended. Silverman writes, for example, about giving the research an own “twist to the wider implications” (2020, p. 432). In values studies, this would mean that the values researchers discuss in the conclusion if they can ascertain any new knowledge about values. This would automatically bring them back to the issue of definitions and conceptualisations of values. Consequently, the conclusion, discussion, and maybe also generalisations would be a natural place to learn about the conceptualisations/definitions of values in a research project and how they were applied throughout the study. This means that we should be able to learn about the value definitions of research projects in organisational and leadership studies by scrutinising their conclusion chapters or sections. This might also be the case for our two examples.

When Hofstede in the GLOBE project draws his conclusions from the survey, it becomes obvious that what he is interested in is culture, not values. His conceptualisation and definition of values are tools for developing the theoretical concept of culture. This means that values are a prominent concept in the discussion of concluding chapters of Hofstede’s book (see, in particular, Chaps. 8–10) but they are not the focus of the theoretical reflections. As a tool for deepening theoretical discussions about cultures, it is not necessary for Hofstede to pay immersed attention to the concept of values. This explains why Hofstede uses a rather simplistic functional definition of values.

In Espedal’s PhD thesis, the discussion of values is closely connected to the discussion of values work. This also becomes evident in her conclusion, where she points out theorising the process of value inquiry as her main theoretical contribution (2019, p. 98). Even though she starts her project with a value definition that would have provided an interesting vantage point for theoretical considerations about values, she does not return to this definition in the conclusion. She states nevertheless that her

study showed that “values reside partly in the narrative unconscious and partly in the pre-reflective corporeal action” (2019, p. 99). This is a finding that could have developed her value definition.

Common to the conclusion in both studies is that they touch on the issue of a theoretical conceptualisation of values but delve into other theoretical debates that are related to the concept of values. It thus seems difficult to enter deeper discussions about such a basic and at the same time comprehensive concept as values, with results from both quantitative or limited contextual empirical studies.

Conclusion

It is not the conclusion of this chapter that all empirical values researchers should enter into the large, overarching theoretical debates about what values are. But avoiding conceptual reflections about values can create mysteries regarding what the empirical values research actually is about. It would mean leaving the field of theoretical value conceptualisations in empirical value research to quantitative, hypothesis-testing studies and thus impoverishing the empirically based theoretical discourse about values. Working with definitions always implies a decision about which discourse researchers want to participate in. Analysing two empirical research projects about values in the field of organisational and leadership studies showed that value definitions in (qualitative) empirical research are complicated, but give more starting points for fundamental reflections the more stipulative and elaborated the definitions are.

In particular, from the perspective of contextual and limited qualitative studies, it seems difficult to feel qualified to contribute to the large and often normatively influenced theoretical debates about values. Our two examples also show that empirical value research might instead contribute to other theoretical debates, such as the leadership culture debate in the case of the GLOBE study or the values work discussion in the case of Espedal’s study. Against this background, the chapter aims to encourage empirical researchers in the field of values to take definitions of values into consideration in their work in at least one of the three dimensions below.

First, when working with values research, it is almost impossible not to come across the question of defining values. Values researchers will meet value definitions and examples of how value definitions have been integrated into research designs when reviewing earlier research in the field. It could therefore become natural for values researchers to include their own reflections about value definitions when considering their own contribution to the research field.

Second, it can be claimed that it is part of the academic fidelity that all values researchers attest to the research community how they understand values and what consequences this understanding has for the selection of their empirical material. It is important that these considerations are not made too implicit, but are made explicit for each step of the research process, particularly when justifying the sampling strategy.

Third, as long as values have been important for an empirical research project, it is appropriate to spend some time reflecting on the (theoretical) understanding of values at the conclusion of the project. Only if conceptualisations and definitions of values become visible in the conclusion can the study of values have the potential to influence the wider theoretical debates about values. These debates benefit from each contribution, not at least if they are based on an empirical study. Therefore, it is worthwhile that empirical values researchers make this additional effort in their conclusion, even though their empirical results might be limited and contextual or guide them into other theoretical discourses.

When using these opportunities for conceptual reflections about values that the research design offers, (qualitative) empirical studies in the field of organisational and leadership studies—and likeliest also your study—can give important inputs to the debates about how values should be conceptualised and defined theoretically. They can thus contribute to keeping the mysteries of empirical value research alive and, at the same time, make suggestions for solving them.

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4

Intentionality and Agency in Values Work Research

Thomas Andersson

Introduction

As a professional, I gain autonomy and trust from society because I let certain values guide my actions. And I could of course provide some politically correct description on what these values are. But are these the values that *really* govern my actions? Well, I guess both yes and no. I mean, I don't think the politically correct values are wrong, but I am certain that I am also governed by values that I am not even aware of. But I guess that is your job as a researcher to help me find out (laughter)? (Transcript from an interview with a physician)

This quotation, I think, presents some of the methodological challenges of trying to understand values and values work in organisations. How can we as researchers or students understand something

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interviewees cannot fully make sense of themselves, especially if values are implicit, hidden, temporary and conflicting? In this chapter, I will address how we can capture values and values work independently of whether the people in our research can describe them to us or not. As a means to make us more empirically sensitive and capable of capturing values and values work, I will use the concepts of intentionality and agency. Since values work research is a concept within institutional theory (Askeland et al., 2020), the degree of agency is not chosen by the actor. It is the actor's roles and social positions as parts of institutions that influence agency (Abdelnour et al., 2017). Based on the basic definition that actors display agency when they go against the constraints of social structure (Calhoun, 2002), I will avoid a more precise definition and instead portray agency as multi-dimensional (Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009). If agency is empirically investigated instead of being investigated as a theoretical point of departure (i.e., one-dimensional), we are able to have a much broader view of what intentionality might mean (beyond what the physician in the above quote perceives as intentionality). Intentionality can be seen as salient expressions of values (Aadland, 2010), which means that different dimensions of agency that allow a broader view of intentionality also enable researchers and students to better capture values and values work empirically. I will also elaborate on how these different dimensions of agency have implications for what people's consciousness is directed to, as well as how consciousness is related to personal values and socially imposed values. The aim of this chapter is to elaborate on the meaning of the concepts of agency and intentionality for methodological choices in values work research. The guiding research question of the chapter is as follows: how can researchers and students use the concepts agency and intentionality to enable data collection and interpretation that better captures values work?

Values and Values Work and Their Relation to Intentionality

The interest in values work, and not only values, follows Barley and Kunda's (2001) request to 'bring work back in' to research. They argue that work had been marginalised in organisational research. Since their research, work has re-entered organisational research in many new forms, such as emotion work, identity work, institutional work, boundary work and values work (Phillips & Lawrence, 2012). In common in all these diverse work research streams is that work is directed towards something that is 'worked upon', and this something is socially constructed. As a researcher, this means directing interest towards efforts and actions (work) (Andersson & Gadolin, 2020) rather than actors/people. Furthermore, it means that concepts such as identity, emotion, institution or value, which previously were more or less taken for granted, now are seen as something that is more actively constructed (and worked upon) (Phillips & Lawrence, 2012). However, what I find problematic in many work concepts is that they seem to be implicitly grounded in a strong intentionality, which risks being misleading regarding method choices. This is most clearly visible in institutional work, which originally was defined as '*purposive action aimed at creating, maintaining, and disrupting institutions*' (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006, p. 217; emphasis added). Such strong demands on intentionality, which this definition implies, would leave out much of what could be understood as institutional work just because the people who are performing institutional work did not intend it to be institutional work or were simply not aware of it. In the next section, I will argue for a broader view of intentionality. However, first I would like to emphasise that values work is not so heavily influenced by strong intentionality since Askeland et al. (2020, p. 4) define values work as 'any sets of acts in everyday work [that are] values-driven'. On the contrary, this definition portrays an implicit intentionality in which values are manifested in work and thereby 'worked upon'. However, even if we are under less risk to be misled in terms of method choice by this definition, we still need methods that enable us to capture values and values work that is both explicit and implicit. Then we need to analyse intentionality and its relationship to agency.

Intentionality and Consequence Versus Appropriateness

The tendencies to understand ‘work’ as based on a clear intentionality is based upon a risk that is always present in social sciences: to over-focus on explicit and intended aspects of almost any social concept. Simply because they are easier to capture, people are aware of them and can express them, for example, through interviews. Actors are not always aware of their intentions, and actors’ accounts of their intentions are not always reliable (Zilber, 2013). Besides not being aware of intentions, another explanation is that human beings prefer to be able to rationalise. March (1994) argues that this preference for rationality means that we understand organisations and leadership based on a logic of consequence, as we view actions as consequential and preference based. Actions are consequential in the sense that they are the consequences of our anticipations of the future; that is, we have specific intentions that lead our actions. Actions are preference-based in the sense that they are evaluated based on our preferences (what we see as important, unimportant, good, bad, etc.). The logic of consequence describes human actions as based on a very strong and explicit intentionality and values as explicit and articulated (almost outside of us), which makes it possible to objectively evaluate something. Based on this view, values and values work would be perfectly accessible through interviews since people are aware of them and can express them. However, considering the quote at the beginning of the chapter, we should question if we can really capture the whole picture. We would only capture values and values work that are explicit, and values and values work become restricted to rationalised values and values work that may be a foundation to evaluate consequences based on them. There must be something else going on that the logic of consequence cannot describe.

Watson (2006) explains this feeling of something else going on by arguing that rational choice and, thereby, the logic of consequence are poor descriptions of human action. The logic of consequence does not take people’s identities into consideration, or interactional relationships between intentions and actions. Actions are not simply an effect of

intentions, but intentions and actions are matched to each other. Similarly, values do not only inform actions; actions also manifest values (Aadland, 2010). March (1994) presents another view, the logic of appropriateness, that better enables an understanding of people's actions in organisations. It takes into consideration that people want their actions to be aligned with who they are (and/or want to be/become) (Andersson, 2012) and that actions are situational and matched to the situations they appear (in, e.g., organisations) rather than connected to clear expectations of the future (March, 1994). In particular, in complexity and ambiguity, the logic of appropriateness tends to guide human action (Andersson, 2015). When people cannot clearly calculate what to do (as the logic of consequence implies), actions are guided by a reasoning process that establishes identities and matches rules to recognised situations (March, 1994). This reasoning process can be understood as people explicitly or implicitly asking themselves three questions (March, 1994; Andersson, 2015):

1. *Recognition*: What kind of situation is this?
2. *Identity*: What kind of person am I?
3. *Rules*: What does a person such as I do in a situation like this?

This kind of reasoning means that values and values work are not just directly and objectively related to actions and consequences, as in the logic of consequence. They are also more implicitly and subjectively connected to personal values (are these values aligned with whom I want to be?) and situational (and thereby more temporal) values. And even more important, there is the connection between personal and situational values, which opens up for conflicting values. The reasoning process described above is complex and often implicit, which means that values and values work will be much more complex to capture empirically compared to the logic of consequence, which we can quite easily capture through interviews and to which I will return. For now, we can settle with that we will always have more of a challenge in researching values and values work that is more implicit, abstract and indirect.

Intentionality is very clear, explicit and future-oriented (expectations of the future) in the logic of consequence, but does it really mean that

people do not have intentions based on the logic of appropriateness? Is there no intentionality behind who you want to be and become just as there is in what consequences you want to reach through specific actions? Yes, but the difference is to what extent people can predict and directly influence consequences. We need a broader view of intentionality to capture the intentionality of the logic of appropriateness. The intentionality in the logic of consequence is based on a strong agency, whereas the intentionality in the logic of appropriateness is based on other dimensions of agency, which will be handled next.

Intentionality and Agency

In institutional work research, the issue of intentionality has been elaborated based on different dimensions of agency (Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009), which can be seen as a way to deal with more implicit and abstract values and values work in research. Battilana and D'Aunno's (2009) basic argument is that there are different dimensions of agency: projective agency, iterative agency and practical-evaluative agency. *Projective agency* is the form of agency that is most explicit since it focusses on actors' projections of the future and leads action in that direction. Projective agency is thereby the agency behind the intentionality we can see in the logic of consequence (March, 1994). *Iterative agency* is related to habits and how previous actions may be reactivated (Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009). Thereby, this form of agency is more related to the logic of appropriateness (March, 1994) since people's previous experiences influence how they both recognise and interpret different situations, as well as who they are based on a processual view of identity (Andersson, 2015). *Practical-evaluative agency* is focussed on the present and how actors respond to contingencies they perceive (Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009). This form of agency is also more related to the logic of appropriateness (March, 1994) since it takes the situational and temporal aspects of everyday work (and life) into consideration.

Projective agency focusses on purposive actions, which are often represented by managers portraying themselves as leading action in certain directions. Iterative and practical-evaluative agencies are both more implicit and subtle, where intentionality must instead be understood as incorporating a wide range of levels of purposefulness (Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009). One example may be people's intentions to accomplish their everyday, mundane, practical work. In such intentions, there are most probably no intentions of performing institutional work, but this is not the same as the actions not being intentional; rather, it says something about what the intentions are directed at and what the underlying dimensions of agency are (Andersson & Gadolin, 2020). In terms of values and values work, most often they are not in the foreground; that is, values and values work are not the main intentions behind certain actions (Aadland, 2010). More often values and values work are implicit and underlying, and they might condition certain actions to different extents. However, values and values work are often important and influence action, especially considering the previous definition of values work as 'any sets of acts in everyday work [that are] values-driven' (Askeland et al., 2020, p. 4). If values work was in the foreground, it would be more related to projective agency and the logic of consequence, but now we have to deal with it as more related to iterative agency and practical-evaluative agency and the logic of appropriateness, which means that we need methods that enable capturing phenomena that are implicit, hidden and tacit and that people might not be aware of. Furthermore, in terms of importance in influencing action, implicit values may be considered more influential than explicit values. The reason is that people who are aware of certain values are also aware of when these are being challenged and when they have a choice in terms of different values. However, when it comes to more implicit values that may be taken for granted, people may be unaware that there is a choice at all. For this reason, even if capturing hidden and implicit values and values work is much more difficult, it might also be much more important if we want to understand people's actions in organisations.

Values and Values Work and Social Order

The challenge related to values often being both hidden and tacit, as Espedal et al. (2021) describe in the introductory chapter of this book and as I have elaborated on in this chapter, is not the only challenge in values work research. Values are also an important part of the social order (Scott, 2013), which means that they are desirable or not desirable in different contexts. The logic of appropriateness brings in the situational aspect (March, 1994), which means that values are not objectively desirable or not, but rather situationally desirable or not. Consequently, differences in what people say and what they do cannot only be explained by to what extent they are aware of different values influencing their actions. It might also depend on to what extent people see certain values as socially desirable or not in their contexts and to what extent they identify with their work roles. Argyris et al. (1985) argue that the difference is not really a difference between theory and action; rather, it is a difference between two different theories of action: espoused theory (the world view and values people believe in and think they base their actions on, which they can and want to espouse) and theory-in-use (the world view and values that actually govern people's actions). If we concentrate on values, there are espoused values (Aadland, 2010) as well as values-in-use that govern people's actions. Argyris et al.'s (1985) two different theories of actions are not mutually exclusive (other than in the extreme situation when what people say and what people do are totally different). Instead, the question is to what extent there are differences in espoused values and values-in-use. These differences can be explained on the one hand by different types of intentionality and on the other hand by to what extent the values represent the social order (i.e., they are socially desirable, and people are willing to openly espouse them). These challenges must be approached when researching values and values work.

Intentionality, Agency and Their Implications for Qualitative Methods

This section will elaborate on how the mentioned challenges regarding intentionality and agency condition our choices of methods. In the introductory chapter (Espedal et al., 2021), it is stated that general limitations apply to the use of quantitative methods in researching values, which is why this book has a general focus on qualitative methods in researching values and values work. However, the use of qualitative methods also presents several challenges when considering intentionality and agency. Different qualitative methods have different strengths and weaknesses, but with a combination of different qualitative methods, such weaknesses can be limited. Often, triangulation is used as a metaphor when using mixed methods, but the metaphor indicates that using several methods makes the data ‘truer’ or ‘more correct’. However, when using different qualitative methods, triangulation is a means of leveraging strengths while simultaneously mitigating the weaknesses of several methods (Paul, 1996). I will discuss qualitative interviews, participant observations and shadowing observations as qualitative methods that can be combined to capture values and values work. I begin with describing them individually based on their strengths and weaknesses, as well as how our use of each method can enable us to better capture values and values work empirically and independently of the dimensions of agency and intentionality.

Qualitative Interviews

Qualitative interviews are preferable when we are interested in how interviewees make sense of the object being studied, in this case values and values work. Furthermore, they are useful when we are not sure what it really is that we are studying, but we need to elaborate on it and increase understanding of the studied case together with the interviewee. We can also use interviews to collect narratives on situations and processes we are interested in. When collecting narratives, it is rather the manifestations of values in actions (or values work) than values per se that we collect. As Alvesson (2011) emphasises, interviews are better suited for capturing

discursive phenomena (i.e., how people talk) than non-discursive phenomena (e.g., values and values work). Values and values work may be reproduced through the story-telling in an interview, but it is important to be careful when determining how to understand the data material. We will need further analysis to understand what kind of values these stories and actions represent (cf. Watson, 2006), for example, through thematic analysis as described by Wæraas (2021) in this book.

In regard to different dimensions of agency, we tend to receive an over-representation of actions based on projective agency in interviews. Consider the following quote from a hospital director in an interview when I asked her to describe her job:

I am in charge of effecting the strategies of the hospital. I work through my management group and in close collaboration with the politicians in the board. Currently, my main attention is directed to the four focus areas to transform our healthcare system in the region.

This statement is based on projective agency; it is about the future and how the director envisions it. However, when I asked her to tell me about her day until the interview, another picture appeared:

Well, I have been running from meeting to meeting, and I have also had problems with my computer. I couldn't access the files on my computer when I came in the morning, but my secretary managed to solve this with our IT support. My secretary can handle them (IT support), which I cannot. Always when I contact them, I wonder if it is me or them who's in charge of the hospital (laughter). The first meeting concerned problems at one of our clinics that we have struggled with for years. We have major problems with recruiting psychiatrists, which influences waiting times for patients, but also quality. The second meeting concerned the collaboration with municipal organisations. We have these meetings every second month to keep the collaboration on track.

When describing her day, she added actions based on iterative and practical-evaluative agencies, which are a major part of her everyday work. My experience is that the higher up in the organisational hierarchy an interviewee is located, the greater the risk of over-representation of

projective agency in interviews. As interviewers, we need to be attentive to the fact that interviewees act based on habits and perform their work also in an interview (cf. Alvesson, 2011). In this case, the hospital director is used to expressing strong intentionality through talk about strategies and plans, not about her everyday computer problems, and she is likely to do that in the interview as well. To delimit this risk, I usually try to make interviewees talk about specific events and actions rather than abstract plans. Simple questions such as ‘Can you give me an example of that?’ or ‘Can you tell me about when this happened recently?’ can take them out of the projective agency mode and encourage them to provide richer descriptions of their everyday work that also involve other dimensions of agency.

Interviews have been heavily criticised since there is a risk they are used in a positivistic sense and in a naïve manner (Alvesson, 2003), as they are seen as producing objective facts. Interviews are seemingly easy to use, and there might be over-use in which interviewers are not really aware of the weaknesses of the method or have naïve assumptions regarding the logic of consequence versus the logic of appropriateness to relate to the previous section. As Czarniawska (2004) makes clear, interviews are not a window to another world. The data that are delivered through an interview are not ‘true’ or ‘facts’: they are people’s insights about the realities of their practice based on their sense-making and interpretation of situations. In terms of values and values work, what we might capture through interviews may be limited by to what degree interviewees are aware of values and values work, as well as to what extent they are able to express them. Furthermore, as interviewers, we only receive data that the interviewee is willing to share with us, nothing more. Interviews may delimit our empirical material to values and values work that the interviewee perceives as desirable.

What can an interviewer do to delimit the weaknesses of this method, that interviewees only share what they are willing to share (with the risk of espoused values rather than values-in-action) and what they are able to share (to what extent they are aware of certain values)? A qualitative research interview is (or should be) an interaction in which both interviewer and interviewee participate actively. Often, the main focus is on the interviewer, but who is really the expert? Even though the student or

researcher who performs the interview may be more educated than the interviewee, interviewees know more about their own practices, values and values work. As students or researchers, we should be attentive to what interviewees really say. This may seem self-evident, but many students and researchers fail to pay attention to interviewees' responses because they are too occupied with their interview guides and the questions they should ask next. As Kreiner and Mouritsen (2005, p. 158) claim, 'When interviews fail it is rarely because the interview guide is violated, but because it is not violated!' When interviewing, we must be careful not to disturb the interaction by violating common-sense rules for any interaction. When there is a true interaction between two active and interested actors, trust tends to develop that makes both parties more willing to share. If trust is built, the interviewer might take advantage of the fact that any practitioner, especially those high up in the organisational hierarchy, has few opportunities to think out loud (Czarniawska, 2004) and openly reflect on their practices without the reflection becoming a part of the organisational politics. Without trust, interviewees, and especially managers, may use statements based on projective agency almost as window dressing, to appear to be in control in the interview. With trust, interviews have the potential to become an arena for open reflection, which means that the interviewee might not only be open about their values and values work that are based on other dimensions of agency than projective agency. They might also become conscious about values that govern their actions that they were not previously aware of when reflecting together with the researcher; see the chapter on interviews by Espedal (2021).

Participant Observations and Shadowing Observations

The previous section describes how interviews can be more effective, but we could also strengthen them or delimit their weaknesses by combining interviews with participant observations and shadowing observations, which will be described in this section. The combination of interviews and observations can delimit the weakness of interviews, namely that interviewees only share what they are willing and able to share.

Observations entail researchers observing practices as they unfold, which means observing practices that the practitioner in an interview maybe did not want to share, was not aware of or did not see as important. However, concerning researching values and values work, we can observe actions and practices, but not values, directly. To access values, we have to analyse what the practice might represent (in terms of values), which can be done through, for example, thematic analysis if the observations are transferred to observation protocols (and thereby texts). As students or researchers, we can perform this analysis by ourselves, but we can do it even better together with practitioners. Ethnographers (e.g., Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995) often argue that interviews should accompany observations. The interview can then become a joint elaboration of a shared experience, where the interviewer and interviewees together reflect upon values that are manifested by certain actions. The challenge with all observations is that they produce a lot of data, much of which is of less use compared to interviews, which tends to be more time efficient. This is another reason why these methods should be combined.

Choosing the arena for participant observation is maybe the most important preparation before an observation. If the aim is to research values and values work, the observation site should be likely to produce manifestations of values and values work. Furthermore, values are often most easily accessible when they are challenged (Seo & Creed, 2002) since they otherwise tend to be less salient. In what arenas are values most likely to become manifested and/or challenged? In what arenas may values work be the most explicit? Such questions should guide the choice of observation site. On the other hand, a weakness with such observations is that the researcher chooses a particular site, which displays only a part of what is going on in the organisation. One way to limit that weakness is to combine it with shadowing observations (Czarniawska, 2007). Shadowing means following a practitioner in his/her daily work, which means attending many different potential sites of observation. Shadowing also often means opportunities to interact with the shadowed practitioner, similar to several ad hoc interviews, with the opportunity to leverage the two methods. Similar to the combination of observations in meetings with interviews, ad hoc interviews during shadowing observation might become shared reflections on values-in-use in the observed practice (Sirris et al., 2021).

Combining Methods to Capture Different Forms of Agency

Different dimensions of agency related to values work require different data collection methods. Interviews are feasible to capture values work based on projective agency since people tend to be aware of and able to express such actions. However, considering people's tendencies to rationalise (March, 1994), we might still risk receiving people's retrospective rationalisations. The most difficult task is to capture values work based on iterative or practical-evaluative agency via interviews. Such values work can better be captured by observations, such as participant observations or shadowing. In particular, practical-evaluative agency almost always requires observation, with actors responding to contingencies they perceive here and now. Iterative agency may require a combination of interviews and observations since it may be possible to capture a response by observation but not the habit it is reactivating. In general, since dimensions of agency present rather an empirical question than something we should view as a point of departure, research on values work always gains from combining interviews and observations. If we could easily determine agency in advance, we could say which data collection method is more appropriate in certain situations, but in reality, it is difficult. An approximation is that the stronger the social position, the more projective agency is demonstrated. However, better safe than sorry: using a combination of methods enables us to capture values work independent of which dimension of agency it is based upon. If interviews are made after observations, the observations provide actions and situations to discuss in the interviews, but on the other hand, interviews before observations might make it easier to understand what we are observing. Consequently, if the research design allows it, there are advantages to moving back and forth between interviews and observations throughout the period of data collection.

Conclusion

There are many advantages to using qualitative methods in research on values and values work, but that does not mean that it is easy. Values and values work are not easily captured since they might be implicit, abstract, hidden, temporal or situational. In this chapter, I have elaborated on some challenges based on intentionality and agency and how researchers and students can combine different qualitative methods to make use of each method's strengths while mitigating each method's weaknesses. If researchers and students understand intentionality and agency better, they will be better prepared to avoid the risk of over-representation of intentions based on strong projective agency during data collection. There is a need to be attentive to subtler dimensions of agency, namely iterative agency and practical-evaluative agency, for which intentions are not explicitly related to certain values or values work but for which values work may be an unintended effect of trying to do one's work as best as one can. People are to different extents aware of their personal values and the values work that they perform.

Combining interviews and observations means that researchers and students are better prepared to capture values and values work independently of which intentionality and agency they are based upon. Interviews are effective at capturing values and values work based on strong, projective agency, but they risk over-representing them in the data material; meanwhile, observations enable us to capture values and values work based on subtler iterative agency, as well as unconscious and undesirable values. Practical-evaluative agency requires both interviews and observations, which in general strengthens our understanding of intentionality based on any of the other dimensions of agency.

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5

Extending Knowledge, Improving Practice and Refining Values: Research Informed by the Concept of Phronesis

Dag-Håkon Eriksen and Marta Strumińska-Kutra

Introduction

In traditional research that aims to explore, describe and explain phenomena, practitioners have limited impact on what is researched and how it is done. They are the end-users of scientific research, responsible for translating knowledge into practice. In this chapter, we focus on a research design that directly involves practitioners in the inquiry process with the goal of advancing both theoretical and practical knowledge. In such a collaborative form of research, practitioners no longer have to ‘wait in a line’ for scientific results to be transformed into applied research and implemented, nor do they have to get research translated into ‘lay language’ (Strumińska-Kutra, 2018). The goal of such pragmatically oriented inquiry is to advance the workability of human praxis; hence, participation, here, is ‘not just a moral value’ but a factor vital to the success of an inquiry (Greenwood, 2007).

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The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate the potential of collaborative inquiry for research, specifically for exploring and refining organisational values. Designing and conducting this type of research is a form of values work as it enriches the ongoing knowledge and reflection processes that infuse an organisation with values-related actions (Askeland et al., 2020; Espedal, 2019). We argue that this potential can be amplified through an explicit reference to the Aristotelian concept of *phronesis* (practical wisdom), which is understood as knowledge about the right thing to do in particular circumstances (Bachmann et al., 2018).

For some time, *phronesis* has been an important part of action research traditions, since it emphasises the practical, experiential and contextual character of knowledge claims, and additionally, it is inherently action and future oriented (Levin & Greenwood, 2008). The concept has also been used in more traditional, critically oriented research to explore practice-based, contextual knowledge and, therefore, to bridge the theory-practice gap in organisation and management studies (Flyvbjerg, 2001, 2006, 2012). Interestingly, however, the values-based component of *phronesis* has remained a relatively overlooked issue. Attending to the practices through which values are performed can enrich the understanding of how values emerge in organisations: what is seen as valuable, why it is valued and how it is made recognisable (Gehman et al., 2013, p. 86). Values are situated in networks of practice (Gehman et al., 2013, p. 84). In this chapter, we explore this neglected component. Specifically, we focus on the following question: *How can the concept of phronesis facilitate research that is oriented towards expanding knowledge about values, improving practice of values and refining values in organisational settings?* We argue that *phronesis*, when used to inform research design, facilitates a continuous exploration of and reflection over values among research participants. Using such an approach is appropriate when the aim of the research is to create actionable scientific knowledge. This knowledge strives both to advance the causes of the scientific community and to meet the practical demands of individuals like professionals, organisational members and leaders; social settings like organisations and communities; or processes like policy formation, decision-making and planning. We assert that practical demands are not merely demands of effectiveness but also demands for reflection on action and on values, which taken together

improve the quality and workability of practice. We also claim that to realise the aim of knowledge creation, practice improvement and refinement of values, non-academic participants¹ need to be actively included in the inquiry process. The degrees and forms of inclusion may vary, but an inclusive approach is incorporated into the entire research design. When problem formulation, design of research tools, data gathering, analysis and drawing of conclusions are performed collectively, each research project turns into a mutual learning process. To illustrate this, we highlight the use of *reflection* in groups, which can simultaneously serve as a tool for gathering data (like traditional focus group interviews), a tool to validate interpretations from previous research stages (see the chapter on participatory validation) and a tool for facilitating reflection over organisational values and practices. We begin by unpacking *phronesis* as a competence emerging out of a skilful combination of five inter-related elements: contextual knowledge, theoretical knowledge, deliberation, action and ethical reflection (Bachmann et al., 2018; Eikeland, 2006; Kinsella, 2012). By using an example from a participatory action research project in a hospital in Oslo (Aadland & Skjørshammer, 2012), we show how each of these elements can be translated into a specific research design.

Phronesis: Unpacking the Concept

Aristotle described ‘practical wisdom’ (*phronesis*) as a type of knowledge concerned with things that are variable and modifiable. These things are related to human affairs, particular circumstances or concrete occurrences that can be controlled, chosen, initiated, constructed, changed or developed. Practical wisdom deliberates ‘what sorts of things conduce to the good life in general’ both for oneself and for one’s community (Bachmann et al., 2018). *Phronesis* involves deliberation based on values—‘what is good for whom and why’—and is oriented towards action—‘what needs

¹ Although division of labour is blurred in action research (see Eikeland, 2008), we still employ the distinction between academic and non-academic participants assuming that mechanisms of financing participation make a difference.

to be done' (Pitman & Kinsella, 2019, p. 57). Deliberation involves combining different types of knowledge to arrive at a situated, wise judgement about what is the (morally) *right* thing to do in the current circumstances. Translating the concept into research design means constructing an approach to examine what the right thing to do is in the face of the given challenge. This involves deliberating and exploring what the challenge actually is (what is the definition/framing of the problem?); investigating the values underpinning the practice and understanding of organisational processes and deliberating them (how to find out what is at stake?); deliberating possible actions to the challenge (what can be done and how?); acting upon the challenge; and again deliberating and reflecting on the action (was the goal achieved and how could we do better?). This is how the research process becomes at the same time a process of acquisition of theoretical knowledge and learning, improvement in practices and refinement of values. Theoretical knowledge is created by academics involved in the process, while non-academic participants develop practical wisdom about how to arrive at more effective and morally right organisational operations.

In the contemporary management and organisational literature, the most cited applications of phronesis suggest that practitioners and publics can develop practical wisdom by providing context-based knowledge (in contrast to cumulative and predictive theory), knowledge that matters to the researched communities and groups, and knowledge that is effectively and dialogically communicated to non-academic audiences (Flyvbjerg, 2006). These scholars argue that if we provide knowledge that matters—knowledge that focuses on specific values and interests in the context of particular power relations—we may transform research into an activity performed in public for interested publics, 'sometimes to clarify, sometimes to intervene, sometimes to generate new perspectives, and always to serve as eyes and ears in ongoing efforts to understand the present and to deliberate about the future' (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 370; Schram, 2012).

Without questioning the utility of critically oriented research and the importance of discussing research results with affected publics, we argue here that the full potential of phronesis can be unleashed in research practice by involving those affected in the process of action-based inquiry.

The action approach reframes research from a means of collecting accounts of the world (with the research goals to explore, describe and explain) to an opportunity to engage in intersubjective and collective world-making processes that recognise the reflexive capacity of both the researcher and the 'researched' (research goals supplemented with reflect, improve and refine). Research becomes a process of people learning about themselves and their world through reflexive engagement and interaction with one another, which is 'a form of collective self-reflective enquiry' (Kemmis et al., 2014; Langmead & King, 2020).

In what follows, we share an example of how research steps were collaboratively enacted in a project whose goal was explicitly directed at exploration and improvement of values in practice and for practice.² We start with a short description of the project and proceed to unpacking the steps by showing how each of them serves theoretical and practical (including values-based) purposes at the same time. Special attention is given to the stage of data analysis in which the specific nature of collaborative design is most visible. This is the stage where a traditional research method (focus groups) is used in a non-traditional way not only to gather data (what people say during discussions is still documented and treated as data) but also to enhance the analysis process (interpretation and validation of interpretation) and to trigger reflection on the practice and values.

Translating Phronesis into Research Design

Targeting the goals of knowledge creation, practice improvement and refinement of values, research inspired by phronesis is designed to include practitioners and facilitate reflection throughout the process. The degrees and forms of inclusion may vary, but a collaborative approach should affect research design. When the processes of problem formulation, designing of research tools, data gathering, analysis and drawing of conclusions are performed collectively, the research turns into a mutual

²The authors have not used the concept of phronesis themselves but have confirmed the connections over personal communication.

learning process that advances both theoretical and practical knowledge. To achieve this, the researcher needs to navigate between *closeness*, in order to gain access and trust, and *distance* that is needed to stay reflexive and critical of the assumptions both in the domain of practice and in research (Huzzard & Johansson, 2014). By managing this balance, the researcher may achieve the double outcomes of both organisational impact and academic results (Tenkasi & Hay, 2008). But avoiding trade-offs and achieving both societal and academic impact call for careful research design and committed project management (Newig et al., 2019). Building on a model by Aadland (2010), we show how this can be accomplished in practice, and we refer to a project undertaken at a hospital (Aadland & Skjørshammer, 2012) as an example.

Box 5.1 Translating Phronesis into Research Design

In their paper 'From God to Good', Aadland and Skjørshammer (2012) describe a participatory action research project that explored the theoretical and practical tensions involved in sustaining institutional identity in a faith-based hospital within a secular and pluralistic society.

In the context of a Scandinavian welfare state, reason and tolerance have replaced worship and religious commitment as core societal values. The hospital was founded on the diaconal ideals of 'Christian charity in practice' and made every effort to meet its diaconal goals, primarily by ensuring that all professional services were of high quality. Through this project the hospital explored a strategy to entail both a sincere reverence towards the faith-based organisational identity and an openness to new practices to comply with contextual changes. The hospital leadership was quite alert to the need for reflection and reaction to contemporary changes. Their identity was at stake.

The main challenge to the investigation was the collaboration between the researchers and top hospital leadership. The specific project intention was to enhance a participatory process of internal self-reflection on values, practices and changes within the institution. The project was carried out over a period of three years.

Starting with 20 volunteers (hospital workers) conducting 12 different empirical observation studies on values in clinical wards in the pilot phase, the project grew to include all departments of the hospital developing local values projects within all units in phase two. The projects involved 1200 staff members, 120 leaders and users of the hospital. This second stage was inspired by the pilot project and allowed freedom in type, content and methods within independent mini-research projects throughout the hospital.

(continued)

Box 5.1 (continued)

Diverse practices were observed, ranging from internal and informal phenomena—like a lunch break in a department, exchange of experiences between colleagues, staff meetings—to the various interactions between staff and patients, such as receptionists receiving new patients or the use of force in a psychiatric ward. None of the chosen projects specifically focused on a religious perspective. However, the exploration of the diaconal identity of the hospital was, by many participants, perceived as the purpose of the research project, as this was expressed in several comments throughout the sessions. The flow of collective reflection processes on the findings, and the consecutive adjustments and changes of values understandings and practices constituted the results of the project.

Through the project, participants with different perspectives got an opportunity to meet on conceptually 'neutral' grounds to engage in mutual reflections on ideals, values and practices that developed their own competence (i.e. *phronesis*). This helped them navigate the values dilemmas they encountered in a hospital with a faith-based identity situated within a pluralist and secular context. This was confirmed two years later in an external evaluation where the participants of the project affirmed in different ways the usefulness of working with values in the explorative manner of the project. The project enhanced the general ethical sensitivity and the development of awareness of values-in-use throughout leadership and staff.

For the researchers, this project generated rich and complex data on how values are understood, practised and negotiated in the organisation.

The model followed a typical collaborative research structure and included several steps: (1) identifying the area of interest and the objective, (2) data gathering, (3) presenting empirical findings and analysis with subsequent sense-making discussions that finally led to step 4, that is, reflecting on the possible changes in organisational practice and formulating values *for* practice. Although each step serves a different purpose, the involvement of academic and non-academic participants and the deliberative character converts each step into a learning process, where theoretical knowledge is developed and reflection over values and improvement of practice occur.

Identifying the Goal

The research question and objectives are set through collective discussion and decision-making on what area to focus on—preferably areas of practice with a certain significance of meaning to the organisation.

In the example from the hospital, the main emerging challenge was defined in collaboration between the researcher and top hospital leadership. The leadership was quite alert to the need for reflection and reaction to contemporary changes. The specific project intention was to enhance a participatory process of internal self-reflection on values, practices and change within the institution. Realising that the values expressed through behaviour are the ones experienced by patients and their families, the hospital leadership initiated an action research process with a focus on values in-practice: An exploration of how values were conceptualised by hospital staff, how values were related to organisational practices and how this awareness (forwarded by mutual self-reflection) influenced identity formation within the hospital became the areas of interest in the designing of the research project.

This exemplifies that the problem statement requires investigation and that this initial reflection about the focus of the research is an important first step in the collaborative investigation.

Designing Research Tools, Data Sampling and Collecting the Data

To generate the preliminary findings that serve as a starting point for reflection in groups, participants (both academic and non-academic partners, such as members in an organisation or community) together design research tools and the data sampling strategy and collect empirical data on organisational practice. Data gathering can be performed by both the researcher and the non-academic participants through observation, interviews and document analysis, as described elsewhere in this book. The goal is to obtain as specific and concrete descriptions of the practices as possible. One should look for practices where values *in* practice can be observed. The researcher and the participants must allocate time for training adequately in the methods for the data gathering.

In the pilot phase of the research project, 20 staff members voluntarily set out to conduct 12 different empirical observation studies on values in clinical wards. The problem statements were formulated by the participants through group discussions, and each study was carried out in a

ward other than the observer's own. In view of the engagement and promising discussions elicited by the pilot project, the top management decided to involve all departments and staff members of the hospital in developing local values projects within all units. Further, to cover everyone in the hospital, attempts were made to involve users of the services as participants in the project. The participants also received brief training in observation methods.

Analysis

In research informed by phronesis, preliminary findings are presented and discussed to facilitate reflection. The goal of such reflection is to identify tacit knowledge and stimulate the formulation of virtues and vices from the material. In this way, values *in* practice are uncovered and identified. Reflection in groups can be used for both interpreting and validating the preliminary findings³ generated in the second step of research process (Slettebø, 2020). Reflection upon practice helps generate new data *and* triggers learning processes and change.

Collective reflection over practice and values-*in*-practice is central to research informed by phronesis. When reflecting on the preliminary findings of values *for* and *in* practice, practitioners get an opportunity to view their own practice from another perspective, which may facilitate insights and reflection over possible alternative ways of acting. Thus, it enables the development of knowledge, reflection over values and the possible improvement of practice at the same time.

Even from traditional focus groups involving several participants, one may obtain both individual opinions and ideas as well as discussions that yield more nuanced, rich and complex data on values. Researchers also can get access to the interaction between the participants, which enriches the data (Kamerelis & Dimitriadis, 2014, p. 99; Tjora, 2018). In research inspired by phronesis, focus groups engage in *reflection upon practice* as a method to generate, present, interpret and validate data. It is essentially a way to stay close to the people and the organisation in focus (Eikeland,

³ See the chapter by Tone Lindheim on participatory validation in this book.

2008, p. 48; Fook & Gardner, 2007, p. 51). Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2018) define reflexivity as ‘the ambition to carefully and systematically take a critical view of one’s own assumptions, ideas and favoured vocabulary and to consider if alternative ones make sense’.

Collective reflection upon practice in groups can provide access to articulations and expressions of both espoused and implicit values (Fook & Gardner, 2007, p. 24ff and 51; Savaya & Gardner, 2012; Aadland, 2010, p. 160ff). It is a sense-making process, where participants reflect upon values displayed through action (Weick et al., 2005). This calls for a critical-emancipatory perspective on social science leading to new understandings and change, which corresponds with research inspired by phronesis given that, ‘whatever else phronesis might be, we can safely say that it involves reflection’ (Kinsella, 2012, p. 37). A reflective approach is recognised as being helpful for improving practice (Tveit & Raustøl, 2019) as it searches for discrepancies between implicit and explicit assumptions and explores the unarticulated and often tacit nature of values (Savaya & Gardner, 2012).

After the observation of values practices at the hospital (from how the leaders’ values influence the culture of the ward to staff meetings and the atmosphere and aesthetics of the different wards), the findings were discussed by the project group and conveyed to a larger audience of hospital employees and leaders. The project participants demonstrated creativity in selecting the values practices to observe, in interpreting inherent meanings and in choosing different formats of communicating their reflections to the wider audience. Each presentation was followed by a collective reflection on institutional values in-practice, which added to the experienced values of the sub-projects.

Future-Oriented Reflection on Change

Collective reflection in groups with its sense-making, formulating and learning dynamics simultaneously facilitates a conversation on the planning of changes in organisational practice and formulation of values both *in* and *for* practice. Through this process, participants acquire the skills and experience for addressing questions related to values *for* and *in*

practice that assist them in developing the organisational practices and procedures according to their deliberations.

The project at the hospital evolved through three stages over time, with a progressive increase in the number of participants and the number of sub-projects. The flow of reflection processes and the consecutive adjustments and changes in insights and practices constituted the 'results' or the 'findings' of the project. This included, for instance, ensuring that all patients were greeted with respect, positioning the computer screens in the reception such that the receptionists could maintain eye contact with patients while writing down their information, and initiating a 'values-forum' in the psychiatric ward to deliberate on the use of force.

This illustrates how research inspired by phronesis opens possibilities of realising co-development of theoretical knowledge, reflection over values and improvement of practice *at the same time*.

Navigating Challenges

This section addresses some of the challenges associated with participatory approaches.

Resource Intensity (Time, Skills)

Participatory methods for data collection demand time and resources from the participants, which are not always available. Alternatively, the researcher can collect and present preliminary findings to the group as a basis for collective reflection. The researcher can also present the findings in the form of a vignette, which is a short fictional story containing a dilemma or a situation that highlights the values in practice. Serving as elicitation tools (Wilks, 2004, p. 82), vignettes are well suited to facilitating a discussion on difficult and sensitive topics, and they allow dilemmas and fuzziness, which can help in theorising (Wilks, 2004, p. 82ff). The use of short videos illustrating real situations as catalysts for reflection in groups is another option (Kogen, 2019).

Ambiguities Regarding the Nature of Empirical Data

The data emerging from this process may be rich, complex and possibly conflicting, thus serving as ‘a resource for developing theoretical ideas through the active mobilization and problematization of existing frameworks’ (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011). The empirical material can be used to facilitate and encourage critical reflection not only among participants but also among researchers, enhancing the latter’s ability to challenge, rethink and illustrate theory (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011). This leads us to an important question: what constitutes data in this type of research? For the researcher, data may stem from preliminary findings presented as a basis for reflection in the groups, it could refer to the reflections and interactions in the groups, and it could also refer to documenting the common process of planning and conducting the participatory research project (e.g. observation of the overall process or records or minutes of the meetings). In every step of this process, rich data about values in the organisation may be generated, and the researchers will analyse and use all this data to increase their understanding and advance the scientific knowledge on the subject. This should be addressed in the dialogue between the researcher and the participants for ethical reasons. Data in itself cannot always be separated from how it is constructed, and for theoretical reasoning, the construction of the data should also be taken into account (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011).

Power Asymmetries

The reverse side of empirical inquiry (data gathering and analysing) is a process of learning for both the researcher and the participants. This includes building up of experiences, knowledge and competence—including practical wisdom. Reflection in groups may adequately facilitate the generation of data on the practices, processes and values in organisations. At the same time, the method advances research inspired by phronesis by offering a way to be in dialogue with those being studied in the organisation. It is a route to facilitate the development of *their* practical wisdom (phronesis), which increases their ability to develop the

organisation further according to their deliberations. As such it is an example of co-production of knowledge and the application of it *simultaneously*.

This process of learning and reflecting requires psychological safety and trust so that participants can share their reflections in a non-threatening environment (Cartel et al., 2018). This was also a concern in the hospital project used as an example in this chapter. Those engaged in the project sought to create a safe communicative space throughout the hospital and safeguard unforced reflections on how values are expressed through established patterns of action, routine practices and hospital procedures. However, it is important to acknowledge the challenges in establishing such a setting in a real politicised organisational life where people are positioned at different social locations. A *third* space for open communication where the people of power and marginalisation meet on neutral ground is needed (Bhabha & Rutherford, 2006; Ikas & Wagner, 2008; Kemmis, 2010). Fook and Gardner (2007) discussed how establishing a trusting climate in the groups necessitates allowing *time* for presentations of the participants and to explain for the implementation of the purpose and various steps of the process. To facilitate a climate for critical reflection, Fook and Askeland (2007) point to the need for emphasising the learning purpose, to clarify the use of self-disclosure and the need to set up an alternative cultural environment. The lack of such spaces for reflection might reduce the impact of the research, as documented by Coleman and Rippin (2000, p. 586). Lee et al. (2020) noted how the establishment of spaces that were separated temporally and symbolically from the ordinary work environment as well as scripts with rules for participant interactions helped establish relational dynamics, characterised by respect, openness and connectedness. They found that the necessary conditions for this were support from the leadership and help from an external facilitator. The improved relational dynamics spilled over from the assigned spaces to everyday interactions.

For research inspired by phronesis, open spaces for critical reflection are paramount, and the researcher must help facilitate this, including room for wonder and sudden discovery. This may require skills of process facilitation as a researcher is not the only person active in the research process. Researchers must also be aware of the possible power dynamics between themselves and the participants.

Division of Labour

Another challenge for both researchers and practitioners in this type of research is that the divisions of labour between the knower (researchers) and the known (the researched) are changed in all the steps of the research process (Strumińska-Kutra, 2016). Participants are expected to be active, learning and reflecting. The researcher is a teacher but also a learner who benefits from the store of experience and judgement of other practitioners. A researcher is a facilitator but also a collaborator who participates in the research process directly and coaches the other practitioners in ways that can facilitate the development of their phronesis.

Achieving Change

Although we argue that research inspired by phronesis may achieve real change in practice, we realise that practice is influenced and constituted by cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements (Wilkinson & Kemmis, 2015) and that some of these factors may be of an external and structural character outside of the participants' sphere of control. In the face of such challenges, a possible strategy for achieving change is to publicly communicate the results from the participative research and create public awareness and debate (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Schram, 2012).

Conclusion

Research inspired by phronesis implies a form of collective reflection over values in practice and for practice. It seeks to go beyond exploration, description and explanation towards co-production of knowledge, improvement of practice and refinement of values. This chapter describes a design for collaborative research used to study values in organisations. It is argued for participatory research methods, especially critical reflection in groups. The challenges in establishing open communicative spaces are addressed, and the need for facilitating such spaces and reflection is

underlined. The chapter also sheds light on the role of the researcher and the need for facilitation and project management skills. If successful in realising such a collaborative approach, the researcher may achieve double outcomes of organisational impact and academic results (Tenkasi & Hay, 2008). Research informed by phronesis can enhance the ongoing knowledge and reflection-creating processes that infuse an organisation with values-related actions. Thus, it can be seen as a type of values work (Askeland et al., 2020; Espedal, 2019). The chapter illustrates that research inspired by phronesis has the potential to not only describe but also refine and improve knowledge, practice and reflections upon values in organisations. This renders it a promising way to *simultaneously* study values *and* perform values work in organisations within the pragmatist paradigm.

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6

Dilemmas and Craftsmanship Practices: Strategies for Empirically Uncovering Values and Value Conflicts

Gjalt de Graaf and Hester Paanakker

Introduction¹

Values are notorious for being highly abstract, essentially contested, hard to define and even harder to make operational and measure in empirical research (see Chap. 1 in this volume by Espedal, Løvaas, Sarris and Wæraas). You cannot point out a value; they are neither here nor there. ‘Inherent in institutional arrangement, values are core constructs of normative structures and thus taken for granted’ (Askeland et al., 2020,

¹This chapter is based on—and contains adapted parts of—our previous empirical research on values (e.g. De Graaf, 2003; De Graaf, 2021; De Graaf & Meijer, 2019; De Graaf & Van Exel, 2009; Paanakker, 2020a, 2020b).

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p. 16). The best we can say is that values never come just by themselves; they never appear unaccompanied. Rather, values are always attached to people, processes and practices, and they express qualities. Here we define values as qualities appreciated for, contributing to or constituting what is good, right, beautiful or worthy of praise and admiration (de Graaf & van der Wal, 2008).²

Here it is our aim to unearth values and value conflicts in the public realm. By elaborating two different and related research strategies that have successfully been adopted in different empirical studies, we describe how we can study these tricky things called values in their *context*. More specifically, the goal of this chapter is to uncover values and value conflicts through two (related) strategies: (1) by studying dilemmas and (2) by studying craftsmanship practices.

Having defined values as qualities, it is important to avoid objectifying these qualities. Quality is clearly not an object that can be pointed out (De Graaf, 2003). Values are not part of a transcendental realm within or behind reality, as Platonists argue. In that sense, they cannot be objectified when using our definition. But if values are seen as stable qualities existing in reality, they are still, in a sense, objectified. That would be the case when someone argues that the (a priori) value of something exists. To us, however, values are attributed within a specific practice (which is always within the confines of a specific context) (see Paanakker & Reynaers, 2020); the quality is not already out there. Values are qualities-in-use. It is very well possible that different qualities are attributed to the same phenomenon. We use the expression ‘attributed within a specific practice’ and not ‘attributed by someone’ because values are not private. Just as a private language does not exist (as Wittgenstein has shown us), private values do not exist. This shows how we position our take on values in an interpretivist tradition, using inductive approaches to look for meaning in the subjective experiences of individuals engaging in social interaction. This way, we find general value patterns that take contextual dependence and subjective nuance, variability and meanings into account.

² Norms are regulations prescribing proper general and situational conduct. Morals (morality) are values and norms taken together.

Theoretical Background: Value Pluralism

We take the theoretical stance of value pluralism, which acknowledges reality as comprising many different, co-existing values that are neither compatible nor commensurable (Paanakker et al., 2020). This is depicted in Fig. 6.1. With respect to the incompatibility of values, Stephan Lukes (1989, p. 125) offers an elegant description: ‘There is no single currency or scale on which conflicting values can be measured, and that where a conflict occurs no rationally compelling appeal can be made to some value that will resolve it. Neither is superior to the other, nor are they equal in value’. Perhaps the most famous definition of value pluralism was given by Isaiah Berlin (1982, p. 69): ‘[T]here might exist ends—ends in themselves in terms of which alone everything else was justified—which were equally ultimate, but incompatible with one another, that there might exist no single universal overarching standard that would enable a man to choose rationally between them’. The idea that values inherently conflict or are in some situations incompatible is hardly new; many social scientists have researched it (e.g. Brecht, 1959).

From the standpoint of value pluralism, however, values are also incommensurable. Value incommensurability, simply put, means that ‘the pursuit of certain values must inevitably comprise or limit our ability

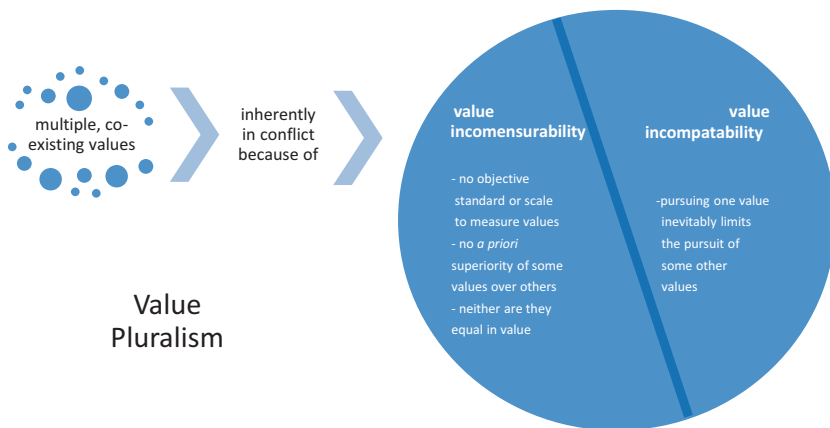


Fig. 6.1 Explaining value pluralism as a starting point for research

to pursue certain other values. The more we see to attain some of these values the less able we are to attain the others' (Spicer, 2001, p. 509). This does not mean that agents cannot make choices or give reasons for them, 'rather, it means that some of the reasons we might offer in support of making a particular choice are incommensurable with other reasons we might offer were we to make an alternative choice' (Spicer, 2001, p. 512). This means that values make themselves heard and felt precisely at the cross points of such value decisions. When actors have to opt for (more of) the one or (more of) the other, they attempt to cognitively rationalise, and to organisationally justify, their weighing options. By doing so, the interpretative repertoire they use to make sense of values comes to the forefront and materialises in specific conscious or unconscious value choices.

Famous examples of incommensurable yet important values in daily life are money and friendship (Lukes, 1989; Raz, 1988; Spicer, 2010). Sometimes we have to choose between spending time to make money and spending time with friends; how do we weigh that? We make such choices, yet we cannot pay for friendship, for then it would not be friendship. 'Our ordinary experience of the incommensurability among our values denies the monistic claim made by a variety of ethical philosophers, whether deontological or utilitarian, that there is "a common basis...a single reason behind moral claims" (Hampshire, 1983, p. 118)' (Spicer, 2009, p. 539). For empirical research, this means that the examination of value conflicts and concurrent value choices is key to uncovering the practical role that values play in everyday organisational behaviour and decision making.

Strategy 1: Studying Dilemmas

The first corresponding strategy we discuss to examine values empirically is the studying of dilemmas. In trying to realise intrinsic values in public organisations, intrinsic values conflicts lead to dilemmas. Value conflict in itself is not a problem; value conflicts can bring forth change for the better by prompting alertness and innovation. And, as can be learned from Lipsky's (1980) seminal study or the later work by Maynard-Moody

and Musheno (2003), value conflict is unavoidable—it is a fact of life. Dilemmas are interesting because in studying dilemmas, one studies which values are important in a given context. In a dilemma, there is a conflict between two values that are apparently equally important. If one of them was not, there would not be a dilemma. Here, we are not interested in solving dilemmas, in stating what are the morally right things to do: it is more important to describe what the dilemmas are. Through studying dilemmas, we can uncover the values trail.

Strategy 2: Studying Craftsmanship Practices

The second strategy we discuss to research values and value conflicts is the studying of craftsmanship practices. This strategy focusses on exploring actors' perceptions and accounts of what constitutes craftsmanship in their work. In our studies on public craftsmanship, we define craftsmanship as 'the application of concrete skills, knowledge and practices, that, according to public officials, are needed to deliver good work in street-level public service delivery', for instance, in education, patient care in hospitals or detention (Paanakker, 2021, p. 223). Similarly, craftsmanship could refer to semi-public or private sector professions that share the characteristics of hands-on work, tangible work practices, direct employee-client interaction and a knowledge base that stems from 'learning-on-the-job' and 'learning-while-doing', in addition to some theoretical knowledge base (Paanakker, 2019). This informal and experiential knowledge is embedded in concrete, everyday craftsmanship practices and offers a wealth of valuable data on how values are enacted and how values conflict in real-life practice.

Actors' own perceptions of craftsmanship reveal what they deem important in the work context, what practical problems they face on the work floor and how well their notion of craftsmanship is facilitated by their organisation. The insights on concrete individual and organisational practices are then used to analytically deduce the values they describe. This offers an interesting method for comparing the manifestation and enactment of values among professionals, but also for comparing different public sector levels (such as public managers and policy makers).

Through collective sense-making, it shows how values in the public domain are powerful indicators of public sector behaviours and processes, but also of organisational problems and conflicts between different roles and responsibilities in the organisation. As such, studying craftsmanship practices specifically enables us to uncover the values trail throughout organisational hierarchies.

Below, we elucidate how to apply these two empirical methods to capture and understand the underlying phenomena that shape value dynamics in concrete work contexts and the more general governance settings that shape organisational settings.

Methodology

The strategies in this chapter share some important commonalities. For instance, both strategies use an explorative and inductive qualitative research strategy (e.g. De Graaf & Paanakker, 2015) to uncover underlying values and value conflicts. Both strategies adopt a case study approach with a focus on understanding the dynamics present within single settings (Eisenhardt, 1989; Herriott & Firestone, 1983; Yin, 1989) in order to generate theory in the shape of propositions (Gersick, 1988; Harris & Sutton, 1986). This method is appropriate when not much is known about the phenomenon being researched, or when the phenomenon is so complex that neither the variables nor the exact relationship between the variables is fully definable (Hoesel, 1985). Due to their less tangible and somewhat hidden nature, and due to their context dependency, value dynamics and the conflicts rooted within them are eminently suited for case study research.

With both strategies, the main research method used is open-ended interviews. From previous research on values (e.g. De Graaf et al., 2016; Willis & Mastrofski, 2016), it has become clear that many interviewees initially consider the role of values in their profession to be abstract. However, they were able to make the values more concrete for themselves and the researchers when actual (value) dilemmas and (craftsmanship) practices were discussed.

Dilemmas

As stated, dilemmas are interesting because in studying dilemmas, one studies which values are important in a given context. For that reason, questions are asked about the difficult situations or dilemmas experienced. Questions are asked about (1) perceptions of conflicting values; (2) relevant dilemmas experienced, foreseen or known; and (3) how to best deal with dilemmas. The specific (value) conflicts that respondents perceive are important here, as is how they justify (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1999, 2006) and frame (Schön & Rein, 1994) them.

Craftsmanship Practices

Like in the first strategy, context is of essence in the study of craftsmanship practices (Paanakker, 2020a). We stress that craftsmanship practices, due to their hands-on nature, are about practices at the frontline of work and/or service delivery. Such practices are profession-bound, with employees using their own sets of ideas, words, logics and justifications to make sense of values. Having interviewees express their own understandings of key skills and practices, and having them use their own language to do so, prevents important information (and, therefore, important values) from being ignored or overlooked. The questions for interviewees focus on (1) what craftsmanship in their work means to them (or, when not interviewing a frontline employee but a manager or policy maker, what craftsmanship means in frontline work); (2) perceptions of how their craftsmanship view is facilitated by and in their organisation; (3) how they perceive other hierarchical levels in the organisation to see or endorse craftsmanship on the shop floor and (4) the effects that may result from differences in organisational views on craftsmanship practices.

Table 6.1 shows examples of the interview questions that can be used to gather data. To preserve the richness of the data, all interviews should be taped and transcribed. Especially with explorative, bottom-up strategies, such as the ones described here, preventing data loss is key because the researcher does not know beforehand what patterns may emerge from the data and therefore what data are more important or less important.

Table 6.1 Interview questions: Examples from interview protocols

<i>Studying dilemmas</i>	
Relevant dilemmas experienced, foreseen or known	Can you give examples of the biggest dilemmas—or toughest choices—in your work?
Dealing with dilemmas	How do you come to a decision in these specific tough choices?
<i>Studying craftsmanship practices</i>	
Perceptions of craftsmanship	What, to you, characterises a good [teacher, police officer, company X client officer]? What skills, knowledge or practice do you value most in a [teacher, police officer, company X client officer]? Why are [teachers, police officers, company X client officers] important? What do you find appealing in the work of a [teacher, police officer, company X client officer]? And what do you find <i>less</i> appealing in the work of a [teacher, police officer, company X client officer]?
Perceptions of organisational facilitation	Do you feel the organisation/sector is supportive of your view of good work, and why or how (not)?
Mutual perceptions	In your opinion, to what extent does the [education, police, company X sector] have a shared vision on the values the sector stands for? Between which staff levels do you perceive views to clash the most/to be the most aligned, and how does that show? When do you do your job well, and what objectives do you pursue in your daily work? In your opinion, when does your direct manager/your executive director/the policy makers in your sector feel you deliver good work? What objectives does he/she/they feel you should pursue?
Effects [In case of differences]	How do you perceive that the differences in key views and principles you witness impacts the way [teachers, police officers, company X client officers] carry out and experience their work at the frontline? And how does it affect you personally? Does it result in specific problems on the shop floor? In incompatibility with the views of others on how to deliver good work? How can this be improved?

(continued)

Table 6.1 (continued)

[In case of similarities]	How do you perceive that the commonality in key views and principles you witness impacts the way [teachers, police officers, company X client officers] carry out and experience their work at the frontline? What benefits or challenges does it bring to the frontline shop floor? How can this be optimised?
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The Follow-up Strategy of Q-Methodology

Up to now we have described how to unearth values and value conflicts. Sometimes researchers are also interested in the value profiles of actors. In order to also find different value profiles of public actors, Q-methodology—a mixed qualitative-quantitative small-sample method—is particularly useful (cf. De Graaf & Van Exel, 2009; Selden et al., 1999). Respondents can be asked at the end of the interview to rank values in a Q-sort in order to get a first impression of the value profiles among the respondents (De Graaf & Van Exel, 2009).

Q-methodology provides a foundation for the systematic study of subjectivity, a person's viewpoints, opinions, beliefs, attitudes and the like (Brown, 1993). It was introduced by William Stephenson (Stephenson, 1935) when he presented his inversion of the use of intercorrelations so that individuals were measuring themselves rather than being measured by a researcher (Smith, 2001). Stephenson distinguished the method from R methodology (hence the name 'Q-methodology'), which provides the basis for a science of objectivity in psychology (Brown, 1986). 'The letter R in R methodology is a generalization of Pearson's product moment r , which has most often been used in the study of relationships among objective characteristics such as traits, attributes, abilities, and so forth' (Brown, 1986, p. 57). In contrast to R methodology, Stephenson correlated people rather than test items.

Typically, in a Q-methodological study, people are presented with a sample of statements about some topic, the Q-set. Respondents, or the P-set, are asked to rank-order the statements from their individual point of view according to some preference, judgement or feeling about them, mostly using a quasi-normal distribution. By Q-sorting, people give their

subjective meanings to the statements, and in doing so they reveal their subjective viewpoints (Smith, 2001) or personal profiles (Brouwer, 1999).

The individual rankings (or viewpoints) are within Q-methodology subjected to factor analysis. If each individual has specific likes and dislikes, Stephenson (1935) argues, their profiles will not correlate; if, however, significant clusters of correlations exist, they could be factorised and described as common viewpoints (or tastes, preferences, dominant accounts, typologies, etc.), and individuals could be measured with respect to them. Brouwer (1999, p. 35) argues that one of the important advantages of Q-methodology is that questions pertaining to the same domain are not analysed as separate items of information but rather in their mutual coherence for the respondent: 'Subjective feelings and opinions are most fruitfully studied when respondents are encouraged to order a good sample of items from one and the same domain of subjective interest (instead of just replying to single questions)'.

The contextuality of values demands that the quantitative methods used for studying values introduce validity threats: it is hard to know, for example, whether employees who speak of the same value mean the same value. Q-methodology is more suitable because Q-study results are clusters that are functional rather than logical. In other words, the clusters are not logically constructed by the researchers; they result from the empirical data and are operant (De Graaf & Van Exel, 2009). Q-methodology can reveal a characteristic independently of the distribution of that characteristic relative to other characteristics in a population. Unlike surveys, which provide patterns of variables, Q-methodology provides patterns of persons, in this case, public officials and their value profiles. Q-methodology is a mixed qualitative-quantitative small-sample method that provides a scientific foundation for the systematic study of subjectivity, such as people's opinions, attitudes and preferences (cf. Brown, 1980, 1993; De Graaf, 2011; Twijnstra & De Graaf, 2013; Van Exel et al., 2005; Watts & Stenner, 2005).

In our Q-research in this vein, the specific values that were used were obtained from previous research in public institutions, values that originated from the Dutch governance code for the public sector, drafted by the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations in 2009

(Ministerie_van_Binnenlandse_Zaken_en_Koninkrijksrelaties, 2009) (see Table 6.2).

Using the same values from previous research makes comparison with other (public sector) organisations possible. Alternatively, values can be derived from the values that emerged from the analysis of the data on dilemmas and/or craftsmanship practices.

Coding and Research Heuristic

Transcribed interviews produce a great deal of data. Using software programs like MAXQDA or Atlas.ti to help with the text analysis, the interviews can be coded in various steps (Boeije, 2010). The purpose of the coding is to identify the specific values and value conflicts experienced in the case. To accomplish that, first, for the two strategies respectively, all the dilemmas, or with the second strategy craftsmanship practices, can be identified. These steps are based on systematic approaches to coding qualitative material (Schilling, 2006). In the remainder of this section, we provide more detail on how to analyse the data from the perspective of the two different research strategies.

Table 6.2 The ten values

-
1. **Openness.** Acting transparently towards all stakeholders on procedures and decisions
 2. **Participation.** Involving the environment and stakeholders in decision making
 3. **Accountability.** Acting willingly to justify and explain actions to relevant stakeholders
 4. **Legitimacy.** Acting with public support
 5. **Effectiveness.** Acting to achieve the desired results
 6. **Efficiency.** Acting to achieve results with minimal means
 7. **Integrity.** Acting in accordance with relevant moral values and norms
 8. **Lawfulness.** Acting in accordance with existing laws and rules
 9. **Professionalism.** Acting with expertise, including learning from previous mistakes
 10. **Equality.** Treating equal cases equally
-

How to Analyse Data on Dilemmas

Once all the dilemmas recorded in the transcripts are coded, the next step is to identify the specific value conflicts experienced. First impressions of overall patterns can be observed and then juxtaposed with the empirical data. This inductive process is clearly not a matter of counting. Respondents in most qualitative research are not randomly selected, and they are usually too small in number for quantitative purposes. But the idea of an explorative study is to consider the nuances and context of value conflicts that are experienced. Constant comparison can be conducted (Boeije, 2010), in which the researchers repeatedly go through the themes to compare results. Thus, it is not just important that a respondent experienced a value conflict: which one, how it was dealt with and how it was worded are important. Each dilemma can be coded simultaneously in software like MAXQDA on the specific value conflict. This inductive analysis process can be repeated many times before the final analysis is written up. Eisenhardt (1989, p. 541) states, ‘The central idea is that researchers constantly compare theory with data—iterating toward a theory which closely fits the data. A close fit is important to building good theory because it takes advantage of the new insights possible from the data and yields an empirically valid theory’.

How to Analyse Data on Craftsmanship Practices

Analysing data on craftsmanship practices follows a very similar approach (software-supported systematic content analysis, using programs such as MAXQDA or Atlas.ti) (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Continuing the same line of bottom-up construction of value patterns is key: the data as presented and worded by the interviewees are put centre stage. Rather than examining how actors translate values to practices, which we commonly see in values research, this strategy follows the reverse direction. It examines perceptions and accounts of craftsmanship practices to see which values they describe, with researchers extracting values from the data and coding values into the data in the analysis stage. Instead of

designing the data collection to a fixed mould of predetermined values, researchers go on a quest to inductively deduce values from the data.

To this end, two-stage coding can be applied (Friese, 2012). In the first stage, the data are coded *in vivo*, with open codes that summarise the types and nature of craftsmanship practices as worded by interviewees. This includes combining data segments with similar content to build a coding scheme of a maximum of 100–150 codes with mutually exclusive codes that ‘reflect the heterogeneity of the data’ (Friese, 2012, pp. 130–131). In the second stage the initial codes are compared, integrated, modified and fine-tuned to inductively aggregate and classify them into the overarching value category they describe (Friese, 2012, pp. 130–131). Table 6.3 shows what this looks like for a study conducted in the prison sector.

Finally, we advise processing stressors, effects and explanatory variables of value conflict into the data analysis. Examples include codes such as inadequate leadership (a stressor) or work alienation or moral dilemmas (both effects). Examples of different manifestation levels of value conflict are ‘perceived divergence on value identification’ (which types of values are seen to matter) and ‘perceived divergence on value enactment’ (which values are actually emphasised in practice and how) (Paanakker 2020a, pp. 93–117; 133–158). Applying the carefully built and validated coding scheme to the data at large allows for the subtleties of craftsmanship perceptions and emerging value conflicts to be grasped and explained and a comparison between different staff levels made.

How to Analyse Data from Q-Methodology

Individual Q-sorts can be factor analysed using the software program PQMethod 2.11 (extraction method: centroid; rotation method: varimax) in order to reveal the distinct ways in which the values were rank-ordered. For more details on how to analyse a Q-methodology study, see Van Exel and De Graaf (2005).

Table 6.3 Coding example on craftsmanship practices and values

The concrete skills, knowledge and practices on the bases of which the value categories are built

Main value	<i>Sub codes: the skills, knowledge and practices that define craft</i>
Humanity	Individual care and support of detainees (helping out practically and emotionally); personal one-on-one contact with detainees; treating and approaching detainees with empathy (being sympathetic to moods and behaviour resulting from stress and personal problems); treating and approaching detainees honestly (keeping one's promises); treating and approaching detainees with respect and dignity (being polite and acknowledging as fellow men); monitoring detainee behaviour closely; literally mentioning 'humanity of detention' or 'humane treatment of detainee'; caring for employees (helping each other out and paying sincere attention to the well-being of employees); motivational treatment (a prison-taught approach based on motivational interviewing); feeling responsible for detainees' well-being; personal and tailor-made approaches to individual detainees; acting with integrity towards detainees and colleagues
Security	Security of detention and/or for detainees (reducing or preventing aggression, violence, unsafe atmosphere); security awareness (managing tensions through contact); security of employee (keeping oneself and colleagues safe); sentencing as punishment; treating and approaching detainees from a disciplining perspective (setting clear boundaries to desirable and acceptable behaviour)

Source: Paanakker (2021, p. 232)

Examples of Empirical Studies on Value Conflicts

Procedural Versus Performance Values

De Graaf and Paanakker (2015) found that effectiveness versus efficiency—both performance values—is the value conflict most frequently perceived by public officials. Lawfulness versus effectiveness and efficiency is the value conflict between procedural and performance values most frequently perceived by public officials. Transparency versus effectiveness and efficiency is the second most frequently perceived value conflict between procedural and performance values.

A Municipality and a Hospital

The most-found value conflict in a case study conducted by De Graaf et al. (2014) on a municipality and a hospital was between transparency and effectiveness. Sometimes it seems to be in the interest of the municipality not to make something public or to be completely open, but these are tough decisions to make. One public administrator stated, 'I might be too open sometimes. Because if you are too open, that can sometimes harm the quality of the decision-making process in the interest of the municipality'.

In the hospital, almost all respondents experienced the conflict between transparency and effectiveness. Doctors and nurses find it important to be open with patients and their relatives, but they also have to take into account whether this can damage the effectiveness of treatment if what they have to say is upsetting. On the level of the hospital as an institution, transparency and effectiveness also conflict. Should the hospital be open about things that have gone wrong, or should it save its reputation? A hospital manager stated, 'I don't want to have any trouble, so I'd rather choose the safe way out. But that leads to discussion with our medical staff because they do not necessarily agree'.

Values of Academic Teachers

In a recent study (De Graaf, 2021), the dilemmas of academic teachers were empirically studied. Thirty-five of the 41 dilemmas found fall within three categories: quality versus efficiency (a value conflict between quality of education and efficiency. The more time you put into teaching, the better the outcome), quality versus equity (this dilemma concerns two aspects: the varying quality of students and the tension between students' own responsibility and the need for teachers to provide guidance) and equality versus reasonableness (students who ask for exceptions because of special circumstances). The conclusion was that quality and efficiency play an important role in the case of academic teachers.

Values in the Police

Another example is a recent study on the influence of social media on value conflicts in the police (De Graaf & Meijer, 2019). Social media is an important factor triggering new value conflicts in organisations. It turns out that especially the values of lawfulness, transparency and participation conflict with efficiency and effectiveness.

The most frequently perceived conflict in this case study is the classic one between effective governance and efficient governance (working in a more efficient manner might mean that the work is done less effectively). On an operational level, in the case study only a (small) proportion of the detectives are found to be active online. Information about criminal acts increasingly comes up through social media, for example, videos of youths mistreating people. A police officer on the street witnessing such a scene would act immediately. On the digital street, things are less clear.

The conflict between lawfulness and effectiveness is a classic one for the police, the dilemma between law and order. In the case study there was clear evidence that social media cause new conflicts between lawfulness and effectiveness. Technological developments happen quickly while law and regulation lag behind, leading to much uncertainty within police organisations.

Many community police officers in the Dutch case study are active on social media like Twitter in order to build a good relationship with citizens; they want to enhance police transparency and citizen participation in police work. However, it takes time to build a good network, and such networking can generate a large volume of responses from the public, with some community police officers feeling under pressure from social media to react quickly. It is felt that the expectation of always being online is an intrinsic characteristic of the use of social media. On both operational and support levels, conflict was experienced between participation and efficiency.

Values in the Prison Sector

Using the strategy of craftsmanship practices, different studies in the prison sector have found that complex, structural value conflicts exist between professionals, managers and policy makers (Paanakker, 2019; Paanakker, 2020a; Paanakker, 2021). These different levels were found to have remarkably similar notions of key frontline values, which reveals an unexpected value convergence rather than value conflict, but the respondents perceive a large level of value conflict. In practice, each level experiences management above them as prioritising instrumental values over the intrinsic values of good penal service delivery.

The resulting value conflict is between the values of effectiveness and efficiency (the instrumental values in this study) on the one hand and the values of humanity, security, rehabilitation and the ability of adequate and timely task completion (the intrinsic values in this study) on the other. Here, performance-based management doctrines clash with the craftsmanship of professionals. Structural value conflicts produce a toxic value gap that is endemic to the organisation and has far-reaching negative effects on value attainment, employee attitudes, craftsmanship and policy implementation at the frontline.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we elaborated on two distinct research strategies we find useful in research on values and value conflicts: studying dilemmas and studying craftsmanship practices. We explain how, each in their own way, these strategies are designed as flexible yet insightful and instructive methods that leave a lot of room for different value interpretations and meanings. Especially in the public realm, where a vast array of values compete for attention, this allows researchers to understand the complexities and context dependency of values and value conflicts. This makes both the dilemma strategy and the craftsmanship practices strategy particularly suitable to uncover the values trail in organisations, institutions or sectors. This is not top-down and static but bottom-up and

focused on the understanding and sense-making of the individual: of their role, their ideas, their choices, their decisions and courses of action and their work and the challenges it brings. As such, these strategies are helpful for researchers to gain insight into values and value conflicts in everyday decision making and into their effects on citizens, clients, customers and patients, as well as the quality of service delivery. This chapter includes detailed tips, tricks and visualisations for data collection; data analysis and examples of research findings to get researchers started.

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Part II

Methods for Collecting and Analysing Data



7

Research Interviews to Investigate and Co-create Values

Gry Espedal

Introduction

We are living in an interview society in which much information is gained by asking questions (Silverman, 1997). News media introduce us to both leaders at the top level and people in the street. Sport reporters are famous for asking athletes how it feels to pass the finish line. Questions like: ‘What do you feel now?’ has been used to uncover information as a kind of entertainment.

Asking questions is a main method of data-gathering in doing research in social science. We can ask, what distinguishes questions in a research interview from a journalist asking questions? Or, how do the questions in a research interview move the questioning beyond the journalism arena? The researcher is often not an expert in asking questions. Some might experience difficulty in finding the right way to explore the research question. Sometimes we see that research questions might be complicated and

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technical and not necessarily easy to answer. In the interview, some researchers might be more concerned with asking questions than being aware of the answers.

How then can we develop a gold standard of qualitative methods to become a viable arena to develop insights during investigation? A good interview requires practical skills, personal insight and training. To conduct an interview is a form of craftsmanship (Kvale & Brinkman, 2015). Knowledge of the interview process, preparation for the interview and working on skills for asking questions and listening to others are part of the process and of special interest when investigating what is 'worth having, doing and being', which indicates that values are involved (Selznick, 1992, p. 60).

Values can be explicit and intended or tacit and hidden in practice, making them difficult to capture (Aadland, 2010). Values can be understood as emerging in our experience (Williams, 1967) as part of our 'human behaviour' (Kraatz et al., 2020, p. 485). In moving away from investigating values as matters of fact to a more relational and temporal phenomenon, we will here look at how research interviews can be used to identify values as part of the experience that is surfacing, including both the present situation and future-oriented desirables. Thus, the central question guiding this chapter is as follows: How can the researcher, through a process of interviewing, explore values in organisations?

In this chapter, I will first discuss how research within different paradigms utilises interviews as a method in various ways. Further, the chapter will present how a constructivist approach can be useful when researching values and values work. The interview process will, in this approach, take the form of a process of inter-viewing, of together-seeing with an-other. In this situation, values and the meanings of values can be part of constructing reality together with another. Finally, general and useful qualitative interview questions in order to explore values and values work will be suggested.

Research Interviews and Their Philosophical Underpinnings

When you as a researcher are starting a research project, you might be driven by an interest in investigating a topic, theme or phenomenon. Some researchers may start with a question they seek to answer, others with a puzzle to solve. Some might start with a preference for a chosen method; for others, the various philosophical assumptions emerge later in the process. However, at some point, you as the researcher have to make decisions on how to build the study on philosophical assumptions, what kind of research design you want and which research methods you want to utilise. Creswell and Creswell (2018) describe four different paradigms: postpositivist, constructivist, transformative and pragmatic worldviews. By worldview, we here mean ‘a basic set of beliefs guiding your action’, establishing a platform for your philosophy of science (Guba, 1990, p. 19). Choosing an interview to collect data is a decision about what research method you would like to use. In order to give examples of different research strategies for interviewing, I will further describe how the postpositivist and constructivist worldviews approach use research interviews differently.

Both positivists and constructivists use the techniques of interviewing to collect data. Within a postpositivist tradition, most often, a standard or structured interview is conducted in the form of a questionnaire. In a questionnaire, the interviewee (the person interviewed) is asked questions in a precisely determined order, identical for all interviewees. The interviewer (the person making or asking the questions) takes a neutral position and does not prompt nor improvise during the session (Silverman, 2017). The questionnaire most often reflects the researcher’s concerns, and the postpositivist interviewer is mostly interested in the answer given, not what is happening between the interviewer and interviewee. In searching for values as end-states and not necessarily as part of a process, the researcher can ask questions such as the following: ‘On a scale from 1 to 7, to what extent do you see the value of respect being practiced?’

Within a constructivist worldview, the interviewer might not always be interested in obtaining objective information. What the interviewer is

looking for in the conversation is human experience, interpretations of facts, events and behaviours (Gudkova, 2018). An interview guide is most often used with a series of questions; however, there is flexibility in the conduct of the interview and an opportunity to vary the sequence of questions (Bryman, 2016). The interviewer has the latitude to ask questions in response to what is seen as significant replies. This exploratory purpose of the interview provides the potential for insight into how people perceive and understand reality. It allows for a reflection of the interviewee's implicit values, work and perspectives. In this situation, the interviewer can ask questions like the following: 'In relation to the value of respect, how do you see it being practiced?' The interviewer may then proceed with follow-up questions aimed at understanding the answers better.

Additionally, within a constructivist approach, there is the potential for open-ended interviews. Open-ended interviews most often have a few key questions and can be used to generate life stories in life story interviews (Atkinson, 1998). In order to achieve rich data, the interviewee has in this interview approach the freedom to talk and ascribe meaning to their perspectives, beliefs and values. The interviewer takes an active listening position. There are also focus group interviews in which the interviewer takes the role of being a facilitator. In these interviews, the researcher asks one or two questions to stimulate discussions, for instance, to identify processes and mechanisms of how an organisation is working on the value of respect and if there might be different experiences of it.

The Role of the Interviewer

What kind of role does the qualitative researcher with a constructivist worldview undertake? A metaphor of the interviewer can be either a traveller or a miner (Kvale & Brinkman, 2015). Through the eyes of a traveller, the interview is considered a tool to collect data. Hidden knowledge is waiting to be discovered, and the interviewer is the one who defines its structure. The miner interviewer understands knowledge as buried, and the interviewer's role is to uncover the valuable information, retrieving the knowledge from the ground and working to understand what there is

to discover. In searching for meanings and values, I will here elaborate on the miner metaphor. The miner researcher is concerned with investigating foundations of social life, practice and reality, of desirables and that which is worth having, doing and being. In order to understand the miner researcher's role, I will start with drawing a distinction between interviewing and interrogation.

In standardised and semi-structured interviews, the interviewer can convey interviews with the purpose of interrogating, which in this context means to help, educate or evaluate respondents. Interrogation methods are mostly known from employment interviews or police investigations (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). The interview implies certain expectations about thematic progression, form and outcome of the interaction, as well as the constraints of the context. The interviewer is recognised as the one that asks questions, and the role of the interviewee is to answer questions. In these situations, respondents become repositories of facts and the details of the situation. However, there is a risk that the interviewee might end up as a passive vessel of answers only answering questions not bringing along experiences (Gudkova, 2018).

In taking a more constructively active position, the interviewer can transform interviews from a passive position (Holstein & Gubrium, 2012) to 'a knowledge-producing activity' (Kvale & Brinkman, 2015, pp. 3–4). Taking this position, the interview is an arena for producing knowledge in the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. Thus, the interview can be understood as an interaction that takes place between two persons (or more) who form their experiences and interpretations together to explore a phenomenon of values and values work.

The Process of Inter-Viewing

To understand the process of interviewing as an arena of experience and interpretation, I will here turn to the etymological roots of the word 'interview'. The word is derived from the French 'entrevue', meaning 'to see each other, visit each other, have a glimpse of' and to view 'between' (Harper, 2021). As such, the research interviewing process can be viewed

as a process of inter-viewing, of together-seeing, a kind of participation and seeing in-between. In this situation, inter-viewing goes beyond *me* (interviewer) participating in *your* (interviewee's) world and moves towards understanding the situation of *us* trying to look at experiences *together* with our both imaginative and reflexive worlds (Bjørkeng et al., 2014).

The process of inter-viewing challenges the traditional subjectivity-objectivity dualism that is often implicit in the practice of interviewing. Instead, it is replaced with connectedness and co-interpretation. To overcome the situation of making the respondent a passive vessel of information exchange, the interview is turned into a search-and-discovery process (Kvale & Brinkman, 2015), as the miner metaphor indicates. To further broaden what is found during search-and-discovery, the process can be called a 'narrative speech act' producing subject, text and knowledge in itself (Mishler, 1991). In a narrative speech act approach, the interview is understood as a social encounter in which knowledge is actively formed and shaped through a reflexive and communicative act (Holstein & Gubrium, 2012). This implies that the interview is not so much a neutral conduit or source of distortion. The interview is an occasion for constructing accounts forming and shaping the content of what is said.

Inter-View as a Narrative Inquiry to Research Values

A narrative inquiry can be a useful approach to get in touch with the more in-depth experience of values and values work (Askeland et al., 2020; Holstein & Gubrium, 2012). The key to the inter-viewing process is to recognise the interview as a process in which both interviewer and interviewee play an active role. As values are often part of hidden practice, the narrative production can be used to identify the deeply and unavoidably pattern of practices of values work that reside within the experience of the situation. Meaning is not merely directed through asking skilful questions, nor in truthful replies. Taking care of how the narrative interview unfolds is as important as what is selectively composed

and preferred. The researcher utilising a narrative inquiry approach is turning the attention to the meaning-making and the communicative conditions of the interviewing process that is happening and the values involved. In this process, it is the constructive hows and the substantive whats that take the interviewer's attention (Holstein & Gubrium, 2012).

The mutual participation in and engagement with the dialogue can be part of the interpretation, making it more than mere 'data-gathering' (Bjørkeng et al., 2014; Skjervheim, 1957/1996). Instead of treating the sayings of the other as facts, the utterances of the other could be engaged with by offering responses and questions in return. For instance, when an interviewee is talking about the desire to be met by respect, the interviewer can ask how the person understands the value of respect and how the other knows this is about respect, for example, by asking, 'What do you think the value of respect really means? Seeing people being treated with respect—what are you seeing they are doing? Can you tell of a situation when you were met with respect?' As such, the whole interview can provide notions of what respect actually mean, the experience of the value and how it is practised.

Co-creating Meaning: Practical Examples from a Research Process

I will here draw examples from a recent PhD project discussing the hows and whats of the narrative practice of inter-viewing and how values and values work were animated through the interviewing process (Espedal, 2019a). The aim of the research process was to investigate how values work emerges and how it is performed in a faith-based organisation. Both interviews and observations were conducted to gather data. Since the case organisation had been working with values for more than 150 years, the researcher assumed that informants had much information on values through conveying daily value discourses and performing activities rife with values practices. To uncover the knowledge of values and values work performed, the researcher decided to do interviews before

observation to gain relevant information on what to work on in the observation phase.

How, then, to choose questions for the interview guide knowing that values are often taken for granted and tacit knowledge? The researcher knew that to start the interview with an open question on what values the informants appreciate most would most likely not lead to in-depth answers. Asking people what they value most often require reflection and a search for tacit values hidden in their daily life and practice.

To gain information, the researcher established an interview guide with a four-fold structure. First, the interviewer asked open-ended questions regarding activities, challenges and the major concerns of the leaders and employees, asking, 'Can you tell me about the typical activities you engage in during a normal working day?' and 'What challenges do you face in being a manager/employee in this organisation?' These questions were used as an initiation and warm-up phase. To avoid the process ending as a stimulus and response activity in which the interviewee was merely a repository of answers, the researcher engaged in the answers as a form of 'speech activity' (Mishler, 1991). Taking a naïve position as an interviewer, the researcher followed up with small questions, such as 'Why is this so?', 'Then what happened?', 'How do you know that?' and 'How do you know this is important?' During the informants' speech, the interviewer would say 'hmm' as a confirmatory marker that the respondent was on the right track for the interview purpose (Mishler, 1991).

Second, the interviewer was involved in the narrative approach by asking, 'Can you tell me a story of when you made a difference to someone at work?' This was an intention they liked to present as some kind of 'saying' in the organisation (Kemmis, 2009). The organisational workers wanted to be known for making a difference for people (Skirbekk & Nortvedt, 2011). The researcher assumed there were some intentions and actually some ideals hidden in the stories. In telling stories of when the informants made a difference for someone, it was possible for the interviewer to uncover the story of how they were taking an ownership position of enacting values and values work. The goal of the question was to hear their stories and gain knowledge of their work. This question was followed by 'How do you know this made a difference to someone?' The question was asked to gain knowledge of how this process actually became

knowledge for the informant to identify some of the knowledge-creation activities of the organisation. Gubrium and Holstein posed a similar question in trying to channel themes from a recovery group when interviewing pharmacists, asking, ‘Whose voices do we hear in these stories?’ This question illustrates how a spectator theory of knowledge lurks beneath the surface in reflexive accounts (Bjørkeng et al., 2014).

The questions that led to stories of when an informant made a difference to someone at work became a gatepost and opened up for something the researchers, after a while, termed sacred stories (Ricoeur, 1995), which were part of the organisation’s values work (Espedal & Carlsen, 2021). Through asking the question above, the researchers discovered how the sacred was figured in two sets of tales that were lived and told with surprising intensity and consistency in the case organisation: the parable of the Good Samaritan and the tale of the legacy bestowed by the organisation’s founder. In one article, the researchers theorised how this figuring of the sacred in stories and in action recast values work from a centralised and unitary process to a two-way dialectic learning process between the ongoing creative imitation of action and how it refigures new stories. There is more to read of this process in this book’s chapter on narrative research.

In the third section of the interview, the interviewer asked, ‘At work, what are the most important and difficult discussions you encounter?’ Through this question, the interviewer discovered the challenges of the external conditions and regulatory frameworks that threatened the organisation’s value platform. An informant told about legislation depriving the organisation of the ability to hire people who are only of particular religious origins and the secularisation of the general workforce working against the Christian legacy of the founder. The researcher discovered that health care regulations and competitive demands that favour economically viable patients worked against taking care of the marginalised (Espedal, 2019b).

As the fourth phase of the interview, the interviewer finally asked questions about how the interviewees saw value processes and value priorities at work. As the interviewer and interviewee had worked through challenges of both work and what was valued in work, this became a phase of summing up. The interviewer learned that values were part of the

everyday language of the organisation. Second, the values influenced practice. It was possible to identify a value practice of value inquiry linking facts of the situation to the ideals of institutional social engagement and the common good. The process elaborated a view on how the temporality of value inquiry became a dominant mechanism of integrating values to realign agency (Espedal & Carlsen, 2021, work in progress).

Capitalising on the information acquired during the four steps of the interview process, the researcher proceeded to collect ethnographic data as it occurred in the case organisation (Holstein & Gubrium, 2008). The aim then, was to investigate and observe values work in vivo in social situations.

Practical Considerations in Conveying Research Interviews

A good idea in preparing for an interview is to develop in advance of the interview a scenario of the interview based on the research questions or topics that the interview should explore. The researcher should think through questions like ‘Just what about this thing is puzzling me?’ or ‘What do I need to know in order to answer the research question I am interested in?’ (Bryman, 2016, p. 469). From this point of view, the researcher can start preparing the interview guide. An interview guide is most often a list of memory prompts of areas to be covered. Conducting a pilot interview can be a good idea to see how the interview questions work in relation to the research question. A pilot interview is an interview conducted to give the interviewer some experience with the questions and imbue them with a greater sense of confidence. Questions that make the interviewer uncomfortable or are not functioning in any other way can be changed.

Kvale and Brinkman (2015) suggest that interviews should have a warming-up phase to give the interview a direction. As an introduction, you can ask, ‘Please tell me about...?’, ‘Do you remember an occasion when...?’, or ‘Could you describe a situation in which you noticed that the value of respect became valuable?’ After the warming-up questions,

the interview can proceed with follow-up-questions to give the interviewee a chance to elaborate on his or her answers, asking questions such as ‘What do you mean by that?’ or ‘How do you know that...?’ It is also possible to ask probing questions to follow up what has been said through direct questioning, such as ‘Can you give a detailed description of what happened when the value became prominent?’

The researcher can also ask direct questions that introduce topics and dimensions, for example, ‘When you mention that people are living by the value of trust, what are you seeing them do?’ The interviewee can, by answering this question, indicate which aspect of the value work on trust is central to them. A suggestion could also be to ask exploring questions, for instance, ‘How did you know this was the right thing to do?’ Depending on the phenomenon under investigation, the interviewer may search for the thoughts and emotions involved: ‘When this happened, what did you think or feel then?’ If something is happening in the interview, the researcher can explore: ‘Is this difficult to talk about?’ The interviewer is responsible for the course of the interview and should indicate when a theme is exhausted, saying, ‘I would now like us to move on to a different topic’.

A qualitative researcher is also aware that silence in the interview can be beneficial. For a researcher, it is often tempting to ask a question again or ask another question when silence occurs. However, the silence might be of importance. Often something is happening in the silence—the interviewee is thinking. A good piece of advice for the researcher is to wait.

Questions to Identify Values

Leaning on the definition of values as that which is ‘worth having, doing and being’ (Selznick, 1992, p. 60), some specific questions can be used to explore values, such as the following:

- What do you value most in your job as a leader?
- What is the most important thing you do as a leader?

- What is the ideal work environment? When have you experienced an ideal work environment? What happened? How do you work to maintain a good working environment?
- Tell me a story about a good leader you once had. What values do you think he/she had?
- Think ahead in time. You are sitting with your grandchildren, and you tell them something you did as a leader that you are proud of. What would that be?

As I have already mentioned, a good interview requires practical skills, personal insight and training. In all interviews, it is a good idea to be an active listener. Being active does not mean being intrusive; it means asking curious questions about the topic and experiences related to the topic to gain insight into the phenomenon you are investigating. It can be challenging for an interviewer to both listen to what the interviewee is saying and find new follow-up questions. Some researchers make notes during the interview; others trust a recorder. It is important to find your own way of doing interviewing, though it is suggested to start with a pilot interview to get some indication of what works. The pilot interview can end with a question from you as the interviewer to the interviewee: ‘Would you mind giving me feedback on the interview process—what worked, what question got you talking, what you especially liked to talk about, what questions were of importance for understanding the phenomenon under investigation?’

Ethical Sensitivity and Interviewing

To conduct a research interview is an ethical issue. Often we research phenomena that can be sensitive or even represent complexity in an interviewee’s personal life. The researcher is balancing a thin line between wanting in-depth information about the topic and risking trespassing the borders of the interviewee. In the research interview, you do not know what kind of reactions you may be triggering.

In relation to the interviewee, it can be wise to talk about the consequences of participating in the research project, especially when the topic

under investigation is sensitive and personal. The interviewee should be informed of the right to withdraw at any moment. The overall purpose of the project and the main features and design should be elaborated on in the informed consent. The informed consent most often notifies the interviewee about the confidentiality of the project and the anonymity of the participants. Please read Chap. 12 on the role of the researcher and participant validation (Chap. 13) for more information on the interview processes.

When to Use Research Interviews?

In what situation would it be useful to conduct research interviews? I have, in this chapter, especially concentrated on research interview based on a constructivist worldview. The advantage of using interviews as a research method is to explain, gain understanding, explore and interpret opinions, behaviour, experiences and phenomena. There is flexibility in conducting a research interview as part of the research design both in relation to gaining the necessary information and in choosing the time and place of the interviews. There is also flexibility in how the interviews are conducted, for instance, through cellular phones, in an office or on digital platforms such as Zoom. As such, it is clear why the research interview has become the gold standard of qualitative research. This can be done anywhere and anytime, and within different types of research designs, such as case studies, longitudinal designs and other designs.

In research interviews, interviewees may provide insight into the situation under investigation, involving cognitive meanings of that which is asked about. However, in some situations, this might not be enough. You might want further data, for example, about what values are embedded in work and practices. It might then be beneficial to include observation as a data-gathering approach as well. Through observation, you might see what is going on in practice, if there is consistency between explicit and implicit values (see Chap. 8 on observation and shadowing in this book by Sirris, Lindheim and Askeland for further information). A combination with observation or analysis of archival sources might present a broader picture of the phenomenon under investigation. Interviews are

also used in mixed-methods research in which qualitative and quantitative approaches are combined in different ways.

Conclusion

I have in this chapter presented how researchers, through a process of constructivist interviewing, can identify values and values work in organisations. In viewing values as part of our experience and a phenomenon that is worth having, doing and being, I have focussed on interviewing as a qualitative research method to identify information on values and values work. A research interview can be a useful method to collect in-depth information about a topic and can be a relevant research strategy when the answer is not obvious and is hidden in taken-for-granted organisational practices. Building on a constructivist worldview, I have identified the interviewing process as a process of inter-viewing, of seeing the phenomenon together with an-other, of co-creating meaning. The interviewer takes the role of a miner to uncover valuable knowledge and works to understand what is discovered, for instance, how the value of respect is being practised. Interviews are an appropriate research method when the researcher wants to produce and construct knowledge on the meaning of values and values work, and they are often chosen because of the flexibility of, for instance, following up information given to investigate the meaning of the phenomenon. Further deepening the values in practice observation is suggested as an additional research approach.

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8

Observation and Shadowing: Two Methods to Research Values and Values Work in Organisations and Leadership

Stephen Sirris, Tone Lindheim, and Harald Askeland

Introduction

This chapter explains in depth two related methods that can be used for collecting data when researching values: observation and shadowing. Values are both ideational and factual. First, they are conceptions of desirable behaviours, objectives and ideals that are not directly tangible or observable. Second, values are inherent in practices. Through various types of observation, researchers can access the contextual embeddedness of values as accomplished in practices in time and space. However, values need to be interpreted. It is in this context that we focus on values work in the field of organisation and leadership studies and address the following question: *How can observation and shadowing be used for data collection when studying values and values work?* To answer the question, we review the observation methods used within this discipline and share examples from two research projects that employed shadowing and

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participant observation. We argue that these observational methods are highly relevant for studying values and values work and can be further combined with interviews for the purpose of interpreting values.

Observation Methods in Organisation and Leadership Research

Studies on values in organisational and managerial practices rely on various methods for data collection (Askeland et al., 2020b). Interviewing, examining documents and studying people in action through observation are three frequently used approaches (Kelly & Ibrahim, 1991). Observation is often included in research strategies such as case studies and ethnography as it allows for collecting rich data about social practices: what people are doing and how in their natural contexts. Observation is time-consuming, often tiring and stressful, yet incomparably useful when studying situated behaviours and practices like values work. For a considerable period, relatively few observation studies were conducted in the field of organisation and leadership research. Observation, as a method, was developed to a limited extent and usually combined with other methodologies. However, since the 2000s, observation methods have been increasingly used to better capture the dynamics of organisational and managerial practices.

Observation studies were central to research in the early stages of the development of organisation theory. Taylor (1911) developed his principles of efficiency by studying work as it unfolded. Importantly, his approach to observing leadership had a rationalistic and individualistic perspective that focused on the content of management and the factors influencing managers' efficiency. For long, this tradition of observation characterised much of management research. In fact, mainstream managerial research still favours quantitative methods, even as various methods inspired by ethnographic approaches are witnessing a resurgence (Tengblad, 2012). Several theoretical perspectives grew out of close encounters with mundane work and practices within organisations, such as the human relations movement, industrial sociology of the 1950s and theories of group dynamics (Barley & Kunda, 2001, p. 80).

Managerial Work Behaviour

Around 1970, observational studies declined because of the shift towards systems theory and a higher level of abstraction. However, towards the start of the 2000s, many disciplines evidenced a turn towards practice, a trend being echoed within organisation and management studies (Barley & Kunda, 2001). The enduring tradition of managerial work behaviour (MWB) foregrounds observational data (Arman et al., 2014; McDonald, 2005; Mintzberg, 1970; Tengblad, 2012). The approach has its roots in the diary studies of Carlson (1951), in the work of Stewart in the 1960s (1989) and in Marple's study of sequences and episodes (Marples, 2019). Carlson's study provided insights into the content of managerial work, while Marple's study focused on decision-making sequences. Mintzberg (1970) criticised the use of diaries because the method presupposed that the researcher *already* knew what managers were doing and sought further knowledge of content in specific categories.

Balancing openness and structure has been, and still is, central to the debate on observation methods. Mintzberg (1970, p. 90) advocated a middle ground, claiming that categories structuring the observation should be defined before conducting the observation. This rationale guided the design of his original study, in which he expanded the richness of data by observing executives. While proposing a methodology to obtain thick descriptions, he addressed what to observe and how: 'I use the label "structured observation" to refer to a methodology which couples the flexibility of open-ended observation with the discipline of seeking' (Mintzberg, 1970, p. 89). Different terminologies have been used to refer to different observation approaches. For example, several studies following Mintzberg adopted the term 'structured observation', while recent studies have downplayed the structured aspect of the approach preferring labels like 'semi-structured' (Noordegraaf & Stewart, 2000), 'shadowing' (McDonald, 2005) or 'semi-structured shadowing' (Askeland et al., 2015).

Integrating the study of organisational members' and managers' everyday work into organisation theory requires a reorientation towards methods that are high on descriptive accuracy and designs that are suited to

comparative analysis (Barley & Kunda, 2001, p. 84). We argue that this requires applying some sort of observational studies and carefully choosing from among the various observational methodologies available. In the initial phase, observational studies often have a wide scope because of their explorative character. The MWB tradition offers semi-structured tools, allowing researchers to delimit the scope, for example, by studying managerial work or values work (Arman et al., 2012; Askeland et al., 2020a; Sirris 2019).

Observation and Shadowing

As evident in the MWB tradition, observation methods are often emphasised for their assumed relevance to practitioners. We utilise experiences from this tradition as they provide a relevant example of how observation and shadowing can inform the study of values. Just like managerial behaviour, values work is enacted in embedded practices. The following sections illustrate how observation methods facilitate the capturing of organisational and managerial practices, and we begin by examining the differences and similarities between observation and shadowing.

Observation and shadowing are associated approaches of collecting data in situ and in vivo (Zilber, 2020). Compared to methods like interviews or document reviews, observation and shadowing enable access to values work as an ongoing accomplishment. Observation can be placed on a continuum ranging from participant to passive (Fangen, 2010). Ciesielska et al. (2018, p. 34) explained the various modes of observation as follows:

In *participant observation*, the researcher strives towards an “immersion” in a specific culture, preferably for a longer period of time, in order to acquire an insider understanding of this culture either as a (marginal) member or as a visitor. In *non-participant observation*, the researcher tries to understand the world, relationships, and interactions in a new way, without prevalent categorizations and evaluations. In *indirect observation*, the researcher relies on observations done by others (e.g. other researchers) on various types of documentation, recordings, or on auto-observation.

Shadowing is a form of direct non-participant observation (Czarniawska, 2007). Meunier and Vasquez (2008, p. 168) noted that between shadowing and observation, in the former, the focus of the researcher's attention is the person rather than the location:

However, it differentiates itself from observation in taking the metaphor of the "shadow" literally: The researcher follows a person as his or her shadow, walking in his or her footsteps over a relatively long period of time, throughout his or her different activities, to collect detailed-grained data.

Observational data shares the characteristics of data from other sources of naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), as the data are socially constructed. Values practices, as they are accomplished, are not self-evident, but require interpretation. Some researchers have advocated for dispelling the traditional distinction between observation and interviewing as both are enacted performances requiring interpretation (Hammersley, 2017). The choice of methods is closely connected to the theoretical perspectives of a study (Zilber, 2020). In values work, studies based on institutional theoretical perspectives, employing an ethnographically sensitive approach or the use of methods like observation and shadowing, are encouraged (Hampel et al., 2017). The following sections describe two forms of observation: participatory and shadowing.

Participant Observation

Participant observation can be used in various ways to study values in the domain of organisation and leadership. Starting with a research question or an issue of concern, a researcher explores and identifies specific situations and settings in an organisation where the social phenomenon is instantiated. Typical situations could be meetings, sessions of supervision and counselling of employees, small talk over lunch, special events and engagement with external actors. The researcher can also look for different sites to observe values practices: 'the sayings and doings in organizations that articulate and accomplish what is normatively right or wrong, good or bad, for its own sake' (Gehman et al., 2013, p. 85). Sites include

offices and meeting rooms, hallways and common areas, or virtual sites like phone calls and email correspondence over the internet. Participant observation in values work studies can also take the form of paying attention to the physical environment and artefacts (Stake, 1995). Examples of physical aspects that can be relevant to such a study are the dress code at the site, the size and interiors of the offices and the use of art and symbols in the building. The location of offices and its proximity to or distance from other locations may also be relevant information for a study. Moreover, observation is temporally situated as it happens at a specific time. This makes the celebration of holidays or different anniversaries potentially important information within an organisation.

Theory and findings from other related empirical studies present categories of what to look for during observation. Identifying how values practices are expressed through sayings, doings, relatings and set-ups (Kemmis, 2009) can guide the observer's attention in the research process. The combination of an open inductive question and existing theoretical categories results in an abductive approach to observational data, oscillating between existing theory and data collection.

The researcher plays an active part in participant observation, and in line with other methods of naturalistic inquiry, there are unclear boundaries between the researcher and the researched (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This implies that the researcher actively uses his or her own knowledge and experiences to build trust and good relations with the informants to gain access to relevant information. Ideally, the researcher's presence should be as less disturbing or uncomfortable as possible for the participants. Even if the researcher seeks to observe a manager, or employee, without interrupting or influencing the person's work, the researcher's presence is likely to make an impact. See Chap. 13 in this book about researchers' role reflexivity. By participating with the informants in activities like eating lunch together or helping them with practical matters, the researcher engages in what Fangen (2010, p. 74) describes as participating in social interaction but not in context-specific activities. Typically during participant observation, informal interviews take place where the informants share their accounts (Zilber, 2020). Because accounts are context sensitive, those collected during observation are more likely to be valid and correctly interpreted compared to those obtained using

retrospective interviews exclusively (Hammersley, 2017). See also Chap. 7 in this book about interviews.

Semi-structured Shadowing

Semi-structured shadowing is a form of observation that involves following a person around as they perform daily work (Askeland et al., 2015; Meunier & Vásquez, 2008). It is a way of studying ‘the work and life of people who move often and quickly from place to place’ (Czarniawska, 2014, p. 92). Shadowing thus implies fixing the observation on a person or an object instead of a location. It involves accompanying a person on the move to different offices and floors in the building, as well as to external locations.

Askeland (2016, p. 112) developed a format to lend structure to shadowing (see Table 8.1). The scheme has columns to indicate the types and content of activities, time, duration and location, the participants involved and who initiated the activity.

To systematise data, the information can be coded, as illustrated in Table 8.2 (Lindheim, 2021, p. 58). This method shares similarities with quantitative observation (Stake, 1995), and the level of structure in these types of observations has been discussed previously (Askeland et al., 2015). The structure provides a clearer focus during observation (Arman et al., 2012, p. 303). At the same time, the coding process allows for a dynamic interpretation, enabling comparison with earlier categories as well as the development of new ones (Sirris, 2016). A critical factor in this type of observation is determining what constitutes an activity. According to Thomas (1998, p. 6), an activity can be ‘an episode or series

Table 8.1 Format for semi-structured shadowing

Time	Activity	Place	Content	Participants	Initiative	Duration

Table 8.2 Coding of semi-structured shadowing

Pattern of activities	Location of activity	Interaction with
Planned meetings	Own office	Subordinates
Unplanned meetings	Staff room	Colleagues
Professional work	Common areas	Superior
Supervision staff	Meeting room	Outsiders
Conversations		
Phone		
Office work		
Inspection/tour		

of episodes taking place during one day relating to a subject; for example, preparing a meeting might involve a number of episodes during a day'.

Semi-structured shadowing is a tool to understand the daily practices of the informants and provides an opportunity to compare two or more persons shadowed as part of a study. As such semi-structured shadowing complements the less structured format of participant observation presented above. It is usually followed by an interview in addition to some communication during the shadowing.

To understand what is happening, the researcher will have to ask the informant to explain what he or she is doing, especially when this is not directly observable such as when the person is working on the computer. Such information relaxes the limits imposed by structuring and provides additional overlay data (Askeland et al., 2015; Thomas, 1998). These conversations occasionally turn into informal interviews. The researcher is challenged to maintain a listening attitude without intervening unnecessarily. The shadowed persons can receive a transcript of the shadowing format before the interview, and the transcript and events from the day of shadowing can be discussed in the interview (Askeland et al., 2015).

To sum up, both shadowing and participant observation are often exhausting methods demanding constant attention. Shadowing requires constant notetaking while moving around and following the actor. Czarniawska (2018, p. 69) captures the minor differences between various types of observation as follows:

Compared to participant observation, shadowing is much easier, because it does not require simultaneous action and observation or skills that the researcher may not have. It also helps in maintaining a distance and a sense of estrangement, whereas participant observers may be tempted to “go native”. Shadowing and estrangement do not require that researchers disavow their feelings or negate them; on the contrary, emotions become a critical research instrument.

Researching Values in Practices

As noted in the introduction, a key issue in observation studies of managerial practices is balancing openness and structure in observation. Structuring observation with pre-defined categories allows for comparison with other studies across time and contexts. Since it is not possible to observe everything, structuring the observations delimits the researcher’s gaze (Czarniawska, 2007, cited in Arman et al., 2012, p. 303). The following sections offer examples from two recent research projects that used shadowing. Because researchers who exclusively use pre-defined categories in shadowing risk missing context-sensitive data, here we argue, through these examples, for the dynamic use of structuring when using shadowing in the study of values work. Drawing on our own empirical studies, we demonstrate how this can be done (Askeland et al., 2019; Lindheim, 2021). These studies used the formats presented earlier (Tables 8.1 and 8.2) to record data obtained from shadowing managers. The observation form was complemented by field notes containing thick descriptions of the activities as well as reflections and impressions. Taking notes is a selective activity in itself since every note contains an interpretation of what is important in the observation. The combination of an observation format and fieldnotes not only guides the researcher’s inquiry but also instils an openness for unexpected information. As mentioned, it is impossible to observe everything, so the observation is guided by a goal or research question. Researchers benefit immensely from making notes continually to record data that might have an interest, including details and impressions.

Shadowing Supplemented by Interviews and Document Analysis

Our first example is a study in which the authors analysed values as a common ground for framing and interpreting organisational practices (Askeland et al., 2019). The researchers collected data through semi-structured observation in three faith-based health organisations. These data were supplemented with interviews and analysis of policy documents, which offered a tighter frame for analysing the role of values in preserving the religious identity underpinning the organisations' foundation (Table 8.3).

Since the study focused on organisational self-representations and symbolic practices, the researchers identified four categories of items in which to search for the themes of values and religion: statements from bylaws, statements from strategic plans, CEOs' statements and values and value explications in the policy documents. Next, we mapped CEOs' symbolic practices using Kemmis' (2009) quadruple analysis of set-ups, sayings, doings and relatings. Finally, items were identified for each faith-based health organisation, and the material was coded jointly.

The pre-defined format for observation allowed for field notes to be taken during meetings, activities or long conversations, earlier labelled as overlay data. These notes were especially valuable in deeming how a meeting or activity carried values implications. Sometimes a surprising activity or conversation was tagged as 'follow-up', reminding the observer to bring up the activity during the interview afterwards. This enabled the observed managers to explain the background, intentions or choices made in situ.

Semi-structured shadowing allowed us to follow managers during their work hours and study their various activities. A manager's behaviour or action was deemed a practice when it was guided by intentions and related to other activities in a greater nexus. However, being outsiders, merely observing practices was insufficient; the practices needed to be interpreted. Thus, during the observations and in interviews, the managers were encouraged to comment on the content and purpose of their activities.

Table 8.3 Connecting methodological triangulation to its contribution for analysis

Sub-methodologies applied			Contribution to analysis
Method	Data gathered	Analytical approach	
Semi-structured observations/ shadowing	Five full days of observation Seminars for employees	Categorising activities Analysing values apparent in interactions Coding of articulated values from policy documents and seminars	Behavioural patterns comparable with prior studies Dynamic development of terms and categories Thick and deepened understanding of practice
Interviews	Three interviews with CEOs, lasting a total of ten hours Common core of interview guide and individual themes	Conceptualisation of leadership role Intentionality of values orientation and work	Self-conceptualisation by leaders, regarding role and values Work intention How values affect practice Interaction of the plurality of logics
Document analysis	Government white papers Institutional policy documents and strategic plans Minutes of the board meetings	Regulative mechanisms Sector/field values and their translation within own organisation Coding narratives of values and identity	Ramifications of field-level policies Relating field-level and organisational values Conveying of values and identity as intentional values work

The interviews covered issues such as the managers' backgrounds, their understanding of their role and main responsibilities, their identification with the institution's values base and their patterns of interactions. To broaden the understanding of practices within the organisations, the national welfare policy documents and institutional documents on strategy, identity and values were analysed. These data revealed that some of the institutions had chosen values that were congruent with those

articulated in government white papers, laws or policies. Yet, a closer analysis showed how they were translated for internal purposes and given ideological interpretations or were fitted into the larger identity narrative of the organisation. Lastly, the study included a review of earlier research reports from first-hand studies conducted in the same organisations.

To sum up, the observational data and transcribed interviews served as the empirical basis for analysis. First, we performed a preliminary analysis by reading the fieldnotes from the observations, the transcribed interviews and the policy documents. In the second phase, we analysed thematically how values appeared in the material and how the managers were involved in articulating and embodying the values. The observational data were coded and analysed according to the values involved in a given situation and how they were exercised. Given that such interpretations are subject to judgement and uncertainty, we prioritised examples in which values were directly articulated. A key contribution of the study was the description of the role of values as a common ground for framing and interpreting organisational and professional practices. Further, the study identified the possibilities and limitations of values in translating and expressing religion.

Observation and Shadowing

Our second example is a case study of cultural diversity and inclusion in three nursing homes (Lindheim, 2020a, 2020b). The study used participant observation, shadowing and interviews to collect data. Combining the two forms of observations, as opposed to only shadowing managers, allowed access to a wider range of organisational practices. The following paragraphs illustrate how values concerning cultural diversity and inclusion surfaced in organisational practices, and how observation and shadowing elicited information that would otherwise not have been accessed.

At a management meeting in one of the nursing homes, the CEO referred to the organisational values to justify why the unit should offer language training to refugees receive refugees:

Many refugees arrived in Norway a year ago. They need to settle down here and acquire employment. We have committed to assume responsibility in this together with the city district. We will facilitate language practice in all of Hope and Justice's [the owner of the nursing home] entities. Specifically, we now talk about two persons from Syria—a man and a woman. They are doing language training, and the plan is that they will spend three days a week in the language course and two days a week in language practice, for three months, in order to learn Norwegian. They are not going to do regular healthcare tasks, but they should practice Norwegian with residents and employees. Primarily employees. We need a unit that can receive them (Excerpt from field notes).

Through his intervention in the management meeting, the CEO articulated and related values to organisational practices, engaging in what could be termed institutional leadership (Askeland, 2020). Observation in situ and in vivo provides access to how this plays out in the everyday life of the organisation.

The researcher shadowed one of the unit managers in a nursing home when she interviewed a candidate for a vacant night-shift position together with another unit manager. The candidate was from Poland, and while walking out of the interview, one of the unit managers said to the other: 'She wasn't very Polish, I mean, with lots of make-up and long nails, and so on'. The quote is an example of how observation can provide access to actors' engagement with values-related practices as they are accomplished. Such practices would likely have been presented differently in a formal interview were interviewees, to a greater extent, present themselves in a more favourable light.

Observing employees in the nursing homes elicited a topic that had not been on the researcher's radar prior to the field work—caring for residents from a cultural and religious minority background. Even though the vast majority of residents in the nursing homes were of Norwegian descent, an increasing number of residents belonged to minority backgrounds. One of the units had a Muslim resident from South Asia with severe dementia. The man was observed to be frequently restless and upset. Often, he would sit in the common living room or the dining area and pray quite loudly. The unit manager told the researcher how the

family members of other residents from the majority background were quite upset about the situation and had demanded that the man be moved to another nursing home to prevent him from disturbing their relatives. By shadowing the unit manager, the researcher observed that the manager discussed the issue with other employees, insisting that the nursing home was the Muslim man's home, too. The example demonstrated the unit manager's values work: defending the man's right to be in the nursing home. It is also an example of how observation may yield topics that would otherwise not be considered. A key contribution of the study was the finding that observation elicits the dynamics between espoused and enacted values, which may support or counter each other. The study furthered showed how values come into play and are made relevant in everyday organisational practices.

Contributions and Implications of Observational Methods

How do observation and shadowing as methods for data collection contribute to the study of values and values work? Social phenomena like values work emerge out of practices accomplished in space and time (Nicolini & Monteiro, 2017); thus, the study of values work requires methods, like observation and shadowing, that attend to what is empirically observable (Janssens & Steyaert, 2019). A benefit of observation as a method is the access it provides to what people say and do in a context that is not structured by the researcher. Another advantage is that through prolonged or intense exposure to the phenomenon under study, the researcher builds rapport and trust with the participants. This, in turn, can ensure that the perspectives of multiple actors are collected and understood (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Observing values practices as they are accomplished reduces the potential for social desirability responses. At the same time, values are ambiguous in their very nature (Sirris, 2020), not readily observable but manifest in the practice itself or in how the actors frame and interpret practices. For such reasons, a combination of methods is particularly suited when studying values work.

Despite the advantages discussed above, observation and shadowing are not without challenges. Stewart (1989) identified the problem of understanding what is going on when shadowing managers. Observational data may inadvertently lead researchers to judge and evaluate the content instead of accurately describing what is going on from the actors' viewpoint. Our proposal introduces a semi-structured approach to non-participant observation (Ciesielska et al., 2018), thus delimiting the gaze (Arman et al., 2012) and tapping into dimensions and categorisations grounded in prior research. This, thus, seems to necessitate some level of precision in the research questions being informed by existing research. Supplementing observational data with interviews expands the researcher's understanding by including the actors' interpretation of what happened. An action is in itself ambiguous and open to manifold interpretations. The interview thus serves as a supplement or even a necessary corrective.

Essentially, shadowing and participant observation are observational approaches that complement each other. In the examples presented above, managers play a key role, but values work is not limited to managers. Values are constituted, maintained and changed in dialectical interactions of actors and coalitions. Broadening the scope of observation beyond the shadowing of managers allows the researcher to study other actors' reactions and responses to managers' values work. The key advantage of shadowing is its mobility (Czarniawska, 2007, p. 56), compared to the stationary nature of observation. The main difference between the two forms is the foregrounding of the actor in shadowing, whereas the participatory approach favours the location as the focus of observation. While shadowing is a form of non-participatory observation, participatory means an explicit engagement in interactions and sometimes involvement in actions. These two approaches offer different perspectives on how values work is performed, each giving prominence to the individual actor—usually a manager—or to the given practice entailed in the social interaction. The research question and aim of the study should guide the choice of approach, as illustrated in the two studies presented above.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has summarised the multiple possibilities that participant observation and shadowing offer in their own right and in combination with other methods. Observation can be used to register activities and present data statistically. Yet, it can also be ethnographically based and provide thick descriptions. We recommend the use of observation along with interviews as a supplementary method. Both shadowing and participant observation have the potential to illuminate the core dimensions of practices like values work. Their complexity is inherent, as they are context sensitive, situated in time and space and open to interpretations of the actors.

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9

Thematic Analysis: Making Values Emerge from Texts

Arild Wæraas

Introduction

When you have transcribed your qualitative interviews, completed your field notes, and you have collected and sorted supporting documents, you most likely have a very large amount of data. How do you proceed when you want to understand the values that are conveyed in the texts, what they mean, and how they relate to each other?

If these are your questions, then thematic analysis could provide the answers. Thematic analysis is a flexible and systematic way of making sense of qualitative data. It can be applied to any kind of written document such as interview transcripts, annual reports, strategy documents and marketing materials, blogs, observation field notes, employment advertisements, letters to shareholders, press releases, and even YouTube videos and photographs. More importantly, thematic analysis can serve to analyse any way of expressing values, explicitly as well as implicitly.

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Thematic analysis is not a research design or methodology in its own right, as it only deals with the analysis of existing data. It does not exist in one single version, and many aspects of it can be found in other methods for analysis such as qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2012), grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1999), narrative analysis (Esin et al., 2014) (see Chap. 11 by Espedal and Synnes in this volume), and text condensation analysis (Malterud, 2012). These methods employ different concepts to describe similar aspects and stages of qualitative analysis without necessarily referring to their approach as thematic, the result of which can be confusing (Braun & Clarke, 2020). In this chapter I do not attempt to bring clarity to this variety, nor do I propose a new way of analysing qualitative data. Rather I discuss the merits of applying some principles of thematic analysis to a specific empirical field; the research on values in organisational settings, and I offer examples of how this can be done. In doing so I draw mainly on a reflexive approach to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012, 2020), in contrast to reliability- or codebook-based versions (Boyatzis, 1998; Guest et al., 2011; Hayes, 1997). My outline of thematic analysis of values is also inspired by Gioia et al. (2012), emphasizing inductive-based analysis grounded in data rather than deductive, theory-based analysis.

The chapter is structured as follows: First I describe the general aspects of thematic analysis and present the main concepts of thematic analysis such as codes and themes. I then review some common principles for performing thematic analysis of texts. Finally, I show how thematic analysis of values can be performed. I will not address the use of computer software programmes, although readers should note that these can be very useful for handling the technical aspects of thematic analysis (see e.g. Paulus and Lester (2016) or Saillard (2011)).

Thematic Analysis: A Brief Overview

Thematic analysis is a method for systematically describing and interpreting the meaning of qualitative data by assigning codes to the data and reducing the codes into themes, followed by an analysis and presentation of these themes. Thematic analysis thus combines a structured approach

with the researcher's subjective interpretation. This combination is a key characteristic and strength of thematic analysis, as it draws on the merits of systematically documenting all the steps in the process of analysing data at the same time as it allows the researcher considerable creativity in attaching meaning to the data. The researcher determines the themes, how many, and what they should be called. As such, thematic analysis does not presuppose the existence of one single "truth" in the data, waiting to be discovered once and for all, nor does it assume that coding is necessarily "accurate" or "objective" (Braun & Clarke, 2020). Rather, it requires a sort of deep immersion by the researcher into the data that eventually leads to themes being generated *from* the data rather than discovered *in* the data.

The structured aspects of thematic analysis revolve around the concepts of codes and coding. The process involves initial coding of the data, followed by a second round of coding whereby codes are grouped into themes and often organized in relation to each other. In the following I briefly explain these steps. A third round of coding can be added to identify aggregate dimensions, followed by visual representations of the codes and themes. I will illustrate these last steps towards the end of the chapter.

Assigning Codes to Data

Codes are the building blocks of thematic analysis. In the first round of coding, you use them to label text segments (coding units) that seem relevant to your research question. Briefly stated, a code is a label assigned to a coding unit, intended to capture the meaning of that unit.

The coding unit may vary from a single word to several paragraphs. The meaning conveyed by the unit determines the coding unit. As a rule of thumb, the coded text segment should always be sufficiently large to retain its meaning when taken out of context.

Where do the codes come from? You can determine (at least some of) the codes before you begin the analysis, in which case you develop them in a theory-driven or deductive way. You can also develop them during the analysis, in which case your approach is inductive and data-driven, similar to open coding used in grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin,

1998). Alternatively, you can use a combination of deductive and inductive approaches. In any case, predetermined codes are rarely sufficient alone in order to capture the breadth of the data. This chapter focuses on the inductive, data-driven approach only, although it should be recognized that thematic analysis cannot be entirely inductive since your pre-existing knowledge and theoretical concepts will always influence what you see in the data.

Should you rephrase the words in the text when developing codes or use the same words as those in the text? A distinction can be made between *in vivo* codes and descriptive codes (Saldaña, 2015; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). *In vivo* codes are taken directly from the text, meaning that the code assigned to a coding unit is exactly the same as the coding unit. Thus, if the word “seeking integrity” appears in the text and is important with respect to the research question, the *in vivo* code for that specific coding unit is also “seeking integrity”. *In vivo* codes are informant-centric, and useful if it is important for you to ensure an as close relationship as possible between informant/textual expressions and codes.

Descriptive codes, by contrast, are researcher-centric codes that you create yourself to describe the meaning of a coding unit by developing another, shorter way to express what you think is conveyed by that unit. For example, “seeking integrity” could be the descriptive code if you determine that this is the meaning of a sentence or a paragraph, even if the words “seeking” and “integrity” are not used in the text. Descriptive codes are useful when *in vivo* codes do not sufficiently represent the nuances and the meaning of the text, and/or when the coding unit is large.

A final distinction can be made between semantic and latent codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Semantic codes are descriptive codes or *in vivo* codes; they describe the explicit or manifest meanings of the data. By contrast, latent codes are descriptive codes that you develop to identify what you think goes on beyond the data by identifying the underlying ideas, assumptions, or ideologies that have produced the patterns in the data. Both semantic and latent codes can involve making inferences about something that is not directly observable. The difference is that whereas semantic codes seek to show patterns in semantic content and

establish the meaning of what is expressed, latent codes seek to determine what produced those meanings.

From Codes to Themes

When coding the data, you will eventually notice that some codes convey similar meanings. If so, something important about the data in relation to the research question has been observed. In a second round of coding, you can then decide to group these codes together into themes. Themes are higher level theoretical constructs than codes because they encapsulate the meanings conveyed by many codes. They are “patterns of shared meaning cohering around a central concept” (Braun & Clarke, 2020, p. 4).

Your judgement as a researcher is critical in order to determine not only which themes are important for your research question but also *when* a set of codes forms a theme and *how many* themes should be generated. There is no rule for how many themes you should end up with, although at some point you will probably notice that adding an extra theme to the ones you already have no longer provides useful information. You may actually be more likely to merge some of the themes you have identified, especially if you have a large number of them.

There is also no rule for how many occurrences of a code or similar codes are needed in order to create a theme. Whereas one theme may be prevalent in every interview transcript or text and backed by thirty codes with similar meanings, other themes may be present in much fewer transcripts and texts and supported by only a handful of codes. The themes that are less prevalent may still be very important if they capture something new, essential, or revealing about the phenomenon of interest.

Organizing Themes

Once you have generated themes from codes, your analysis may stop here, in which case the next step is to report your themes as your findings. However, you could also undertake an additional analytical step by examining how the themes are connected. To figure out the connections, ask

yourself the following questions (cf. Saldaña, 2015, p. 247): Do the themes make more sense if they are arranged chronologically? Which theme seems to logically precede the other themes? Does one theme influence another? Is there a hierarchical relationship between them? Can some themes be understood as subthemes and others as aggregate themes?

When developing answers to these questions, you may be able to see a connection between the themes that becomes an important part of your findings. If this is the case, your analysis may end up proposing a grounded theory model (Gioia et al., 2012). However, regardless of whether it does so or not, keep in mind that your themes are your findings. When presenting your findings, it is important that you structure your presentation around the themes and back up your claims with relevant quotes that address the research question.

Thematic Analysis of Values

The coding process in thematic analysis of values varies depending on some features of the values to be studied and the goal of your research. Two important questions to address are:

- Are the values explicit or implicit in the text? This is to say, do the informants and the documents you have collected make direct references to values, or do you need to “read between the lines” to observe them?
- Is the goal of your research primarily to report the values as they are articulated explicitly or implicitly in the text, or do you want to go “deeper” in order to understand how the values relate to latent beliefs and assumptions?

Coding Explicitly Expressed Values

Let us first consider the simplest case, which is when the data consists of texts that make explicit references to values, and your primary aim is to

describe these values. In this case, the values are easily identifiable, and you will only have to deal with the question of what counts as a value rather than interpreting the text in order to establish them. Perhaps you asked your informants to talk about the values that are important to them, or perhaps you are studying official core values statements retrieved from strategy documents or web pages. In both of these cases, core values will be explicitly mentioned in the texts or transcripts. An example is provided in Table 9.1 below. It shows an excerpt from an analysis of the values found in a large university's core values statement (NTNU, 2018).

The table highlights the values in the text in the left column. In the right column, each value is now an *in vivo* code. In other words, the coding unit is one word (or sometimes several words, but rarely many), and the code is the same as the coding unit. If you are using a software for qualitative data analysis, the table looks quite similar to what you would see on your screen. On the left you identify and highlight the values; on the right you assign codes. The codes used in this example are *in vivo* codes only. The procedure for descriptive codes is basically the same, except that the coding units are likely to be larger because more than one word is needed to represent a value.

If your data material consists of explicit text segments such as this one, you should be able to produce a long list of data-driven codes that correspond exactly or at least very closely to the values in the text and then look for themes emerging from that list that could provide a better understanding of the values and your research questions.

Table 9.1 Excerpt from coding of core values statements using *in vivo* codes

Text	Codes
Every employee and student has a responsibility to contribute to a work and study environment characterized by respect and consideration . We facilitate personal growth and professional development . We contribute to diversity and equal opportunity in society and in our own activities. We promote equality and tolerance .	Responsibility, Contribute Respect Consideration, Personal growth Professional development Diversity, Equal opportunity Equality, Tolerance

Coding Implicit Values

In some cases, your data material is likely to speak about values in a more subtle way. This could be because the abstract nature of values makes it difficult to elicit information about values from informants, even when they are asked direct questions. Also, many written documents and other sources are not created specifically for the purpose of describing values. This does not mean that these texts do not contain values. What it means is that you will need to *look* for the values that are hidden in the language of the text and make a judgement about which values are implicitly invoked. Coding at the implicit level requires interpretation, meaning that you will have to infer from your observations something that is not directly said. For this type of coding, it will be necessary to rely more on descriptive codes rather than in vivo codes.

Consider the example in Table 9.2 where the researcher wants to find out which values are expressed in different leadership philosophies. A

Table 9.2 Excerpt from thematic coding of a qualitative interview using descriptive codes

Text	Codes
I was dreaming of a company where the worker would become the operator.	Empowerment
A place where operators would be able to organize themselves, adjust machines themselves and auto-control themselves.	Autonomy
At that time, employees were clocking in and out and received sanctions for any delay ... I was dreaming of a place where instead of putting sanctions on being late, we would inquire the reason why somebody was late. Because nobody is late on purpose. And if needed, we would adjust the time schedules, for example for a young father whose baby had been crying all night.	Caring
At that time, we were awarding bonuses every month, up to 20% of the monthly salary. Most of the bonuses were awarded based on the mood of the direct supervisor. I was dreaming of a place where the bonuses were integrated in the base salary, and I was dreaming of a system where we would share our results.	Flexibility
	Solidarity
	Sharing

French factory CEO describes his dreams for the ideal workplace in the following way (Minnaar, 2017):

In this case, the CEO was not asked to reflect on the values on which his leadership is built, nor on what the values should be. He was simply asked to describe his leadership philosophy, and he actually does not explicitly mention a single value. However, the texts still express many important values. Generally, you should look for phrases such as “It’s important that”, “I like”, “I love”, “I need”, “I think”, “I feel”, and “I want” (Saldaña, 2015, p. 113), or, as in the case described above, “I was dreaming of”.

Did you agree with the coding in the table above? Note that there could be multiple ways of delimiting the relevant coding units and assigning codes in this case. Two different researchers may not arrive at the same codes. For example, take the first sentence; “I was dreaming of a company where the worker would become the operator”. Alternative codes to “empowerment” could be “emancipation”, “liberation”, “enablement”, and other synonyms. Also note that if the research question was different, for example, if it involved examining the various components of leadership philosophies rather than identifying values, then the code could be “vision” or “worker-centric”, depending on the preferences of the researcher.

So far, we have seen an example of a text that was very explicit about its values, and another that was not. Usually, texts are not either explicit or implicit in this respect—they are a combination. Your coding should reflect this reality. Alternating between *in vivo* codes, descriptive codes, explicitly derived codes, and implicitly derived codes is perfectly possible in thematic analysis of texts.

Coding at the Latent Level

With some research questions your primary interest may be to understand what lies behind the values you see in the texts. In these cases, you are less interested in identifying *which* values the texts are talking about, explicitly and/or implicitly, and more interested in understanding the attitudes, ideas, beliefs, or assumptions that seem to underpin the values

you observe in the text. Hence, latent thematic coding of values is based on the assumption that our beliefs shape the values we talk about and how we talk about them (similar to discourse analysis described in chapter 10 by Kivle and Espedal). As such, latent thematic coding could be especially relevant for highlighting and explaining differences between groups of informants. Questions you may ask yourself are: What do the values that you observe “really” mean in the context in which they are expressed? With what kind of characteristics, assumptions, or ideals do the texts associate the values? To which world views do the values “belong”? Does the text highlight some values as more important or essential than others?

As an example, consider in Table 9.3 again the example of the CEO who expressed his leadership principles:

Although this informant makes indirect references to values, these values are not the main focus. Rather, we create codes for the assumptions and beliefs that we think *produce* these values. Doing so requires a

Table 9.3 Excerpt from thematic coding of a qualitative interview using latent coding

Text	Codes
I was dreaming of a company where the worker would become the operator.	Employees work better when they
A place where operators would be able to organize themselves, adjust machines themselves and auto-control themselves.	enjoy professional autonomy
At that time, employees were clocking in and out and received sanctions for any delay ... I was dreaming of a place where instead of putting sanctions on being late, we would inquire the reason why somebody was late. Because nobody is late on purpose. And if needed, we would adjust the time schedules, for example for a young father whose baby had been crying all night.	A caring work environment is a goal in itself
At that time, we were awarding bonuses every month, up to 20% of the monthly salary. Most of the bonuses were awarded based on the mood of the direct supervisor. I was dreaming of a place where the bonuses were integrated in the base salary, and I was dreaming of a system where we would share our results.	You should treat your workers well
	Employees are more motivated when profits are shared.

thorough analysis of the claims in order to get an idea of what lies behind them. Notice that the codes consist of multiple words because they need to capture a more complex logic compared to descriptive codes that seek to reflect explicit or implicit values. This makes coding at the latent level more complex than coding at the explicit level.

Latent coding is complex also for a different reason: When analysing underlying assumptions and beliefs, your private beliefs could be challenged. For example, consider the statement: “I definitely feel like I need to hire more people with a different cultural and ethnic background”. Which latent belief or assumption lies behind this view? Without examining the rest of the text, at least two different interpretations are possible depending on your own views. One is “diversity is good for the workplace”, another is “political correctness is a necessary evil”. These beliefs are contradictory, yet both could arguably have produced the statement above. So, be careful: Before deciding on the latent belief, make sure you can justify your coding based on how the informants talk about *their* values, practices, and beliefs in the context in which they find themselves.

Generating Themes from Codes

Having developed codes, your task is now to identify themes. The process of doing so can occur in different ways. Three alternatives are as follows:

Grouping synonyms: You are likely to discover that many of the values you have coded are synonyms with similar meanings. For example, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary (2020), sincerity, openness, frankness, candour, honesty, impartiality, and trustworthiness are synonyms. If these codes are part of your list, they can form a theme. Choose a name for the theme that matches its contents (e.g. “sincerity”). Similarly, other synonyms such as empathy, sympathy, clemency, altruism, benevolence, kindness, and compassion can also be grouped into a theme and given a name, if they exist in your data. This is a straightforward way of generating themes from codes, although it is not well suited for latent codes. You also risk the possibility that some of the codes on your list do not have synonyms and consequently do not have a “home”. As a result, you may want to consider the other two alternatives:

Grouping codes of the same type: Many codes are likely to share features even if they are not synonyms. For example, when scholars classify values as belonging to the same type, they look for something that the values have in common. An example is Kernaghan's (2000) typology of public service values. It groups values such as integrity and fairness into *ethical* values, impartiality and rule of law into *democratic* values, and effectiveness and service into *professional* values. The logic of this process of generating themes is the following: You consider whether a group of codes have similar meanings in the sense that they refer to similar aspects of organisational activities, practices, identities, or states. If they do, then you group them into a theme, and find a name for this theme. This approach is also relatively straightforward. However, again, this approach is not well suited for coding at the latent level, and it does not fully consider the semantic content of the codes.

Grouping codes based on semantic content: Finally, and perhaps most importantly, you can group codes based on their semantic content. In this case, the approach involves figuring out what the codes are saying about something or someone, and then condensing that information into themes, regardless of whether the codes that constitute the themes are synonyms and/or of the same type or not. This is usually not a straightforward process. Each theme will have to be phrased as a short sentence, and this can be done in a number of ways. You may be experimenting with some themes initially, discarding some, and splitting others into separate themes. You may also be moving codes back and forth from one theme to another multiple times before you make up your mind about which codes belong where and how to name the themes. Moreover, you may discover new themes as you are working with your data. In the end, you will have to make a decision about which codes go where, how many themes are necessary to represent the data, and how the themes should be named.

If possible, you should consider whether the themes can be further reduced into aggregate dimensions. This would be an additional round of coding and the last step of the coding process in which you connect all the themes around a few core dimensions. The aggregate dimensions could clarify certain shared aspects of the values or highlight common

underlying assumptions, and they could form the basis for grounded theory development (Gioia et al., 2012).

Visual Representations

It is always useful to draw visual representations of your themes and their relationship with the coded values. By doing so, you keep track of all the codes and make sure they are grouped somewhere, and you can better demonstrate how you generated the themes. There are many ways of visually displaying codes and themes. Figures 9.1 and 9.2 show two examples of themes generated from the same set of initial codes. Note that the figures are not complete representations of the data set. In your own thematic analysis, the number of codes and themes is likely to be higher (for a more complete example, see Vaccaro and Palazzo [2015]).

When comparing the two figures you will notice that although the initial codes are the same, the themes are different. These differences not

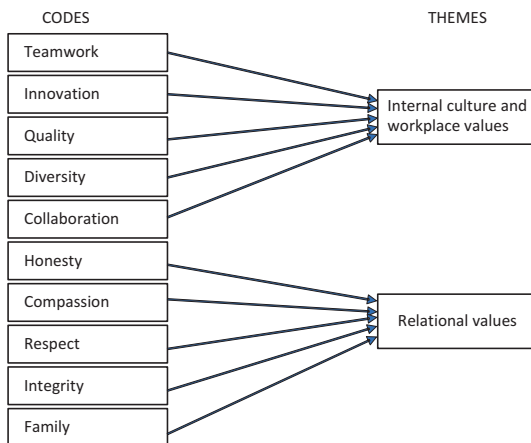


Fig. 9.1 Codes grouped into themes based on type of code

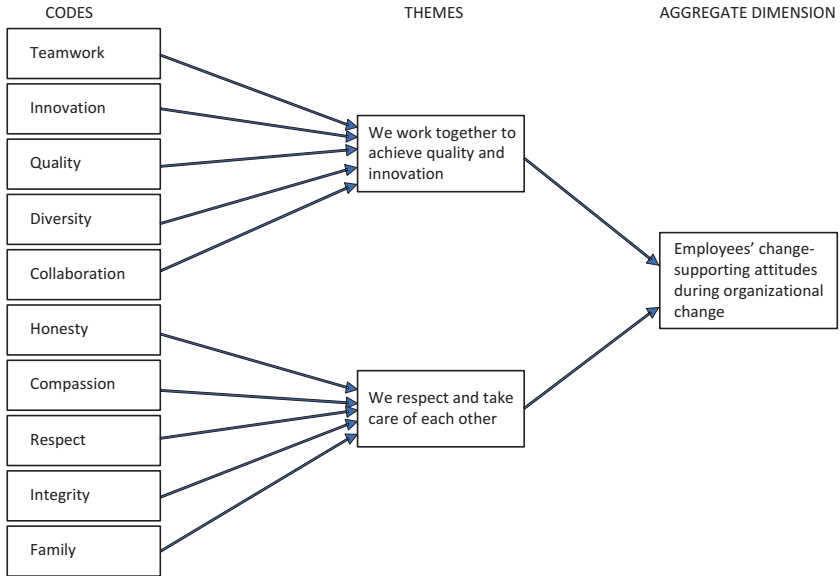


Fig. 9.2 Codes grouped into themes based on semantic content of codes

only reflect different ways of generating themes (the first figure is based on type of code, the second on semantic content), but also different research questions or purposes. In the first case, the purpose may be to understand what characterises the values of a particular organisation or group as they are expressed by employees and top managers. In the second case, the figure could reflect the desire to understand the implications for successful organisational change of the values that employees attach to their own organisation or group. In this case it is possible to develop an aggregate dimension that highlights the overall pattern in the themes.

The themes can also be displayed quantitatively as frequencies. You could, for example, create charts that rank the different themes on the basis of how many codes they contain. This could be useful for summarizing your findings. Note, however, that frequency charts should not be used as the only basis for presenting codes and themes, as this would be

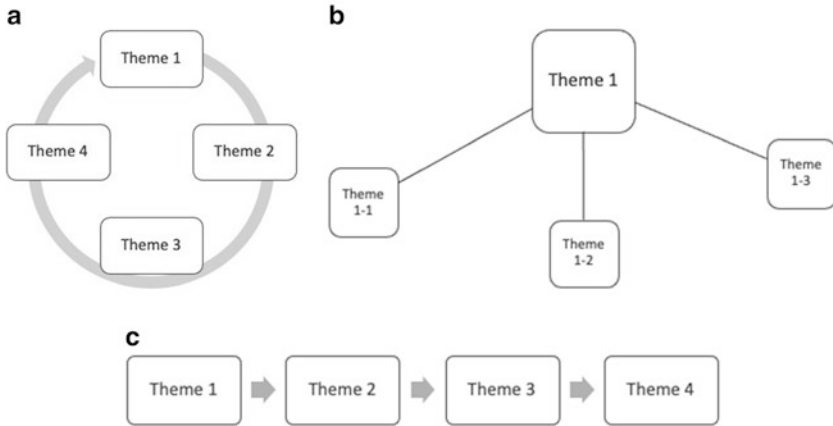


Fig. 9.3 (a) Themes organized in a cyclical model. (b) Themes organized as one central theme with three subthemes. (c) Themes organized in chronological order

more similar to quantitative content analysis (and in some cases, qualitative content analysis [Schreier, 2012]).

Finally, if your themes are developed on the basis of semantic content or latent codes, your analysis may benefit from showing visually how the themes are connected (see e.g. Braun & Clarke, 2006; Gioia et al., 2012). Figures 9.3a–c outline three possible models. The first model shows a cyclical relationship between the themes, the second shows one central theme and three subthemes, and the last shows four themes in chronological order. You may find that your themes fit one of the models, but if not, you could develop your own variation of one of them, or you could develop an entirely different one.

Conclusion

Values often manifest themselves in texts, and thematic analysis is one way of making them emerge from those texts. This chapter has suggested a few ways of doing so. As a stepwise approach, thematic analysis of values can be summarized in the following way: (1) Assign codes, (2) generate themes, and if possible, (3) organize themes, (4) create aggregate

dimensions from themes, and (5) make visual representations. The first two steps should be seen as essential to thematic analysis of values, the remaining ones can be added for further analysis and refinement.

The steps you take should be appropriate for your data and your research question, and you should never try to force fit your data to codes or themes or to a complex visual representation. If your research question only involves describing explicitly expressed values, steps 3 through 5 are probably redundant. If your goal is to understand how latent assumptions and ideas produce different value orientations in different types of settings, you may need all five steps. In any case, apply the principles outlined here with flexibility and creativity, and take your time to understand what kind of analysis your research questions require.

Values come to expression in different ways, and thematic analysis is one of many ways of understanding how. Its benefits lie in the reduction of information into a manageable and comprehensible body of data, which, in the end, is an important part of understanding abstract aspects of social life such as values.

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10

Identifying Values Through Discourse Analysis

Benedicte Maria Tveter Kivle and Gry Espedal

Introduction

Texts are pervasive and naturally occurring features of everyday and institutional life. Minutes from meetings, interviews, talks, annual and strategic reports, e-mails and Facebook messages are all sources for analysis. However, an analytical approach to discourse analysis is more than simply text analysis (Neumann, 2021). The texts contain representations and intentionality. There can be underlying (and to some extent hidden) prevailing perceptions, opinions and understandings that are baked into the text. The analysis then consists primarily of interpreting these understandings to find shared and possibly hidden values or values in practice. As such, we can say that discourse is the established and obvious narrative of a phenomenon. Discourse is often intuitive and taken for granted, describing why things are the way they are. We therefore understand discourse analysis as 'a system for carrying out a set of statements and

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practices ... appearing to be more or less normal, constitutive of reality for its carriers and with a certain degree of regularity in a set of social relations' (Neumann, 2021, p. 22, translated from Norwegian).

The 'system' is possible to investigate through certain techniques suitable for finding the link between the textual expressions and the more constituent and regulative system. Texts reflect what is socially accepted, desired and valued. Hence, we may claim that values are part of discourses and are thus integrated within texts in everyday life. To understand how values and values work appear in texts, we should look for tools that go beyond text analysis and that aim to analyse, in Sheperd's (2008) words, 'systems of meaning-production rather than simple statements or language, systems that fix meaning, however temporarily, and enable us to make sense of the world' (p. 10). In the following, we present and discuss how students and researchers may perform discourse analysis to investigate values and values work in texts.

In this chapter, we present possible approaches to identify values through discourse analysis. We ask: what are the available approaches for signifying values in texts through discourse analysis? To answer the research question, we draw on theoretical contributions and earlier writings on discourse analysis (e.g. Neumann, 2021; Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). The presentation of the approaches is illustrated through an example text taken from a popular scientific journal on the topic of trust-based leadership within the public sector in Scandinavia.

The aim of this chapter is to give readers a framework in which they can place their own research projects on values using different traditions of discourse analysis. This chapter contributes to the arsenal of research methods on values through examples and illustrations of the value of trust within three discourse analysis approaches. We limit our definition of discourse analysis for identifying values to the construction of meaning concerning values and the distribution of these constructions. We present basic understandings of discourse analysis, values and values work. We then discuss the three discourse approaches—structural-semantic discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis and discursive psychology—illustrating each approach through analysis of the journal text. We also offer some critical reflections on the possibilities and limitations in discourse analysis of values work.

What Is Discourse Analysis?

Discourses are found everywhere in social practice. We use language to communicate and to categorize our understanding of the world as it appears around us. However, we might give different meanings to specific incidents and phenomena. We give meaning to phenomena through the words we choose to use and in what way we choose to use them. Hence, in analysing discourses, language becomes a central focus for analysis to understand social practice (Potter, 2004). In the context of social sciences, Alvesson and Kärreman (2011) referred to this as the linguistic turn.

Discourse analyses are mainly motivated by the desire to spell out the *sensed* yet not directly accessible structures of power and knowledge within specific talk and texts. Two main lines of approach divide discourse analysis: bottom-up text-focused studies (Potter, 2004) and the Foucauldian line of approach (i.e. paradigm discourse studies) aimed at revealing historically developed ‘regimes of truth’ via text analysis (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011). Both lines are limited and have been criticized for not delivering what they promise. While text-focused studies struggle to link the textual practices to anything above the locally situated practice, paradigm discourse studies lack step-by-step instructions explaining how to find the meta-level ‘regimes of truth’ embedded in texts. For the early scholar, it might be confusing to navigate this landscape. Therefore, this chapter offers some step-by-step guidance for discourse analysis, relying mainly on the text-focused approach while being aware of its limitations.

Discourses can be introduced via three fundamental principles. They might be action oriented, constructed or situated (Potter, 2004). *Action-oriented* discourse analysis assumes the world is in motion, leading to several discourse-analytic questions, such as: What is this discourse doing? How is this discourse constructed to make things happen? What resources are available to perform this activity? In our case, we can also add questions concerning values: How is this discourse identifying specific values and values work? What discourses do the values partake in? As such,

discourse analysis can be used to identify values, what brings forward the values and what is the broader perspective of the values work.

Neumann's (2021) perspectives on discourse analysis broadened the action-oriented approach to discourses. He highlighted that discourses are fusions of text and social materiality. Social materiality points at how the written word is simultaneously a product and producer of social practice. What makes written text especially useful for analysis is that while other social practices produce meaning as a side product, language is constructed to create meaning. Written texts found in media, organisational documents like strategic plans and other types of texts are always meant for communication and, thus, meaning making (Neumann, 2021). The text has a purpose, and the writer has specific intentions for writing the text or saying what they are conveying. The choice of words in a written text may contain traces of both intentional and unintentional world views, power structures and social codes that reveal important understandings of values and actions.

How do we understand discourses as *situated*? The situatedness of discourses can be understood in at least two ways. First, speech and text, as representations of discourses, are embedded in sequences of interaction. Hence, the discourses are situated on a timeline, occurring both after specific actions or incidents and before others. Second, discourses are situated within terms of rhetoric. This means that a discourse analysis might include revealing different rhetorical means used in the text. Discourse analysis is used to identify words, idioms and rhetorical devices or ways in which the discourses stabilize the world. The way the discourses are constructed and stabilized is treated as an analysable feature of the production of the discourse (Potter, 2004).

Finally, the discourse as *constructed* resides in a constructionist world-view in discourse analyses. Construction is the process by which something is built from existing material (Czarniawska, 2008; Hacking, 1999). A paradigm of constructivism can provide an understanding of the world in which we live. The emphasis is on how the participant is engaged in actively constructing their world through forms of social action and by assigning meaning to the world through language-based distinctions (Holstein & Gubrium, 2008; Lincoln et al., 2011). As such, the researcher engaged in discourse analysis is seeking to understand the complexity of

the conceptualized world within a context rather than simplifying it into a few categories and ideas (Creswell, 2014).

The use of language is worth paying attention to (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Our vocabulary, the words we use, proverbs, values, sayings and stories all elicit meaning (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004). Language and stories are part of the cultural process and gain their meaning within an organized form of interaction (Wittgenstein, 2009). To tell the truth is not to furnish an accurate picture of what actually happened but to participate in the situation of understanding social conventions. To be objective is to play by the rules of the given tradition. Thus, we can say language and stories do not describe action but are in themselves a form of action (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004).

Discourse Analysis and Other Analytical Techniques

To clarify the concept of discourse, it is helpful to separate discourse analysis from the analysis of social norms and institutions (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011) as well as other strategies for analysing data. While social norms and institutions are established by physical prerequisites, discourses are embedded in socially constructed meanings. Discourses may influence social norms and the constructions of institutions, but they are not totally overlapping.

Discourse analysis shares similarities to conversation analysis and narrative analysis (as described in the next chapter of this book). While conversation analysis is a fine-grained analysis of speech as it occurs in interaction in naturally occurring situations, discourse analysis is an approach to language that can be applied to forms of communication other than conversation. Discourse analysis is more flexible and incorporates analysis on how the text under investigation is constructed and constituted (Bryman, 2016).

Narrative analysis is an approach that is sensitive to the temporal sequence often formed as stories to provide an account of characters or events. These stories might give insight into how events have affected the

persons or have been noticed by the surroundings. It often emphasizes how people make sense of occurrences. While narrative analysis investigates narratives, plot and the voices represented, discourse analysis is more concerned with the language used and what it means. The analysis is aimed at connecting language and text to identify political, social and critical discussions. As such, discourse analysis can be used to identify different discourses at the societal or institutional level as well as the individual level. For instance, they can be part of discourses on the role of love in the society (Øfsti, 2008) or discourses that organisations are engaged in, such as utilizing user participation (Breivik, 2016).

The emergent field of researching institutional logic (see Chap. 14) shares some similarities with discourse analysis. While research on institutional logic focuses on investigating the rationales or the rules of the game to lead to an understanding of the social order (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Thornton et al., 2012), discourse analysis focuses on identifying which discussions the issues or phenomena are participating in. As such, discourse analysis can be a relevant approach for studying cognitive structures, causal relations and the broader picture of events.

In regard to using analytical techniques, discourse analysis often requires an open approach. Numerous analytical techniques can be used for identifying values and values work through discourse analysis. For data gathering, both audio and video recordings can be used during research interviews or observations. When transcribing the data material, the researcher should put emphasis on carefully listening to the material. When listening to the recordings from interviews or reading the notes from observations, it is a good idea to look for words and phrases that might be considered odd, interesting or confusing (Potter, 2004). Often prior expectations are out of line with what is captured in the recordings and notes. This also opens up possibilities for coding the material, allowing for departure from the intrinsic coding often utilized in grounded theory. When choosing discourse analysis, the approach involves sifting through the material for the phenomenon of interest, looking for alternative codes and copying them into the coding list. A thematic analysis as described in Chap. 9 can be used when looking for meaning and recurring themes in written and transcribed oral statements, while the discourse analysis is more flexible and often combine semantic patterns in

the text with critical analysis of sentiments or power-relations that are framing the text. Discourse analysis is more flexible and can be a useful approach when you want your study to engage in a broader debate. The analysis is often a cyclical process that reveals new and different understandings of the research topic and requires going back and forth between the various data texts, theories and potential themes found within the texts.

Discourse Analysis and Values

Research on values and discourse analysis can be done in several ways. Defining values as that which is ‘worth having, doing and being’ (Selznick, 1992, p. 60) allows for the identification of values through discourses. While we can say that all discourses are value based in some sense, some more explicitly enhance values than others. For instance, when a husband and wife in counselling assemble different descriptions of the state of their marriage (e.g. to assign blame and responsibility for the change to the other), this could be based on a different perception of values and what the marriage is worth to them (e.g. respect for each other’s time, honesty, fidelity and trust). The text and the situation need to be analysed to identify the different discourses they enhance and are part of.

Another example can be found in the study by Gehman et al. (2013), who highlighted circulating values discourses as important for identifying the range and construction of values work. Values work in organisations can be viewed as clarifying which actions are right and wrong as well as circulating values discourses (Espedal, 2020). Gehman et al. (2013) defined *values practices* in organisations as ‘sayings and doings in organizations that articulate and accomplish what is normatively right and wrong, good or bad, for its own sake’ (p. 84). This work might include reflecting on principles, ideas and standards in addition to meanings and value assessments. Gehman et al. (2013) studied the introduction of an honour code at a university to follow a value of integrity. They found that the introduction of the honour code led to a larger value discourse on ethics within teaching settings. As such, the values work of introducing the honour code led to circulating value discourses of ethical

behaviour in the classroom. The introduction of the honour code established a situation that formed both a new values practice and an ethical discourse.

Three Discourse Analysis Approaches

By analysing texts and discourses, researchers can discover how patterns in texts and argumentations either strengthen or diminish the values in question. When answering the research question ‘How are values identified through discourse analysis?’, there is a need for practical guidance to identify values through written language. Here, we offer a concrete example from a Scandinavian journal dealing with the value of trust in public organisations. Through the examples, the readers can see the strengths of different discourse analysis approaches.

Discourse analysis on texts is sometimes divided into three scholastic traditions with different theoretical and methodological connotations (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). The three approaches are (1) structural-semantic discourse analysis, (2) critical discourse analysis and (3) discursive psychology. The three discourse analysis approaches are described below to give the reader an understanding of the available approaches within discourse analysis. These different theoretical groundings can allow for the identification of values.

Structural-Semantic Discourse Analysis

The basic idea in Laclau and Mouffe’s structural-semantic approach is that the written or spoken language is filled with *signifiers* (as cited in Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Signifiers or nodal points are abstract or concrete central words, concepts or symbols. Signifiers relate to other concepts and words and make *patterns*, *pathways*, and *structures* that can be analysed (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). The researcher identifies how values are placed in patterns and structures and gains a deeper understanding of how clusters of values are linked to each other in the texts.

Critical Discourse Analysis

The most popular and widely used approach for analysing discourses in texts is critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis was originally promoted by Fairclough (2003). Through critical discourse, the researcher emphasizes how dominating values are powerfully executed through language and texts. Hence, critical discourse aims at detecting structures of power in language. The analysis is divided into three levels: text, discursive practice and social practice. Fairclough (2001, pp. 30–33) suggested four steps for identifying the discourses. Step 1 is to investigate what the social problem is (rather than the research question) in order to find the knowledge necessary for understanding it. Step 2 is to identify obstacles to problem solving in the way that social life is constituted. Step 3 is to investigate how social life is affected by the problem, and Step 4 is to determine paths to circumvent the obstacles. This approach was described by Aadland (2010) for the detection of values in managerial texts and practices.

Discursive Psychology

The third discourse analysis approach allows for the exploration of individual values in practice expressed through text and speech. Discursive psychology is the study of psychological issues from a participant's perspective. It investigates how people practically manage and express psychological themes and concepts such as emotion, intent or agency within speech and text. For example, texts on trust show how discussion, negotiation and promotion of trust-based leadership are linked to emotions and individual preferences.

A Text Example

To illustrate the three traditions of discourse analysis, we chose a text published in the Danish journal *Det Offentlige* (*The Public*; detoffentlige.dk) on 30 November 2016 that we manually translated to English. The

text was written by journalist Mia Dalby Larsen and is an interview with the union leader and the municipal director on trust-based leadership.

In Scandinavia, there has been an initiative to develop trust-based leadership in public organisations. The value of trust is explicitly promoted and materialized in management and structures (Kivle, 2020; Nyhan, 2000). In Denmark around 2005, trust-based leadership was introduced as a public governance model, with ‘trust’ as the first keyword, followed by ‘trust model’, ‘trust reform’ and ‘trust delegation’ (Bentzen, 2016; Preisler, 2016). Trust-based leadership is defined as the extent to which a manager risks trusting their staff’s competence and motivation to do a good job (Kuvaas, 2017). Trust-based leadership both challenges existing dominant values and priorities and proposes specific practical solutions. Trust in institutions is distinguished from interpersonal trust. In public organisations, it is associated with interpersonal expectations towards public systems. Trust within public organisations is associated with positive interpersonal expectations of other actors within the institution (Kivle, 2020).

When aiming to reveal the circulation of the value of trust within texts on trust-based management in Scandinavia, the first step is to get an overview of the relevant documentation and texts concerning the discussions of trust-based management in the three Scandinavian countries (Neumann, 2021). It is crucial for the analysis to get an overview of the so-called *monuments*, texts that are cited frequently by others. The discourses/shifts in the discourses are often connected to these monuments because these texts either defend the status quo or take a stand against previous writings on the subject.

The text chosen in this example is not a monument text. Thus, different analytical approaches are used here to reveal whether and how the value of trust is circulated within this text. As you may notice, the three different approaches to discourse analysis give three different emphases and perspectives for understanding the text. Here is the text:

Why do municipalities need to de-bureaucratize?

A major reason is that resources are wasted if we use them incorrectly. De-bureaucratization can free up time and energy that we can use for welfare and services for citizens and companies, says Lau Svendsen-Tune, who

in addition to being a member of Fremfærd's board is the daily municipal director of Vordingborg Municipality.

Thus, every day he faces the challenges and dilemmas associated with getting bureaucracy, documentation and an organization with motivated employees to go hand in hand.

The citizen must get the most out of welfare and the services we provide, and the employees must have the opportunity, time and space to use their professionalism, providing working conditions that allow them to make a difference for the individual citizen, says deputy chairman of Fremfærd's board and chairman of the FOA, Dennis Kristensen. His members are among those who are expected to create welfare for the citizens.

The employees are the central focus when municipalities must determine where they can cut unnecessary rules and documentation. Both representatives agree that employees and managers are the main actors fostering new ideas, and municipal core tasks must continue to be developed.

If bureaucracy stands in the way of our employees using creative solutions, then it will be a big problem in relation to the need for us to rethink public services. One may feel unnecessarily controlled or that what one is doing is not meaningful. If bureaucracy removes their motivation, then we lose an important parameter in what we are fighting for in the public sector now—namely to succeed in our tasks and live up to the expectations that citizens justifiably have for us, says Lau Svendsen-Tune. (Larsen, 2016)

Discursive Analysis of the Example Text

How can discourse analysis contribute to research on values in organisations? When using a *structural-linguistic approach*, we must focus on keywords that signify the subject. Here, the subject is *de-bureaucratization* of the public sector. The message and valuation of the different signifiers become evident when they are placed and understood in relation to other signifiers in the text. For example, 'de-bureaucratization' is associated with 'free time and energy'. The cherished value of getting the 'most out of welfare', which is a well-known utterance regarding efficient usage of public resources, is combined with signifiers like 'professionalism' and 'working conditions'. Signifiers in texts relate to values work; as the signifiers strengthen each other, they also give one another positive or negative value. In a different text, other choices of words could indicate other

solutions to the same problem of inefficient public bureaucracy. By placing the desired goal of 'get the most out of welfare' together with 'professionalism', and later describing 'employees' as 'main actors' associated with 'creative solutions', there is a pattern of values and anti-values. The undesired values include clustering bureaucracy, unnecessary rules, control and documentation, and the desired values are clustering de-bureaucratization, getting the most out of welfare, professionalism, creative solutions, new ideas and employees as main actors.

When using *critical discourse analysis*, researchers must look for social relationships and power structures within the text. In addition to analysing the words used, linguistic objects (e.g. exclamation points) can also be analysed to draw theories on the discourse. In a critical discourse analysis, it is possible to look for words that weaken or strength the meaning (such as 'like', 'in a way' or 'maybe'). It is also possible to analyse the use of modal auxiliary verbs (must, can or will). In the case of the example text on trust-based leadership, we can also ask: Is it an academic or scientific text, popular science, a newspaper article, a poem or a fable? Additionally, we can ask: What norms govern the tone and content of these different types of text?

Looking at the example text, the text illustrates how trust and trust-based leadership are promoted by the authors within a broader power structure and how power and influence are executed by the authors through their words. When dividing the text into three levels—text, discursive practice and social practice—we find that the *text* is a popular scientific management text of the union leader's and municipal director's assumptions on their approaches to what is needed to de-bureaucratize the municipality. The text presupposes a Western, humanistic and human rights-oriented notion of the world, which presumes interpersonal trust based on equality and accountability. This might also be part of an approach known as 'Scandinavian management', which emphasizes enhancing a flat structure, delegating safety and promoting democracy in the workplace.

The municipal director is partaking in a *discursive practice* by highlighting that municipalities must look at where they can make cuts in unnecessary rules and documentation to establish other practices. This also indicates that the leaders are in the process of rethinking public service.

The *social practices* they forward are to listen to the employees and be conscious of their sources of motivation for rethinking practice. Regarding Fairclough's (2001) four steps, we can say that the social problem is de-bureaucratization and the forwarding of trust as a foundation of management. Step 2 of identifying obstacles to the problem is to look for knowledge that may liberate understanding. The people in control of the situation are the leaders, and their assessment of the situation is that they are in power to act. In identifying Step 3, how social life is part of the problem, the leaders highlight their opinion on the risk of unnecessary control. The road past the obstacles can be found in how de-bureaucratization can be done in a trustful and meaningful way.

When doing a *discursive psychology* analysis, the researcher must look for emotion, intent or agency within the speech and text. In relation to trust, the researcher can look for how emotions are part of the discussion, negotiation and promotion of trust. In the chosen text example, the word 'trust' is not explicitly mentioned, but we spot the connection to emotions in how the relations between employers and employees are emphasized. When rethinking public service, the leaders mention that the situation can lead to people (employees) feeling that they are unnecessarily controlled and that what they are doing is not meaningful. In relation to this situation, there are some reflections indicating that the leaders are placing themselves in the situations of employees. In the leaders' eyes, bureaucracy must aim towards a practice that motivates employees; if not, they will lose important parameters on how to organize bureaucracy. As such, the statements of the union leader and the municipal director forward an understanding of the psychology of trust, as both reflexive and intuitive, which is conceptualized as strategic, relational and institutional (Aadland, 2010). The situations of control and motivation are presented as two opposing methods of dealing with trust-based leadership.

Critical Remarks on the Method

The gap between textual entities, which can be spotted through the above-mentioned analytical approaches, and the analytical entities of studies of values, values work and discourses must be considered before

and during the discourse analysis. There are a number of pitfalls. Alvesson and Kärremann (2011) helped us understand how researchers tend to fall into circular argumentation when all findings promoting the researchers' assumption of discourse are seen as evidence, while contradictory findings may be interpreted as signs of 'different discourses'. In discourse analysis, as in all empirical research, it is crucial to be one's own devil's advocate, reflecting critically and systematically on what competing interpretations of the presented findings might be.

A difficulty worth mentioning is dealing with text. The process encourages the analyst to treat the text in a decontextualized manner that is attentive to the practice in which it partakes. Working with decontextualized texts can result in a temptation to speculate about abstract relations and structures. A related temptation is to consider texts in terms of their relation to what they describe as if what they describe can be captured by the research. This can generate much confusion (Potter, 2004).

Conclusion

Just like values, discourses are difficult to spot at first sight. Values hidden in texts and actions can be revealed through discourse analysis, emphasizing semantic structures, connections between texts, power relations, emotions and rationality. Even though the analysis is challenging when it comes to connecting textual evidence to analytical entities as discourses in values research, when done with caution and sensitivity towards so-called cherry picking, discourse analysis can provide valuable insight for your study and be a useful way to analyse discourses at individual, societal and institutional levels.

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11

A Narrative Approach to Exploring Values in Organisations

Gry Espedal and Oddgeir Synnes

Introduction

Values in organisations can be difficult to study. Often, the values of an organisation are taken for granted or more or less tacit in various activities and practices. If you ask organisational members what values they think are of importance or what values they themselves practise, they may find it difficult to answer. They often present the organisation's core values or say what they are obliged to say, or they might respond by telling a story.

A well-established definition of values is 'a conception, implicit or explicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means and ends of action' (Kluckhohn, 1951). Here, values are presented as influencing modes and actions, but how this is done in practice is not highlighted. In this chapter, we will argue that by investigating narratives we

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can deepen and broaden research on values and values in practice. Through stories, we can obtain an in-depth understanding of the connections between institutions, intentions, values and actions.

In organisation theory, narratives are often presented as giving insight into what develops, changes or sustains organisations (Czarniawska, 1997, p. 24). Boje (1991, p. 106) defines organisations as ‘A collective storytelling system in which the performance of stories is a key part of members sense-making’. Sense-making proceeds when participants collectively perform a story as some kind of pattern in organisational practice. Narratives provide a structure in which the past, present and future connect. They can bring forward institutional values that recall and represent the past but also re-interpret the past for present purposes to shape future activities (Linde, 2001). Thus, narratives can play a crucial role in identifying organisational processes that configure temporality as well as organisational identity.

But how do we go about researching values through stories? How do we collect stories? How can we analyse them? And, not least of all, what is a narrative? In this paper, we will give insight into what a narrative is, in which situations narrative analysis can be conveyed and how to analyse narratives when investigating values.

What Is a Narrative?

So far, we have argued for the centrality of stories to explore values in organisations without specifying what we mean by the concept of story or narrative. The word ‘story’ shares a common etymology with ‘history’. Both words are derived from a group of Greek words that include ‘histos’, meaning ‘web’; ‘histanai’, meaning ‘to stand’; and ‘eidenai’, meaning ‘to know well’ (Gabriel, 2000, p. 1). As such, storytelling is about weaving and constructing the product of knowledge. The constructing of knowledge is tied to how stories are linked and actively shaped by a storyteller. The narrative is often used to explain ‘a particular way of understanding events’ (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021). Narratives are thus not an objective recollection of what happened but an active construction of how the

different parts are linked together. The sequence of events in a narrative is linked through the story's plot.

Often, the terms 'story' and 'narrative' are used interchangeably. However, a central aspect that is highlighted in the term 'narrative' is connected to the understanding of plot. While a story is an account of incidents or events, a narrative adds a plot or coherence to the story (Boje, 2001). The plot is a way of interpreting and fitting together various episodes through causality. Consider novelist and literary critic E. M. Forster's (1927) well-known example of the difference between the objective events of a story and the ordering of the same events through plot:

'The king died and then the queen died'.

'The king died and then the queen died of grief'.

While the first is a rudimentary story recounting what happened, the second is an example of what Forster calls a plot. Here, two events that are not necessarily linked together (apart from following each other in time) are interpreted and made meaningful through a causal explanation.

This way of thinking of plot as the central aspect of narrative has been hugely influential and has spilled over from literary studies into theories of personal identity and human meaning-making on both an individual and societal level. For instance, in Ricoeur's (1984, 1992) theory of narrative identity, it is the plot that gives unity and identity to the character. Our narrative identity is a result of how we interpret various and heterogeneous events throughout life to make sense, or, as Salmon argues, 'Narrative shaping entails imposing a meaningful pattern on what would otherwise be random and disconnected' (Salmon, in Riessman, 2008, p. 5).

When to Use a Narrative Approach

A narrative approach can be a useful approach in organisational studies where knowledge and experience are not easy to identify. As values often are part of tacit and taken-for-granted knowledge about how organisations organise activities, a narrative approach can be used to identify

values and value practices. Through narrative research, a researcher's investigation can introduce visibility into leaders' lives and the culture of the organisation, as well as what values leaders/organisations think are valuable. As a researcher, it is also possible to research narratives to identify how cultural expressions and moral interactions between people are enacted and also who the characters of the story are. Finally, you can use a narrative approach to identify how organisational members work on values and practices and what the meaning of values is.

However, there are several critical aspects to be aware of in doing narrative research. As a researcher, you must be observant of the proximity of this type of research to discourse analysis (see Chap. 10). Discourse analysis is more aimed at identifying political, social and critical discussions, while narrative research delves more into the stories themselves and the different voices they represent in an organisation.

As a narrative researcher, you should be observant of your role as a scientist when utilising a narrative approach. Are you ready to take the stories told? Some stories can be sensitive and create difficulties for the informant and also for the researcher. Make sure that there is sufficient support for the informant after you have left if necessary. In utilising a narrative approach, you might also experience that the stories told are not part of the official intentions of the organisation. They might take a critical view of the organisation, and you as a researcher have to take intentions into consideration. As a researcher, you should also be aware that the story is an ongoing construction. It continues after you have left. Not all stories contain every element. You will need to find more than one person's story to identify the pattern. In some situations, you will experience that some individuals are better storytellers than others. Be aware of whether your informants are creating bias in your material.

In addition, if you are concerned with hard, rational facts and a true picture of what is happening, it is not necessarily stories you should ask for. You must be aware that an interpretation takes place in the mind of both the narrator and the listener.

Narratives and Values

According to MacIntyre (2007), human actions are entwined with the narratives of the culture: human actions are performed to make specific stories happen. As such, actions, behaviours and practices have underlying meanings related to what is important, desirable and wanted. Hence, narratives are always tied to values of how we choose to interpret actions and situations from our perspective by putting them into a more or less coherent story.

Take the example from Forster of the queen dying of grief, which clearly is a normative version of how a queen ought to react to a king's death. However, maybe her death was not connected to the husband's death. Or maybe it was connected but not as grief. We could easily think of other possible interpretations of why the queen died after the king, depending on the understanding of the two situations. How stories are made intelligible through the ordering of the plot is always value-driven in how it fits the standpoint of the storyteller. Another crucial aspect to understand narrative as connected to values is performativity. Consider Phelan's (1996, p. 218) rhetorical take on narrative as 'somebody telling somebody else on some occasion for some purpose that something happened'. Phelan's conception highlights performativity and context: a story is told at a certain moment in time by a specific narrator to a concrete listener for a reason.

Another important aspect of narrative's close relationship with values is the intertwinement of various types of narrations in which individual stories are played out against larger stories of society and cultures, in opposition or in agreement. The systems we are part of as organisational members are already there, deeply entrenched in our culture and language (Bruner, 1990). Our values are part of the preferences of the culture and, as such, part of the stories we tell of the meaning we use to understand the larger system. In other words, telling stories of what is of worth is part of larger stories of what we value.

Thus, stories are shaped from human life's myriad events and happenings. These are shaped into stories for a particular purpose, to achieve an effect or to bring forward a meaning. What stories thus convey are

narrative truths, not historical truths (Spence, 1982). A narrative can be contested by other versions, for example, a new version of why the queen died might challenge the established story.

Exploring Values Through Narratives

Values are beliefs of a particular type. They are ‘ideas about the good life’ (Morris, 1956), which concern those things ‘worth having, doing and being’ (Selznick, 1992, p. 60) or what we think is of value. When we as human beings enact our lives, we can be held accountable for that of which we are the authors (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 209). In establishing a link between being an author of life and being held accountable, an opening is made for values as part of the enactment of the story. In authoring ourselves, values become prominent in what we say and especially in what we do.

Narratives can be a central mechanism that provide a bridge between tacit and explicit knowledge, allowing tacit social knowledge of values to be demonstrated and learned (Linde, 2001). The performative aspects of values of what is worth having, doing and being can be explored through narratives revealing how members believe they ought to behave as participants in their unique organisational culture or how they persuasively advocate those values through narratives (Meyer, 1995).

Narratives can also bring forward institutional memories of historical values by recalling and representing the past through invoking and retelling present purposes. Linde (2009) speaks of institutions using narratives in their practice of remembering values. As such, narratives might be seen as a central mechanism that mirrors the values of an organisation’s founder (Linde, 2001).

Espedal and Carlsen (2021) have identified a connection between sacred stories and practices in a faith-based organisation. The values work of the organisation is summarised in narratives promoting the value of compassion. One organisational leader said, ‘I was at a conference, hearing a young teenager speaking to the audience. He said to the professionals: “You should let your heart take the lead, let it beat as close to the surface as possible, and then let your knowledge follow up”’ (Espedal &

Carlsen, 2021). When back at the workplace, the leader used this story to make a connection to the larger work and the founder of the organisation. She mentioned the encounter with the teenager in meetings with professionals as an example of how they should continuously work on the value of compassion.

Narratives can also be of importance for obtaining information about what is not said. Values in organisations can be both conflicting and counter-active. Counter-narratives can be stories opposing institutional and societal stories (Bamberg & Andrews, 2004; Frandsen et al., 2016). Stories in organisations can thus display narrative tensions and offer various narrative truths about which values are prominent, given attention and performed in everyday practices.

Narrative Research

Narrative research is positioned in the field of qualitative research and falls under the scientific tradition of constructionism. Within constructionism, reality is viewed as socially and societally embedded (Grbich, 2012). Knowledge is constructed in the interactions between actors and between the researcher and the researched. Narratives and stories are not fundamentally possessions of the individual; rather, they are products in which individuals render themselves intelligible to others (Gergen & Gergen, 1988; Hinchman & Hinchman, 2001). As such, we agree with Nelson (1989), who argues that the researcher does not find narratives but instead participates in their creation.

In conducting narrative research, you might wonder where to find stories. We claim that stories can be found anywhere. For example, as a researcher, you might, in semi-structured interviews, ask for stories. Useful questions and statements to elicit values include the following: Tell me a story of when you made a difference for someone. What do you value most at work? When do you think you are at your best? Tell me why you became a leader. The important aspect of eliciting stories in interviews is letting the interviewer tell the story as fully as possible to develop an understanding of how the narrator tells the event, establishes the settings, includes characters and interprets incidents.

As a researcher doing observation, you can let stories lead your curiosity. When you write field notes, this can be a collection of stories of what is happening in the organisation. You can use photos, videos and audio recordings to look for stories people tell or values people hold. Archival documents can be used, as well as posts on Instagram and Facebook (this was done by many who were investigating the #metoo campaign).

Here are some examples of how narratives are used for data gathering in studying values. In a master's thesis at the VID Specialised University, students asked leaders in the middle of the coronavirus crisis to write diaries. They used a solicited diary method, meaning participants were asked to record their actions, thoughts and feelings at the request of the researcher (Alaszewski, 2006). These diaries were stories of the leaders during a crisis situation. In other cases, students have researched stories in appreciation and complaint letters at hospitals. Another student conducted a survey of values in three child welfare institutions for an analysis of storytelling. Stories were collected from the institutions and compared to the official values of the organisations (Jordheim, 2008). Through this approach, it was possible to tell how stories and values were used to make sense in the organisation.

Analysing Narratives Through Three Case Studies

Once you have the stories, how should you analyse them? There are a few standardised ways of performing narrative analysis. The challenge of using a narrative approach in doing analysis of text is that stories are not generally highly agreed-upon texts, told from beginning to end. They are not static; they vary by the context and implications in which they are told. As such, Boje (2001) describes stories in organisations as self-deconstructing, flowing, emerging and networking, which provides many approaches to interpretation.

Despite the heterogeneity of stories, in each storytelling there is most often a pattern that models either the past or unfolding and anticipated experiences, intentions and practices. While there are no predefined steps

for analysing narrative material, it is often common to ask questions that concern the overall (holistic) meaning-making in a story:

- What are the significant events, and how are these ordered through the plot?
- How is the connection between present, past and future interpreted?
- What are the central characters in the stories, and what roles do they play?
- In which settings are the stories played out?
- What different voices are found in the stories? Stories are multi-voiced, displaying tensions between versions of the self, as well as influenced by larger cultural plotlines. See: Frank (2012); Josselson (2011); Riessman (2008); Synnes et al. (2020).

To make clearer how to conduct a narrative approach to analyse narratives and values, we present Riessman's (2008) suggestion of three ways to perform a narrative analysis of written material: (1) thematic analysis: (what is being told and what is the content of the stories?), (2) structural analysis (how is it told, what kind of language is used, metaphors, etc.?) and (3) performative analysis (why is it told, for what purposes?). Within a thematic analysis of narratives, the content is the exclusive focus, and the approach is adapted to uncover and thematically categorise the storytellers and the researchers' experiences. Structural narrative analysis has its roots in the 1970s, when social and organisational scientists took as their methodological position stories, myths, sagas and other forms of narratives as overlooked yet valuable source (Clark, 1972; Mitroff & Kilmann, 1975; Rhodes & Brown, 2005). As such, a structural narrative approach might look for the structure of a story to understand how human behaviour and experience are intertwined with available narrative resources. How the story is told, the language used and the metaphors or the coda surfacing in the stories might be analysed (Labov & Waletzky, 2003). Performative narrative analysis can establish the meaning of why stories are being told in a particular context and for what purposes. Taking a stance in organisational theory, we argue that performative analysis can be of interest when investigating Boje's (1991) perspective of storytelling as sense-making.

These three analytic perspectives all underscore how narrative analysis is concerned with holistic understanding in which the different parts of a story are seen in light of the pre-figured story or engaged in retrospective sense-making (Boje, 2001). As such, where the researcher puts the emphasis regarding analytic lens might differ from project to project. However, parts of all three narrative approaches are often used in the analysis. We underscore this by presenting three case examples.

We will first turn to one study researching values and value work in a faith-based organisation in Norway (Espedal, 2019). In order to identify how values are part of the ongoing performance of the organisation, a narrative approach was undertaken (Espedal & Carlsen, 2021). During interviews, a question to elicit narratives was asked: ‘Can you tell me a story of when you made a difference to someone at work?’ This was done to investigate the practices and stories for which organisational members wished to be known, especially in relation to the core values of compassion and quality. This question was followed by ‘How do you know this made a difference to someone?’ as a way to gain information on how the informant constructed their knowledge of their story.

In thematically analysing the collected data material, a live coding sequence was utilised (Locke et al., 2015). Through this approach, a list of codes, themes and stories from within-case descriptions were brought to a meeting with the authors. Live coding is a creative process that connects validation and discovery to generate new theories, codes and findings. In the live coding sequence, pattern, content, new stories and inconsistencies in the material were sought to form other creative codes or aggregated dimensions that ‘legitimate the new insight’ (Locke et al., 2015, p. 374). The thematic live code sequence was used to shift from what actually happened to describe how people make sense of what happened.

In the case study of sacred stories in a faith-based organisation, structural narrative analysis led to a growing recognition of the importance of the meta-stories of the organisation, the tales of the biblical parable of the Good Samaritan and the organisation’s founder Maria Haven, as well as the telling of sacred stories in the organisation. Looking across all types of data, including the archives and the observations of patient treatments, the authors singled out 92 excerpts of data that directly or indirectly

referred to one or all of these stories. The stories were analysed for common structures and basic sequences of exposition, complication and resolution (De Beaugrande & Colby, 1979; Kintsch, 1978). What the authors found was that the stories had the same plot about not passing by a person in need, whether in relation to marginalised patients or personnel. The authors also scanned through the data for potential contrary narratives and identified 21 excerpts in which people critically contested the grounds of the sacred.

Leaning on a performative analytical perspective, the authors found a repeated practice of telling what they termed 'sacred stories'. The authors drew on prior work to conceive 'sacred' as something within the realm of human ideals and values that people 'set apart' (Anttonen, 2000, p. 42) and grant special significance to as 'inviolable' or 'untouchable' (Harrison et al., 2009, p. 227). The authors explored the meaning of the sacred as a form of values work that extended beyond situations, subjects and organisations (Bednarek-Gilland, 2015) to sources of transcendence (Ricoeur, 1995). Sacred texts (which may be likened to articulations of deeply held values in organisations) were addressed to 'imagination rather than obedience' (Ricoeur, 1977, p. 37). The sacred was latent and realised in performative rather than propositional terms, in events of meaning where people appropriate the possibilities of the text in the situations in which they find themselves (Wallace, 2000).

To understand the performativity of the dynamics of telling and living sacred stories, the researchers turned the stories into two sets of analytical categories: figuring the sacred-as-story and figuring the sacred-as-practice. Through this analytical approach, it was possible to identify how the figuring of the sacred in stories and in actions reinvigorated values work as a two-way, dialectic learning process between the ongoing creative imitation of action and narratives being identified. The study shows that values in the shape of the stories of the sacred do not achieve their meaning as unchangeable cores or sanctioned beliefs. Rather, they come to life in the process of ongoing moral inquiry that co-evolves with moral agencies (Espedal & Carlsen, 2021).

In a second and well-known study, Polletta (1998) combines elements from Riessman's (2008) analytical perspectives, finding the oral handovers of stories to be of importance in establishing a countrywide civil

rights protest in the US in the 1960s. It started with a non-violent protest of black students 'sitting in' at a restaurant for white people, symbolising their right to eat in a public place. The demonstration was uncoordinated, but it spread like a fever to other cities, eventually coming to be known as the Greensboro sit-ins.

Polletta shows how narrative analyses are often intertwined with considerations of what people tell, how they tell it and for what purposes. Thematic analyses of campus newspapers; articles, letters and speeches; and organisational and personal correspondence showed a coherent and compelling narrative of the sit-in movement. Structural analysis of the narratives showed the importance of storytelling in constituting the students' activities and their part in the demonstrations. Performative narrative analysis illustrated how the movement led to a sense of urgency, local initiative and moral imperative. The study of the context exposed that the churches were the linchpin of the students' activism, the place for telling stories and supplying leaders and members' guidance, training and inspiration.

In a third study, how stories are closely linked to values was explored in Synnes' research on storytelling among terminally ill cancer patients. The analysis showed how the narrator positioned herself together with significant other characters and in specific meaningful settings, adding weight to the interconnectedness, solicitude and love that had been experienced throughout her life (Synnes, 2012). Another finding was how important nostalgic stories of childhood and youth become when approaching death (Synnes, 2015). Here, the narrative analysis showed how these smaller stories that hardly had been noticed by previous narrative research became important ways of upholding continuity and belonging.

A related perspective from this material argued that the prevalence of stories of childhood homes from the patients must be seen in the light of cultural imaginaries of home, providing legitimacy and substance to the memories (Synnes & Frank, 2020). Furthermore, the value of the home is not just something that is thematised in the stories but also performed: narrations of home can thus also be ways of home-making. Synnes' research thus shows that values are thematised in stories by, for example, talking about solicitude, love and connectedness. In addition, the analysis

shows that this telling is also related to available cultural resources and structures (nostalgic stories and cultural imaginaries of home). Finally, the analysis underscores how the telling of these kinds of stories also performs something, makes something happen through the storytelling. Telling a story can thus be seen as narrative care and self-care (Synnes & Frank, 2020).

Conclusion

Investigating narratives as a form of sense-making through exploring the plot, and investigating narratives as performative in specific contexts, underscores the close relationship between values and how narratives are central to understanding what matters to people in organisational life. Narrative research can as such be used to explore individual and organisational values that are enacted and authored by organisational members. The narratives provide a structure in which the past, present and future connect. They provide descriptions of sequences of events and can as such be powerful tools for highlighting the ongoing performance of values work and of value practices, telling people what is right and wrong. Narratives unfold at the intersection between discourse and practice and can become a resource that furnishes the embedded agency of the organisational members.

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12

Researchers' Role Reflexivity When Studying Values Work

Stephen Sirris

Introduction

Researchers leave fingerprints on their research that are often implicit and subtle, rarely obvious or visible. Can researchers become aware of the impacts of their involvement on their research? And how can such insights explicitly be accounted for? Such questions essentially highlight how researchers position themselves through various roles. My approach to this challenge is to answer the question *How can researchers strengthen role reflexivity when studying values work?* The aim of this study is twofold: to clarify and link the multifaceted concepts of reflexivity and roles and to exemplify through empirical illustrations how these concepts are a resource when researching values work. I specifically draw examples from observation and interviews since these methods, in particular, highlight fundamental challenges about roles and reflexivity that are also relevant to other methods.

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The chapter is structured as follows. The theoretical section delineates the main concepts and the philosophical underpinnings of the illustrative study. I then discuss reflexivity as a dimension associated with awareness of the researcher's roles and apply it to three stages of data collection: while preparing the study, interacting with participants and interpreting.

The Norwegian film *Kitchen Stories* (2003) offers interesting lessons on role reflexivity. The film illustrates the challenges of being positioned as an insider or outsider—in other words, balancing proximity and distance (Repstad, 2019). Depicting the early 1950s, the film is based on Swedish observers from a firm producing kitchens who want to study Norwegian homes. By studying inhabitants' use of the kitchen, the observers hope to, with the help of 'modern, scientific methods', place the stove, sink and table in the most effective way so that users do not have to walk unnecessarily. In the film, the observer sits on a highchair in a corner, watching and taking notes about the 'object', who is an old bachelor cooking and drinking coffee. The observer and the observee are not allowed to communicate. The bachelor gradually gets bored and turns off the light, leaving the observer in a dark kitchen. The observer, however, turns on his headlight. The bachelor then drills a hole on the kitchen ceiling and starts observing the observer from the floor above the kitchen. Finally, tired of the situation, the bachelor invites the observer to a cup of coffee. They become friends and discover mutual interests and values. When the bachelor dies, the observer chooses to enter new roles by leaving his job, moving into the house and embracing the values of its former resident.

Theoretical Perspectives

Kitchen Stories illustrates how researchers shuttle between positions, managing proximity and distance by assuming different roles. To theoretically ground this construct, I relate it to the scientific paradigms that underpin interviews and observation. I also link the key concepts: roles, reflexivity and values.

Scientific Paradigms and Researcher's Positioning

Kitchen Stories offers insights into how scientific paradigms inform researchers' involvement. The 1950s were characterised by a sense of belief in progress, the future and science. The ideal of neutrality has mirrored a positivist legacy derived from the natural sciences, foregrounding distanced researchers who guaranteed the ideal of objectivity. Generally, such distancing is more easily realised when sending a questionnaire to people, without engaging in face-to-face contact. Quantitative research deals with variables and parts as well as counts and measures. On the other hand, qualitative researchers explore people in their natural environments, attempting to characterise and describe, seeking in-depth understanding and examining the meaning of particular events, actions and experiences from the angle of purpose and values (Creswell, 2013). Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009) metaphors of miners and travellers capture this duality. Like miners searching for prized metal amid worthless stones, quantitatively oriented researchers extract objective information because they know what to look for. In contrast, travellers set out to discover and write their accounts upon returning home. Similarly, the qualitatively oriented researcher is not a tool that is detached from the process of interpretation and knowledge creation. Paradigms about reality being socially constructed foreground the researcher as an involved co-constructer of data.

Traditionally, indicators like neutrality, distance and objectivity have separated quantitative studies from qualitative ones. However, such indicators are difficult to evaluate in situations characterised by indifference towards the participants. Thus, the direct involvement of researchers can be placed on a scale: from making surveys to performing fieldwork, interviewing and observing participants. Irrespective of paradigms, researchers are not neutral; in fact, they tend to affect their research personally and institutionally (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009). Importantly, this highlights the ethical and values-laden dimension of research. It signifies that researchers' fingerprints are on their research, metaphorically speaking. Accepting this premise, researchers are compelled to attend to such connections. Accordingly, I propose the concept of role reflexivity which, for

the purpose of this chapter, I understand as identifying, accounting for and managing researchers' roles.

Definitions—Roles and Reflexivity

While role is an external attribute linked to positions within the social structure, identity is internal, consisting of internalised meanings and expectations associated with a role (Sirris, 2019, p. 55). Roles are not static; rather, they evolve through interactions, as illustrated in *Kitchen Stories* by an ongoing and dynamic negotiation of roles from distant observation to befriending. Similarly, research is a process characterised by how role incumbents, researchers and participants alike, attach meanings and work on coming to terms with multiple roles. This is because research is processed in interaction and identification with the participants.

Textbooks on research methods operationalise roles into various typologies (Repstad, 2019). Researchers themselves, deliberately or unknowingly, claim and perform roles. Moreover, roles are attributed as researchers reflect external expectations from participants, for example, colleague, friend, enemy, superior or apprentice (Wadel, 2014, p. 31). Even when researchers claim to be precisely researchers, they can be regarded as inspectors, controllers or guests. The sum of expectations from oneself and others results in a complex plurality of various roles that demand attention. Participants can also use their role repertoire and portray themselves as superhumans, victims, experts and so on. During research, roles naturally develop or change as researchers assume new positions and experience transitions. Thus, roles express positionality: what we know and believe. However, changing positions or roles does not necessarily imply that one is reflexive about it.

When researchers are reflexive about their roles, they engage in identity work, which involves forming constructions that provide coherence and distinctiveness (Sirris, 2019, p. 53). Generally, reflexivity denotes multiple factors that are relevant to research: interrogating the roles of the researcher, the relation of the researcher and the researched, how the research process and practices shape its outcome, and the context of

knowledge production politically and socially (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). Vital to reflexivity is an ongoing process of vigilance and self-questioning—researchers' conscious stance vis-à-vis their data analysis and theorising (Gabriel, 2018, p. 145). Reflexivity refers to interrogating one's own position, values and practices during the research process and how these may have had impact on the research. The goal of reflexivity is to enhance trustworthiness and the value of qualitative research. To me, role reflexivity is the process by which researchers identify, account for and manage their roles. Being reflective is to consider something, while being reflexive is to take a step back and involve the subject, in this case the researcher, in the reflection, and examine how they are part of the research (Johnson & Duberley, 2003).

Delving deeper into the role concept, a person can define oneself in alignment with the role or not. From a functionalistic perspective, a role is understood as explicit and systematically enforced prescriptions for how organisational members should think and feel about themselves and their work. In contrast, Simpson and Carroll (2008, p. 43) focus on the affinity for social interactionism and interpret role as 'a vehicle that mediates and negotiates the meanings constructed in relational interactions, while itself being subject to ongoing reconstruction in these relational processes'. Since roles are not exclusively linked to a social position, they are means of translations. They are seen as a boundary object, functioning like open containers to be filled with meaning, in line with the symbolic interactionist view. Simpson and Carroll (2008) suggest that role identity encompasses values, goals, behaviours and beliefs that are connected to a given role which may be enacted.

Values and Role Reflexivity

Researchers exercise their values in choosing roles. Importantly, from a moral perspective, one is never solely a researcher in relation to the actors, and the actors are more than research objects. In a research setting, human beings are in contact, and not roles. According to Ciesielska et al. (2018, p. 40), 'researchers are thinking and feeling human beings, engaged in relationship with others, nurturing more or less crystallized political and

religious views and preferences and thus always situated in their research and their production of knowledge’.

To provide context for the examples used in this chapter, I view observation and interviews as methods linked to values. Observation involves studying and registering behaviour in a given context or field. It gives direct and unmediated access to reality, as in the case of *Kitchen Stories*. Interviews are not context-bound in the same way; they can be retrospective or prospective and hence transcend time and space. Both methods are a product of ‘intersubjective encounters and practice, influenced by numerous psychological and circumstantial factors’ (Gabriel, 2018, p. 147). First, to avoid narcissism and promote transparency, reflexive researchers interrogate their own values and motives and how these may impact the research. Seeking transparency in values has a bearing on how one describes and reflects on the choices of subject, concepts, methods and field work. This entails a demanding and close probing of motives, understanding how values drive research and recognising researchers’ own presence.

Second, the participants’ values constitute or inform the object of research. Social interaction relates to acquiring certain values or goals. Awareness of the values dimension necessitates interaction and interpretation of the researchers’ and participants’ worlds. Explicit and official core values, or values-for-practice, are captured more easily than values-in-practice, to which qualitative research is particularly well-suited (Sirris, 2020). While interviews capture what people say and what they say they do, observation gives access to their actual behaviour. Both methods capture actions and situations where something is at stake and underpinned by emotions. Both methods allow for capturing the actor’s point of view and allow for in-depth characterisations through the study of an environment or a case with distinct nuances. Combining these methods casts light on practices, discourses and values. The combination potentially examines behaviour as values-laden, allowing researchers to understand why events are experienced as significant and why emotions arise. Emotions are ignited when encountering situations that threaten or enhance values (Mazzetti, 2018, p. 159).

Methods and Role Reflexivity

In interviews and observations, there is a distinction between what we *look at* in the sense of watching and noting—as naïve observation or narrativism—and what we *look for*, that is, phenomena of interest that are theoretically informed and expressed in generic concepts. Wadel (2014, p. 33) summarised researchers' involvement and roles in the following words: 'A person may drink (participate in the native culture) drink heavily (participate, fully, in depth) get drunk (temporarily go native) or become a drunk (go native and stay in that condition)'. Although the quote refers to observation, it also has a bearing on interviewing. Such categorising has implications for researchers' roles at three different stages, and these roles are distributed between inside and outside positionings. First, completely participating means blending into the studied environment and practices of the actors. In interviews, blending is indicated by a strong sympathy and even adoption of the interviewee's stance against adversaries. This stance implies going native: an acculturation with strong identification, which is useful when seeking insiders' points of views and access to tacit knowledge. The researcher becomes an ally, therapist or a peer. However, the researcher can either be in the background or draw more attention by interrupting and asking questions. Second, partial participation is taking part in interactions by learning the behaviour and values that offer in-depth understanding from an external standpoint. This implies not losing control of the researcher's role as a scholar and academic. Third, non-participant researchers observe without becoming involved in practices. The researcher in such situations is an 'alien', as seen in shadowing, who fixes their gaze on a person by following them around (see Chap. 10). Hidden observation has its limitations since ethical guidelines safeguard participants' informed consent. At the same time, it also has advantages in terms of no researcher's effect, which refers to the tendency of some people to behave differently because they know they are being observed. To sum up, combining interviews and observation enables the researcher to capture values-for-practice and values-in-practice. Using these methods, researchers should position themselves after considering and explicating their repertoire of roles, and thus

demonstrate role reflexivity. The following section illustrates how this can be practically achieved in a research study.

Role Reflexivity in Values Research

To exemplify role reflexivity when studying values work, I conceptualise three interrelated phases associated with data collection: (1) the *before* phase involves claiming and establishing roles by interest and self-presentation; (2) the *during* phase involves performing and negotiating roles through interactions, where roles are preferred or attributed (values works involve a moral perspective) and (3) the *after* phase involves interpreting. These are somewhat overlapping and not isolated processes. My examples stem from a PhD project on hybrid professional managers' self-understanding of roles and values (Sirris, 2019). Using a multiple embedded case study design (Stake, 2013), I interviewed nine middle managers in a faith-based hospital and nine deans who supervised pastors in the Church of Norway. I also shadowed three leaders from each organisation for one workweek each.

Phase 1: Claiming and Establishing Roles—Research Interest and Self-presentation

The choice of research project emanates from an individual's scholarly interest. However, questions and goals are institutionally framed and depend on disciplinary trends. Given that nothing exists in an ideological vacuum, research is values-laden and driven by politics and interests. In other words, research depends on what issues are perceived as problems, what questions are considered relevant and what priorities are made. Researchers are not neutral and detached from these contexts. Axiology concerns such layers of the context in which the research is done (Creswell, 2013).

Usually, positioning oneself requires self-presentation, which is explicated in the methods section along with ethical considerations. First, a researcher's inherent values should be accounted for as part of the

axiology since researchers' values, intentions and experiences cannot be left out of the research. For instance, one can account for educational background (in terms of professional training), work experience and particular research interests. These can be a source of bias *and* a resource for enhancing engagement. For example, in my comparative study, I had profound knowledge of the church context as a former employee. As an insider, I knew and had access to the deans and clergy. However, my knowledge of healthcare was limited. To compensate, I read research literature on hospital organisation and management. My knowledge of the sectors included in the study was asymmetric. To balance this discrepancy, I favoured the collection of more data than less. I sought to overcome my own prejudices by spending adequate time on the field. Having a comparative project was useful since comparisons between the organisations were inevitable. This sensitised me to the uniqueness of each organisation.

Second, how research is situated within a particular institutional context should be explicated. For instance, my institution enjoys a long-standing tradition of training health and social workers. I work at the university's master's programme that offers a specialisation in values-based leadership and attracts students from healthcare and social sector fields as well as from faith-based and religious organisations. The institution is owned by a faith-based trust. The doctoral programme lies within the cross-disciplinary realm of 'diakonia, values and professional practice', and most PhD projects are empirical. These factors frame the research project.

To sum up, reflexivity on axiology by accounting for context, research interest and self-presentation resembles the act of looking in the mirror at features that help in establishing the researcher's role (Gabriel, 2018). The reflexive researcher steps back and learns since the mirror allows for adjusting one's position and changing expressions when viewing oneself from the position of others.

Further, reflexivity also deals with positioning oneself within the researcher's role and explicating one's relationships with research organisations and participants. Assuming any role is associated with both advantages and disadvantages. According to Wadel (2014, p. 51), 'a role affects where the researcher can go, what he can do, who he can interact

with, what he can ask about, what to see and what be told'. Conducting research in a well-known field has its advantages; for instance, having thorough knowledge about the routine of an organisation can improve understanding and avoid misunderstandings. Choosing a well-known field can allow researchers to exercise their values through engagement and fulfil their desire to improve or change the field or a given problem. Access is easier but maintaining distance is challenging. Going native is easier when researching known persons, like friends and colleagues. In such cases, the researcher's role is embedded in the professional role, since the studied role is prioritised. People seek common ground when they meet. This demands reflexivity concerning added roles such as presenting oneself and behaving like a peer professional, or discussing like a manager with another manager. Social roles like being a parent or sharing beliefs may also need to be articulated and often emerge in small talk.

There are also disadvantages associated with proximity to the research subject, and that includes the lack of distance to discover something new. Much is taken for granted and not questioned. The following axiom holds true: 'Familiar things happen and people don't bother about it. It takes an unusual mind to discover the obvious'. However, distance is not always an advantage; for example, social anthropologists exploring a remote island may feel isolated and foreign as they acquire new knowledge and language to understand the culture. Culture refers to value patterns informing behaviour whereas social structure or organisation refers to patterns of behaviour (Wadel, 2014, p. 24). Social scientists study the organisation of cultural values, the people who organise and maintain such cultural values, and their reasons and processes. In order to understand something about the lives of others, one must accept their views on what is important to their lives: one must listen to them and their priorities. This, of course, is vital to values studies. Whether a researcher is an insider or outsider, reflexivity is not merely about one's own role. It implies assuming the role of the other to enhance understanding. This entails encountering and entering their culture by understanding their patterns of values-for-practice and values-in-practice.

Phase 2: Performing and Negotiating Roles— Attribution and Preference

To enter a cultural field, one needs to approach an organisation to gain access. The researcher is a representative of a given institution; the role carries weight as well as authority. Often the study is in the interest of the organisation and is anchored by the management who offers formal consent. Approaching the organisation with a letter or asking for a meeting creates expectations about the researchers' roles and establish role patterns.

It is important to add that one cannot automatically enter any roles that one desires. People typically expect to fit and place the researcher into a familiar category within their social system, such as a supervisor, an expert or a guest. For instance, if the research has been approved by the management and the researcher is studying managers, the researcher could be perceived as being associated with the management, particularly if study method involves shadowing, where the entire focus is on the manager. Since observation is selective and filtered, it is challenging to distribute attention. Wadel (2014, p. 84) expressed this in the following words: 'the collecting of data is a discriminating activity, like the picking of flowers, and unlike the action of a lawnmower'. To guard against this problem in my project, I spoke to a number of actors around each manager and included several managerial levels in my interviews. I also met different participants with different roles (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). For example, gatekeepers can exclude from activities or metaphorically open doors. Sponsors have a special interest in the project, and they facilitate and offer support. Allies and mediators serve as key valuable informants who are cooperative, motivated, well-formulated and facilitate access to central activities and information.

I gained experienced with attributed roles in the hospital setting. One of the shadowed managers introduced me to the female nurses with a humorous line: 'As you can see, I have gotten a boyfriend on a regular basis'. As part of shadowing the manager, we also visited a unit of Philippine workers. Given the workers' Catholic identity, she introduced me as 'archangel Gabriel', signalling that I was a caring, discrete and trustworthy person. This manager had a tough work situation, filled with

hectic activities and a lot of responsibility. She also shared a dynamic relationship with the union representative, and I had observed their discussions on a few occasions. Later, the representative agreed to be interviewed and provided a balanced description of the running of the unit. In my opinion, she regarded me as a neutral person who did not take sides. This coincided with my preferred role identity.

Role expectations can also be shaped since positioning occurs through words and actions. It is important to question oneself about the values one expresses and whether one is considered polite and reasonable or ignorant, cynical and provoking. This can be achieved by informing oneself about the research project, by understanding self-presentation and by building trust. It is important that a researcher does not disturb organisational or professional routines and is not considered a threat. Flexibility is central to the researcher role. For instance, for my research project, I followed the managers and made notes discretely by hand or on the laptop. If I was alone with the managers, I occasionally asked questions, but interfered minimally. I had asked the managers to talk me through their work as they went about completing their daily tasks. Some of them initiated conversations and seemed eager to talk about their job and share their reflections.

My preferred main role during fieldwork is that of an apprentice, which is typically known within all cultures. This recommended role is associated with a legitimate stance of not knowing, yet eager to learn (Repstad, 2019). Apprentices are open to instruction and are essential to the research process, which involves learning from other people. Apprentices invite others to teach, guide and explain what, how and why. This role is marked by questions, humility and avoidance of heavy terminology to avoid being considered an expert. I experienced that people were often flattered when someone displayed genuine interest in them. The apprentice is often considered a young person or a novice who is trained in a profession and its practices by experienced others. Apprentices thus receive valuable information in an understandable language. I experienced that this role blended easily with other roles like researcher, teacher, VID-employee and pastor. Importantly, assuming the role of an apprentice gives access to cultural values inherent in practices. In values

studies, this is a resource for understanding why something is relevant and prioritised.

Importantly, roles evolve through interactions. Roles are not static; similarly, access is not guaranteed once and for all. It is a process that involves establishing relations and broadening the role repertoire. Formal access does not equate real access, being accepted or entering an interaction. Real access entails going beyond ice-breaking activities and engaging in renegotiation and improvement of relations. My experience allowed me to realise that a researcher's role is dynamic and shaped in interaction with the participants. For instance, I shared a good rapport with all the managers I shadowed, and they seemed comfortable with my presence. The managers I shadowed probably had different motives for participating in a study about the value of collegiality. For example, one elderly dean gave me the feeling that he wanted to exemplify 'the perfect dean'. This placed me in the role of a pupil or even a secretary, making records of his leadership. I was not completely at ease with this attributed role. I did not experience a dynamic interaction; rather, I suspected that my questions were met with pre-fabricated answers. In this deanery, I was excluded from certain activities and felt like a distant observer who was only invited to some parts of the show, but not into the unfolding of everyday life.

This dean separated leadership—strategy, motivating, preaching—from the nitty-gritty micro-management that he detested and delegated to his secretary. As a management researcher, I noted this division as well as the fact that the daily running of the deanery was, consequently, ill-organised. This did not coincide with my own managerial values. To better understand the deanery, it was crucial to obtain additional viewpoints. I conducted a group interview in which seven pastors participated. Additionally, two other pastors asked me to interview them separately. The two pastors criticised the authoritarian leadership style of the dean as 'mis-management'. It was important to them to communicate their managerial values and role expectations of the dean. I interpreted their initiative as an expression of trust towards me. They knew me beforehand and believed that I would safeguard their information. Both pastors used me to channel their frustration. They held collegiality as a central value and felt that it was not respected by the dean.

The above episode illustrates how roles are not constant. Thus, researchers will benefit from managing a repertoire of roles. So far, I have articulated various strategies for promoting acceptance of researchers' presence and actors' participation. I now turn my attention to social and values-laden interactions when fostering roles.

Managing researchers' roles shows how social enquiry is a moral enterprise both formally and informally. Formally, researchers are committed through their institutional anchoring, and in my case, this was the recommendation from the Norwegian Centre of Research Data (NSD). Firstly, ethical guidelines mandated that all participants received information about the project. Participation was voluntarily, and informed consent was obtained from all the participants. Further, I ensured confidentiality by anonymising the data and did not divulge the names of the organisations or the managers. The participants were also informed about their right to withdraw from the study without providing any reasons. The quotations cited in the study could not be traced back to the sources. Finally, the consequences of participation, as an ethical principle, was also relevant to my study. I found that the managers enjoyed talking about their work and showed interest. Some also told me they were motivated to contribute to the project because the topic of hybrid professional managers' values was relevant to them.

At an informal level, awareness of ethical issues emerges from interactions. Fostering trust helps participants to open up and share essential information as well as their viewpoints. While the role of a researcher representing an institution inspires trust, it must also be built with formal and informal leaders in order to be accepted and included. The participants must be willing to share freely and by consent. For example, I interviewed two managers together, and unlike interviewees who were typically eager and talkative, they seemed very hesitant. This could be because of the relationship between the two interviewees. It is likely that they did not trust that I would keep the information they shared to myself. I emphasised my role by being polite, listening attentively and showing respect towards them and their perspectives, without hiding my interest in their work.

Relationships and emotions are embedded in qualitative research. Role reflexivity on the part of a researcher requires self-reflection on behaviour,

reactions, thoughts, feelings and how one's presence affects situations. Behaviours such as showing understanding and being friendly are important. Mazzetti (2018) holds that emotions become a critical research instrument as they are indicators of values. Irrespective of roles, a researcher must be a responsible adult who offers sympathy without entering the role of a helper. Participants being observed by a researcher should feel comfortable to continue with their jobs, without the feeling of being gazed at or interrogated. Managers, despite their many meetings and interactions, tend to feel isolated and lonely because they shoulder heavy responsibilities and do not receive constant follow-up or support from their own supervisors. Thus, being observed or shadowed can be experienced as an affirmation that they are interesting and worth studying.

Observing and interviewing provide access to participants' emotions. Researchers can use personal empathy to make the participants feel at ease and therefore more willing to tell 'their story'. Emotions can also be expressions of the fact that something is at stake. Any researcher engaging with the participants can develop sympathy for them and their views. One should acknowledge emergent feelings that are triggered by values, whether it is sadness, anger or compassion. Values especially surface in controversies and conflicts. They can be identified as priorities, worth of centrality and drivers of actions. In dilemmas, they are evoked and expressed more than in situations with a clear course of action. This ambiguity provides scope for negotiating values. Values work is a space of contestation when it comes to the interpretations drawn and the concrete consequences that a given value implies in a particular case. Core values are open to dialectic claims and ongoing tensions, as illustrated by the example of collegiality in the deanery. At close quarters, the participants are deeply engaged in their work, and the triggering of values suggests that something crucial is at stake. Values are expressed both in experiences of violation or trespassing as well as in dreams and hopes. The emotional engagement in such situations can be high, and the researcher may be able to capture the emotional spillover in the behaviour of the participants. However, doing this calls for a specific researcher value: respectful listening.

Finally, the researcher cannot be immune to strong reactions or the circumstances within the research field (Czarniawska, 2007). Interaction

with participants may evoke sympathy and the urge to listen to the participant's version. Conflicts may lead to pressure to choose sides. Sympathy or conflicts may induce a researcher to enter the role of an advisor. However, in my research project, I refrained from offering my opinions if the managers asked. I chose not to judge them or offer my own views. The helper role—sorting out issues, giving feedback and assisting the actors—can be postponed to after the project. This highlights the tiresome reflexivity that positions a researcher closer to a therapist. Listening to persons in distress was a part of my earlier professional practice as a pastor. The interview situation also resembled a key practice in pastoral work, which was discussing joyous or sad occasions. Thus, there is an asymmetry or imbalance between the researcher and the participant. The boundary between identification and overidentification should not be crossed by letting one's own feelings flow (Mazzetti, 2018).

Phase 3: Role Reflexivity and Interpreting

Within the context of interpreting, role reflexivity calls for transparency and outlining of the process and one's own perspectives both in data collection and in the interpretation of data. Reflexivity suggests that research should reject one-dimensionality and elicit several interpretations in order to produce rich and varied results. It operates at the metatheoretical structure that guides the interplay between producing interpretations and challenging them. For example, my 360-degree research design afforded me multiple perspectives on the same managers, values and events. Thus, reflexivity was ensured by opening up the phenomenon, exploring more than one set of meanings and acknowledging ambiguity both in the phenomenon addressed and in the lines of inquiry favoured. Reflexivity also involves rejecting interpretations that are one-dimensional in favour of plurality and rich data (Alvesson et al., 2008). In observations and interviews, researchers' interactions with subjects tend to produce specific representations that need to be examined from multiple angles.

After I had concluded the observations, I asked the shadowed managers how my presence had affected their work and interactions. This was

to better understand presence and researcher's effect in my research study. Most participants said that they and other organisational members behaved like they usually would, and I attribute this to my role as an apprentice. The managers did not deem my presence as threatening, and I, in turn, exhibited discretion and willingness to learn. This effect can also be partly attributed to the very nature of managerial work, which is hectic and fragmented. Managers and employees must attend to issues as soon as they occur; things cannot be postponed *in media res*. Thus, over time, people's authentic behaviour usually prevails. Some hospital managers speculated that a stranger's (my) presence in the office may have deterred a few employees from knocking on their office doors. I solicited such reflections to better understand the researcher effect. In both the organisations that I studied, the managers were involved in many meetings and were surrounded by people most of the time. I was but one of those many people. To remain inconspicuous in the hospital, I wore a white coat, which signalled that I was an employee and not a civilian visitor, that is, foregrounding a professional insider role. This was done at the suggestion of the managers. When in the surgery department, I wore the uniform of the surgery nurses. While such camouflaging facilitates hidden observation, it may also raise ethical questions.

After the fieldwork, it may be challenging to express one's perspectives and findings if they are critical to the practices and values of the researched. Reflexivity entails bridging of the gap between epistemological concerns and methods. For example, in interviews and observations, a researcher interacts with subjects, and specific representations are produced. Taking these at face value would be a naïve approach; they should instead be explored from various angles (Alvesson & Sköldbäck, 2009). Inconsistencies are bound to surface between what people say they do and what they actually do, and not least in terms of values. A combination of methods is an attempt to come to terms with such discrepancy. Combining interviews with observations is thus a useful strategy.

The examples discussed above show how people employ various roles in different settings, and the context shapes the expectations of roles and values. Reflexivity concerns both role patterns and value patterns. Distinguishing between the emic perspective (actors' understanding) and the etic perspective (the researchers' perspectives) is crucial, and so is

balancing description and interpretation. My examples show how one can adopt a critical view of frontstage and backstage behaviour. After I gained the trust of the managers, they spoke more freely with me backstage than they did frontstage when the employees were present. Thus, a critical perspective towards role reflexivity is needed as its absence can lead to narcissism and self-indulgence. Most readers are more interested in the research rather than the researcher. Researchers should also be mindful of reflexivity paralysis, where too much attention is given to the personal, institutional and disciplinary layers of research (Johnson & Duberley, 2003).

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the question *How can researchers strengthen role reflexivity when studying values work?* I have explained how researchers can take measures and ask certain questions that strengthen their role reflexivity, which is defined as the capacity to identify, account for and manage researchers' roles. First, researchers should decipher their positioning by identifying various roles. In qualitative research, the researcher and the participants attribute various roles to each other and shape them through dynamic interactions. There is a continuous and challenging negotiation of roles. Second, roles should be accounted for in the research report. Being a qualitative researcher necessitates reflexivity on roles and identifications—about who you are and who the other is. In this chapter, I have discussed how roles have a significant bearing on the research—what the relation between the researcher and the field or object of research is. Third, managing roles is a demanding effort throughout the research process. Thematising the roles of the researcher in values research shows its embeddedness in complex webs of interactions.

Interview and observational values studies are characterised by their proximity to participants and close involvement of the researchers. In such cases, forming relationships with the participants appears inevitable. I have exemplified how researching values is an interactive and transformational process that emerges from interpreting life experiences and

closely associates the researcher with the participants. This chapter highlights the need for ongoing reflexivity when strategising and handling researchers' roles.

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13

Participant Validation: A Strategy to Strengthen the Trustworthiness of Your Study and Address Ethical Concerns

Tone Lindheim

Introduction

After gathering and analysing the empirical data from your study of values or values work, how can you ensure the trustworthiness of your study? Trustworthiness is important for you as a researcher, for the informants who have contributed to your study and for the reader. The technical terms often used to describe this are validity, reliability and generalisability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). In qualitative research, where the boundaries between the researcher and the researched are unclear, Denzin and Lincoln (2018; see also Krefting, 1991) recommend using credibility, dependability and transferability as equivalent terms. Different measures, like extended periods of fieldwork and triangulation of methods and sources of data, can be used to strengthen the credibility of a study. Participant validation, or member checking (the terms are here used

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interchangeably), is another strategy to strengthen the credibility of data and results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Participant validation implies that you as a researcher in one way or another present the data material or the preliminary analysis to the informants to validate and assess interpretations. The purpose is to ensure the trustworthiness of your study from the perspective of the researcher, the informant and the reader (Carlson, 2010). With participant validation you are transparent about how your informants are represented, and it allows you to correct misunderstandings and document the research process.

This chapter describes how participant validation can be incorporated in the research design of values work studies. It is a strategy to address ethical concerns in a study, for example, related to transparency and power, but it also raises new ethical concerns. To decide how to incorporate participant validation in your study, it is useful to explore and develop a broad understanding of the ethical dilemmas involved. This chapter thus addresses the following questions: how can participant validation be incorporated into a study of values or values work, and how does participant validation respond to and generate ethical concerns? The chapter first reviews existing literature on participant validation and then uses a case study of cultural diversity and inclusion as an example of how participant validation can be incorporated into the research process. For researchers studying values work, the example demonstrates how participant validation may be an opportunity for values work in and of itself, generating valuable data that can be incorporated into a study.

Former Studies on Participant Validation

The most referenced text on participant validation, or member checking, is Lincoln and Guba's (1985) book on naturalistic inquiry. Naturalistic inquiry is the study of a social phenomenon or people's actions in their specific context or natural environment. In this type of research, the boundaries between you as a researcher and the subjects being researched are fuzzy (See Chap. 12). The ontological and epistemological foundation of naturalistic inquiry is that the realities you study are socially constructed. In the research process, the researcher and the researched interact

and cocreate understandings and interpretations. Participant validation is one strategy for cocreation in research, and Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest how it can be incorporated at different stages of the research process. Most studies claiming to have used participant validation refer to sharing interview transcripts or quotations with the informants. While that may be a way to correct misunderstandings and errors, it does not involve informants in the analysis of the data, and it does not reap the full benefits of member checking as an approach. Other researchers have demonstrated how participant validation can be incorporated in the research design and have applied it in a more extensive way. Three studies are presented here: Buchbinder's (2011) review of experiences with validation interviews, Birt et al.'s (2016) elaboration of a synthesised member checking method and Slettebø's (2020) use of participant validation in an action research project. The three studies highlight different aspects of the use of participant validation and illustrate different ways of applying it in studies of values or values work.

The first study analyses experiences with validation interviews. Buchbinder (2011) interviewed social work students who had used individual validation interviews in their study of more experienced social workers. The students first interviewed the social workers, transcribed the interviews and identified core themes. In the validation interview, the preliminary analysis was presented to the social worker, offering him or her an opportunity to confirm, modify or reject the analysis. Buchbinder's study surfaced various ethical concerns: the legitimacy of offering interpretations going beyond the interviewees' own understanding of their narratives, handling relationships and roles and the use and abuse of power in the validation process. The validation interviews challenged the students' handling of the boundaries between interviewer and interviewee. As social work students, they were younger and less experienced than the social workers they interviewed. The interviews generated feelings of uneasiness when the students presented their interpretations of what had been said in the first interview. The feelings of uneasiness varied with how close or distant the interviewer and interviewee were prior to the interview. During the research process, the students experienced several shifts of power. In the initial interview, the experienced social workers had more power in determining what was said but were simultaneously

vulnerable when sharing personal information. In the validation interview, the students assumed a more powerful position, offering interpretations of the first interview. At the same time, they felt vulnerable as their interpretations were being assessed by a senior person. In summary, Buchbinder presents validation interviews as one way of incorporating participant validation into a study. Buchbinder demonstrates how validation interviews address the ethical concerns of interpretations and power differences by offering informants an opportunity to correct the researcher's interpretation. On the other hand, the validation interviews generated new ethical concerns related to roles, boundaries and power.

The second study offers an example and a model for how participant validation can be incorporated in studies with larger samples of informants, using written communication between the researcher and the informants instead of face-to-face validation interviews. Birt et al. (2016) developed a five-step 'synthesised member checking' (SMC) process and tested it out in a health research study. The first step of the model is to prepare a synthesised summary of emerging themes from the total sample of interviews using illustrative, anonymised quotes from the different interviews. In the second step, the informants' eligibility for participating in the member checking process is considered to ensure that the research process will not inflict unnecessary harm on the informants. In the third step, the synthesised report is sent to the selected informants with an invitation to make corrections and add comments. The responses are collected and added to the data material in the fourth step. Finally, the new data are integrated and coded. In addition to developing a model for member checking, Birt et al.'s study addresses two central ethical concerns. First, by offering the informants an analysis of the total sample, the information from the interview is placed in a broader context, which gives the informants a better understanding of how their responses have been interpreted in relation to others. This relates to the ethical responsibility of ensuring that informants understand how the information they have provided is used. Even if the informants have received information about the purpose of the study before the interview, this form of member checking enhances a more comprehensive understanding of the research process. Second, an ethical concern in social research is that the study should be as little harmful to the researched subjects as possible. The

second step in the SMC model addresses the ethical issue of the harmful effects of the research on the informants. For research on sensitive issues, participant validation may represent an additional burden and harm to the informants and thus generate an ethical concern. By evaluating whom to include in the member checking process, the possible negative effect is reduced. The fourth and fifth steps of the model illustrate how participant validation is used to generate new data for the study.

The third study highlights the empowering effect of participant validation and demonstrates how the process may modify and generate new and relevant data. The study presents an action research project involving parents who had involuntarily had a child placed in care (Slettebø, 2020). Throughout the research project, the parents participated in focus groups with the aim of developing new types of services for parents in their situation. At the end of the project, a preliminary report was elaborated and shared with the parents. This use of participant validation was aligned with the empowering purpose of the action research project. About a quarter of the participants received a 70-page hard copy version of the report, and after three weeks, comments from the parents were collected through telephone interviews. The comments were incorporated into the text and analysed as additional data. Participant validation contributed to the final report by complementing the researcher's first draft, adjusting the analysis, and refining the use of theoretical concepts. Beyond generating additional data for the study, the process encouraged revisions of the use of concepts and methods for future studies. In this study, participant validation helped maintaining the proactive role of the parents throughout the process—a central ethical concern in action research. Slettebø discusses how the academic jargon of the research report represented a barrier as well as an empowering conceptual tool for the parents to handle their experiences, thus demonstrating how participant validation in this study both addressed and generated new ethical concerns.

In the three studies reviewed here, informants were not only invited to review the transcripts of the interviews they gave but were provided with an opportunity to respond to the researchers' interpretations of the data material at different stages of the process. In Buchbinder's (2011) study, informants were presented with thematic analyses of their own interviews, whereas Birt et al. offered participants a synthesised preliminary

analysis of the whole sample. In Slettebø's (2020) study, the participants received copies of a preliminary report on the whole research project. The three studies illustrate how comments from participants may be collected through face-to-face interviews, in writing, or through telephone interviews. Inviting the informants to respond to and engage with the researcher's interpretation of the data material disrupts the inherent power relations of the research process, but it also generates additional ethical concerns.

Participant Validation in a Study of Cultural Diversity and Inclusion

A case study of cultural diversity and inclusion in three nursing homes will here be used as an example of how participant validation can be incorporated at different stages of the research process. The case study combined different methods and sources of information to generate empirical data. In the nursing home units, I observed the interaction between employees and residents and participated in their different meetings and activities. Six unit managers were shadowed for a full shift each. During the shadowing, the unit managers' activities were recorded in a format indicating how much time was spent on the activity, the location, the participants and who initiated the activity (see Chap. 8). After observation and shadowing, 27 interviews with managers and employees were conducted.

In the following, three different uses of participant validation are described. The examples illustrate how to incorporate participant validation in a study and how this strategy both addresses and raises ethical concerns. In addition, the examples demonstrate how participant validation provides opportunities for values work when the informants assess their own work and the management of their units.

Validation of Shadowing Reports

The unit managers received transcripts of the shadowing report before the interview, and in the interview, they validated my understanding of their working day. The unit managers could then correct mistakes in the shadowing report and comment on how representative this day was in comparison to other working days. In the interview, they further explained and interpreted what happened during the day I shadowed them. In general, the managers found it interesting to get this report of their day. Some of them had felt it awkward to be shadowed, and they were uncertain and curious about what information had been recorded about them. When they read the shadowing report, I sensed a sigh of relief, and one of them expressed that it was not as bad as she had thought it would be. Sharing the shadowing report with the unit managers thus responded to an ethical concern for transparency with informants in the research process.

Validating the shadowing report was an opportunity for the unit managers to assess their own role and work. The following two quotes demonstrate the unit managers' responses to the report:

It was very exciting to read. I was really happy when I read it, so shared it with my partner at home and said: "See! I have never written down what I have done at work, but now you can see what I do when I go to work!" (laughing). But I am encouraged by what I see. From this I see that I am not sitting so much by the computer to cover shifts, and that is good, because that is what I prioritise the least. (...) I spend more time on my employees, in conversations, listening to what they want, what we can change, having time for employees and procedures in the unit. (Dragan, unit manager)

First and foremost, I thought about how much and how varied [my day was], and how much could actually have been done without me—I think. I thought that right away. I am going to share this with Hege [the CEO]. It is a supervising tool for us. (...) [My] lack of structure is quite evident in the report. (Jonathan, unit manager)

These two quotes highlight the unit managers' priorities at work and what they consider to be important. Dragan was proud of how the shadowing report confirmed his priorities, showing that he spent more time engaging with employees than doing administrative tasks. Jonathan was less satisfied. The report showed that he spent time on things he should not have done, and he suggested discussing the report with his supervisor. As such, participant validation generated reflections on priorities and subsequent initiatives to make changes. The unit managers' evaluations and adjustments represent values work as a result of the validation process.

Validation of Observation in Interviews

Participant validation was also applied in the other interviews with employees in the units. The interviews took place after observation in the units, so incidents from these days were presented and discussed in the interviews, giving the informants an opportunity to offer their points of view or to explain further what had happened. As such, validation in the interviews adjusted my interpretation of the observational data.

Validation of observations that involved other informants generated new understanding and dilemmas. In one of the units, I had followed the unit manager closely and was in many ways impressed with what I saw. When I interviewed one of the employees about the unit manager's leadership, more critical observations surfaced:

She is a bit direct. And it is not everybody who likes that. You feel that you are treated very hard sometimes. Nobody likes to be treated badly. Everybody does their best, and still, they get "pepper". (...) And then we have heard she is the best to save money. So, it means that she doesn't spend money on calling in substitutes. (Zahra, nurse)

At first, these comments were surprising, but in the following interviews with other employees in the unit, Zahra's comments were confirmed. When employees talked about the unit manager's leadership in the interview, they also engaged in reflections around the issue. Milan, another nurse in the unit expressed it this way:

She can be experienced as strict, and maybe unfair. But I think she is a good leader. I know that in our unit there is a general discontent with her. And I understand that the others can get upset or feel that she is condescending in the way she talks to them. (...) If it had been a male manager who had behaved the same way, there would have been fewer employees reacting. Because if a man is very direct and strict and so on, he's ambitious, he wants things done. If it is a woman, then, well, well, she's a bitch, she's strict, you know. That's how people think.

When the unit manager was interviewed at the end, the questions were revised based on the information from the employees. The unit manager then shared about the ongoing conflict in the unit and how she was handling the situation (Lindheim, 2020). In this example, participant validation elicited discussions of central leadership values and generated further values work. On the other hand, participant validation generated ethical concerns related to how information should be shared and used with other informants (see Røthing, 2002 for further discussion).

Validation of Preliminary Analysis in Focus Groups

After a preliminary analysis of the data material from observation and interviews, validation meetings were held with a selected group of managers in two of the nursing homes.¹ A central finding of the study concerned the employment situation of immigrant employees without formal healthcare credentials (Lindheim, 2021). Tables that displayed the numbers and percentages of employees in different categories of healthcare positions and the size of their employment contracts were presented in the validation meetings. The participants could then compare the information from their nursing home with the information from the other two nursing homes. They were informed that the three nursing homes had different operating structures (one run by the municipality, one run by a non-profit entity and one run by a for-profit entity), but the identities of the nursing homes were kept anonymous. The comparison

¹ The third nursing home was also offered the same opportunity but did not respond to the invitation, nor to a subsequent reminder.

of the three nursing homes revealed that employment policies were applied differently, and informants from a nursing home with one operating structure justified their way of doing it and criticised the others:

We, too, follow the Working Environment Act in that you are entitled to a permanent position [when you have worked for three years]. It is exploitation of the staff not to give them extra shifts to avoid [them claiming] a permanent position. (Excerpt from validation meeting)

The validation meetings stirred up discussions among the participants about the identity and values of the nursing homes and evolved into what is here understood as values work. The validation meetings thus generated new data material that was incorporated into the study. The arguments and interpretations that emerged would not have been accessed without participant validation of the analysis of the data material. The validation meeting also generated concerns related to how informants' reactions should be handled. How should I balance ethical responsibility and analytical freedom (Røthing, 2002)? Should I accept their responses at face value and incorporate their feedback directly as new data, or could I further interpret their reactions as potential justifications and defence mechanisms?

Participant Validation—Ethical Concerns and Values Work

Participant validation is a strategy to strengthen the trustworthiness of a study. The review of the literature and the examples from the case study highlight three further contributions of participant validation when it is incorporated in the research process: it addresses and raises ethical concerns; it generates new data that can be incorporated into the study and it functions as a site and instantiation of values work.

Addressing and Generating Ethical Concerns

Participant validation addresses ethical concerns in the research process. Core issues in this regard are transparency and trust in the research process and the unequal power relation between the researcher and the researched (Buchbinder, 2011; Fangen, 2010; Slettebø, 2020). In the case study described above, by sharing the shadowing reports with the unit managers, the informants trusted that their work situation and everyday challenges were understood. A side effect of trust in the research process was that it improved the quality of the interviews that followed. When trust and rapport were established, the unit managers shared information more openly in the interviews. The case study also illustrates that transparency and power are interrelated. Sharing instead of withholding data, like the shadowing reports, modified the experience of power imbalance between researcher and informants, which in turn increased trust.

In the validation meetings in the nursing homes, the informants were invited to respond and react to the analysis of the data material from all three nursing homes, addressing again the ethical concern of transparency in the research process. The opportunity to compare findings from their own nursing home with other nursing homes also modified the power relation between the researcher and the researched (Birt et al., 2016). The interpretation and outside perspective offered in the validation meetings had an empowering potential (Slettebø, 2020), which could further reduce the power imbalance in the research process.

However, participant validation also generated a new set of ethical concerns. Of the examples presented above, the situation with the manager who had conflictful relationships with her employees elicited the most ethical concerns and feelings of uneasiness (Buchbinder, 2011). The discrepancy between the manager's perspective and the employees' perspective in the interviews surfaced questions around handling the issue of anonymity, protecting both managers and employees from harmful effects of the research process. In the information provided prior to the study, informants were ensured anonymity. In publications from the study, informants and nursing homes are anonymised. However, the

informants in the study had knowledge of the other persons involved from their nursing home, in particular the other interviewees from their units. Røthing (2002) discusses the dilemma of external versus internal anonymity. In her study of couples, the partners were interviewed individually, while the data material from both parties was analysed together. If the couples read the analyses, the partners' perspectives would be revealed. My solution to the challenge in the case study presented here was to examine even more carefully which quotes from the informants to use. I wanted to shed light on the tension between the manager and the employees' perspective without causing further conflicts and placing the informants in a vulnerable position. By choosing quotes that contained information that was already known to both parties, I sought to safeguard both concerns.

The validation process also raised questions of representation of informants in the articles published from the study. How should the information and feedback received from one informant or from one validation meeting be balanced with information from other informants and my own interpretation. (Birt et al., 2016)? Would they feel betrayed if they read the publication afterwards (Røthing, 2002; Slettebø, 2020)? In the writing process, this question was troubling, and the papers written for publication were revised yet again to ensure that the presentation stayed true to the data material. These questions reflect the challenge of balancing the impetus to conduct research that sheds light on injustice in organisations with concerns for avoiding bias and partiality.

The validation meeting with the managers surfaced yet another ethical concern. Who should participate in the validation meeting? Was it right to have this meeting only with managers? What about the informants in subordinate positions? In hindsight I would have preferred a more representative validation meeting. The selection of participants was a pragmatic solution, which is often the case in research. It was easier to gather a smaller group of managers who had more flexibility in their work schedules than to organise a larger gathering for which employees had to leave their daily duties in the units at the nursing homes.

Generating New Data

In line with Slettebø's (2020) findings, the experience from the case study discussed here was that participant validation generated new data that were incorporated into the study. The clearest example was the discussions generated during the validation meetings. When the informants examined the statistics on employee categories and employment contracts, they offered new information of how the system regulated these issues in the nursing homes, and they argued for their positions and priorities with reference to the other nursing homes. The tendency for employees without formal healthcare credentials in the nursing homes to remain in precarious employment (Lindheim, 2021) was an issue that stood out more clearly after the analysis of the data material. The validation meetings thus offered an opportunity to probe further into this issue, which had not been as evident during observations and interviews.

Focus groups are not frequently used in participant validation (Birt et al., 2016). However, the use of focus groups or validation meetings with multiple informants has the potential to generate discussions at a different level than what individual validation interviews or written feedback can do.

Participant Validation as a Site and Opportunity for Values Work

The examples from the case study presented above illustrate how participant validation may represent a site and an opportunity for values work. Beyond researching values work as a topic, incorporating participant validation into the research process may generate processes of values work, which offers an opportunity to study values work *in situ* and *in vivo* (Zilber, 2020). This was evident when the unit managers assessed and evaluated their management practices in light of the shadowing format. Another example was the validation meetings, which generated opportunities to discuss the identity and values of the nursing home when the managers compared their nursing home with the others included in the study. This finding resonates with Slettebø's (2020) experience with validation interviews in his study.

Concluding Remarks

Why should you incorporate participant validation in the research process when you study values work in an organisation? A first answer to that question is that it is a strategy to ensure the trustworthiness of the data and results of your study, and, second, it is a way to address ethical concerns of transparency and power imbalance in the research process. In addition, the validation process may itself result in values work. You may use participant validation when you collect different sources of data and data from different informants early in the process. To reap the benefits of this strategy I would encourage you to also include participant validation at a later stage in the research process, inviting the informants to validate and discuss your analysis and interpretation of data. This way, participant validation have a further empowering potential and may add valuable data to your study of values and values work.

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Part III

Researching Values Through Practical Cases



14

The 'Telos' as a Lens That Illuminates Values in Practice

Nina Kurlberg

Introduction

The question at the heart of this chapter is, how can the perspective of institutional logics contribute to research on values in organisational practice? I address this question using empirical research conducted within an international faith-based development organisation (FBDO) in the UK. The argument advanced is that it is the 'telos' of each institutional logic in action within the organisation—that is, its ultimate aim or intention—that shapes the values in operation within organisational practice. While all institutional logics are value-based, some are more explicitly so than others. By identifying the teloi (plural of telos) of the institutional logics dominant within organisational practice, the values tacit within it are brought to light. Thus, the chapter both illustrates the contribution the institutional logics perspective can make to research on values in practice and provides insight into how these values 'align with

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the telos and overall goals inherent to practices' (Askeland et al., 2020, p. 3).

I begin by outlining the theoretical framing for the chapter, which introduces both the institutional logics perspective and the place of values within this. In this section I also explain the relationship between teloi and values. I then provide a brief overview of how the institutional logics in action within organisational practice can be 'captured' using a 'pattern-matching technique' (Reay & Jones, 2016), drawing on my empirical research. Finally, I use this research to demonstrate the importance of the category 'telos' for research on values in practice.

Theoretical Framing

Institutional Logics: A Brief Overview

The concept of institutional logics first emerged as a metatheoretical perspective through Friedland and Alford's 1991 critique of organisational and neoinstitutional theory on account of its failure to take societal context into consideration. According to Friedland and Alford (1991, p. 232), essential to any understanding of individual and organisational behaviour is an understanding of the societal context in which such behaviour occurs. They conceive of society as an interinstitutional system (1991, p. 240), and the institutions of which it is comprised as both 'supraorganizational patterns of activity' that shape human behaviour and symbolic systems that enable individuals and organisations to order and give meaning to this behaviour (1991, p. 232). Institutions can also be described as 'the rules of the game' in any given society (North, 1990, p. 3), with these rules incorporating both 'formal' and 'informal' components—the former typically relating to clearly articulated 'written' rules, and the latter, to unspoken social conventions and 'codes of conduct' (North, 1990, p. 4).

As such, institutions have both material and symbolic components, and further, there is a connection between institutions and action. Yet, while the behaviour of individuals and organisations is constrained by

institutions, it is not determined by them (Friedland & Alford, 1991, p. 256): although the agency of societal actors is embedded within societal institutions, these institutions are themselves socially constructed (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008, p. 104), and societal actors play a key role in either reproducing or transforming them (Thornton et al., 2012, p. 80).

Fundamental to each institution is a logic that 'guides its organizing principles and provides social actors with vocabularies of motive and a sense of self' (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008, p. 101), and it is this that is referred to as an institutional logic. Friedland and Alford hold that the influence of multiple institutional orders within organisations leads to conflict between their logics. This, because rationality is institution-specific (1991, p. 235), or to put it differently, the practices that emerge within each institutional order are 'ontologically rational' (Friedland, 2009, p. 25).

Building on Friedland and Alford's pioneering work, Thornton et al. (2012) developed a method by which institutional logics can be analysed socio-scientifically. They produced a typology of the logics of what they perceive to be the seven institutional orders that comprise the interinstitutional system (i.e. society), identified as family, community, religion, state, market, profession, and corporation. They conceptualised the perspective as a matrix, placing the institutional orders along the x-axis. Along the y-axis they placed the 'elemental categories, or building blocks, which represent the cultural symbols and material practices particular to [each] order' (2012, p. 54)—such as 'sources of authority', 'basis of norms', or 'informal control mechanisms' (see Table 14.1). In other words, for each institutional order, the content of these y-axis categories represents their logic.

It is important to note that the y-axis categories within Thornton et al.'s typology are not definitive and can be expanded upon or amended depending on context. However, specifying categories according to which institutional logics can be seen in action enables analysis of how they impact practice, as this chapter illustrates. Institutional logics are notoriously difficult to define, let alone identify, and therefore the benefit of Thornton et al.'s approach is that it enables one to analyse the way in which they can be seen in action.

Table 14.1 Excerpt from Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury's societal-level typology (2012)

Y-axis categories	X-axis institutional orders						
	Family	Community	Religion	State	Market	Profession	Corporation
Sources of legitimacy	Unconditional loyalty	Unity of will Belief in trust and reciprocity	Importance of faith and sacredness in economy and society	Democratic participation	Share price	Personal expertise	Market position of firm

Values and Institutional Logics

What, then, is the connection between institutional logics and values? While Thornton et al. (2012, p. 44) argue that values are 'anchored' in societal-level institutional orders and thus embedded within institutional logics, values are largely absent from their approach, and consequently from much of the existing empirical research that has derived from it. Indeed, one of Friedland's critiques of their approach is on account of this 'most critical omission' (2012, p. 585). Nevertheless, values are arguably implicit within Thornton et al.'s approach. A key aspect of values on which there is general consensus within the literature is that they are 'conceptions of the desirable' (Kraatz et al., 2020, p. 478). Since Thornton et al. hold that institutional logics shape organisational actors' perceptions of what is desirable and appropriate, institutional logics can also be said to shape their values. Yet the question remains as to how the perspective can be applied to research these. In order to address such a question, it will be important to first explain precisely how values are understood within this chapter.

As Kraatz et al. (2020) highlight in their helpful overview of the literature on values within institutional scholarship—of which there is surprisingly little from recent years—values have a 'dynamic and processual aspect' (2020, p. 475), 'operate at multiple levels of society' (2020, p. 476), and bridge 'the (outwardly) separate worlds of social science and morality' (2020, p. 477). Thus, values are multifaceted and elusive and can be understood and defined in differing ways. Within this chapter, Askeland et al.'s (2020, p. 3) working definition of values is adopted; that is, values are 'individual and collective trans-situational conceptions of desirable behaviours, objectives and ideals that serve to guide or value practice'. Askeland et al. also underscore the connection between values and 'morality', highlighting the notion of 'realising the good' that is inherent within values. This aspect is particularly salient for the chapter given its focus on FBDOs and connects with another aspect of values highlighted within the literature—the recognition that they are somehow related to the 'ends', or goals, of action.

The perspective of institutional logics brings an additional dimension to this understanding of values. As already noted, according to Thornton et al., values are anchored in institutional orders and therefore embedded within institutional logics. Friedland and Alford (1991, p. 235) hold that these orders also ‘generate values’ and, by extension, that values therefore anchor institutional logics. To put this in another way, institutional logics are value-based. Whereas some institutional scholars, such as Selznick, see a distinction between values and the ‘less-ideal goals’ embodied by organisational operative systems (Kraatz et al., 2020, p. 479), using the perspective of logics would lead one to argue that such systems are not valueless; rather, their values are tacit. Summarising Weber, whose theory of ‘value spheres’ aligns in a number of significant ways with the institutional logics perspective, Friedland (2013, p. 18) writes: ‘As the claims for and the scope of religious ethical systems have been challenged and attenuated, we moderns fail to recognize that the “routines of everyday life” are likewise grounded in their respective “gods”.’ What Weber referred to as the ‘gods’ of value spheres, Friedland (2013, p. 18) has called ‘institutional substances’, that is, ‘the unobservable, but essential, “value” anchoring an institutional logic’. There is an important connection between the ‘institutional substance’ or ‘anchoring value’ of a logic and its telos, and this will be discussed in the following section.

The ‘Telos’ as a Category

‘Institutional substance’ is a particularly important concept for Friedland, and in order to understand what is meant by this, it is vital to briefly outline the way he uses the term ‘value’. Friedland understands ‘value’ as being more than a subjective valuation—values are also performative (2013, p. 21). He helpfully explains: ‘[v]alues must be both exteriorized as material practices that deploy objects, and interiorized as possessions that possess their practitioners’ (2013, p. 20). Friedland goes on to note that ‘[i]nstitutional logics presuppose an immanent, internal relation between value and practice’, and this is an important assumption underlying the perspective (2013, p. 20; see also 2017, p. 40).

Returning to the concept of institutional substance or anchoring value, this has been developed in Friedland's recent work to include a more explicitly teleological element, which he envisions as being internally related to its ontological element. As Friedland explains, an institutional substance or anchoring value 'bounds the ontological and the teleological, its reality as well as its orienting quality, its goodness' (2018, p. 1371). The values in practice that are the focus of this chapter are rooted in the anchoring value.

Within my empirical research, the y-axis category that emerged as particularly important was that of 'telos'—that is, the ultimate aim or intention of the institutional logic. Given the expectation within the sector that organisations are organised around specific social 'causes', FBDOs are often very mission- or goal-focused. Thus, while Friedland's conceptualisation of the value anchoring each institutional logic is broader than the concept of 'telos', encompassing both teleological and ontological aspects as it does, 'telos' is a helpful category for analytical purposes given my research context due to its directional, goal-oriented dynamic. The telos of an institutional logic is in reality inseparable from its anchoring value, and while I agree with Friedland that teleology and ontology are internally related in this regard (2018, p. 1376), focusing solely on the 'telos' in analysis sheds light on the values in practice within an organisation since these are rooted in the anchoring value and therefore also intimately connected to and inseparable from the telos.

It became apparent through my empirical research that although all logics are value-based, some are more explicitly so than others. Therefore, as will be illustrated below, adding the category 'telos' to the typology of logics was a critical aspect of the research: by enabling the telos of each logic to be identified within the data, this also enabled tacit values to be identified. Before demonstrating how this can be done, I will briefly outline how institutional logics can be identified.

Capturing Institutional Logics in Action

Using the 'Pattern Matching Technique'

In order to 'capture' the institutional logics in action within organisational practice in my empirical research, I used a 'pattern matching' technique (Reay & Jones, 2016), which is an approach taken in a number of studies, such as Goodrick and Reay's (2011) research on pharmaceutical practice in the US. This technique 'requires researchers to first identify and explain the pattern of behaviors associated with the ideal type of a particular logic and then evaluate their data' against these ideal types (Reay & Jones, 2016, p. 446). In comparison to the two alternative approaches to capturing institutional logics outlined by Reay and Jones—that is, the 'pattern deducing' or 'pattern inducing' technique—the 'pattern matching' approach privileges both theory and previous research to construct 'ideal types' of the different institutional logics of interest to the research that then serve as the instrument through which empirical situations are interpreted (2016, p. 447).

Developed by Weber in the 1900s (e.g. see Weber, 1949), the 'ideal type' is a tool that can be used to assist analysis of social phenomena. It is neither descriptive nor analytical; rather, it is an 'abstraction from reality' (Goodrick & Reay, 2011, p. 378), presenting 'ideal' behaviour that is not expected to occur (Gerhardt, 1994, p. 84). The purpose of so doing is to enable socio-scientific interpretation to hold in tension both broader, societal-level dynamics—represented by this behaviour—and the specificity of individual situations. The ideal type has the ability to do this because of the way that it is used in the research process; that is, whilst it is general in its construction, it is used as a point of reference against which the specific characteristics of individual situations can be compared and the differences accounted for. Swedberg (2018, pp. 188–9) notes that it is this stage of accounting for difference that enables one to analyse the particularity of the empirical situation.

Researchers wishing to employ the pattern matching technique to capture logics should first develop a typology of logics for their chosen field of research. In the following section I will illustrate how this can be done.

Constructing the Typology of Logics

I carried out my empirical research in two stages: the first was to develop a field-level typology of the institutional logics in action within the field in which the FBDO I was researching operates. This approach was chosen since organisational- and field-level institutional logics are connected: '[o]rganizational fields and industries are viewed as having their own logics nested within societal level institutional orders' (Goodrick & Reay, 2011, p. 375).

The field-level typology developed through my research is closely connected to Thornton et al.'s societal-level typology but relates to a narrower and more specific sphere of action. The definition of 'field' that I employ derives from institutional theory; that is, the field is a group of organisations 'that partakes of a common meaning system' and whose interaction and engagement is frequent and significantly shapes practice (Scott, 2008, p. 86). The first step in the process of constructing a field-level typology of logics, then, is to identify an appropriate field, sampling frame, and method of data collection. Once these have been identified, the existing theory and literature can be used as the starting point to build the typology of logics by exploring their application within the specific field of interest, drawing on any data collected as necessary. It is important to remember during this stage of the process that institutional logics 'shape individual and organizational practices because they represent *sets of expectations* for social relations and behaviour' (Goodrick & Reay, 2011, p. 375, emphasis added).

Within my own research I began with Thornton et al.'s ideal types and took an approach similar to that taken by Goodrick and Reay (2011, p. 378). The question underlying the typology's construction was, what would one expect an organisation within the field's practice to be if it was influenced only by the logic of corporation, market, or religion, for example? Put differently, what are the 'sets of expectations' within the field connected to each of these logics?

Table 14.1 is an excerpt from Thornton et al.'s societal-level typology that shows the content of each cell according to the category 'Sources of Legitimacy'. This category identifies the key factor that gives the

organisation legitimacy in any given context. Table 14.2 shows the content of each cell for the same category according to the field-level typology I developed.

While the field-level typology is closely related to the societal-level typology developed by Thornton et al. (2012), it can also include additional logics and categories that emerge as being of significance within the data collection process. For example, the logic of aid is a hybrid logic specific to the field that emerged as significant during my data collection, which involved both documentary analysis and interviews in a number of organisations within the field. To give another example, as shown in Table 14.3, ‘Definition and determination of success’ and ‘Recruitment priorities’ were found to play an important role in the everyday life of organisations within the field. Once I had developed the field-level typology, I then shared it with several of these organisations and adjusted it on the basis of my conversations with them.

Researching Values in Practice

Once a field-level typology of logics has been constructed, this can then be used as the lens through which organisational data is analysed. In this section, I draw on data from interviews conducted within one FBDO in the UK to demonstrate, firstly, how the institutional logics in action within organisational practice can be identified using the typology of logics; secondly, how the telos can be identified; and, lastly, how identifying the telos can enable one to study values in practice. It is important to emphasise that my own research is introduced within this section for illustrative purposes only rather than to present the findings, and therefore only certain elements of the analysis have been included.

Table 14.2 Field-level typology

Y-axis categories	X-axis institutional orders				
	Corporation	Market	Religion	Community	Aid
Source of legitimacy	Status within the sector	The success and marketability of the product	God’s call	The needs of the community	The cause

Table 14.3 Field-level typology

		X-axis institutional orders				
Y-axis categories	Corporation	Market	Religion	Community	Aid	
Mission	Increase the scale and scope of the organisation	Increase income, efficiency, and profit	Carry out God's purposes	Action in service of the community	Action for the sake of the cause	
Definition and determination of success	Success is defined by organisational performance as determined by Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Success is defined by return on investment and determined by income generated	Success is defined and determined by ethical precepts	Success is defined and determined by the community	Success is defined by positive change as determined by beneficiaries and their communities	
Recruitment priorities	Proven track record	Entrepreneurial skills	Faith	Personal attributes (e.g. language, culture and character)	Sector-based experience	

Identifying Institutional Logics

As noted above, the typology of logics was used as the lens through which to analyse the interview transcripts. I will show how the typology can be used in this way using the category ‘Definition and determination of success’ as depicted in Table 14.3. According to the logic of corporation, ‘success is defined by organisational performance as determined by Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).’ KPIs were frequently referred to in relation to measures of success within the organisation. I asked interviewees how they knew whether or not an aspect of their work had been successful, and although some discussed other measures of success, these were nearly always spoken of with reference to the KPIs. It quickly became apparent that KPIs were the key focus within organisational practice since they were the only aspect formally measured by the organisation. As one interviewee commented, for example, the organisation used KPIs for all the ‘accountable’ aspects of their work. Thus, in relation to this category the logic of corporation was clearly dominant at the organisational level.

Nevertheless, the typology enabled analysis of the action of other logics within organisational practice and, more specifically, at the individual level—that is, in relation to how employees negotiated organisational-level logics. While interviewees clearly felt the pull of the logic of corporation in their work, this was also in tension with other logics. Speaking in relation to the staff they managed, one manager contrasted KPIs with ‘personal’ measures of success, which were not measured by the organisation. These measures of success included helping staff to deliver good quality work and also supporting them through personally challenging times. A tension became apparent through our conversation between the logic of corporation and those of religion and aid as far as ‘success’ was concerned. The source of this tension was that these personal measures of success were not captured by the manager’s KPIs, but either contributed towards someone else’s KPIs or were not measured at all. The manager explained, however, that this was where their faith enabled them to be humble and to keep in mind that, ultimately, they were carrying out their

work for the sake of the people the organisation served rather than the organisation itself. Success for this interviewee personally was 'defined and determined by ethical precepts', as became apparent through the course of the interview. It was this that was the driving factor behind the time and effort they put into those aspects of their work not captured by the KPIs, enabling them to both keep the organisation's mission in mind—which they understood as being simultaneously about 'carrying out God's purposes' and 'action for the sake of the cause'—and accept the dominance of the corporate logic as far as the organisational-level conceptualisation of success was concerned.

Although what was measured by the organisation took primacy due to the overall dominance of the corporate logic in operation at the organisational level, then, interviewees also had their own individual-level measures of success related to other logics. Thus, using the typology as a lens through which to analyse data can illuminate the logics in action within organisational practice at both individual and organisational levels.

Identifying the 'Telos'

As discussed above, the 'telos' is an important category for researching values in practice. In relation to my data, the telos was identified through the process of coding the interview transcripts. The specific codes for the five logics were:

- 'telos is to build up and sustain the organisation' (logic of corporation)
- 'telos is capital' (logic of market)
- 'telos is to worship God' (logic of religion)
- 'telos is the common good' (logic of community)
- 'telos is social justice and relief' (logic of aid)

The process of coding the transcripts included identifying keywords, such as 'sustain', 'worship', or 'justice', and exploring the context in which these keywords were used and by whom. Words and phrases closely

related to the keywords were also noted; for instance, ‘serve God’ or ‘honour God’ were identified in relation to the logic of religion. Once these portions of the transcripts had been assigned a code, it was then possible to look more closely at the data and ask questions of specific practices and scenarios that were highlighted in relation to these words—for example, what was this practice aiming towards, what was the expressed intention behind it, or what was the reason given as to why this scenario unfolded as it did?

One of the findings from the process of data analysis was that the dominant ‘telos’ within organisational practice was connected to that of the logic of corporation—that is, to ‘build up and sustain the organisation’ (see Table 14.4). This correlated with the overall dominance of the logic of corporation at the organisational level, in contrast to the individual level, where the operation of logics was more complex, with staff simultaneously negotiating multiple logics. Given the top-down nature of decision-making processes within the FBDO, it was not surprising that the code ‘telos is to build up and sustain the organisation’ most frequently occurred in interviews with those in higher-level roles across the organisation.

More specifically, the telos of the logic of corporation was most often referred to in the interviews as the ‘long-term sustainability’ of the organisation. The focus within the organisation did not seem to be so much about building up the organisation as sustaining it so that the work could continue into the future. What stood out within my data was not only the ways in which this ‘telos’ was guiding and influencing organisational practice, but also how and where it was interacting with other logics and impacting the values in practice within the organisation.

Table 14.4 Field-level typology

Y-axis categories	X-axis institutional orders				
	Corporation	Market	Religion	Community	Aid
Telos	Build up and sustain the organisation	Capital	Worship God	The common good	Social justice and relief

Using the 'Telos' to Identify and Research Values in Practice

Two of the explicit values held by individual staff members that emerged through the interviews were those of 'helping others' and 'serving others'. These were frequently mentioned in relation to the people the organisation worked with and were therefore arguably associated with the logic of aid. These values were also associated with the logic of religion for some, as the principal expressed motivation behind them was interviewees' faith in, and desire to serve, God. Yet the values tacit in organisational practice were not so easily identifiable within the data, and it was not until the telos of each logic in action within the organisation was identified that these began to emerge.

For instance, one interviewee commented that in order for the organisation to ensure its long-term sustainability, it needed to adopt a lot of the practices of 'well-run' organisations. Once the telos had been identified here, I then noticed its associated values, which included being a 'well-organised' and 'well-run' organisation, and 'developing staff'. The data also showed that these values were seen by some interviewees as infringing on the values of 'helping others' and 'serving others' since, as one complained, 'there's not always an obvious link as to how this benefits those that you're trying to help'. This is a common dilemma in faith-based organisations (Espedal, 2019; Aadland & Skjørshammer, 2012).

Another interviewee referenced the telos of the logic of corporation while underscoring the importance of 'financial viability', saying, 'it has to be financially viable otherwise we can't do it.' Referring to a decision that had to be taken to turn down a large grant because it did not cover the organisation's administrative costs, this interviewee explained that one of the difficulties when making decisions such as this is that the need to take a longer-term perspective can appear at odds with the value of 'helping others' that is so prevalent amongst staff. In this instance, the value of 'financial viability' was prioritised at the organisational level.

It is important to highlight that this approach enables analysis of the operation of values at multiple societal levels, which is an important aspect of values captured in Askeland et al.'s working definition (2020).

For example, at the organisational level the telos of the logic of corporation and its associated values largely appeared compatible with the logic of religion. Although one of the most important aspects of work for interviewees in higher-level roles was that the organisation was sustained over the long term, for many this was because they saw the organisation as doing God's work. Therefore, in their view, God was being served through the work of the organisation. A similar point could be made in relation to the telos of the logic of aid, which is 'social justice and relief'—for many, sustaining the organisation was the means by which this could be addressed. Thus, being well-run and financially viable were important values to uphold since they enabled the organisation to help and serve others.

However, at the individual level tensions emerged in practice in relation to how staff negotiated these values, especially when they were seen to be in competition with one another. For example, a tension emerged between the value of 'being a well-run organisation' and that of 'building a Christian ethos and culture' in relation to recruitment. It became apparent that certain roles within the organisation had a Genuine Occupational Requirement (GOR) for the post-holder to have an active Christian faith. There were specific criteria against which roles were assessed to see whether or not they had a GOR. This was found to be a source of tension: what decisions should be taken if in an interview process none of the candidates had an active faith in addition to the necessary technical skills to carry out the role? While recruitment processes can be rerun, this becomes increasingly difficult the more time and finances have been invested in the process. It emerged that managers prioritised differently in this regard, and several examples of unsuccessful recruitments along both lines were noted.

The dilemma faced by managers is that if the telos at the organisational level is to sustain the organisation in the long term, it contradicts this not to employ the most experienced candidate for a particular role or to restrict someone that has shown great aptitude and loyalty towards the organisation who wants to progress but does not meet the GOR for more senior positions. If the organisation is to be successful in a competitive environment, it needs employees who can get their work done and done well. This tension was felt all the more keenly in relation to recruitment

in countries where the Christian community is in a minority and therefore the pool of suitable candidates that meet the GOR is limited.

These select examples illustrate how identifying the teloi of the institutional logics in action within organisational practice enabled me to research values in practice, not only bringing to light tacit values, but also highlighting their operation at multiple levels.

Conclusion

In summary, then, the perspective of institutional logics has the potential to make several important contributions to research on values in organisational practice. This is unsurprising given that a key assumption underlying the perspective is that value and practice are inseparable; however, while all institutional logics are value-based, some are more explicitly so than others. Thus, in this chapter I have shown that identifying the telos of each institutional logic in action within organisational practice, firstly, plays a critical role in unearthing the values tacit within such practice and, secondly, enables analysis of the operation of values at multiple levels, individual as well as collective.

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15

Applying a Qualitative Case Study Approach to Study Values in Public–Private Partnerships

Anne-Marie Reynaers

Introduction: What Is Case Study Research?

Case study research is popular amongst social scientists, especially those interested in qualitative research (Baskarada, 2014). Simons (2009) defined case study research as ‘an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in a “real life” context’ (p. 21). The way in which case study research is applied may differ depending on the purpose of the case study (descriptive/exploratory), its design (single/multiple) and its epistemological point of departure (positivistic/interpretivist). Stake (1995) and Yin (1981) provided exhaustive comparisons of different types of case studies.

Case study research is often criticised for its low potential for enabling generalisation because, usually, only a limited number of cases are included. Case study research does not allow for statistical generalisation,

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which leads some scholars to believe that it does not contribute to the development of scientific knowledge. In that respect, Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) argued that case study research does allow for generalisation but of a different kind. Instead of statistical generalisation, case study research allows for theoretical or analytical generalisation. Whereas statistical or sample generalisation refers to extrapolation from a randomly chosen sample to a larger population, theoretical or analytical generalisation implies that particular findings can be connected or applied to a certain theory. Findings from one case can be generalised to other cases that have not been studied but fall under the same theory.

In relation, researchers often consider multiple cases. The multiple case study approach is a variation on the single case study approach (Yin, 2009). Comparing multiple cases clarifies whether findings derived from a single case are idiosyncratic (i.e., particular to that specific case) or 'consistently replicated by several cases' (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007, p. 27). The adjective 'qualitative' refers to the nature of the type of data that are being analysed in the context of the cases under study. Case study research allows for the use of different data collection methods (interviewing, survey research, observations, etc.) and different types of data (qualitative, quantitative or both; Baskarada, 2014; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1981).

The remainder of this chapter describes *how one can study the safeguarding of public values in the context of organisational manifestations of the new public management (NPM) paradigm* by applying the (multiple) qualitative case study approach. Although this chapter focuses on public-private partnerships (PPPs), the research approach is suitable for studying the safeguarding of important values in many organisations, such as public sector and voluntary organisations facing external pressures and organisational change.

Public Values and New Public Management

The NPM paradigm promotes the idea of business-like government as a remedy for the apparent lack of efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy of the public sector (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). It has been defined as 'a

process in which business principles and private sector management techniques are transferred into the public sector in correspondence with, and based on, a neo-liberal understanding of the economy and the State' (Drechsler, 2005, p. 95).

Many Western governments have embraced private sector management techniques and values and have intensified collaboration with the private sector (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). In relation to the latter, alternative public service delivery structures, such as PPPs, privatisation and contracting out, have been created and are referred to as organisational manifestations of the NPM reform (Klijn & Teisman, 2000).

Supporters suggest that public sector reforms inspired by NPM are potentially beneficial when it comes to public sector legitimacy, efficiency and effectiveness. Critical scholars, however, suggest that the expected gains are realised at the expense of other important values. For example, Box (1999) stated, 'There remains a sense that something is wrong ... something about running government like a business does not feel right' (p. 19). Literature on so-called public values delves into this assumption in further detail.

A specific niche of public values literature is concerned with the question of whether NPM allows for the safeguarding of public values such as accountability, transparency, responsiveness, responsibility and quality. Terry (1998, p. 198), for example, suggested that such values are at stake and invisible on the business-like radar screen. Likewise, Broadbent and Laughlin (2003) argued the following:

A genuine concern to many is that this private sector supplier, with its profit emphasis and necessity to give priority to its shareholders, may or may not share the same public service values that might be the case if provision was exclusively made by those in the employment of the public sector. (pp. 335–336)

In contrast to the idea that NPM might imply a loss of public values, others have argued that the exact opposite is true. Hirsch and Osborne (2000) stated that the introduction of private-sector techniques, such as performance measures and the use of output indicators, helps governments to increase transparency and accountability. Rather than public

values being at stake, Osborne and Plastrik (1998) maintained that public values are safeguarded or even strengthened.

Overall, there exist many contradictory claims about the effects of NPM on the safeguarding of public values. Whereas these different claims sound convincing in normative or theoretical terms, *empirical research* should be used to determine whether they hold. However, this is not an easy task. First, the meaning of the ambiguous concept of *public* values (rather than just values) is often unclear. Second, a clear yardstick allowing for comparison of 'traditional' and 'NPM-inspired' settings for how well each safeguards public values is often absent. Finally, it is difficult to locate and assess public values since they are neither here nor there, and unlike material concepts, values cannot be measured on an objective scale (de Graaf, 2003, p. 22).

How, then, can we study the safeguarding of public values in the context of organisational manifestations of NPM? The following section describes the application of a multiple case study approach that allows for the study of public values in PPPs. The examples provided all derive from actual empirical research on public values in PPPs (Reynaers, 2014a). A similar approach was applied by Reynaers (2014b), Reynaers and de Graaf (2014) and Parrado and Reynaers (2017, 2021).

Applying the Multiple Case Study Approach

The Importance of Context

Social science scholars have addressed the importance of considering context when it comes to studying social phenomena or concepts (e.g., Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). It is suggested that our perception of reality is constructed by social, cultural, historical and individual contexts (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). This means that to fully understand the nature and complexity of behaviour, processes, dynamics, outcomes and the like, researchers should consider specific contextual characteristics when describing, exploring and analysing phenomena (Benbasat et al., 1987, p. 370). Context influences the object of study and vice versa.

The importance of context has likewise been recognised in relation to the study of PPPs or other NPM manifestations (Brown et al., 2006; Reynaers, 2014a). In relation to PPPs, for example, Bovaird (2004, p. 213) argued that one must consider the institutional differences between PPPs: what goes for one PPP type does not necessarily go for others. Product type (infrastructure or public services), project duration (short or long term) and the quality of the relationship between partners (collaborative or hostile) may all differ between projects and may influence the outcomes produced by the PPPs.

Public values literature stresses the importance of context as well. Paanakker and Reynaers (2020), for example, suggested that values only acquire meaning in a specific context and that they have no objective or universal meaning. Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) stated that 'For any particular value, the extent to which it is embraced ... varies both across and within societies' (p. 36).

Given that scholars of PPPs and public values stress the importance of context (e.g., Bovaird, 2004; de Graaf, 2003), the use of qualitative data (i.e., words rather than numbers) that allow us to 'interpret and contextualize meanings from people's beliefs and practices' (Baskarada, 2014) seems most appropriate when it comes to studying the safeguarding of public values in PPPs. This would require a research design that allows for considering the specific contextual or institutional features of individual PPPs. The case study approach allows for just that.

Operationalisation of the Central Research Concept

To study public values, the central research concept must first be operationalised. This means one must define it 'through a set of attributes/variables to make it measurable through empirical observations' (Baskarada, 2014, p. 8). This first step can be rather challenging given the ambiguous nature of the public values concept.

The first reason for confusion stems from the adjective 'public', which suggests a distinction between public and private values. Public values are assigned to the public sector, while private values are assigned to the private sector (Reynaers & de Graaf, 2014, p. 121). However, scholars have

demonstrated that such dichotomous distinction between sectors and corresponding values does not hold true empirically (e.g., Rainey & Bozeman, 2000).

Second, the concept of public values is used empirically as well as normatively. Suggesting normatively that the public sector should safeguard certain public values is different from affirming that they do, and with respect to public values as a normative concept, it is unclear which authority would determine which values are public values (Reynaers, 2014a).

Third, public values have no objective and universal meaning. It is difficult to define what a value such as, say, transparency either looks like or should look like. Some authors have argued that public values are socially constructed and that their exact meaning and importance depend on the context in which they are used (e.g., de Graaf, 2003).

Fourth, the often immaterial character of values makes them difficult to locate and measure. Public values are not just out there (de Graaf, 2003), but they are expressed through actions, routines, preferences and attitudes (Schmidt & Posner, 1986). Values, therefore, always require further operationalisation, and differences in the way they are operationalised inhibit a single conceptualisation.

Fifth, the public values concept is used to refer to different ideas, such as public goals (e.g., the reliability and safety of public transport or energy services; de Bruijn & Dicke, 2006), process-related rules (e.g., transparency; Weihe, 2008) and moral guidelines for the public sector (e.g., honesty; van der Wal, 2008).

The ambiguousness of the public values concept does not impede conducting empirical research; rather, it requires the researcher to define very specifically what values are being considered and how these values are defined. Most research on public values considers a selection of specific values. This selection always requires some sort of justification that may be found in the prominence of a public value in the literature (Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007). By selecting public values from the literature, it is possible to approach the theoretical debate on public values in relation to NPM with empirical findings (Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2002).

Besides their prominence in public values literature, this selection should relate to the specific characteristics of the organisational

manifestation of NPM, whether it be PPPs, privatisation or contracting out. For example, in relation to PPPs, the construction of a road is more likely to raise questions in terms of *quality* than equality given the fact that PPPs do not imply the reallocation of user rights (something that is very likely to be the case in the context of privatisation).

The public values selected for this specific study were accountability, transparency, responsiveness, responsibility and quality—all considered crucial principles or guidelines for democratic or public governance (Bevir, 2010; Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007). A literature review on each of these values was conducted to provide a definition that would fit the context of PPPs. In relation to this fit, several academics have argued that traditional notions of, for example, accountability, should not be used as a yardstick for evaluating accountability in a non-traditional policy context (e.g., Bovaird, 2004). By means of example, transparency was defined as the availability and accuracy of information available to public servants on juridical, financial, technical and operational aspects of the project.

These first two steps, *selecting* the appropriate values to be studied and *operationalising* them, are applicable for the study of other values in different organisational settings. For example, academic literature may indicate that equality and integrity are at stake when voluntary organisations depend too much on private sector funding. Researchers who empirically want to determine to what extent this suggestion holds should define what equality and integrity ideally should look like in the specific organisational context in which these values are being studied.

Considering Context and Case Characteristics

Case study research stresses the importance of context when it comes to understanding phenomena, dynamics and the like. To make sense of the relation between context and the object of study, researchers should provide an adequate description of this context (Lietz & Zayas, 2010). Describing the natural context in which a phenomenon or specific concept is studied may differ depending on the exact research objective. In some cases, it therefore may be relevant to describe a case's historical

context, whereas other cases may require the description of a strategic, cultural or regulatory/governance context (Darke et al., 1998).

The contextual features a researcher should describe and consider depend on the scope of the research project and the research question. For example, in relation to the question of to what extent public values are safeguarded in PPPs, researchers should describe the general institutional characteristics of PPPs and, furthermore, specific project-related characteristics, such as product type, duration and the nature of informal relationships. As such, the relative safeguarding of values will be understood in relation to these characteristics. The following two sections discuss the description of the general institutional characteristics of PPPs and case-specific characteristics.

Description of the general institutional characteristics: PPPs are a type of long-term infrastructure contract (Hodge, 2010). Cooperation between the public and private sector is organised through a long-term performance contract (lasting from 15 to 30 years) that transfers the responsibility and risks for the design, construction, maintenance, operation and finance of public infrastructure and public service delivery to a private consortium. The consortium has the contractual obligation to monitor its performance. As such, the consortium creates an integrated monitoring plan that meets the procurer's approval, measures performance in terms of output specifications and links it to a financial mechanism determining the level of the monthly availability fee that the procurer owes the consortium for the services delivered. When monitoring reports show no discrepancies between output specifications and actual service delivery, the procurer pays the full availability fee. If, however, service delivery is not as agreed upon, the procurer receives a financial discount, resulting in a lower availability fee for the consortium. Such a reduction is expected to stimulate the consortium to provide the agreed-upon level of service. The procurer can conduct additional tests, the results of which—with the consortium's monitoring reports and user feedback—provide input for the meetings between the consortium and the procurer and adjustments made if necessary.

Case selection and characteristics: Whereas the previous section provided insight into the context of public values in terms of general institutional characteristics, it is equally important to describe and consider the

case-specific characteristics. In relation, researchers should decide whether to study the safeguarding of values by conducting a single or a multiple case study. The choice of whether to conduct a single or multiple case study depends on several practical factors (such as resource availability) as well as epistemological considerations (see Dyer & Wilkins, 1991). Dyer and Wilkins (1991) suggested that neither single nor multiple case studies guarantee the production of rich theoretical insights. Both approaches may therefore be appropriate. However, when academic literature provides indications that contextual differences between PPPs are important for studying the safeguarding of public values, it is logical to opt for a multiple case study approach that allows for empirically testing such assumptions. When a study emphasises the sample of various cases rather than individual cases, the research design is considered a cross-case study (Gerring, 2007, p. 20). In that case, the analysis focuses on comparing findings between cases.

What cases, then, should one select? In relation to PPPs, it is important to select cases that are different in terms of product type (referring to the specific service or infrastructure the PPP aims to deliver) or sector (either infrastructure projects or utility building projects). Considering the long-term character of PPP projects is also crucial. In relation to the latter, the public values trajectory in a certain PPP project might very well change over time. It is therefore important to include cases that have been through all three project phases, that is, the preparation phase (during which contracts and output specifications are developed), the construction phase (including design and realisation) and the operational phase (including maintenance and operation). Selecting cases that are not yet operational would only provide part of the story.

Having selected the appropriate cases, researchers should provide a description of the case-specific characteristics as these characteristics are likely to be important when trying to explain and understand the safeguarding of public values. Such a description may include dimensions such as sector, product, characteristics of the public authority, the private sector firm, contract duration and informal relations.

Data Collection and Respondent Selection

What data should be considered when trying to assess the safeguarding of public values? As mentioned earlier, it can be difficult to locate and assess public values since they are neither here nor there (de Graaf, 2003, p. 22). Unlike material concepts, immaterial concepts such as values cannot be measured on an objective interval scale that allows for determining whether the occurrence of a certain value has increased or decreased.

To assess public values in PPPs, project-related documents such as contracts, output specifications, monitoring reports and plans, internal and external evaluations and project descriptions can be considered. These documents provide information on agreements; financial, technical and juridical parameters; and the design of certain processes, and they allow the researcher to understand how public values are considered *on paper*.

Perceptions of actors involved in these PPPs allow for the study of public values *in action*. Contrasting both realities is important given the possible discrepancy between them. With respect to the perceptions of actors involved, these can be reconstructed through semi-structured interviews to establish how meaning is given to the selected values throughout the lifespan of the PPP project.

With respect to respondent selection, it is important that they all either are or have been directly involved with the project and that the selected respondents, taken together, cover the preparation, realisation and operational phases. Further, following Weihe (2008), it is necessary to include actors who work for, or on behalf of, the state as well as the private consortia. Conducting interviews with actors from the procurer's side as well as from the consortium side will result in a more complete impression of the experience with public values.

The aim of the interviews should be to uncover respondents' experiences with public values in PPPs. The interviews should progress in line with the different project phases. For example, interviewees should first be invited to reflect on the level of transparency during the preparation phase (input), followed by the construction and operational phase (process). Comparing experiences with transparency during different project phases is important since the meaning of transparency changes slightly per phase (see Table 15.1). Although Table 15.1 concerns the value of

Table 15.1 Operationalisation and interview questions concerning transparency

Type of transparency	Definition	Interview questions
Input transparency (preparation phase)	Visibility and infeasibility of information on the project's financial and service-level parameters, established in the performance contract and output specifications	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How did you organise the process of formulating the contractual, financial and technical specifications? 2. Were you satisfied with the amount and quality of information written down in the contract and output specifications? 3. Did you experience any problems with the amount and quality of information during the preparation phase?
Process transparency (construction and operation phase)	Visibility and infeasibility during the process obtained by performance monitoring and monitoring of expenses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How did you organise the process of monitoring during the realisation and operation phase? 2. Were you satisfied with the amount and quality of information available and provided during the operation phase? 3. To what extent were the contract and output specifications useful guidelines? 4. Did you experience any problems with performance and financial monitoring during the operation phase?

transparency, similar tables can be created for other values (such as quality and accountability). This way, researchers can empirically assess what a specific value looks like in a specific PPP. Scholars should not only consider multiple cases (PPPs), but they should also consider multiple values at the same time (Parrado & Reynaers, 2017, 2021; Reynaers, 2014a).

Data Analysis

When a single case study is conducted, the analysis allows for comparing the research results with other academic studies. When researchers opt for a multiple case study approach, the data analysis may begin with a within-case analysis, meaning that each case is analysed separately (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 540). The goal of the within-case analysis is to understand a case as a unique entity that ‘allows the unique patterns of each case to emerge before investigators push to generalize patterns across cases’ (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 540). The within-case analysis provides sufficient familiarity with separate cases, which helps with eventual cross-case comparison.

During the first stage of the analysis, the researcher must try to grasp and report on the actual meaning that is given to public values throughout the different project phases of the PPPs under scrutiny. Thereafter, the interpretations of the findings should be compared with the assumptions about PPPs safeguarding public values found in the public values literature. As such, researchers can contrast the meaning that is given to public values in PPPs *in practice* with the *theoretical ideal type*. For cross-case comparison, the interpretation of the findings for each value should be compared with the overall findings in terms of public values followed by a search for similarities and differences between the various cases. As such, researchers can establish (causal) relationships between context and outcomes.

Qualitative data (documents and interviews) can be analysed through coding using, for example, MAXQDA or AtlasTI. This type of software allows for systematically analysing and interpreting qualitative data, which may help to increase the oft-questioned rigorousness and robustness of qualitative research (Sutton, 1997).

Conclusion

Studying the safeguarding of public values in PPPs requires a research design that allows for considering the specific contextual or institutional features of individual PPPs. The (multiple) case study approach allows for just that.

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16

Values-Based Participatory Action Research in Development Ethics

Isaias Ezequiel Chachine

Introduction

Given their complexity, values have always been part of the academic research but often ignored or relegated to the realm of insignificance because values are not easily identified or negotiated at the naked eye (Petrova et al., 2006). In the traditional research encounter, though participants have always been bearers of values, researchers have often entered the research space disarmed or even unsure of the values they bring. The attempt to ignore, exclude, or even impose values cannot prevail without undermining the very norms and values which form the social base of a pluralist society, gradually destroying the dignity, the freedom, and responsibility of the human person (Nürnberg, 1999). The present chapter argues that the need for values-based participatory actions and decisions that take values seriously is not only a moral equivalent but a compelling base for research that takes people and the values they hold seriously. Hence, to ask whose values count and whose needs and choices

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are neglected, when certain values are denied, is one perspective of doing research on values work. The present chapter claims that the need for research on values work is self-revealing evidence that we live in a pluralist society, where moral pluralism, the plurality of social values, requires participatory actions, negotiation, and recognition in every space of human encounter where values are identified, shared, or even contested. Increasing acknowledgement of values in the field of academic research is a clear tribute in favour of the growing demands for recognition of the participants' abilities, as bearers of values, to contribute to knowledge. A transformation of the research landscape occurs when values are participatorily identified, negotiated, or even incorporated as part of the institutional paradigm, practice, and ethos. Yet, one of the pros and cons to bear in mind, as values are researched, is the fact that values, as standards of right and wrong that influence our actions and behaviour, may also raise both ontological and epistemological questions of a liberal nature, which cannot be ignored (Delanty & Strydom, 2003).

Moving from ontology (what is known) to epistemology (what ought to be) is not an easy undertaking, it is like moving from morality (is) to ethics (ought). This means that moving from what is known about the nature of a given reality (what is) to justification and explanation of the validity of the values we hold (what ought to be) is an epistemological exercise. Further, this implies that relocating from morality to ethics, from what is morally acceptable to what may be ethically sound, may lead to a conflict of values (Delanty & Strydom, 2003). When it comes to values, the ontological and the epistemological seem to conflict, which, by implication, may also lead to a conflict of values. The epistemological always tends to influence the research design and outcomes (Delanty & Strydom, 2003). In other words, what is known may conflict with what ought to be, the means may not lead to ends. In the research encounter, as one relocates from one space to the next, there is also a shift in values. One of the key pros and cons is that what is morally acceptable (good) may not lead to what is ethically fitting (right). Engaging with this complex reality, linking the ontological to epistemological is at the root of the pros and cons of values-based participatory action research. Mitigating this complexity, underlying this relationship, is a way of doing values work (Delanty & Strydom, 2003). Thus, values-based participatory

action research and the ethics of regards work together as a basis of shared decision-making between participants in the research encounter. In the end, values-based participatory action research provides an approach for reaching balanced decisions, where values shift, or wherever 'framework values' are in conflict (Petrova et al., 2006).

The chapter's argument is threefold: Firstly, this chapter argues that, in participatory action research, though participation is part of the underlying paradigm, when participants enter the research encounter, the values they bring are often ignored or given no sufficient attention. Ethics of regards, as part of values-based practices, holds that values have to be identified, negotiated, or even contested. By applying values-based participatory action research, from ethics of regards, the present chapter seeks to demonstrate how participatory research practices can contribute to the development of knowledge, hence enhancing values work, when participants enter the research encounter as key role-players and bearers of values. Values-based participatory action research insists that, as bearers of values, participants enter the research encounter, not only as participants but also as producers of meaning and transformers of the research landscape, with the potential of furthering the creation of new values. Key in the argument is that values-based practices insist that values rather than principles, take centre stage in the research design. Secondly, the chapter insists that how values are assumed and understood may impact and influence the design and research outcomes and methodology. Hence, the chapter illustrates how values-based participatory action research and practice, as a new approach that incorporates values in research decisions and practices, can contribute to the development of knowledge by incorporating values in the research design. Thirdly, key in the argument is how could the approach assist in clarifying the epistemological and ontological assumptions linked to values research. By using development ethics as research context, the present chapter will engage with the pros and cons of values-based participatory action research from ethics of regards, to ascertain whether and how ethics of regards, as a research methodology, could contribute to the development of practices, in values-informed research methods, as well as assisting practitioners in developing skills to identify and negotiate values, where diversity of values may seem to conflict. Assisting practitioners with skills to identify and negotiate values is a form of doing values work.

Participatory Action Research

Participatory action research (PAR) from which values-based practices spring is a well-established platform in the field of academic research where its growing presence plays a critical role in the development of society, engaging levels of democracy, social justice, and freedom as fundamental values and key indexes in participatory development practices, hence contributing to the development of knowledge:

PAR is an iterative process in which groups of people come together to grapple with a serious social issue that affects them in their daily lives. In principle, participants design the process, define the action-research questions and goal, choose the methods, interpret the results, and draw conclusions about the implications of what they have learnt. (Chevalier & Buckles, 2019, p. 4)

As such, PAR is a boundary-breaking methodology in the research field. It breaks the boundaries of power, culture, gender, ideology, status, elitism, and class, defining one's roles and position in the research. As the name itself implies, PAR, as part of the wider umbrella of action research, is rooted in action research itself, in terms of its methodological principles and underlying approach. PAR reveals a rich diversity of philosophical and ethical insights that may give us the vocabulary and the insights we need in order to articulate values-based participatory action research from ethics of regards. Ethics of regards is in itself a participatory ethical principle to moral action, based on the virtue of mutual recognition and reciprocity, for it defends the view that my own wellbeing is dependent on the wellbeing of others. My own regards is rooted in my own acknowledgement, recognition, and appreciation of the fact that everyone else's welfare is worthy of moral regards. Action research, in which PAR emerges, is 'a means whereby research can become a systemic intervention, going beyond describing, analysing and theorizing social practices to working in partnership with participants to reconstruct and transform those practices' (Somekh, 2006, p. 1).

PAR is a community-engaging research methodology that emphasises participation, mutual understanding, and common action as methods of

inquiry. PAR insists that context informs the extent to which participatory ethical decisions are made. As the name indicates, since participatory action research entails participation, ethics of regards is adopted in order to include and enhance the perspectives of ordinary people and their experiences of exclusion and marginalisation who at times are excluded or ignored when more formalised methods of research are applied. Against this background, PAR takes an empowering agenda as its starting point:

Participatory action is recursive or dialectical and is focused on bringing about change in practices. Thus, in participatory action research studies, inquirers advance an action agenda for change. It is focused on helping individuals free themselves from constraints found in the media, in language, in work procedures, and in the relationships of power in educational settings. Participatory studies often begin with an important issue or stance about the problems in society, such as the need for empowerment. (Creswell, 2013, p. 28)

In PAR, when ethics of regards is applied, one cannot speak of research in community development without reference to the economy, equity, and redress. Using development ethics as a conceptual framework, the present study applies PAR as a methodological tool to bridge the gap between theory and practice in community development. Despite the advantages of employing action research as a conceptual framework, participatory action researchers are often confronted with challenging ethical dilemmas, when dealing with research questions involving real people in real-time and space. Earning the trust of the participants, in order for them to not regard the researcher as an outsider, but to be comfortable in taking ownership of the process and allowing your insight into their perceptions and experiences, does not often come easily (Ferreira, 2016). It may take time for a researcher to be immersed and embedded in a specific context and win the trust of the locals in the research field, so as to shift the role she leads as a researcher and allow the locals to move in self-esteem and confidence. The attempt to move towards changing attitudes and behaviour, allowing the participants to determine the process and sensitising them to the idea that they themselves could come with

solutions, as opposed to receiving answers from outside experts, may frustrate one's objectives and outcomes in the research process. The researcher's quest to be ethically accurate, while acknowledging contextual imperatives, ignoring certain social relationships within the selected community, by implication excluding certain voices which are not heard remains an underlying risk (Ferreira, 2016). As PAR is rooted in the underlying principles of action research, according to action research philosophy, there are no experts in the research field. The basic assumption is that local problems require local solutions by relying on local materials and representations. Accepting diversity, differences, and complexities as methods of inquiry, while keeping in mind that no single thrust exists, is one of participatory action research's key requirements.

Development

Development is a values-sensitive subject. Amongst the values (Des Gasper, 2015, p. 1) is whether 'values of human well-being, justice and human dignity adequately are reflected in practice; and how can attention to those values be supported; as well as what is the significance of culture and how far are values justifiably culturally relative?' In the present chapter, development ethics is used as a study context to ascertain the pros and cons of values-based participatory action research. In development ethics, values-based participatory action research insists that how values are conceived and articulated may impact research design and possible outcomes. Des Gasper (2015, p. 1) gives us the vocabulary we need to speak about values-based participatory action research in development ethics when he insists that 'development in human societies involves value-laden choices. Different choices and ways of thinking about development bring greatly different outcomes for different people.' For Des Gasper (2015, p. 1), '[t]he key role of development ethics is to reveal, reflect on and assess these choices, and add a voice for those who otherwise are unreasonably neglected or sacrificed.' Therefore, development is a complex process of structural transformation that cannot be conceptually captured without leaving out some of its critical components. It encompasses socio-economic transformation to political, and human

development. Human development is the foundational premise in which other complementary means of development may be lodged. Development ethics provides strategies of how action inquiry initiatives may shape and be shaped by theoretical debates to show how the practice of participatory action research could support social change but also the advancement of knowledge in the field of academic research (Chevalier & Buckles, 2019, p. 4).

For the purpose of this chapter, the best approach to development that may seem to capture a range of arrays that development entails is offered by Amartya Sen, who insists that ‘economic growth cannot be sensibly treated as an end in itself. Development has to be more concerned with enhancing the lives people lead and the freedom people enjoy’ (Sen 1999, p. 19). Given its concern on wellbeing and capabilities, this approach has been termed the capability approach by policymakers. In the light of this approach, development can no longer be about an increase in commodities but the need to augment people’s capabilities to use such commodities. Returning to values, Des Gasper (2015, p. 2) insists that we should try to think openly, carefully, and fairly about the priorities and principles that guide peoples’ choices, ‘about which groups are favoured, neglected or even sacrificed, and about the choices involved also in the related ways of thinking.’ For Des Gasper (2015, p. 2), apart from their importance for guiding action, attention to values is important for trying to understand people. In his view, ‘[h]umans hold and use and are partly driven by values, including ethical ideas; and the types of ethical ideas they hold affect their motivation for thinking empathetically about other people and for engaging in action.’ Still, ‘[p]owerful groups often keep values concealed and deny choices, to hide who is favoured, neglected or sacrificed’ (Des Gasper, 2015, p. 2).

According to the UN human development goals (HDGs), there are three core values to development reformulated from Amartya Sen’s capability approach: sustenance, self-esteem, and freedom. Sustenance or the ability to meet the basic needs of people is one of the key values over which every other value may find resonance. Self-esteem or a sense of worth and self-respect and a feeling of not being marginalised is an extremely important value for individual’s wellbeing. All peoples and societies seek some form of self-esteem (identity, dignity, respect, honour

etc.). The nature and form of self-esteem may vary from culture to culture. Freedom or the ability to choose is essential for the wellbeing of individuals. In values-based participatory action research these three core values are essential, but the value of self-esteem is the most critical one for may impact on values identification and possible negotiation for the lack of self-esteem. But self-esteem without freedom or the ability to meet one's basic needs is impossible or pointless.

Though the individual should at least strive to have access to one of these values to be able to function as a dignified member of society, to achieve one of the values does not come easily. Given the challenges to address these three core values simultaneously, it was finally realised that problems of poverty, inequality, and institutional changes require a direct attack and policy interventions (Des Gasper, 2015, p. 3). It led key policymakers, such as IMF and World Bank, to realise that development is a complex process involving major changes in social structures, attitudes, and institutions as well as growth and redistribution. It is here where Amartya Sen's conclusion springs, in the sense that though wealth is key for human wellbeing, development is more than wealth; it is concerned with enhancing the lives people lead and the freedoms they enjoy. Income and wealth are not ends in themselves but instruments for other purposes (Sen, 1999, p. 73). For, Sen (1999, p. 88), '[r]elative deprivation in terms of income can yield absolute deprivation in terms of capabilities. Being relatively poor in a rich country can be a great capability handicap, even when one's absolute income is high in terms of world standards.'

Development cannot be an isolated effort; it cannot take place on its own. It is part and parcel of the social, cultural, political, constitutional, legal, economic, psychological, environmental, and the spiritual makeup of a given society. Without any political will, any ideal of development cannot be possible and its effort may be deemed to be a failure. For this reason, that is why it is so crucial and critically important to make development a human right and policy issue and try to relate it to the United Nations' declarations such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a collection of 17 interdependent global goals established in 2015 designed to be a blueprint to achieve a more sustainable future for all which many individual countries are signatories. By virtue of their membership, these countries have committed

themselves not only to abide to but also to make the development agenda and aspirations of their individual nations mandatory and possible by the order of importance. Hence, to be authentic, studies show that ‘development model has to build on and execute government policies and strategies’ (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006, p. 8). In South Africa, examples of such models include ‘the South African Integrated Development Plan, aimed at sustainable municipal development in a sound environment, and the integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programme, aimed at rural development’ (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006, p. 8).

An Ethics of Regards

Ethics of regards sees the ideal of human dignity as a wellspring of regards. One author in modern scholarship who has engaged with the ideal of human dignity as a defining paradigm of liberal theory of justice is the American Philosopher John Rawls. According to Nussbaum (2000), Rawls’ views are always presented abstractly and are often difficult to understand and for philosophers and civic actors to penetrate. But Rawls himself has given new specificities and vigour to one of the most valuable legacies of the liberal political tradition: the idea that a person has a dignity and worth that social (structures) institutions should not be permitted to violate. Like Kant, Rawls (1971) has held that the moral judgements of ordinary people are an essential ingredient and starting point for good political deliberation. Though its Kantian roots cannot be completely dismissed, the idea of dignity also occupies centre stage in Aristotelianism where the ideal is understood in relational terms. Rawls’ theory of justice is a synthesis of both Kant and Aristotle remarkably made clear in his ‘difference principle.’ In the light of difference principle, for Rawls (1971, p. 60), a just distribution of welfare means an equal distribution unless an unequal distribution would be to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged. In his description of virtue ethics, Aristotle sees dignity not only as a concept but also as a key component that guides moral reasoning in practical wisdom. The Aristotelian stance based on the ethics of virtues takes human fellowship, participation, relationality, and sociality as a springboard for regards, hence an avenue for human flourishing and

dignity (MacIntyre, 1999, p. 226). In this case, dignity can no longer be conceptualised as an abstract category but materialised as a lived experience, a consequence of human interaction and exchange whose result is regards itself.

In the realm of an ethics of regards, the capacity for development is innate; it takes its roots from within out. An ethics of regards insists that for community development to be authentic it should take its roots in the realm of two key paradigms, namely the participatory paradigm and the sustainable development paradigm (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006, p. 27). In line with the sustainability paradigm, regards insist that community development is a bottom-up process that requires the empowerment of people to be responsible for their own development. Local development efforts should be in harmony with local ecology. Local people are the experts on local ecology; they know and understand the challenges of their surrounding environments best (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006). Regards insist that participation is more than involvement, yet participation without power is futile and worse than marginalisation. Participation should be matched by recognition and authenticity. Participation is dialogical and engaging, when one participates, they become part of the decision-making process and planning. The research, by being context sensitive, provides rich contextual data so vital in the reshaping and reframing of the participants' worldview. Like action research itself, the advantages of an ethics of regards is that 'plans that are made by local people (participants) usually have a higher propensity of being successful than those planned by outsiders, as local people have first-hand knowledge of their situation and take into account local conditions when planning activities to address challenges' (Ferreira, 2016, p. 12). At the core, when an ethics of regards informs the *pros* and *cons* of participatory action research, community members begin to experience feelings of enablement and empowerment during the research process, increasing their understanding of the challenges and opportunities they face, generating local solutions to overcome local challenges.

Moving from PAR to values-based participatory action research and the insights it creates is, in itself, a participatory ethical action that underlies and inspires the conceptual framework of an ethics of regards that takes us well beyond our narrow understanding of what development and

sustainability entail. In the realm of an ethics of regards, the attempt to move from a participatory action research into a values-based participatory action research is not automatic and does not come easily. And to identify which values might be conducive to a fair, just, liberating, and empowering participatory actions is not easily discernible either. Indeed, it might require listening to the voices of other fields of study, as my effort to dig into the field of classical economics so as to retrieve the ideal of an economy of regards in which an ethics of regards is rooted has shown. At times, one might need to strategise the possibility of adopting an etic or outsider perspective, as well an emic or insider perspective, as a clue to understanding the complexity of institutional arrangements, structures, culture, and memory influencing the way people relate and regard each other, as well as to why things are the way they are, and why people relate the way they do. Values are repositories of people's identities. Here is where Des Gasper's (2015, p. 1) point makes sense that we need to try to understand values in order to understand people.

The words emic and etic are specifically used, though not uniquely so, in the field of social research, to indicate both objectivity and subjectivity of a given phenomenon. They have their root in anthropology where they are applied to denote, respectively, an insider, subjective perspective and outsider, objective perspective. Firstly, when an ethics of regards is embraced, the researcher's role shifts from outsider professional who might provide information and advice (so-called etic approach) to insider participation and understanding from an insider's perspective (emic approach). Secondly, when an ethics of regards is embraced, the *participants* in action research projects are encouraged to think for themselves, contribute to their own learning rather than merely receiving information from outsiders, and share knowledge and work together in order to face challenges that exist (Creswell, 2013, p. 51).

Based on the ideal of reciprocity as a key virtue in the exercise of mutual regards, when an ethics of regards is guided by sympathy and empathy, roles are reversed and a new relationship based on the ideal of

human dignity comes into being as a result. Hence, as Swanepoel and De Beer put it, ‘dignity is promoted by giving people recognition; by recognizing them as capable of making their own decisions and accepting responsibility for their own decisions’ (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006, p. 27). As in PAR, when an ethics of regards is implied, the researcher is expected to regard the participants as research partners worthy of moral regards, thereby enhancing mutual collaboration where power and domination in research are not only discouraged but abolished. An ethics of regards has the propensity of horizontalising vertical and hierarchical relationships, allowing for opportunities to create insights of power from inside out from the previously disempowered, as opposed to merely receiving power from who seemingly seems to possess it. In the realm of an ethics of regards in participatory action research, participants gain ownership in participatory decision-making, thereby setting their own priorities and working towards their goals. As participants become gradually motivated by an ethics of regards, they become gradually ‘responsible in initiating change.’

Translating Values-Based Participatory Action Research into Research Design

Values-based participatory action research, as a family of values-based practices, is a new research methodology that ‘emphasises the centrality of values in decision making, the diversity of values, which may remain unnoticed if they are presumed shared; and the importance of practitioners’ developing skills to identify and negotiate values’ (Petrova et al., 2006, p. 703). Central to values-based participatory action research is the assumption that a shift in human social values may have consequence on how research methodologies and practice are conducted. While PAR is research with and along ordinary people, values-based participatory action research goes a step further to see research not only in terms of participation, or in terms of the participant’s ability to participate, but also in the light of what the participants value most and the ability they have to identify and negotiate the valuable.

In values-based practices, from an ethics of regards, participation is more than inclusion. Values-based participatory action research takes a step further to see participation in terms of one having a voice and the ability to articulate, identify, and negotiate values. In the traditional research methodologies, researchers are experts who speak on behalf of the voiceless or those whose voices have been suppressed or marginalised; in values-based participatory action research, as a wellspring of an ethics of regards, everybody has a voice that is recognised and acknowledged. Participants are seen as persons worthy of moral regards, whose dignity is recognised and afforded equal worth. Participants are valued as competent members of the team who are able to speak from within—in a manner that affirms and strengthens their social standing and self-worth. They have the ability to identify and express the values they hold as dear in the light of their own situation, as well as in the light of their ability to identify and negotiate those values. Collection, prioritisation, use, and exchange of information in the research process is an act of regards that requires to be handled with dignity. Information is not only information but a repository of people's life stories that may be handled and wounded. Those handling it should do so with a degree of care and discretion, conscious of the fact that people may be mishandled or wounded if their lives' stories are not handled properly or with a degree of discretion and respect (Taylor, 1995, p. 225).

Since in values-based practices values are identified when in conflict, as a family of participatory action research, in contrast to more conventional research design strategies, researchers are seeking to apply more regards-informed decision-making in their theoretical formulations. As ethics of regards as a methodological principle inspires values-based practices, it would often be expected to be selectively biased towards research methods and tools that are particularly participatory, democratic, context-sensitive, humanely grounded and geared towards solidarity amidst diversity where difference is emulated as a source of strength and recognition. Values-based participatory action research tends to take the situation of the excluded and marginalised of society as defining principles of research. Values-based participatory action research, from an ethics of regards, defends that regardless of circumstances, each participant is worthy of moral regards. The foundational premise of an ethics of regards is

the value placed on the idea of human dignity and equal worth—methods that offer not only the ability to empower and encourage oneself to participate but also the ability to identify, negotiate, and add value in the discourse as recognised member in the research project, to experience oneself as a competent and effective member of the research team and to be experienced by others as a person whose self-worth and dignity are inherently recognised, affirmed, and valued by others (Abma et al., 2019, p. 127).

Discussion: Pros and Cons of Values-Based Participatory Action Research

Values-based participatory action research is a cutting-edge methodology that combines top-down approaches and bottom-up initiatives in research design. Values-based participatory action research shares a common pledge, together with other fields of studies, insisting that transforming societies for sustainable living depends not only on top-down decisions but also on bottom-up initiatives embraced by local communities, together with efforts made by civil society, and the corporate sector. A values-based participatory action research sees values as defining features in the research encounter. It shares similar tools with the qualitative research methodology in which the participants' meanings, in terms of the values they hold, take centre stage. 'In the entire qualitative research process, the researchers keep a focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue, not the meaning that the researchers bring to the research or writers from the literature' (Creswell, 2013, p. 51). Key, in the pros and cons, is that the adoption of the sustainable development goals in 2015 marked a shift in global values, introducing the idea that people everywhere should aspire to universally acceptable development aspirations that 'leave no one behind', yet because of pressures imposed by IMF and the World Bank 'policy-makers face philosophical dilemmas' in policy choices, when having to frame their decisions according to the standards of international institutions while, at the same time, having to adhere to

the needs and aspirations of local communities (World Development Report, 2003, p. 193).

While the interplay between top-down and bottom-up initiatives is widely recognised, a considerable debate about what the level of participation in the encounter really mean remains a matter of values contestation. For example, to use the example of Life & Peace Institute (LPI) in Uppsala in its effort in trying to bring together global policymakers and local actors on peace initiatives reveals a myriad of challenges. According to LPI, a ‘challenge that follows direct engagement is that inclusion and participation in global peacebuilding policy processes often still means being invited to participate in a system of power and adapting to it, rather than transforming the system’ (Life & Peace Institute, 2020, p. 14). It could be argued, however, they say, ‘that the very fact of inviting local actors to participate in the global peacebuilding policy space is transforming the system away from an elite-only club towards a more inclusive space’ (Life & Peace Institute, 2020, p. 14). However, ‘most civil society engagement with UN agenda setting occurs through invited spaces, where the terms of discussion are largely pre-determined by global policy actors’ (Life and Peace Institute, 2020, p. 15). An ethics of regards insists that how development and sustainability are understood impacts policy formulation and implementation. One more important view, linked to the one shared by Life & Peace Institute amongst the pros and cons, which many scholars also seem to share, is that development indexes, assumptions, and constructs made at the level of international bodies, such as the IMF and the World Bank, tend to be more globalised, hence impacting how development and policy formulations are understood locally, regardless of context (Des Jardins, 2006).

As one of the cons, for example, Bagele Chilisa is cited to have highlighted ‘how knowledge systems rooted in African philosophies, world-views and history have been marginalized in development discourse while holding the potential to enrich sustainability science.’ Yet, as one of the pros, ‘the interdependence of biological and cultural diversity has led to biocultural diversity as a source of knowledge for scientists, local communities, civil society and policymakers interested in local and global sustainability’ (UNHDI, 2020, p. 150). Still, in the light of values-based participatory action research in community development and public

policy, from an ethics of regards, ‘values systems go beyond conventionally looking at nature and the planet for only their instrumental value (service provision) or intrinsic value (inherent worth) to incorporate relational values (“associated with relationships, both interpersonal and as articulated by policies and social norms”)’ (UNHDI, 2020, p. 153). To achieve wellbeing, people need adequate and secure livelihoods. The majority of people in the world live in rural areas. To them land and nature play a vital role in making secure livelihood possible (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006, p. 14). As the UNHDI report remarkably emphasises, ‘[p]eople’s attachment to their place of living implies an awareness of the value of territory, local identity and a sense of community, fostering stewardship for the planet’ (UNHDI, 2020, p. 153). Further, the report proceeds to see this effort as being ‘combined with a participatory approach to decision-making as well as institutional respect for people and organized groups, for their identity and for their local culture constitutes a favourable setting for collective action at the local level’ (UNHDI, 2020, p. 153). Such an approach, the report proceeds, ‘is also well equipped to foster the complex and intertwined relationship between equity and sustainability in a way that unleashes positive synergies between the two’ (UNHDI, 2020, p. 153).

Going Beyond Participation to Recognition

In a values-based participatory action research, when the value of moral regards is implied, an ethics of regards is assumed. An ethics of regards contends that a participatory community development to be sustainable should be worthy of moral regards; participation is more than involvement but recognition. Mutual recognition between role-players in the realm of values-based participatory action research is key. In a values-based participatory action research, an ethics of regards bears substance on the reversal of roles. A corresponding illustration that well expresses the nuances of values-based participatory action research process, from an ethics regards, can be found in ‘qualitative research approach.’ As Creswell (2013, p. 52) puts it, ‘[w]e conduct qualitative research when we want to *empower individuals* to share their stories, hear their voices,

and minimize the power relationships that often exist between a researcher and the participants in a study.’ Further, Creswell (2013, p. 52) insists that ‘qualitative research, then, should contain an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of participants, the institutions in which they live and work, or even the researchers’ lives.’ As I have alluded earlier that values-based participatory action research should take the context of the oppressed and their experience of injustice as its starting point, Creswell (2013, p. 52) goes a step further to say that ‘the issues facing these marginalized groups are of paramount importance to study, issues such as oppression, domination, suppression, alienation, and hegemony. As these issues are studied and exposed, the researchers provide a voice for these participants, raising their consciousness and improving their lives.’

As one moves from action research to participatory action research, hence values-based participatory decision-making, the roles (See Chap. 12) which researchers and participants now ought to assume in this new dimension ought to be equally informed by the virtue of mutual recognition based on the ideal of human dignity. Recognition is the well-spring of human dignity, hence the springboard of an ethics of regards. Where recognition has been creatively assumed and seriously taken as a defining feature of development, policymaking and prioritisation have indeed led to an extraordinary human flourishing and wellbeing, Scandinavia being the most accurate example in view. An ethics of regards sees development environment and sustainable development as key categories in human flourishing and wellbeing because of the impact they create on how people see, associate, and identify themselves. In the end, this nuanced process informed by an ethics of recognition and regards is a form of conducting values work research.

Conclusion

We have seen how when an ethics of regards is implied, values-based participatory action research may be turned into a boundary-breaking research methodology. This means that when an ethics of regards is assumed, boundaries are not only broken but also turned into bridges. In a postmodern society, when a plurality of values conflicts, values-based

participatory action research offers us the vocabulary we need to be able to take participatory ethical decisions together as a method of inquiry. An ethics of regards allows us to embrace the prevailing plurality and difference not as a form of weakness but as a source of strength. Values-based participatory action research as a boundary-breaking research methodology can indeed assist us in bridging the gap between theory and practice, even in policy dilemmas, where critical decisions are required to be made. An ethics of regards is a way to go in organisational leadership—in corporations, where leaders are systematically confronted with critical policy decisions. Economy and equity are critical ethical questions in development ethics because they impact the way policy decisions are made and justified. When an ethics of regards is implied, values-based participatory action research as boundary-breaking research methodology not only can lead in bridging the gap between theory and practice in sustainable community development and public policy but can also help in turning the existing gaps into bridges.

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