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The Politics and Practices of Funding Qualitative Inquiry

*Messages About Messages
About Messages . . .*

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Dear Reader,

This chapter is a series of reflections about how it is, and might be, possible to fund qualitative inquiry. Put another way, it is about how to sell our research ideas and research expertise in order to gain the resources we need to be able to do our research. For, no matter what type of qualitative inquiry we do, we are all selling, be it selling our time and/or our labor or/and our research projects. While speaking to issues that in some way touch and affect all qualitative inquirers, the discussion is primarily directed to readers who are perhaps a little unsure of how to begin funding their qualitative inquiry and/or navigate the research marketplace. My hope is that the chapter will provide this group of readers with both practical information that they can use to help them gain funding, as well the impetus to continue the ongoing intellectual work and reflection that thinking about the politics and practices of funding qualitative inquiry demands of us all.

At this point, some readers may be thinking that a discussion about funding qualitative inquiry is not relevant to them. If you are one of these readers, then perhaps you are thinking that the type of research you are interested in does not

need large amounts of funding or interaction with funders, it really only needs your time. My response to this is that implicit within this type of thought is the assumption that funding for qualitative research is synonymous with, or limited to, support from sources removed from researchers themselves, most often thought of in terms of monetary support. Also implicit is the assumption that the researcher's time is somehow not funding for research. This overlooks the fact that funding for research comes in many different forms.

For example, funding can be in the form of money for salaries to employ research staff, bring on research students, or even release chief investigators from other duties in order to be able to conduct the research. Support can also come in the form of money for the purchase of equipment such as data recorders and computers, or it can involve in-kind (nonmonetary) support where the equipment is either supplied or loaned for the duration of the project. Monetary, or in some cases in-kind, funding can also be gained to enable necessary travel or access to specialist skills and services such as translation expertise. Other forms of funding for qualitative inquiry can come either directly or indirectly from institutional incentive schemes to "reward" researchers who attract research income for that institution through their grants, publications, and successful research student completions. Such rewards can take the form of, for example, infrastructure grants to establish research centers within that institution, an increased percentage of workload allocation for research, and/or allocation of modest discretionary funds for approved research-related purposes such as conference attendance or research assistant hours.

Morse (2002) points out that it is a myth that qualitative research is cheap, or cheaper than other types of research, to do. It seems to me that this myth has arisen and flourished throughout much of qualitative research's history both without, and also interestingly within, the qualitative research community because of limited notions of funding and what constitutes funding for research. All researchers, regardless of their methodological or substantive interests, require some way of funding their research. This is true of any study, even those qualitative studies largely done by researchers working in their "own time" and not requiring large pieces of equipment, specialized workplaces/laboratories, and/or expensive consumables such as chemicals. It is this allocation of paid work time and/or donation of discretionary private or unpaid time to the study that is in effect funding the research. Thus, I think that funding our qualitative inquiry is a question that concerns all of us.

There were many forms that a chapter about funding and qualitative inquiry could take. For example, one possibility was to focus attention on "how to write a winning proposal" for funding. But this runs the risk of limiting the discussion

to one about writing for funders, and often very specific types of funders running large research-granting programs. Funding, as we have seen, can take many forms. It also runs the risk of reducing the discussion to an instrumental “how to” one. Another possibility was to focus on the political dimensions affecting funding for qualitative inquiry, looking, for example, at how we can position our research in relation to a politics of evidence that has been so pervasive for the past decade. But this has already been written about, and written about well, in ongoing and vigorous calls for qualitative inquiry to resist the excesses of a politics of evidence with normalizing, exclusionary, and positivist tendencies (Denzin & Giardina, 2008; Holmes, Murray, Perron, & Rail, 2006). Further, a possible danger of such a focus is limiting the discussion of funding and qualitative inquiry to one that is always in reaction or relation to this politics, a politics imposed on qualitative inquiry from without. This may actually have the effect of sustaining the centrality of that politics in defining the parameters of the discussions we both do have, and importantly might have, about funding and qualitative inquiry. In this way, the politics of evidence can become a distractor displacing qualitative inquiry, funding, and even evidence as the focus (Long, 2010; Morse, 2006a).

Given this, how have I decided to structure the discussion? The explorations and reflections to follow about how it is, and might be, possible to fund qualitative inquiry, focus on two different, yet interconnected areas. The first area is what I have decided to call the *practices* involved in the seeking, gaining, and accepting of funding. It is about the practicalities of funding qualitative inquiry such as where funding might come from, the forms that funding might take, and strategies in locating appropriate funding for a particular piece of research. It is also about crafting a proposal for funding, and what it involves. This includes decisions about whom and what will be studied, as well as when and how and why. But equally, the discussion to follow is about how these decisions can be affected by the politics of funding and the politics of research. It is this *politics* that is the second area of focus in the chapter. It has been my experience that practices associated with locating and obtaining funding for qualitative inquiry cannot be seen apart from the politics that affects them at every point in both the research and funding process. Where a qualitative inquirer chooses to seek funding from, how they go about locating and applying for funding, and what they do when they receive funding, is as much a political discussion as it is a practical one.

What is this politics that I am talking about? The form of political thought that has dominated the thinking of many Western governments and administrators in the past decades, is one derived from neoliberal understandings. This is a

politics promoting competition, efficiency, quality, notions of the marketplace, and audit-derived understandings of accountability (Cheek, 2005; Kvale, 2008; Torres, 2002). It is a politics in which one type of research evidence is privileged over another. Implicit within it are “contested notions of evidence. It is both about the way we do our research (the methods or procedures used to produce the evidence) and concomitant ways of thinking about what form(s) evidence must take in order for it to be considered valid, acceptable and therefore of use” (Cheek, 2008, p. 20). For as Denzin (2009, p. 142), drawing on Morse (2006a), points out, it “is not a question of evidence or no evidence.” Instead, it is about who can say that something is evidence and something else is not. This shifts the emphasis from evidence per se to the *politics* of evidence, which is about the power that enables one type of research finding to be deemed as evidence and another not. This is a politics that has percolated down to the level of many funders of research, affecting the way that funding for qualitative inquiry is thought about and allocated (Cheek, 2005, 2006; Hammersley, 2005; Morse, 2006b; Stronach, 2006).

Thinking about it, few researchers have remained immune from the effects of the infiltration of this politics into the research arena. For example, at a macro political level qualitative researchers have seen the proliferation of endless forms of government-driven reviews and audits in the quest to ensure, and provide “evidence” of, research efficiency, output, and quality (Cannella & Lincoln, 2004; Denzin, 2009). At a more micro level of research practices, limited understandings of research and research evidence have, and continue to, affect the types of methods used, able to be used, and/or even called methods (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006; Morse, 2006b; Torrance, 2006). As a result, over the past decade, there has been ongoing tension, collision, and at times rupture, at the interfaces of qualitative inquiry and a politics of evidence (Denzin & Giardina, 2006, 2007a, 2008, 2009). These tensions, collisions, and ruptures have spilled over to, and impacted, ways we think about, and do, fund our qualitative inquiry. Given all this, I believe that exploring the interfaces between the politics and practices of funding our qualitative inquiry is absolutely crucial, not only for trying to better understand how best to fund our inquiry, but also because this interface has the potential to shape the form that our inquiry does, and even can, take.

How can this be? How can the interfaces between the politics and practices of funding qualitative inquiry shape the form that our inquiry takes, or might take? An example of what I am thinking about is if we were to choose a particular substantive area for study due to a perception that this will make it more likely to get funded. So, if, for example, a funder has a priority area to which funding will be allocated, then it may be that substantive area we tailor our research to and not

another. Or, thinking about methodology, if a funder prefers one type of research approach over another, then we write our research design to fit that preferred approach. Of course, writing within and to the parameters set by funders may not necessarily be a “bad” thing. Indeed, some might call it just common sense. However, it does raise questions about what is driving what—is the funding driving the research, or the research the funding, or something in between? To some extent, this has the potential to turn the original intent of funding, which was as an enabler or support for research, on its head. The means of support (the funding) becomes as much, or even more, the goal as the research to be supported (the research problem). What the researcher might in fact be doing is buying the funding as much as they are selling the research project.

All of the above raises a number of complex issues for qualitative researchers to think about, and at times difficult choices to make, related to the practices and politics affecting the way they fund their qualitative inquiry. For me, chief among these is constantly reflecting on what is my prime motivation—enabling the research or gaining the funding? Am I selling research or buying funding or something in between? How far am I prepared to modify my research in order to get funding for it and, importantly, what is the reason for my decision making in this regard? How is it possible to find ways to fit the politics and funding to qualitative inquiry, and not qualitative inquiry to the politics and funding? What am I prepared to give up, change, or adapt in terms of my qualitative inquiry and what am I not? Many qualitative inquirers have had to make a number of trade-offs in relation to funding their qualitative inquiry when faced with questions such as these. Talking about such tradeoffs can be confronting and difficult. Perhaps this is why there is not much writing about them. Yet what we *don't* say about what we do can be just as, if not more, instructive and important to consider as what we actually *do* say about what we do (Cheek, 2010a).

Thinking about all this, I came to the conclusion that what I wanted to explore was how it might be possible to be pragmatic and realistic about funding qualitative inquiry in a world where there are demands on most of us to produce research “products,” yet at the same time feel like we have some control over what those products are and what they might be. It seemed crucial to me that this discussion must speak, and relate directly, to the everyday reality we live and work in. How can we as qualitative inquirers both thrive and survive (in that order) in this reality? This is a particularly important question for less experienced and beginning researchers, especially those who are seeking their first research or academic post, or who are yet to gain tenure. How do you grapple with, and even accommodate, demands of administrators, tenure and search committees, research agencies, and the research marketplace without the feeling

of selling out either in terms of oneself or the type of qualitative inquiry one employs? All of these questions are central and important dimensions of exploring the ideas about ideas about ideas, and messages about messages about messages (Bochner, 2009), related to funding qualitative research. A starting point for unpacking and exposing this cascade of ideas and messages pertains to locating funding for qualitative inquiry, and it is to this that our discussion now turns.

Locating Funding: Where to Begin and Some Hard Questions to Ask Yourself When Doing So

How and where do you begin when trying to locate funding for your qualitative research? Of course, the answer to this depends to a large extent on the research problem you wish to investigate, the type of research you want to do, and what type of funding you need. But in all of this there is a key, immutable point. This point is that, regardless of what strategies you may employ when thinking about how to fund your qualitative inquiry, the first step toward attracting that funding is the development of a well-thought-out research problem and concomitant research design. You must have a very clear idea of what you want to gain funding for, or put another way, what you want to research, why, and how. There are already excellent discussions published pertaining to qualitative research design, one of which is the next chapter in this handbook (Creswell, Chapter 3, this volume). I will not repeat those discussions here. Instead, I want to emphasize that it is only after you are sure that you have spent the time and energy required on the plain hard thinking that Morse (2008) reminds us sits behind the deceptive simplicity of the design of an elegant qualitative inquiry, that you are ready to take the next step in locating funding for that research.

This next step involves not only ascertaining what types of funding are available, but also the way those funding sources understand and think about research. Are they going to be interested in qualitative projects? Do they have particular emphases or priorities in terms of the substantive issues or areas that they will fund? One problem faced by qualitative inquirers in trying to find out this type of information about potential funders and funding schemes is that qualitative inquiry has not been particularly active in, or good at, building up collective knowledge about either funding sources or the experience of interacting with them. There is no collective list of potential funders, for example, nor is there systematic collection of information about the experiences of qualitative researchers who either have attracted funding from a particular source, or who

sit on review panels of funding agencies. As a result, much collective wisdom is lost. Nevertheless, strategies do exist that can be employed in the quest to locate possible funding sources for qualitative inquiry.

A beginning strategy might be to use formal networks, such as meetings like the Congress of Qualitative Inquiry held annually at the University of Illinois, and/or informal networks of qualitative inquirers to find out from where funding has been gained for qualitative inquiry, in what form, and for what type of research project. Just as important, also try to find out where funding has not been awarded to qualitative inquiries and the reasons why. This will give you a clue as to possible “unfriendly” funders for qualitative inquiry and may save you much time and energy from the outset. Another strategy might be to access and use databases and/or publications that list potential funding sources, the frequency of their call for applications seeking funding, and the success rates of applications in the respective schemes. These are often country-specific such as the GrantSearch electronic database in Australia that is published in hard copy every two years as the GrantSearch Register of Australian Funding. It advertises that it has over 3,000 entries identifying funding sources for study, travel, research, business and professional development, the arts, sport and recreation, and community groups offered by all levels of government, universities, foundations, the private sector, and overseas sources specifying Australian applicants (GrantSearch Register of Australian Funding, 2010). Of course, the relative importance of, and opportunities for, funding for qualitative inquiry afforded by each of the above categories of potential funding sources will vary from country to country and even within countries.

It is most important to bear in mind when trying to locate funding for qualitative inquiry that accepting funding from a sponsor “links the researcher and research inexorably with the values of that funder” (Cheek, 2005, p. 400). Consequently, in the search for potential funders, at some point it will be necessary to reflect on whether or not funding should be sought from a particular funding source. For example, most researchers will hesitate if offered funding from tobacco companies. For some qualitative researchers working in health-related areas, whether to seek part of the large sums of funds often available from pharmaceutical drug companies is a vexing question creating fine lines to be traversed. And what of seeking support from companies whose profits are derived in some way from outsourcing labor offshore in developing countries where people work for very little and barely enough to survive? Does a funder’s environmental record matter? In considering such questions, the politics of funding affecting qualitative inquirers comes from another position—the politics that comes with the funder. Taking up a position in respect to this politics is

something that all qualitative inquirers will have to reflect on when working out their strategy to locate funding. Further, some places where qualitative inquirers are employed may have policies about where funding cannot be accepted from. It is important to find this out.

Once potential funding sources have been identified, the search for funding can be refined further with respect to the chances of having a particular qualitative inquiry supported by a particular funder. Sometimes funders have specific substantive areas that they will fund, or priority areas for funding that may change annually. Your project will have a much better chance of being funded if it is in keeping with these areas of interest identified by the funder. Thus, it is important to find out if a funder has priority or interest areas, and if they do, what these areas are. Of course, this can raise dilemmas for you as well in terms of what you are prepared to trade off with respect to your research problem and design in order to “fit” a priority area. You will have to make your own decisions about this. If I am completely honest, at times some of my research has been “fitted” to a particular funder’s requirements as seeking and gaining the funding has been my prime motivation. Thinking about it, this has been for a number of reasons. One is the constant pressure that I have experienced over the course of my career, like many other researchers, to attract funding for my research. Another reason is the harsh reality that funds for research are not easy to get and there are not a lot of them. Given this, I have grappled with whether I needed to be pragmatic about all this, and if so how pragmatic was I prepared to be? Was it better to try to fund exactly the project I wanted to do, or could I live with researching something else because the funding was available to do that project and not the one I had originally intended to do? Was it better to be doing some research in an area or none at all, which may have been the outcome if I did not shape my research to fit with the funding call or the funder’s agenda? There are no easy answers to these questions. Nor is it a matter of right or wrong. However, each potential position that can be adopted in this regard has a cost of some kind. How much modification we are prepared to make to our research problem and why we would do that are questions each of us as qualitative inquirers will need to think about.

Finding out what a particular funder has previously funded is another way of refining the search for potential funding and funders for qualitative inquiry. Have there been any qualitative projects funded and if so what type of qualitative inquiry has been supported? Try to get hold of any funding guidelines, application forms, or other relevant documents such as annual reports detailing funding or research activities published by the funder. This is because “shaping all application forms or guidelines provided by funders are assumptions, often

unwritten and unspoken, about research and the way that research is understood” (Cheek, 2005, p. 394). If it is a struggle to fit the qualitative inquiry around, or into, the sections and headings that are required as part of the funding application and/or there is no record of funding qualitative inquiries, then this strongly suggests that qualitative inquiry may not be something that has been part of the thinking of the funder when constructing the funding scheme. At the very least, this indicates that more needs to be found out about this funder’s position with respect to qualitative inquiry.

The composition of the panel that will review the applications and the process that they will follow can provide further useful information in this regard. Is there anyone on the review panel with expertise and experience in qualitative inquiry? And if the answer to this is a “yes,” then what exactly does that mean? For “yes” can mean qualitative inquirers with extensive experience, or it might mean those with an “acquaintance” with qualitative research, having “attended a short session on qualitative methods at a conference—and they use these isolated ‘facts’ as gold standards” (Morse, 2003a, p. 740). If, on the other hand, the answer is a “no,” then is there the possibility for the panel to seek advice from external reviewers for applications outside of the panel’s collective expertise? For if there are no persons on the review board with qualitative expertise, and the standard procedure is either not to, or not be able to, seek and/or take into account opinion from outside the panel, then this does not augur well for the likely success of the proposal. If expert external opinion is sought, then how that expert advice is sought is equally important to consider. The way this expertise is sought can often be very ad hoc (Morse 2003a).

Being entirely honest about something that maybe we often do not say about what we do, I have at times weighed in my mind whether having external expert opinion, even if it is positive about the proposed research, really changes anything anyway. For example, I have sat on granting and review panels where 0.5 or less of a point in a score out of a possible 100 points has separated those applications that will be funded from those that will not. Every panel member’s score awarded to a grant is therefore crucial. Even if only one member has concerns, spoken or unspoken, about supporting qualitative inquiry, that member’s score can in effect make an application uncompetitive in the funding competition where success rates may be lower than 20%. Thus, the traditional practice of averaging the scores from panel members for a particular application often works against the chances of a qualitative inquiry being funded.

If, after considering the above facets of the practices and processes followed by a funder, it seems as though there is a real opportunity for qualitative inquiry to be funded, then a next step in locating funding can be to approach the funding

agency in person. This can be done in different ways and for different purposes depending on a particular sponsor's way of organizing the allocation of funding. If the allocation of funding is organized on the basis of annual granting rounds, then there is little point to meet to ask for funding outside of those funding rounds. In addition, to do so may give the impression that you have not done your homework with respect to this funder's way of operating. In this instance, you may seek to talk to the office and/or manager with responsibility for the oversight of the funding rounds. This is not only to acquire information about that process, but also to introduce both the researcher(s) and the idea for the research to the people who will be dealing with the application on an administrative basis. This enables them to put a face to a name and demonstrates that you are serious both about your idea, and having a working partnership with them with respect to this research. If a potential sponsor has no set dates for funding rounds but applications can be made at any time for funding, or it is not entirely clear how to apply for funding, then it is important to find the appropriate person in the organization to talk to about your research idea and you as a researcher. This can be difficult, so it is important to persist politely when trying to gain entry to the organization and navigate the various levels of contact that are usually gone through before eventually finding the right person to talk to.

If you are successful in getting a meeting time with that person, make sure that you are very well prepared thereby respecting the time that they have given you, as well as making the most of it in terms of putting across your research idea. Try to think about the research from their point of view. Why should they fund this? What do you offer them? The key is to be clear and precise in the message that you are trying to convey and the research that you are trying to sell. Offer to send a one-page concept paper to them before the meeting that outlines the research idea, the type of support being sought, and any preliminary work that has been done. The concept paper should also have information about you and any other researchers that constitute the research team for the project. This is because track record is an important consideration in a potential funder's mind. Avoid submitting a standard format, multipage, and multipurpose curriculum vitae (CV) that may or may not be read by the person. Rather, present a track record in the form of a modified CV with accompanying text that is written in such a way to draw attention to, and highlight, aspects of your research career that demonstrate that, based on your past experience, you have the expertise to do this research, on time, and within budget (Cheek, 2005). If you do not have a lot of research experience, then a starting point can be to join a research team where some members do have this experience. You can then build up your own track record while researching with, and learning from, them as part of the team.

Another strategy for building up a track record is to look for seed funding opportunities directed to less-experienced, early-career researchers. In these schemes, small amounts of funding are made available to less-experienced researchers for research projects, thereby helping them overcome the eternal issue highlighted here: how to get a track record without having a track record!

Locating Funding: Contracting to Do a Piece of Research

A different strategy when trying to locate potential funding for qualitative inquiry is to look for calls or advertisements from government or other organizations seeking to pay researchers to do a specific piece of research. This specificity may pertain to any or all of the substantive focus of the research, the aspects of that substantive focus to be picked up on and how, as well as the time frame in which the research must be done, written up, and the results "delivered." To varying degrees, and not always, there may be some scope for the researcher to develop the focus and methods that will underpin the research. Advertisements for this type of research funding can often be found in the contract/tender section of newspapers. They ask interested researchers and/or organizations to submit a proposal, on a commercial basis, for conducting the specific project. What the funder is looking for in tendering or contracting the research is to buy the expertise and time needed to do the research because they do not have it themselves. For example, tenders may seek researchers able to conduct a specific number of workshops, focus groups, and/or interviews in order to attain certain prespecified research aims. Here, the emphasis is on researchers fitting both themselves and their research to a specific, time-delimited funding opportunity.

An understandable part of the funder's thinking when devising and awarding a tender for research is the question of what is the least amount of money that they need to spend in order to get the expertise they need and the research done. This is not to suggest that the cheapest proposal will necessarily be successful as the expertise and experience of the researchers will be major considerations as will the overall research design. Rather, it is about getting value for money, which "means not only meeting high standards in the research; it also means considering how much, or little, money needs to be allocated to attain those standards" (Cheek, 2005, p. 394). What all of this means is that the budget will play a major part throughout the entire funding application process. It may also mean that the maximum amount of possible funding that has been set aside for this project

makes it impossible to conduct a qualitative study that can meet the aims of the research required. It is easy to underestimate the amount of time needed for a qualitative project and associated project costs. It is also easy to fall into the trap of trying to be more competitive in the tender round by undercosting researcher expertise and project costs and/or overcommitting as to what it is possible to “deliver” in the time available to do the research. Help in costing projects and making sure that what is promised is realistic can be obtained from research and/or business development offices increasingly found in universities and research organizations. These offices also have the remit to source and look out for calls for tendered research.

Tendered research is characterized by short time frames at every part of the research process. There may be only days to prepare an application, and just weeks or a few months to complete the research. Not all qualitative inquiry and approaches are suited to such short time frames. This is compounded if the funder requires interim reports throughout the research in that it is not always easy, or even possible, to “chunk” any interim findings into bits that can be delivered in a piecemeal fashion. Time and energy put into such interim reporting can cause much frustration in that this diverts researcher time and focus from the bigger research picture. A danger of such emphasis on time delimited results is that it can encourage the rise of atheoretical, or at the very least shallow and thin, qualitative research designs and findings. Morse (2003b, p. 846) notes that not having enough time to do and think about our qualitative research “will kill a project or result in a project that has not become all that it could—and should—be.” Her observation forces us to think carefully about what the short time frames for the delivery of the research findings might actually mean in practice. Stripped of the theoretical understandings that underpin them, such research designs can become little more than a collection of techniques or a series of steps to be followed.

For some qualitative researchers, gaining funding from contracted research has been part of everyday reality for many years. For other qualitative inquirers, tendered research has only relatively recently become an increasingly important income source as the contemporary research context has continued to see a decline in many countries in the relative amount of monetary and other support given by governments and other funders for researcher-generated projects. Qualitative inquirers thinking about tendering for research need to think deeply about how much of the control of the design they are prepared to give away or can live with giving away. How will they navigate the tensions arising from the entry of “fast capitalist texts” (Brennan, 2002, p. 2) into their qualitative inquiry with, for example, research products being transformed into “deliverables” and

research timelines into “milestones”? This is not just a matter of semantics. It is an outworking of messages about messages within messages. One message is that research can be reduced to, or thought of, as a series of tasks. A message that then sits within this message is that once these tasks have been identified, the performance of the research team and the quality of the research can be assessed in relation to whether they have fulfilled these tasks.

For example, I was involved, as part of a team, in doing a contracted piece of research for the Australian government (Cheek et al., 2002). Part of the contract for the research outlined the tasks to be performed by the research team, as well as associated performance criteria that would be used as indicators of success in fulfilling those tasks. One of the tasks stipulated in the Standards and Best Practice section of the contract was to gain “informed consent of all participants.” The associated performance indicator identified in the contract was “signed consent forms.” Thus, gaining informed consent of all participants was in effect reduced to being synonymous with the production of signed consent forms. Our research team had a far wider view of the contested and complex issues surrounding what both informed consent, and the gaining of that consent, might mean in practice. Yet we signed this contract and attempted to navigate this potential tension by delivering what the funder required in terms of signed consent forms while also ensuring that consent and ethical considerations extended far beyond this. However, we never talked about this tension with the funder. Why was this? Perhaps, looking back, there was a pragmatic edge to what we traded off in terms of meeting the requirements imposed by the funding body while at the same time conducting the research in a way that we felt did not compromise the qualitative inquiry. This research addressed an important substantive area and the results were going to be used by government as part of initiatives being thought about in this area at the time. If we were not doing this research, then perhaps others would be who did not have the same problem with, for example, reducing gaining the informed consent of participants to a task and the production of signed consent forms.

There were, and are, no easy answers to these sorts of issues and tradeoffs. Nor are there right or wrong answers. Rather, it is a matter of thinking deeply about what we are prepared to give up or trade off and what we are not when selling ideas or time to funders. As I have mentioned before, as researchers we are all selling something all of the time. Thus the idea of selling is not an issue for me. However, what is an issue for me, and what I still constantly reflect on, is what I am trying to sell, how I am going about selling it, and most importantly why? Questions that all qualitative inquirers might usefully ask themselves in this regard include the following: Are we selling a research problem, our time, our

expertise, or all of the above? How do we feel about selling our time and expertise to do what is, to some extent at least, someone else's research? What are we prepared to trade off in doing that research and what are we not? The importance of reflecting on these types of questions is one of the key messages in this chapter.

Locating Funding: Yet More Considerations *Before Submitting an Application for Funding*

However, even having employed all, or some, of the above strategies in the quest to locate funding for qualitative inquiry, there is yet more homework to do before any application for funding should be made. In the excitement of the possibility of having found a potential funder, or the pressure of a deadline for research proposal or tender submissions, it is easy to overlook the question of what the funder's expectations will be if funding is gained. For example, to what extent will they want to be involved in the research process? What parts of it, if any, will they wish to have control of? Will they expect to have access to the data or parts of it? Will they want representatives on the research team, at team meetings, or to form advisory boards to give input to the form and direction of the research as it unfolds? How will this fit with the research design? How will it affect the researcher/funder/participant relationships in the research and does that matter?

It is just as crucial to consider these matters at the point of applying for funding as it is to focus on trying to write a winning proposal. Before rushing in, or being carried away by the tantalizing possibility of having located a funding source for your research, it is important to remember that applying for and accepting funding from any source is not a neutral activity (Cheek 2005). It involves entering into intellectual and contractual agreements with funding organizations and their agents, such as the manager assigned responsibility for ensuring that the research is completed and on time. Concentrating on winning the funding and worrying later about such details is a poor and dangerous strategy. There is little point in getting the funding if the research cannot proceed as planned because of different expectations on the part of the funder and the researcher as to their respective roles in the research process. All of this is not to paint a picture of doom and gloom. Rather, it is to caution against not thinking through the partnership and agreement you are about to enter into, and making sure that it is one that you want to be in.

The extent and formality of such agreements will vary from funder to funder. Not all funders will have formal expectations about their involvement in, or the way that, the research should be done. Nevertheless, no matter the degree of formality or even informality, it is essential that early on, and absolutely before funding is accepted, researchers and funders discuss, agree upon, and record any assumptions that they have about the research and how it will be done. This includes what can be said about the research and by whom. Not being able to write about and publish part of the research, or any of it at all, because of contractual issues is the uncomfortable place in which some qualitative researchers, including myself (Cheek, 2005), have found themselves. It is thus critical to negotiate how the findings of a study will, and can be, reported, when, and where; the use(s) to which the research data can be put and who owns that data; as well as what can be published in scholarly literature by the researcher(s). Making such agreements is central to building a positive workable relationship with funders built on mutual respect for each other's point of view. It is crucial that this open communication continues throughout the duration of the research project. This is particularly so if something goes wrong or if, for whatever reason, aspects of the research plan, such as the timelines for the research, have to be changed.

It is equally important that these issues have been discussed and negotiated among the research team itself so that there is an agreed position with respect to them *before* they are discussed with the funder. This discussion and negotiation is not always easy, as often there are competing views in the team that need to be navigated. However, one thing is for certain—these competing views will not go away by ignoring them. In addition, the team will need to discuss matters such as what support individual members will have access to; individual responsibilities in contributing to the research especially with respect to time frames and the final report; how often to meet; how disagreements among team members will be resolved; and, very importantly, who in the team will have contact with the funder and on what basis. This is critical to the smooth functioning of the team throughout the project. Having these things thought through, under control, and working well during the research will give the funder confidence in the team. It also makes the life of the funder much easier if they know whom to deal with on the team and the message that they are receiving about the research is clear and consistent.

There should also be agreement between funders and researchers as to what, and by whom, participants in the research will be told about the agreement between the funder and the researcher(s). Qualitative inquiry is built on building trust between participants in the research and those conducting the research.

Central to this trust is being open and honest about who is funding the research and the agreements that have been entered into with that funder with respect to what can, and cannot, be said about that research and any findings. It is also about telling participants exactly who will have access to what data from the research, and how participant anonymity will be ensured. This is particularly important to allay any fears on the part of participants who may be in dependent positions in relation to the funder, such as, for example, the funder's tenants, suppliers, or employees. Such considerations are ethical ones as much as they are practical ones.

Thus, locating any type of funding for qualitative inquiry involves much more than simply locating funding sources. It involves thinking about how the research and researcher will be affected by seeking, and possibly gaining, that funding. In all funding agreements, to a greater or lesser extent, researchers will give away some of their freedom with respect to the project and the way it might be, and actually is, done. Making decisions about how much freedom they are prepared to give up in this regard is one of the fine lines (Cheek, 2008) that qualitative inquirers walk when navigating the funding and research marketplaces. Thinking about how to navigate these fine lines must be done as part of the search for potential funding sources, well before the research funding is gained, and absolutely before the funding has been accepted and the research is actually underway.

Writing to Attract Funding: Crafting a Proposal for Funding

Having done all this, and having located a potential source or way of funding your research, the next step is crafting a proposal to seek that funding. The discussion that I want to have here is not about qualitative research design and/or how to write a proposal per se for a qualitative inquiry. Good examples of this type of discussion already exist (see, for example, Carey & Swanson, 2003; Morse, 2003b; Penrod, 2003). Rather, the discussion is focused on exposing, in order to be better able to navigate, the tensions inherent in writing a funding proposal for multiple audiences sometimes with multiple understandings of what constitutes "good" research or even research. Or, to put it even more simply, how do you write a proposal for a number of different interested parties and still retain the project you want to do both in terms of intent and approach? Shaping and tailoring a research idea to a particular audience is a crucial part of the craft of writing

for funding, a craft built on a set of skills that are largely learned and refined by practice.

When crafting the funding proposal, it will need to be congruent with the guidelines of a funder as well as meeting the requirements of other interested parties such as ethics committees that will need to approve the research before it can proceed. Thus, each application for funding, even for the same project, will vary depending on the characteristics and requirements of the audience being approached. It is not good strategy to work up a generic proposal that is then submitted to a number of funders for two reasons. First, because it may be that individuals serve on more than one review panel and therefore may have seen the proposal before, giving the impression of a nontargeted and recycled funding proposal. Second, when a proposal is written for a potential sponsor's consideration, it is written for a particular audience, whose members have assumptions and expectations of the form a proposal should take and the level of detail that it should contain. These will vary from funding scheme to funding scheme. Thus, as emphasized previously, it is important for researchers to know their audience(s) and its (their) expectations. Sometimes, it may even be possible to have access to research applications that have won funding thereby providing an excellent guide as to how much detail is expected in the proposal and the style of presentation expected by those reviewing the application.

An essential part of crafting the application involves following the guidelines. At the most basic of levels this means conforming to any word or page limits either for individual sections of the application, or the application as a whole. It also means addressing all sections or areas that the guidelines identify. For example, if the guidelines state that an application should comprise a 100-word summary, and then, in no more than 10 pages of text that uses 10-point font or larger, outline the research aims, outcomes, dissemination strategies, significance and novelty value in relation to existing work in the area, methods, ethical considerations, budget and budget justification, and provide a statement about the researcher(s) track record(s), then that is *exactly* what the application should do. A good strategy is to use each of the areas identified in the guidelines as needing to be addressed as headings for the different sections of the text that make up the application. This organizes and gives structure to your writing, as well as making it clear where and how you are addressing these areas. Often, when scoring applications, reviewers will have a sheet where they assign a score to each of these sections, so making it easy to see where and how you have addressed them makes good sense.

A good research proposal is one that is clear and concise. Use accessible language that can be read and understood by panel members who may not be working and/or researching in your exact area of expertise. Writing that is full of

jargon will not impress. There must be a clear statement of the question/issue/problem that the research is addressing and everything that is written following that should be in terms of how it is related to addressing the question/issue/problem. Thus, for example, the description of the methods should be explicitly related back to how they enable the aims of the research to be met. Any literature review must move beyond description to be an argument of why the proposed research is needed in relation to both what has preceded it, and is happening currently, in the relevant substantive area. Show how the proposed research fits with the funder's priorities and funding remit. Make these connections throughout the discussion and document. Do not make the reader have to do the work, or expect that they will, as if they are a reviewer with many applications to read it is likely that they will not have the time to do this. Never underestimate the importance of parts of an application that may seem to be more routine or administrative, such as the budget.

It is important to bear in mind that when crafting your proposal, you are selling your research *and* your expertise to this funder. This is why the statement of the researcher's track record is so important. Publications are the hard currency of the track record needed for researchers to be able to compete for funding. Without a strong publishing track record, it will be much more difficult to win funding. Largely for matters of expediency in terms of ease of data collection and manipulation, publication track records are increasingly being assessed using quantitative metrics. The most pervasive of these is impact factor. Although related to impact of a specific journal (Cheek, Garnham, & Quan, 2006), increasingly the term "impact factor" is being used interchangeably with the term "impact" in the commonspeak of funders and university administrators. One effect of this is that in many funding schemes, impact factor is being used when assessing the quality and impact of the work of researchers. Thus, guidelines for applying for funding require the publication track record of researchers to list the impact factor of the journal that a particular journal article was published in. The erroneous assumption is that the higher the impact factor, the higher the scholarship and quality of the applicant's published work. Thus, a supposed measure of the impact of a *journal* is transformed into a measure of the impact and quality of a particular *article*. This in turn is transformed into measures of the impact and quality of a particular *researcher* (Cheek et al., 2006).

This poses considerable challenges for qualitative inquirers and creates messages about messages about messages about where, and why, to publish. Chief among them is, given the increasing emphasis placed on a metric-based, impact-factor-driven publishing track record when assessing applications for funding, should qualitative inquirers seek only to publish in "high-impact" journals? How, when presenting their publishing track record to funding bodies not

familiar with qualitative inquiry, do qualitative inquirers demonstrate the impact of publishing in places such as this handbook, for example, which does not have an impact factor? What does opting in or out of trading in the currency developed around metric-based publication measures do to our chances of locating and gaining funding for our research? Where to publish their research and why is another of the fine lines all qualitative inquirers walk.

Writing Our Methods for Funding: Walking Fine Lines and Making Tradeoffs We Can Live With

Part of writing for funding involves making decisions about how we will write our methods for particular audiences. This involves making decisions not only about what methods we might employ but also about what details we might, or might not, give about those methods. I am going to use three examples drawn from my own experience of writing my methods for funding to explore some of the tensions that this writing, and the decisions that underpinned it, created for me. The first of these is about fine lines I walked, and tradeoffs I made, when writing sample size into a qualitative funding proposal in response to needing to have a detailed and justified budget for the proposed project.

EXAMPLE ONE: DECIDING WHAT TO SAY AND/OR NOT TO SAY ABOUT SAMPLE SIZE

The production of a well-thought-out and justified budget is an important part of crafting a research proposal for funding. It is quite reasonable for those who provide funding for research to ask whether or not the proposed project represents appropriate use of the funds for which they have responsibility. It is also reasonable for them to require a justification of the amount of funding being sought. Reasons need to be given for the amount and type of funding sought. Often this means a detailed level of precision and justification in the budget with respect to what exactly funding is being applied for and why. For example, here is a short excerpt from the budget justification section of a grant proposal I was part of developing:

A professional transcriber will be required to transcribe the audio taped interviews. It is estimated that every hour of taped data will take three hours to transcribe. We anticipate 50 interviews of each at least 1 hour, therefore

50 hours minimum of taped interviews plus allowance for 10 hours of extra time as experience has shown some interviews will go for longer. Thus 60 hours of tape x 3 transcribing hours per hour of tape recording = 180 hours of transcription @ \$17.50 per hour (quoted by L. . . Supplies, a professional transcribing company). $180 \text{ hours} \times \$17.50 = \$3,150$.

From this justification, it is clear that one of the costs associated with the interview component of the study is that of transcribing the interviews. Thus, this part of the budget is premised on multiplying the number of interviews to be done by the transcription costs associated with one interview to come up with an overall dollar figure.

While on one level this represents very clear crafting of a budget and its justification, on another it raised, and still raises, questions about the tradeoffs that were involved in deriving these numbers.

These questions center on whether it was possible to give precise details about the number of interviews that would be done before the research was underway. In keeping with the inductive approach of qualitative inquiry, we could not be sure of exactly how many participants we would interview in the study. However, costs associated with doing each interview, such as the transcription of the interview, were the major component of the funding being sought. How could we come up with a budget and justify it if a large part of the budget for the project reflected costs related to those interviews but we couldn't say how many we would do? After all, it was not unreasonable for the review committee to expect that we could provide justification for our budget.

After much thought, we decided that we would nominate a specific number of interviews to be conducted in the proposal even though we were not entirely comfortable in so doing. We nominated a sample size of 50 interviews. This number was based on the sample size used in a study reported in the research literature on which, in part, our study drew. We wrote in the proposal that our *anticipated* sample size of a total of 50 interviews (25 older people and 25 family members) was *guided* by that study. We were fortunate enough to gain funding for the project, and after we had completed the research we published the findings. In this article, we specified the sample size we had used (Cheek & Ballantyne, 2001). We then applied for funding for a related study that also involved interviewing older people and their families. When writing this proposal, we were able to refer to our published first study and state that drawing on our previous experience we anticipated that 25 interviews of older people and 25 interviews of family members would meet the needs of the study. We gained funding for this study, carried out the research, and published it. More studies followed and the results were also

published (Cheek, Ballantyne, Byers, & Quan, 2007; Cheek, Ballantyne, Gilham, et al., 2006; Cheek, Ballantyne, Roder-Allen, & Jones, 2005). By this stage, we had provided ourselves with a way of overcoming the problem of how it is possible to specify the number of interviews to be conducted when it is not possible to do so with absolute certainty. We could refer to our own work.

Throughout the entire process of doing this, we were employing tradeoffs. If we did not give a number with respect to the number of interviews to be conducted, then it was impossible to apply for funding. This was because we could not stipulate a budget, and also, if I am completely honest, because we knew that without a defined sample size it would be impossible to attract funding from the particular granting scheme we were applying to. Yet, if we did give a number then we may be complicit in giving the impression that it is possible to be certain about aspects of qualitative research design that it is not possible to be certain about. Using words in the proposal such as “it is anticipated” that 25 interviews will meet the needs of the study, and writing in our report of the research about why sometimes we did not end up having 25 interviews of older people and/or their family members but more or less (see Cheek & Ballantyne, 2001), were some of the ways we tried to navigate the tradeoffs we knew we were making. In addition, we found that interviewing 25 people from each group of participants (older people and family members) in these studies provided us with the richness of data and information that we sought. And we are optimistic that our results have influenced practice and attempted to address issues pertaining to social justice and human rights for these groups of people (Cheek, 2010a, 2010b; Cheek, Corlis, & Radoslovich, 2009). Nevertheless, there were very fine lines to walk when making these decisions, and no doubt there may be readers who feel as though we may have sold out a little (or a lot) in what we did.

Morse (2003a) also shares her reflections on the tradeoffs she made when needing to specify a sample size in order to be able to specify a budget. She does this using her experience of having had an application for funding rejected by a review committee. She explains that when crafting this proposal, in keeping with the tenets of qualitative inquiry underpinning her research design, she wrote, “sampling would continue until saturation is reached” (Morse, 2003a, p. 740). However, she then went on to specify an actual number for the sample largely because of the need to have a number in order to be able to develop a budget. The number chosen, and the reasons for providing it, drew on her long experience of doing qualitative inquiry. “Experience has taught me that you must calculate some number as the requested dollar amount; experience has also taught me that it is folly to minimize, rather than maximize, the sample size” (p. 740). However, in this instance, the tradeoff of giving of a number became a

problem. Morse puts it this way: “It did not matter what the number was. My sin was to have produced an actual number: ‘In qualitative research’ they [the review committee] told me, ‘the sample size cannot be predicted’” (p. 740). While there may be some merit in such a view, what in effect this did was reduce complex design issues to simplistic “rules” stripped of any theoretical understandings, while effectively dismissing years of experience of conducting qualitative inquiry. Further, in effect it made getting funding for qualitative inquiry nearly impossible, for if there could be no guide to the sample size in the study, then a budget for this research was impossible to develop. If no budget could be developed, then what would be applied for in terms of amount of funding sought?

Both Morse’s and my own experiences highlight that when crafting an application qualitative inquirers face the dilemma of negotiating the pragmatics of trying to write a competitive proposal without selling out to expediency. Writing for funding is as much a political as it is a practical activity. Consequently, how and what to write, and equally what to leave out or not write, are much more than decisions about style or following sections in guidelines. Rather, they are decisions about what to defend and what to give up when crafting a proposal. What aspects of qualitative inquiry, both substantively and methodologically, can be/might be/must never be tailored to meet the understandings and requirements of audiences such as funders? These are questions that confront all qualitative inquirers. I wish to continue the conversation about these questions and the fine lines they involve in terms of the decisions made and paths chosen when writing for funding, using the example of writing for ethics committees.

EXAMPLE TWO: WRITING FOR ETHICS OR “GETTING OUR METHODS THROUGH ETHICS” TO GET THE FUNDING?

It may be a bit unusual or unexpected for some readers to think about writing for ethics committees (also referred to as Institutional Review Boards or IRBs in some countries), as part of a discussion about writing our methods for funding. But the fact is that, in some ways, ethics committees are often as much a part of the decision making about if a research project is able to attract funding as are formal research review panels. This is because most funders will require that research is approved by formally constituted ethics committees before funds can be given and/or released. Even if such approval is not a requirement of a particular funder, then, in Australia, for example, university-based researchers must obtain ethics approval from the relevant university ethics committee before their research can proceed. Thus, a critical part of the process of gaining funding for

qualitative inquiry is the navigation of, and writing for, the formal review process of the ethics of the research.

On the surface, this seems something that all those committed to qualitative inquiry surely would support. Yet there has been an uneasy tension between the role and function of ethics committees on the one hand, and qualitative inquiry and inquirers on the other. Such tensions increased markedly in the late 1990s and continue as we enter the second decade of the 21st century. Many tensions emanate from disagreements about which parts of the research are ethical issues, and therefore part of the remit of an ethics committee, and which are not. This has particularly pertained to questions of methods against the backdrop of the emergence of a politics of evidence embodying narrow views of what constitutes research evidence (see the opening section of this chapter). Lincoln and Cannella have explored aspects of these tensions with great insight (Cannella & Lincoln, Chapter 5, volume 1; Lincoln & Cannella, 2007). One of their key concerns is whether ethics committees are making what are in fact methodological recommendations rather than ethical ones.

Ethics committees argue that part of their remit is to stop research proceeding that is unethical in terms of it being of poor research design and therefore unable to provide any meaningful or useful results (Lacey, 1998). Thus, the risks of the research far outweigh any possible benefits. While on one level this is a reasonable position for ethics committees to adopt, it is not reasonable if only certain understandings of research and evidence are in play. In the United States (Riesman, 2002), the United Kingdom (Ramcharan & Cutcliffe, 2001), and Australia (Cheek, 2005), ethics committees emerged from the traditions of medicine and medical science, and largely in response to issues that had arisen in relation to questionable medical practices. The methods and traditions of medicine and science are those more in keeping with conventional quantitative methods (Lacey, 1998) and understandings of research as deductively based (van den Hoonaard, 2001). Guidelines drawn up by ethics committees have thus tended to reflect this way of thinking about research.

So what does this mean for how we write our methods? Some qualitative inquirers have experienced having their research blocked by ethics committees, or even dismissed out of hand, on the basis that it is not the experimental, deductively based research that some members of the committee believe that all research should be (Denzin & Giardina, 2007b; Lincoln & Cannella, 2002; Lincoln & Tierney, 2002). The research is thus deemed unethical on the basis of research paradigm. Although, over time, there has been some mellowing of this situation with ethics committees recognizing that qualitative inquiry (or at least some forms of it) is a legitimate form of research, tensions remain. For example,

qualitative researchers have found that some of the information ethics committees require is difficult to provide at the outset of an inductively based inquiry. This can pertain to, for example, the requirement to specify the exact wording of every question that participants will be asked during an interview. Or it might be in relation to specifying an exact number in regard to the sample size, thereby once again raising the issues we talked about previously in relation to specifying a sample size when constructing a budget for the research. Further, the practice of some ethics committees of requiring ethics approval every time questions are added in response to emergent themes, or when more participants are needed to be interviewed than first anticipated, creates much frustration for qualitative researchers.

Tensions also arise from the fact that there is sometimes inconsistency between ethics committees. If the qualitative inquiry is to be conducted on several sites, such as several hospitals, for example, and each site has its own ethics committee that will not accept the approval given by another ethics committee, then qualitative inquirers can find themselves in the position of having gained approval from some committees and not others for the same research. This creates many problems and can even jeopardize the funding received, as the research cannot proceed according to the application that was funded. The time that it can take to navigate the minefield of one or more ethics committees can mitigate against the relatively short time frames of tendered and contract research, thereby in effect making it uncompetitive in winning tenders. As noted previously (Cheek, 2005), what all this potentially means is that ethics committees can be more powerful than any funder in determining what research will and will not get funding or even go ahead. At times, the last and definitive word on method has belonged to ethics committee members, not members of peer-review panels constituted by the funder. And this includes national, so-called “gold star,” peer-reviewed funding schemes!

So what to do about all this? Perhaps the key is to ensure the maintenance, in some form, of the two separate discussions that Lincoln and Cannella (2007) noted should be ongoing about ethics and qualitative inquiry. The first of these pertains to the effects of the increasing bureaucratization of ethics and concomitant tightening regulation of research. It is a conversation about how we might navigate the reality of having to submit our proposed research to ethics committees who may not necessarily be supportive of, or expert in, qualitative inquiry. In the section of this chapter about locating funding, I talked a lot about trying to understand the way that funders think so that we can try to work with, while not necessarily accepting, those understandings. The same applies to ethics committees. Be proactive. Discuss your project with the Chair of the committee.

See if it is possible to get copies of previous applications to the committee to get an idea of their depth and the way they have been written. Do the hard reflective and reflexive work about what you are prepared to give up and what you are not in terms of your research and its methods in order to get it “through ethics.”

However, only to focus on “getting ethics” or “getting through” ethics committees is to be complicit in reducing understandings of ethics to a focus on expediency and instrumentality. There is another discussion to be had, as Lincoln and Cannella (2007) remind us. This is a broader discussion. It is about what ethics is, and might be, in terms of research. It involves creating spaces in our teaching, the enactment of our research, and our research training where we model the ethics of our research and research practices (Lincoln & Cannella, 2007; Schwandt, 2007). In this discussion, there is less emphasis on the mechanics of navigating ethics processes and more on the reasons for talking about ethics in the first place. Rather than simply dwelling on the negative effects of the increasing interference of ethics committees in matters pertaining more to methodology than to ethics, this conversation can be a more positive and constructive one to have. For as Hurdley, while reflecting on the bureaucratization of ethics, reminds us, there is still the possibility of “constant active reflection within these confines” in that “limited horizons do not inhibit depth and richness of insight” (Hurdley, 2010, p. 518).

EXAMPLE THREE: MIXED METHODS—WRITING FOR DESIGN OR WRITING FOR FUNDING?

The third example I wish to use to explore tensions around writing our methods for funding shifts the focus to a discussion about choosing what methods to use in our research, and importantly *how* we choose to use those methods. Mixed methods provide an interesting vehicle for this discussion. Recently, there has been an upsurge of interest in, and concomitant writing about, what is termed mixed methods research both without, and significantly within, the folds of qualitative inquiry. There are now whole journals, books (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Greene, 2007; Hesse-Biber, 2010; Morse & Niehaus, 2009; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009), and handbooks (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003) devoted to it. Advocates of mixed methods argue that this type of research design can add a type of depth and multi-dimensionality to the analysis not otherwise possible. While this may be so, it also seems to me that mixed methods as a research approach is very vulnerable to being reduced to a technique in the way that it is thought about and used, and that writing for funding

exacerbates this vulnerability. What do I mean by this and why do I think this? The rest of this section of the chapter unpacks these ideas.

Despite the rise in the popularity and prominence of mixed methods research design, it remains a difficult to define and somewhat contested concept. In large part, this is due to the different emphases given to what is to be mixed, and how, when mixed methods is written about and/or discussed. Most often, mixed methods refers to the use of qualitative and quantitative methods in the same study or program or sequence of studies (Creswell, 2003; Hesse-Biber, 2010; Morse & Niehaus, 2009). However, it can also refer to the use of two methods from the same paradigm, for example, two qualitative methods in the same study, although this way of “mixing” methods has not achieved the same prominence. Responding to the traditional primacy of quantitative approaches over qualitative ones in mixed methods discourses, Hesse-Biber identifies the centering of qualitative approaches to mixed methods research, and providing “researchers with a more detailed understanding of qualitative mixed methods perspectives and practices” (2010, p. 9) as two of her four aims when writing her recent book on mixed methods.

Morse and Niehaus (2009) provide the following definition of mixed methods that attempts to pick up on and incorporate the diversity of emphases in mixed method design. They write, “a mixed method design is a scientifically rigorous *research project*, driven by the inductive or deductive *theoretical drive*, and comprised of a qualitative or quantitative *core component* with qualitative or quantitative *supplementary component(s)*” (2009, p. 14, emphasis in the original). In this definition, the emphasis is on mixed methods in terms of an overall research design that is theoretically informed, rather than on the fact that methods have been “mixed” in a study and/or the specific mix of methods that will be employed. It stands in stark contrast to a “methods-centric” conception of the field of mixed methods research with a focus “primarily on the construction of mixed methods designs, often to the detriment of how they interact with the research problem” (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p. vi). This is a significant point that we will return to later in this discussion as it has implications for the way that we think about writing an application for funding employing a mixed methods approach.

It is interesting in terms of the recent rise of interest in mixed methods that, in reality, this research approach is not actually new. It has been around in various forms for many years, including in qualitative inquiry. For example, think of ethnography involving observations, interviews, and sometimes other ways of collecting data (Morse & Niehaus, 2009). What is new is the degree of prominence this approach has assumed, especially in the past decade. In part, this is

due to renewed scholarship in the area exemplified by the work of Morse and Niehaus (2009), Hesse-Biber (2010), Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), Mertens (2005), and others. But this in itself cannot fully account for the degree of heightened interest in mixed methods and the almost fervent urgency with which students and more experienced researchers take classes and workshops in it. Perhaps the politics and practices of the research marketplace can add another layer to the possible explanations for this elevated interest.

Interviewed in 2004 (the transcript of the interview can be found in Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 335), Morse made an interesting comment when asked about how she saw what was termed “multimethods” evolving. Her response was, “I think it is going to get in a terrible mess but will sort itself out in the end.” When asked what she meant by this, part of her response was as follows: “I think that the pressure to do mixed methods, in order to get funding, overwhelms or overrides the goals of qualitative inquiry. I think the funding agencies say they fund qualitative inquiry, meaning that they really do fund mixed methods. This still places qualitative inquiry in an inferior position” (p. 335). Here, Morse points to the way that writing for funding can affect the methods chosen *and* the way we choose to write our methods. An example of this was when I was approached to be part of a large quantitatively focused funding bid on the basis that a (small) qualitative component would give an edge to the competitiveness of the grant in question. This perception arose from the fact that in the previous funding round more studies that had a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods were successful. The assumption was that it was the fact that there were different methods mixed that gave the successful proposals their competitive edge, rather than the theoretical drive of the design and the congruity of the mixing of methods with that drive.

How to respond to approaches such as this creates dilemmas for qualitative inquirers. On the one hand, it may be that, even if for questionable reasons, the qualitative “bit” was added as an afterthought to a quantitatively driven project, doing that qualitative component of the research may enhance the findings of the research. Participating in the research as part of the team may offer the opportunity to heighten that team’s understandings of qualitative inquiry. Joining a strong research team may also help build track record for the individual qualitative researcher. On the other hand, to accept such invitations runs the risk that methods that have been stripped of their theoretical underpinnings are considered to constitute qualitative inquiry. Similarly, perpetuating an instrumental use of mixed methods design puts the emphasis when thinking about that design on the use of different methods *per se*, rather than the use of different methods in an overall coherent and theoretically driven design. In so doing, it

reduces mixed methods design *itself* to a technique rather than a theoretically grounded research approach. As Morse and Niehaus (2009) and Hesse-Biber (2010) emphasize, mixed methods is a theoretically driven study design, not simply the insertion of a mix of methods into a study.

All of this raises important points for qualitative inquirers to reflect on with respect to their motives in writing their methods in particular ways for funding. One starting point for such reflection is a somewhat unsettling and provocative question. When we write our application for funding, is the reason for choosing a mixed method design (or any other design for that matter) that the question will be better answered by this approach, or is it that by using this approach as opposed to a wholly qualitative design the chances of funding will be increased? Another starting point might be to reflect upon why qualitative inquiry within a mixed methods frame is seemingly more acceptable to some funders than research that is wholly qualitative. Perhaps this is because in some funder's minds mixed methods fits "well with the global economic imperative of the 1990s to do more with less and with the rising evidence-based practice movement" (Giddings, 2006, p. 196).

Perhaps, too, it is because descriptions of mixed methods read superficially might seem familiar to many funders and members of grant review panels. The QUAN → qual, QUAN + qual, QUAL → quan, and QUAL + quan symbols developed by Morse (1991) appear reassuringly similar to what science "should" look like. So does the language in the following excerpt from a description of some of the strategies within mixed methods: "The sample selection for the qualitative and quantitative components of sequential (QUAL → quan) or simultaneous (QUAL + quan) triangulation must be independent" (Morse, 1991, p. 122). Morse's incorporation of notations, symbols, and arrows into complicated figures that visually represent the mixed method strategy bears an uncanny resemblance to traditional ways of representing science and scientific "speak." While this in itself is not a problem, what is a problem is if that resemblance is what reassures funders and others that the research is sound and the methods reliable, rather than what those symbols are representing and conveying. Yet the tradeoff is that without this type of conceptualization and notation, the risk is that understandings of this approach will become muddled and unclear.

None of this is to suggest that mixed methods are not a valuable and important part of qualitative inquiry. Nor should it give the impression that a mixed methods research design is necessarily more inherently problematic than any other research approach with respect to the tensions and potential ruptures that exist at the interface of qualitative inquiry and funding. Rather, what it is to suggest is that mixed methods provides an excellent example of the fine lines we

walk between selling and not selling out when we write our methods for funding. Achieving prominence in the repertoire of methods and study designs looked upon favorably by funders may not necessarily work in the interests of mixed methods design. As Hesse-Biber and Leavy point out, “more is not necessarily better” (2006, p. 334) with respect to methods; but it can be if, and it is *if* that is the crucial word here, it is the right design used for the right reasons to explore the problem or question that the research seeks to address.

Funding: Wheeling and Dealing in a Research Marketplace

Our conversation about the politics and practices of funding qualitative inquiry has ranged widely across issues such as how to locate funding, what that funding might be, how we might think about writing for that funding, and what this might mean in practice. At various points throughout this conversation, we have touched on the notion of a research marketplace where research is bought and sold. In this research marketplace, funding for qualitative inquiry is about much more than supporting a specific research project. Funding is a commodity, a unit of exchange. For example, individual researchers can trade their research for jobs, promotion, and tenure based on their research “performance.” Institutions also trade in this marketplace, trading institutional research performance for rewards such as research infrastructure funding from governments, as well as a competitive ranking in the marketplace. The discussion to follow explores these ideas further using the metaphor of “wheeling and dealing” in a research marketplace as the organizing construct. As such, it is the most politically overt section of the chapter, shifting the focus of our discussion about the politics and practice of funding qualitative inquiry from the more micro level of specific projects, funders, or methods to a more macro, wider societal context.

Arising in the late 1990s, continuing throughout the first decade of the 2000s, and exacerbated by the global financial crisis of 2008 and 2009, there has been a period of economic restraint and funding cuts by governments in most Western countries. As a result, most universities and other research-intensive organizations are forced to run “mixed economies,” where part of their funding comes from government operating grants and the other part is reliant on the generation of income from staff activities. This has created an imperative, and increasingly an expectation, for individual staff members to generate income for cash-strapped institutions. Gaining research funding is one way staff can do this, as

funding for research can generate income for institutions in several ways. The first is from profit arising directly from the research undertaken. This is when contracted and tendered research can become very interesting and attractive. Normally, in this type of research funding it is possible to charge consultancy market rates both for the research team's time as well as research costs and overheads. This is in contrast to funding schemes that have a set limit on the amount of costs and overheads that they will pay, and which may not pay at all for the researchers' time if they are already employed by a university, for example. Given all this, it might seem that universities, research organizations, and researchers alike would focus more and more on contracted and tendered research funding. However, it is not this simple. There are messages about the messages.

These messages about messages are related to the fact that research income is also one of the variables in the schemes developed and used by governments to assess the research performance of higher education and research-oriented institutions. In many countries, a complex array of ever-changing formulas have been used in the quest to transform the individual research problems and projects of researchers employed in institutions into measures of collective institutional research performance (Cheek, 2006; Torrance, 2006). In Australia, for example, over the course of the last decade there have been several versions of proposed ways of measuring and ensuring quality and excellence in research. All have been premised on audit-driven notions of accountability designed to give government, industry, business, and the wider community assurance of the excellence of research conducted in Australia's higher education institutions. The current scheme in play at the time of writing this chapter is called Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA). ERA is a complex scheme that, like so many of its predecessors, as it unfolds becomes even more complex. There are 12 key 2010 documents alone listed on the Excellence in Research for Australia website (July 2010) including a 53-page booklet of evaluation guidelines and an 89-page booklet detailing submission guidelines! "Rewards" will flow from the Australian government to higher education institutions based on their research performance as calculated by the formulas embedded in the ERA scheme. Those institutions ranked highest will receive the largest share of the pool of dollars allocated for distribution.

However, that is not the end of the story. The results of the ERA assessment exercise will be publicly released and published at both institutional and national levels. This will enable comparisons to be made with respect to research performance not only between institutions, but also within institutions at the departmental level. League tables can be drawn up and published where the rankings of institutions in terms of this formulaic-determined research performance are

displayed. Universities ranked highly in these tables can, and do, market themselves in the research marketplace as being “the top,” a “top,” or in the “top eight,” and so on research universities in Australia. This marketing can then be used to attract sponsors of funding wishing to be associated with highly ranked and therefore prestigious research universities. It can also be used as part of the marketing to attract more research students. In turn, this generates more research outputs in the form of completed research student projects and publications, which in turn generates more income through assessment exercises that use research income, numbers of research student completions, and publications as part of their formula. In this way, not only do schemes such as ERA generate “rewards” for research performance, they also contribute to the possibility of this cycle of “rewards” continuing. Thus, layer upon complicated layer is deposited in a landscape known as the research marketplace.

But there are still more messages about the messages. In this landscape, not all research income is necessarily equal. In these assessment exercises, schemes, and/or formulas, often it is *where* the money comes from, not just the absolute amount of it, that matters. One effect of this has been to create a complicated system of classifying funding. For example, in Australia at the time of writing this chapter, funding received is divided into various categories depending on its source. Highly sought after and prized are grants that appear on the Australian Competitive Grant Register (2010). The number of Australian Competitive Grants (ACG), as well as the amount of dollars attached to them, held by a particular university or individual researcher have been, and are, used as a measure of quality and research activity for institutions and individual researchers alike.

Yet there are even more messages about these messages to unpack. For, in Australia, among all grants, National Health and Medical Research Council (NH&MRC) and Australian Research Council (ARC) grants are prized the most. Historically, these funding schemes have attracted more “rewards” from government both monetarily and prestige-wise. Indeed, institutions will sometimes draw up tables of their relative national ranking with respect to number of grants, and amount of dollars, received from the NH&MRC and ARC alone. This is particularly the case when doing so presents them in a better light than their relative ranking on the league table of national research performance. This selective reporting of performance is part of wheeling and dealing in national and, increasingly, international research marketplaces. At the time of writing this chapter, the website of the University of Sydney (2010) proudly boasts that “Sydney researchers scored the ‘research double’ topping both the National Health and Medical Research Council (NH&MRC) and the Australian Research Council (ARC) for the number and dollar value of new, peer-reviewed, researcher

driven research projects commencing in 2009.” It goes on to state that “Sydney not only leads the Nation, it achieved a personal best by attracting record amounts of funding from both the ARC and NH&MRC for research projects starting in 2009.” Here, the language of a competitive marketplace such as “research double,” “topping,” and “personal best” is overt. In this research marketplace, it is the amount and type of funding that both counts and is counted!

The effect of such wheeling and dealing, and the translation of research funding into other forms of funding, cascades down to the level of the individual researcher. The amount of dollars received by that researcher, and where they come from, are used as indicators of individual research performance and impact. What those dollars are used for, or even if they are really needed, is not the point. For example, in some types and fields of research the grant might be for large pieces of equipment. In such cases, the amount of the funding is actually as much a measure of the expense of the equipment as it is of the quality or the intensity of the research in a given institution. Another effect at the level of the individual researcher of this increasing emphasis on funding as being able to provide additional income for institutions, is that researchers and/or areas without this research income are increasingly viewed as not being as research-productive or research-intensive as those researchers or departments attracting large amounts of dollars. Writing on one’s CV that one has funded research by working on it for some 30 hours a week above paid workload allocation does not have the same currency in a market-driven research context as does writing that one has attracted some hundreds of thousands of dollars of funding in the past two years, even if that funding has been to buy an expensive piece of equipment or equip a laboratory. This works against many qualitative inquirers whose major form of support or funding for their research is their own time either as a percentage of their paid workload, or the time they use on weekends or evenings to do research over and above any such allocated percentage.

An effect of differentially rewarding types of funding for research is that the gaining of specific categories of funding has become an end in itself, rather than that funding being a means to support a specific piece of research. The danger in this is that the research design becomes subverted and shaped by the demands and expectations of highly prized funding sources. For example, if a so called “gold star” research scheme has historically been adverse to funding qualitative research in general, or some types of qualitative research specifically, how do qualitative researchers position themselves in relation to this? Does this mean we abandon this source of funding, or do we abandon our qualitative inquiry and put up approaches and techniques that we think the funder will support? If we choose not to abandon our qualitative inquiry altogether, do we try to make our

qualitative inquiry look more like the type of research that these funders and their decision-making panels will expect and/or understand? How far are we prepared to go in terms of shaping our research to fit these schemes? Is it better to opt out of, or opt to be in, this research marketplace and the spaces it creates?

But it is not as simple as that. There is ambivalence in these categories of opting out and opting in and their possible effects. Opting in, and thereby gaining currency in this marketplace, may paradoxically provide opportunities to promote and advance qualitative inquiry. Perhaps there is the possibility that external funding can be used as a currency to gain institutional power and positions on panels awarding funds in granting schemes where qualitative inquirers can work from within to try to change practices that work against qualitative inquiry. Furthermore, in many institutions, attracting this type of “prized” funding is “rewarded” with infrastructure monies and in-kind support to build critical masses of researchers and develop research centers. In turn, this may provide the opportunity to fund forms of qualitative inquiry that may not otherwise be able to attract monetary or other forms of support, thereby helping resist the potential reduction and homogenization of qualitative inquiry into forms acceptable to external funding agencies. Thus, paradoxically, although participating in a research marketplace does not necessarily advance qualitative inquiry, it might. Yet even given this possibility, a question that lingers in my mind is whether this is an example of a way to resist the excesses of the research marketplace by turning it against itself, or a case of selling out—at least in part. Is there a danger in this that inadvertently a two-tiered structure of qualitative researcher is created, a new binary where those with the currency highly prized in the research marketplace, the “haves,” are the primary and dominant category, with their poor cousins, the marketplace “have nots” dependent on them?

Denzin and Lincoln remind us that all of us are “stuck in the present working against the past as we move into a politically charged and challenging future” (2005, p. xv). At times, this sense of being stuck in a present working against the past has resulted in feelings of fatigue and frustration on my part. For example, I wonder about where the next research productivity reform or audit will come from and what form it will take. I think about how much time I have used, and will again use, to respond to relentless demands for demonstrating delimited forms of evidence about the impact/quality/products (or some other form of research marketplace) of my research only to find that with a change of government it has all changed anyway. Thinking about the past decade, these audits and reviews congeal and blur into each other. They are new versions of the same old rhetoric, ideas about ideas about ideas, depositing layer upon layer on bedrock of positivistic-influenced assumptions about research and evidence.

In all of this, it has not always been easy or comfortable for me to navigate the tension between critiquing the spaces I research in, and surviving in the spaces of the research marketplace of which, whether I like it or not, my research has been part (Cheek, 2007). At times, I have questioned my motives in applying for certain types of external funding for my research. Was my motive to obtain the external funding to do a project I was burning to do, or was it that I needed the external funding to score points on some form of research marketplace scorecard? If the answer is both of the above, then which mattered most to me? In wheeling and dealing in this market, and enjoying the privileges and trappings that this can “buy,” such as tenure, promotion, and research infrastructure, have I had to do things that I would rather not talk about—the “yes but” thinking? Have I been part of what Stronach and Torrance (1995) referred to close to two decades ago as preserving little private spaces to be radical in, while doing something else in various dimensions of my professional life? And, if so, could I be accused of saying a lot about what I do in this chapter and not enough about what I do not say about what I do (Cheek, 2010a)?

Like so many other qualitative inquirers, I am still searching for some sort of middle ground in all of this. I cannot tell you exactly what this middle ground might look like, as I suspect it will vary for each of us. However, I can tell you that the middle ground that I am looking for is a place from which to engage the politics and practices of funding qualitative inquiry and the research marketplace on my terms, not someone else’s. It is a place from which any engagement with those politics and practices is because I choose to engage with them not because I have to, or because they constantly engage my time and energy destructively (Cheek, 2008). In this middle ground, I can choose how to engage with a politics not of my own making.

Signing Off for Now: The Politics and Practice of Funding as an Ongoing Conversation

So reader, how to conclude? It is customary to call the final section of an extended discussion such as the one in this chapter a conclusion. However, somehow at this point the word “conclusion” does not seem right or an easy fit with what has been, and remains to be, said. It seems too final, too much like having the last word when there is no last word to be had. At best, this chapter could only ever hope to be “a comment within an ongoing discussion” (Maxey, 1999, p. 206). This ongoing discussion is about moving away from reactionary

positions be they in terms of a funder's requirements, or a politics of evidence, or a critique of qualitative inquiry from within qualitative inquiry itself. It is an ongoing discussion about being in places that are of our own making as qualitative inquirers and places that we choose to be in. From such places, we can apply for funding and take the hard decisions that this involves with respect to what is negotiable and what is not, and know that we and not others have made those decisions. From such places, we can be confident that the thinking and reflection that sits behind taking up such positions will contribute to the ongoing development and strength of qualitative inquiry. This is because when we are forced to try to articulate on what basis we have made these decisions we develop further our understandings about what enables something to be called both "qualitative" and "inquiry." And, importantly, such development comes out of qualitative inquiry itself rather than being imposed on it. Put another way, it enables us to choose the messages about the messages about the messages that we will take on board, and those that we will ignore.

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