

## 15

## NARRATIVES AND NUMBERS

*Feminist Multiple Methods Research*

ABIGAIL J. STEWART

ELIZABETH R. COLE

Several years ago, along with our colleague David Featherman, we were fortunate to have the opportunity to coteach a yearlong graduate seminar introducing students to feminist social science research that integrates both qualitative and quantitative methods. The goal of the seminar was to move beyond a conflict about the value of these two approaches that has been characterized as a debate (sometimes known as the QQD; Rabinowitz & Weseen, 1997) or even a war (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Without advocating any particular methods, we aimed to examine the obstacles and benefits associated with combining and integrating qualitative and quantitative methods and to encourage students to become skilled in the use of both approaches.

Our syllabus began with readings that outlined ideal approaches for combining methodologies

(Newman & Benz, 1998; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, 2002); with these as a backdrop, the remainder of the course was a series of invited lectures by researchers whose research programs used both qualitative and quantitative methods. Over the academic year, we learned a great deal about how researchers called on these two approaches to address their research questions; the combinations both reflected a wish to gain knowledge about a phenomenon unconstrained by methodological preconceptions and at the same time were almost always pragmatic, often innovative, and even occasionally based on serendipity or the resources at hand.

In this chapter, our goal is to distill some of what we learned from this teaching experience, thereby sharing it with a broader audience. Our reflections have led us to generate a typology of approaches based not on ideal types but on

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## 328 • HANDBOOK OF FEMINIST RESEARCH—CHAPTER 15

combinations of strategies actually used by researchers whose work addresses women, gender, and sexuality. To cast our net widely, we have used a broad definition of feminist research in this chapter: We are interested in work that takes gender and/or sexuality as a central focus or category of analysis. But this endeavor, as we have defined it, begs two larger questions. First, is feminist mixed method research different from that undertaken by any other researcher, and if so, how? Here, we are in agreement with Harding (1987): Feminist research is distinguished not so much by its methods, that is, the procedures through which information or observations are collected, but by its methodology, that is, the underlying theory about how research should be conducted and what its aims should be. Harding argues that feminist researchers typically ground their research questions in the experience of women, with the goal of understanding women's experience and improving women's lives, and in doing so, many attempt to equalize the hierarchy in the traditional relationship between "researchers" and "subjects."

The second question is why any social scientist should attempt to combine these methods, methods that some would argue are based on fundamentally different assumptions about epistemology and ontology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the most commonly offered answer to this question is that different methods suit different questions or aspects of questions. Courses in research methods typically represent the research process as composed of two sequential phases: the context of discovery, in which hypotheses are generated, and the context of justification, in which they are tested. In this tradition, qualitative methods are often presented as subjective, unsystematic, and inherently unreliable and, thus, only appropriate for the context of discovery.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, the strengths of quantitative methods are held to be reliability, replicability, and generalizability. They, therefore, hold sway over the context of justification. However, Lin (1998) cogently challenged this binary, arguing that although many believe qualitative and quantitative approaches are divided by an underlying divergence in their epistemological assumptions (which she termed interpretivist and positivist, respectively), this characterization is misleading. Lin argued that positivist approaches aim to identify relationships between variables that are

generalizable to different contexts; in contrast, interpretivist methods are designed to reveal the mechanisms that underlie these relationships in particular cases or contexts. She argued that qualitative methods can be used in research with both types of epistemological aims and demonstrated this with examples from public policy research.

For example, both Stack (1974) and Edin (1991) used qualitative methods to study how poor women survive on very limited incomes. Stack's project, an interpretivist one, demonstrated how women shared resources within social networks even when doing so came at personal costs to individuals. Stack studied the norms and sense of obligation among women in one kin network, richly documenting the particularity of this social context. In contrast, Edin used qualitative methods of in-depth interviews and ethnography to construct a detailed accounting of her respondents' household budgets, finding that women often used family gifts and undocumented work to make ends meet. Because the gap between the cost of living and welfare payments was similar in different parts of the country, Edin argued that it was appropriate to generalize these findings. Thus, Lin's (1998) insights suggest that one of the most commonly given justifications for combining qualitative and quantitative methods in a single project may unnecessarily constrain researchers; a researcher with both interpretivist and positivist aims could also choose to design a pair of qualitative studies to address these research questions. Proponents of mixing qualitative and quantitative methods also argue that this approach can increase our confidence in the robustness of a finding when the relationship appears to hold using a variety of research approaches (this represents a form of replication or cross-validation, and is often termed triangulation). However, as Lin's work reminds us, this particular strength of the multi-methods approach could be accomplished using any combination of methods and does not necessitate the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Among social scientists, feminist scholars have been particularly vocal in arguing for the value of mixed methods research approaches, although for a variety of different reasons (see especially Fine & Gordon, 1989; Jayaratne & Stewart, 1991; Peplau & Conrad,

1989; Reinharz, 1992). First, because feminist scholars often begin from a posture of critique of existing social science findings, and recognize that social science research has often “left out” or ignored aspects of phenomena that they care about, they are much less inclined to believe that a single method is the “royal road” to understanding. Thus, feminist scholars have often embraced pluralism partly as a strategy that might be less likely to produce such a narrow and selective picture of human experience (Jayaratne & Stewart, 1991; Rabinowitz & Weseen, 1997; Sherif, 1987; Unger, 1981; Weisstein, 1971).

Feminist scholars are wary of the dangers of false generalization in formulating research questions. For example, Sapiro (1995) noted, of political science, that “in the early days most work was of the ‘add women and stir’ or compensatory variety, taking conventional questions in different fields, but especially political behavior and political theory, and asking, ‘what about the women?’” (p. 291). Smith (1987) made a parallel argument about sociological studies of the family and education—that they began from the standpoint of men, even when they included attention to women and children. Similarly, feminist scholars commented that much of psychology was in fact a generalization from research on male college sophomores until the late 1960s (Lykes & Stewart, 1986; Wallston, 1981; Weisstein, 1971). Because of their recognition of this early false generalization from men, or even male college sophomores, to “people,” feminist scholars were sensitive to the importance of care in defining and describing samples, as well as specific measures (Morawski, 1994).

For example, one early target of feminist critique was the notion of “achievement motivation,” which was based on a model of male-male competition that was clearly too narrow to cover all kinds of achievement even for men, much less women (see, e.g., Horner, 1972)! To many feminist scholars, multiple measures help ensure greater sampling of the phenomenon (with different definitions and techniques of assessment), and that increase in sampling of the phenomenon seems likely to increase the likelihood of legitimate generalizability (see, e.g., Yllo, 1988, on studying marital rape).

Alternatively, of course, a deeper reflection on the nature of generalizability can be an

outgrowth of this preoccupation. Instead of worrying about ensuring generalizability, many feminist scholars urged greater specificity about the nature of the generalizability that could be claimed (Morawski, 1994). For example, Fine and Weis (1998) showed that women of different ethnic backgrounds viewed and responded to domestic violence differently because of the different relationships of each ethnic group with social institutions such as the police. Such differences are not only systematic, but they also mean that one cannot make broad generalizations about how women—even poor women—respond to domestic violence.

Because feminist scholars are often particularly interested in phenomena that are studied in many different social science disciplines (women’s labor market experience, breast-feeding, sexual harassment, etc.), they tend to read across fields. This exposure to interdisciplinary theory and evidence inevitably exposes feminist scholars to alternative habits about methods. Thus, for example, feminist psychologists may be drawn to ethnographic or historical methods (Stewart, 2003), while feminist sociologists may consider interpreting psychological tests (Martin, 1996), and political scientists may decide to include experimental treatments in their surveys (Huddy et al., 1997). In short, exposure to a wider range of methods in the literatures that feminist scholars study nearly inevitably produces an increased temptation to borrow methods from neighboring disciplines.

Equally, because feminist scholars are generally reading across disciplinary boundaries, they are also inclined to theorize about problems that are new to their own disciplines. Thus, for example, feminist psychologists are increasingly interested in studying issues that arise in the “workplace” (such as sexual harassment and incivility), historically the province of sociologists (see, e.g., Cortina, Magley, & Williams, 2001; Ragins, 2004), while feminist political scientists increasingly notice that people’s family lives (traditionally the domain of sociology and psychology) have implications for their political behavior (see, e.g., Burns, Schlozman, & Verba, 1997). Anthropologists who study culturally based conceptualizations of health and fertility may use the tools of demography to

## 330 • HANDBOOK OF FEMINIST RESEARCH—CHAPTER 15

complement ethnographic methods (Bledsoe, 2002). There is an intellectual energy and excitement that occurs as feminist scholars identify and theorize these new questions, and their new theories demand methods that are often new to the field of study.

This wish to study phenomena that may or may not fit within traditional boundaries, and the need to study them with unfamiliar tools, often result in a desire to speak to new and different audiences, audiences who may find different methods persuasive. Thus, feminist scholars may find that because they want to use a concept like “intersectionality” to study multiple social identities (e.g., gender and race or class at the same time), they want not only to address audiences across disciplines and methods but also to address scholars of race and class and gender, and not just one of these. The need to address different audiences in turn often reinforces the use of multiple methods, because different audiences are likely to be persuaded by different kinds of evidence—evidence that is familiar within “their” paradigm and not someone else’s.

Finally, feminist scholars’ intellectual commitments may lend themselves to combine methods in improvisational or nonsystematic ways—ways that are quite different from the traditional ways advocated by texts touting the virtues of “multiple methods” (e.g., Newman & Benz, 1998; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). For example, an interest in postmodern and poststructuralist theory is likely to lead researchers to a much greater comfort with paradox and complexity, with seeming contradiction, even with “messiness” (Gergen, 2001; Stewart, 1994).

Alternatively, the habit of reflexivity—of continually revisiting and reframing questions in light of knowledge produced or insight gained—may support an iterative rather than a linear process. Studies based on this kind of process may deviate radically from conventional notions that separate contexts of discovery from contexts of justification. Instead, they may seem to circle around a phenomenon, but (it is hoped) clarifying its nature and features as they do so (Tolman & Szalacha, 1999).

Thus, we argue that there can be no prescriptive typology for combining qualitative and quantitative methods (although some methods

texts have aimed to develop them; see, e.g., Morgan, 1998; Newman & Benz, 1998). Instead, in the following sections we turn to a review of the research literature to identify projects that we feel have fruitfully combined “narratives and numbers” and in this way, we generate a necessarily partial and preliminary list of suggested approaches for those considering mixing these approaches.

### MODELS FOR INTEGRATING “NARRATIVES AND NUMBERS”

There are several different ways to integrate “narratives,” or qualitative data, with “numbers,” or quantitative data, in a single study. Each approach requires different resources and assets of a research project and offers different benefits to a study or a researcher. In this section, we will examine different strategies for combining these two kinds of data in a single project. In most cases we refer to studies conducted by researchers who explicitly identify themselves as having feminist perspectives or aims; however, in some cases we will discuss research that may not have an explicitly feminist perspective but focuses on women’s or girls’ experiences, or gendered phenomena.

#### Systematic Transformation of Qualitative Data Into Quantitative Data

Perhaps the most common and the least controversial approach is to gather narrative or qualitative data in the course of a research project and then to transform it (usually via systematic content analysis) into quantitative data that can be analyzed (see, e.g., Boyatzis, 1998; Smith, 1992). Feminist scholars who have developed longitudinal studies of women’s lives have often adopted this strategy (see Hulbert & Schuster, 1993, for a compendium of such studies), often arguing that including material that is articulated freely by women in their own terms enables a larger, generally quantitative project to represent women’s experience more adequately (Hulbert & Schuster, 1993, pp. 12–13; see also, e.g., Helson, 1993; Stewart & Vandewater,

1993; Tangri & Jenkins, 1993). Often, researchers adopting this strategy develop systematic content analysis strategies—reflecting either a priori themes or emergent themes from the data gathered—to transform the qualitative data gathered into presence/absence codes or ratings, both of which can be treated as numbers in data analysis. Thus, for example, the Ginzberg-Yohalem study (see Yohalem, 1993, for a summary) included an open-ended question in their study about whether “there were any attractive opportunities for career or other long range activities which you did not pursue? Why did you not pursue them? Any regrets?” (Ginzberg & Yohalem, p. 206). Yohalem (1993) quoted one woman from their study of women who earned graduate degrees at Columbia in the late 1940s:

Having children before finishing a Ph.D. made the pursuit of the highest degree impractical for me. Not getting a Ph.D. has made the salary range I command smaller. I regret not having had the opportunity to finish that work as a younger woman. The competing demands of family and career can make a woman's choice very difficult, especially if she marries after 30 as I did. (p. 149)

Data like these enriched the project's ability to represent not only the choices women made but also the ways in which those choices felt constrained, and reverberated over the years of their lives. In addition, by collecting such data, researchers were able to develop “codes” that turned these data into numbers. This kind of quantification is not particularly valued by some qualitative researchers (see, e.g., Mishler, 1990), but we believe that it permits some kinds of analyses that are otherwise impossible.

Stewart and Vandewater (1999) developed a measure of regrets about career and family decisions, which they used to code data collected in two different longitudinal studies that asked the same question (and some different ones) that Ginzberg and Yohalem had. By categorizing women's responses to capture the nature of their regrets, they were able to show that women who expressed regrets about making more “traditional” role choices (not to acquire education or pursue careers) were lower in well-being in middle age, but if they made life changes in the

direction of remedying those regrets, their subsequent well-being was equivalent to that of women who had no regrets of that sort. In more recent research, Torges, Stewart, and Miner-Rubino (2005) looked at related issues in an older sample and found that it was possible to code qualitative data to capture whether individuals have “come to terms” with their regrets internally or not. They found that not coming to terms at that later age was associated—as was regret itself—with poorer health outcomes. Collecting the qualitative data (as Ginzberg did in 1951) and recognizing the important and variable life experiences it might be capturing (as later scholars could) allowed researchers to assess an aspect of these people's lives for which no standard measures exist.

Duncan and Agronick (1995) were interested in the differential impact of social experiences occurring at different life stages in women's lives for different cohorts. Stewart and Healy (1989) had gathered quantitative ratings of the impact of a list of social events on women in that study; Helson had asked an open-ended question along these lines, but there were no ratings available in her sample from a slightly—and crucially—different birth cohort (see Helson, 1993, for an overview). In a creative and imaginative study, Duncan and Agronick (1995) were able to explore the same question in both data sets by coding qualitative data in one data set to render it roughly equivalent to the quantitative data in another. They coded Helson's data and conceptually replicated their findings from one sample of college-educated women in another, strengthening our confidence in the finding's validity both because it was robust in two different samples and cohorts and because it held up when assessments were made in such different ways. This kind of approach—in which a phenomenon is assessed with multiple measures, and its relations with other phenomena are also multiply assessed—is sometimes referred to as “triangulation” (see, e.g., Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

In these examples, qualitative data are used to address questions that can be addressed—if they are recognized and assessed—with quantitative data. Tolman and Szalacha (1999) provided an example of a study in which qualitative data may be the only way actually to assess the

## 332 • HANDBOOK OF FEMINIST RESEARCH—CHAPTER 15

phenomenon under study—adolescent girls' experience of sexual desire. Tolman and Szalacha (1999) argued that collecting "in-depth narrative and descriptive data from girls on their thoughts about and subjective experiences of sexuality, including sexual desire, sexual pleasure, feeling sexy and sexual fantasies, during private, one-on-one, semi-structured clinical interviews" (pp. 12–13), itself constitutes a feminist intervention, because "one of the primary tools of oppression of women is the maintenance of silence about their experiences and perspectives." Using an iterative process, they used the data they collected to address three different research questions.

First, they used the qualitative data simply to describe girls' experiences of sexual desire. Despite social pressures to the contrary, most girls described an intense, urgent, and powerful experience of sexual desire. At the same time, they also expressed doubt and confusion about what their feelings implied. The qualitative analysis indicated that girls from urban versus suburban backgrounds articulated very different reasons that desire must be countered by self-control. Urban girls felt that sexual expression carried many practical risks or dangers; in contrast, suburban girls viewed the issue as one of internal self-image, for example, "I don't like to think of myself as feeling really sexual" (Tolman & Szalacha, 1999, p. 16).

Once they had generated this distinction in the qualitative analysis, Tolman and Szalacha were interested in assessing the degree to which this distinction characterized girls' experiences. They coded the 128 narratives (produced by 30 girls) for expressions of vulnerability and of pleasure. They found that there was a modest difference between urban and suburban girls' narratives in expressions of vulnerability (with urban girls expressing more such themes), but a larger difference in expressions of pleasure (with suburban girls expressing more of the pleasure theme). They further considered the role of sexual abuse in association with these themes and found that suburban girls who had experienced abuse expressed similar themes to urban girls (whose narratives did not differ as a function of their sexual abuse experience).

In a third iteration, the researchers returned to the original qualitative data to explore in

detail the different sexual experiences of these four groups of girls (suburban or urban; survivors of abuse or not). This study demonstrates how readily qualitative data can be pressed into service to provide richer understanding of a phenomenon or to test a relatively narrowly specified hypothesis. In the hands of flexible and creative researchers they can be used to do both, allowing a single study with a relatively small sample to provide a solid base for further research on adolescent girls' sexuality.

In an ongoing program of research, Diamond (1998, 2000, 2003) has examined the development and relinquishment of different sexual identities among women, using systematic content analysis of interview data. Those data revealed, contrary to expectation, that women who had relinquished their sexual minority identity during the 5 years under study were significantly *less* likely than women who maintained their identities to view sexuality as fluid. Diamond pointed out that perhaps this apparent paradox makes sense. She noted that "acknowledging and accepting one's capacity for diverse, fluctuating desires and experiences might actually promote stability in sexual identification by eliminating the implicit pressure to jettison one's identity label once it is contradicted by novel feelings or behaviors" (Diamond, 2003, p. 361).

We have seen, then, that generating quantitative indicators out of qualitative data allows researchers to create new measures for previously unmeasured variables (as in the case of types of regrets and responses to regret), to replicate findings with other measures (as in the study of the impact of political events), and to assess the frequency of newly identified features of phenomena (as in the study of adolescent girls' sexual experiences).

### Using Quantitative Data to Contextualize or Frame Issues Raised by Qualitative Data

One approach taken by multimethods scholars is to employ quantitative data as a way to frame and contextualize findings from a qualitative study. Researchers who do qualitative studies with interpretive or constructivist aims may be hesitant to generalize those findings to other settings or populations (Lin, 1998). In these cases,

findings from a more positivist-based quantitative study can provide a context in which the qualitative findings may be understood.

Raffaelli and Ontai's (2004) study of gender socialization in Latino/a families provides a paradigmatic case. They conducted in-depth interviews with a small sample of adult Latinas regarding their experiences of socialization about sexuality within their families of origin, as well as their early sexual and romantic experiences. They used multiple coders to identify emergent themes in the interview transcript. This process revealed three main themes of parental behavior: differential treatment of boys and girls, enforcement of feminine behavior among girls, and restriction of girls' freedom of activity. Based on these interviews, survey items were developed tapping each of these themes, and a larger sample of both women and men were asked to rate the extent to which their mothers and fathers had encouraged these behaviors. These survey data confirmed the qualitative analysis, because men and women reported the expected differences in their gender socialization. Quantitative analyses also revealed reliable patterns of gender socialization for parents with different backgrounds; for example, mothers who were more acculturated to the United States were more likely to encourage tomboy behavior in their daughters. The use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches within this study allowed the researchers to gauge how typical the results from the qualitative study were and to develop a quantitative measure that is likely to have a high degree of ecological validity.

The work of Patillo-McCoy (1998) represents a slightly different approach to this type of multi-method strategy. She conducted an in-depth ethnography of a black middle-class neighborhood, involving several years of participation in the social networks of the community, as well as interviews with community leaders and residents. Much of the interpretive power of her analysis of these interviews, however, came from the way she contextualized this community using census data. She demonstrated that this neighborhood was surrounded by neighborhoods with higher rates of poverty and crime. She contrasted this geographical proximity of the black middle class with white neighborhoods of comparable socioeconomic

status. Her ethnography confirmed that spatial proximity fosters a social proximity as well, which engenders both costs and benefits: links between gang members and more stable members of the community provided a form of social control while simultaneously making it impossible to eradicate gangs and drugs from the community. This work suggests that combining qualitative and quantitative data in this way is a means of understanding a phenomenon at multiple levels of causality.

Similarly, Cohen's award winning book, *The Boundaries of Blackness* (1999), combined qualitative and quantitative methods to understand the African American community's limited and late response to the HIV/AIDS crisis at multiple levels. She used content coding to chart the incidence of coverage of HIV/AIDS stories in both mainstream and black media. Her analysis of coverage in the *New York Times* between 1983 and 1994 is a good example. During this period, the rate of AIDS cases among African Americans grew steeply, as did the coverage of AIDS stories in general, but stories concerning HIV among blacks were scarce until a sharp uptick in 1991, when Magic Johnson announced his diagnosis. Indeed, only 38% of the reporting on African Americans and HIV/AIDS during this time concerned anyone other than Johnson and Arthur Ashe. This discrepancy in media coverage was made even more stark by Cohen's finding that African Americans comprised 32% of all AIDS cases during this time, while only 5% of *Times* stories were devoted to this group. Cohen asserted that these analyses revealed a pattern of marginalization, a contention that was bolstered by her more finely grained analysis of the way the AIDS crisis and the black community's response to it were framed in these stories. Importantly, she argued that practices of marginalization take place at multiple levels and change over time. Later chapters used interviews to explore the ways black political and religious leaders chose not to define AIDS as a threat to African Americans because they did not want to acknowledge gay people and users of intravenous drugs as part of the black community, framing AIDS instead as a problem caused by the "bad behavior" of individuals. Taken together, these multiple levels of analysis, employing both qualitative and quantitative methodology as

appropriate, painted a picture of how narrow identity politics led to social conservatism, exclusion of certain segments of the black community, and ultimately a public health crisis.

Finally, Hodson (2004) used quantitative analyses to generalize from qualitative research in a very unusual way, conducting a meta-analysis of ethnographies aimed at understanding the role played by gender and race in shaping experience in workplaces. Rather than averaging effect sizes, as the traditional meta-analysis would, Hodson systematically coded 120 book length ethnographies. This method allowed him to capitalize on the strengths of the ethnographic method—the opportunity to draw on many observations of a social system and to analyze these observations in great depth—while avoiding its greatest drawback, which is that the ethnographer brings this depth and range to only a very small number of social systems, often only one. Hodson noted that several ethnographies had characterized women as dutiful, acquiescent, and, thus, relatively complacent workers (particularly in contrast to men). Thus, he expected the meta-analysis to confirm this with women having higher job satisfaction; however, the opposite was true. Nevertheless, in the United States, men were more likely to express their dissatisfaction by engaging in confrontational behavior such as infighting and strikes. However, among people of color and workers outside the United States, men were actually more acquiescent. Clearly, the breadth of these findings was beyond the scope of a single ethnography to address.

These examples of using quantitative data to frame qualitative findings suggest that this approach offers a way to magnify the strengths of qualitative methods, including depth, validity, and descriptive and interpretive power, either by leveraging the qualitative findings into a more generalizable set of findings or by helping to understand them as one piece of a complex system working at many levels.

### **Use of Ethnographic or Interview Narratives to Illuminate Issues Raised by Quantitative Findings**

Another way quantitative and qualitative methods are often combined is to use a qualitative study as a follow-up to clarify or explain

findings from the quantitative analysis. This approach is consistent with Lin's (1998) distinction between the epistemological standing of *positivist methods*, which can establish relationships among variables, and *constructivist methods*, which can demonstrate causal mechanisms. The approach of using qualitative methods to illuminate issues raised by quantitative findings is one of the more commonly used forms of combining them; this is noteworthy because it challenges the wisdom so often received in traditional research methods courses (Bernard, 1865/1927; Hempel, 1965) that qualitative methods are most appropriate for the context of discovery. Findings revealed in such a (discovery-oriented qualitative) study, so the classical argument goes, should be validated through the context of justification, usually involving a more positivist and usually quantitative study.

Carr's (2004) research on the retrospective career reflections of midlife women who came of age in the 1950s provides a prototypical example of a study in which qualitative analysis was used to help illuminate quantitative findings. Based on a large-scale longitudinal survey of mostly white mothers of daughters, Carr found that mothers who felt that their daughters were more occupationally successful than they themselves had been suffered no decrement in self-acceptance if the mothers took a great deal of credit for their daughters' success. Because this outcome contradicted the predictions made by social comparison theory, Carr turned to qualitative data to understand how mothers could maintain self-esteem even when making an upward comparison between themselves and their daughters. Interviews with a subsample of original respondents revealed that mothers who rated their daughters as more successful often explained their attainment in terms of social changes that gave their daughters more choices, but many also cited the additional stress that combining roles contributed to their daughters' lives. She concluded that these attributions protected mothers' self-esteem. Interestingly, Carr argued that this part of the project sought "to explore and generate hypotheses—not to test hypotheses—about the ways social comparisons are made, explained and interpreted" (p. 138). Thus, she carefully framed her project within the traditional parameters of the contexts of

discovery and justification—an interesting move given that her qualitative analysis was subsequent to her quantitative analyses.

Guinier, Fine, Balin, Bartow, and Stachel (1997) similarly designed their qualitative inquiry to illuminate the findings of their quantitative analysis. Interestingly, they wrote that the initial survey emerged from Bartow's desire to make a film documenting her personal experiences of gender bias in law school. She approached Guinier to supervise the project, who suggested that she begin by surveying her classmates to learn whether her experiences were typical. The original impetus for the project was thus the desire to learn whether the personal was indeed reflective of a larger political context. The research team began by examining student records obtained from the law school. They learned that although women entered with comparable qualifications to their male peers, women's grades were consistently lower through all 3 years, and women were much less likely to achieve honors. Results of Bartow's survey revealed other, perhaps more disturbing, patterns: First-year women students reported a systematic pattern of bias against women, including exclusion, disregard, and even sexist comments in the classroom. By the third year, it appeared that either such experiences had decreased or women had become more tolerant of such behaviors, because fewer were reported. At the same time, this cross-sectional comparison indicated that women entered with greater enthusiasm for public interest law, but by the third year, they were no more interested in pursuing this area than were men. The authors argued that in these ways, law schools force women to "become gentlemen." The qualitative data, based on open-ended survey questions and interviews, suggested the cost of this transformation. Women students reported feeling alienated, outraged, and silenced in law school. Sadly, many internalized these feelings, looking for counseling and support from women peers to address what they felt were personal shortcomings. Most reported that to overcome these feelings, and the obstacles they posed to success in law school, they had to suppress and repress their feelings.

Thus, although women have been allowed access to legal education, these results indicate

that women have not truly won equality in this setting. Instead, first-year law students enter an environment in which "a gender system is established, legitimated, and subtly internalized" (Guinier et al., 1997, p. 61). This analysis would not have been possible based only on the data from the registrar and the survey; indeed, the findings generated from such methods might have been plausibly explained in terms of women students' inadequacies. The qualitative data enabled Guinier et al. (1997) to understand the context in which the outcomes described in the quantitative data emerged. This example clearly illustrates Lin's distinction between the strength of positivist methods to demonstrate relationships among variables and that of interpretivist methods to demonstrate causal processes.

### Using Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in "Parallel"

Some researchers find that quantitative and qualitative methods enable them to address *different* research questions, not to explore the same ones in different ways. In these cases, the particular constraints on interpretation or inference imposed by different methods can be offset by parallel use of both approaches. Most often, qualitative methods are used in these research programs to unearth or identify issues or themes, while quantitative methods are used to answer questions about frequency and association that often cannot be addressed by quantitative methods.

Cortina, in the context of a larger program of research on gender in the workplace, provides us one model in her research on Latinas' experiences of sexual harassment. The goal of this research was to develop a fuller understanding of how the phenomenon of "sexual harassment" (defined in terms of white women's experience in the United States) might be different for Latinas—both because of differences in the way people treat them and because of differences in the social context or cultures they bring to their experience.

In the first study, Cortina (2001) began by conducting focus groups with 45 Latinas recruited through a public adult vocational school in San Diego. The focus group facilitator

## 336 • HANDBOOK OF FEMINIST RESEARCH—CHAPTER 15

was “a native Spanish-speaking Mexican American woman who understood the culture and life experiences of the participants, spoke both English and Spanish fluently, and possessed the skills necessary to guide focus group discussions” (p. 167). Focus group transcripts were transcribed by a bilingual researcher, and Cortina examined the transcripts in both languages twice and noted “specific behavioral examples of harassing behaviors” and “references to categories of harassing behaviors.” She then compared the terms generated in this way from the focus group discussions with a standard measure developed and based on the experiences of white women. This comparison yielded six items, of which two covered unique verbal behavior not covered (or not covered in the same way) in the standard measure. For example, one item was “addressed you informally when a more formal manner of address was more appropriate (e.g., used *tu* rather than *usted*).” In addition, four of the new items addressed nonverbal behaviors, such as “gave you a sexual ‘look’ that made you feel uncomfortable or dirty.” Finally, five new items addressed a sense of the intersection of sexual harassment with ethnic or racial harassment; Cortina (2001) termed this “sexual racism.” Examples of these items include the following behaviors: “called you insulting names that referred to your gender and ethnicity (e.g., ‘Mexican bitch’),” and “said they expected you to behave in certain ways because you are a Latina woman (e.g., expecting you as a Latina woman to wear sexy clothes).”

Cortina (2001) then used these new items, along with the “standard” ones with a large sample of Latinas recruited in a similar way. Using a process of double translation of items, she gave participants the option to complete the survey in Spanish or English. Analyses of these data aimed at identifying the common and unique features of sexual harassment experiences of Latinas and white women. This strategy yielded some important insights: Both the focus group and the survey data suggested that Latinas were more inclined than more heterogeneous, predominantly white samples of women to infer sexual intentions from behavior that was not explicitly sexual. She quoted one woman as saying,

What I’ve seen is that [white women] are more open . . . if it’s something sexual they’ll laugh and giggle about it, and I would take that offensively. And they wouldn’t, because they’re like more open to sexual stuff than Mexican or Hispanic ladies are. (p. 176)

Interestingly, although there were clear examples of sexual racism reported in the focus groups, the quantitative study provided little support for the importance of this construct. Nevertheless, Cortina (2001) pointed out that the likely explanation is not that sexual racism is unimportant but “the relative absence of racial harassment in participants’ workplaces. . . . the great majority of participants did *not* work in environments dominated by non-Latinos—who would be most likely to racially harass Latinas” (p. 177). Thus, she weighted the qualitative data fully equally with the quantitative and concluded by advocating for more research on Latinas’ workplace experiences in environments dominated by Anglos. In subsequent research, Cortina and her colleagues (Cortina, 2004; Cortina, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 2002) used the revised version of the standard measure created for Latinas (the Sexual Experiences Questionnaire—Latina) to study the effect of sexual harassment on Latinas while paying close attention to features of Latino culture and processes of acculturation.

Sigel, a political scientist, offered another version of a parallel model in her study *Ambition and Accommodation: How Women View Gender Relations* (1996). Like Cortina, Sigel employed both focus groups and surveys; however, rather than developing a scale, Sigel aimed to understand both “what the population-at-large (or a given segment of the population) thinks about an important issue” and also “a great deal about each individual and how she or he comes to hold these thoughts or sentiments” (p. 24). Thus, she was interested both in the generalizability of findings and in the depth and complexity of the material that could be obtained. Sigel conceded that although her initial expectation was that the focus groups would be mainly “guides to questionnaire construction, it soon became obvious that they had an independent contribution to make” (p. 34). She stressed that the focus group data did in fact

guide the development of the survey protocol and that they also were used to help interpret the survey findings. She said,

Listening to men and women in the groups actually helped shape my sensitivity to the role the topic [gender] played in the daily lives of the public. I felt as though I became privy to some of their frustrations as well as gratifications, and most of all, I learned what mattered to them and what did not when they thought about gender. (p. 35)

### Diversity of Materials as Data

Often those who wish to describe the challenge posed by multiple methods research are particularly concerned about the difficulty of combining qualitative and quantitative data due to the opposing epistemological assumptions underlying each approach (see Lin, 1998; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2002). However, the work of some feminist researchers transcends this simple dichotomy to incorporate data from unusual sources, photographs or other visual media, material from historical archives, or even literature, often combining these less often used types of data with more commonly used sources, such as responses to interviews or surveys. Some who employ these creative data sources also draw on innovative methods to analyze these data.

To begin with an example that represents a fairly common approach, scholars within communications studies often pair a close reading of a media text with an audience reception study of that same text. One such example is Press and Cole's (1999) examination of the way social class and position on abortion as a political issue shape women's readings of prime-time entertainment television depictions of women facing abortion decisions. Drawing on the work of Condit (1994), they reviewed entertainment television depictions of abortion decisions, arguing that television offers a limited pro-choice position in which legal abortion is seen as necessary but undesirable unless the woman faces extreme hardship, including extreme financial hardship or blocked opportunities for moving up out of poverty. Focus group interviews showed that pro-choice women viewed these narratives very differently. Although

middle-class women often claimed to be critical of television as a medium, they were very accepting of the rationales proffered by the working class heroines seeking abortions in the shows. In contrast, many working class women did not accept the heroines' protests that they had no option but abortion; many working class viewers could offer stories in which they had faced similar obstacles and had overcome them. By pairing the textual analysis of television shows with the qualitative analysis of women's responses to them, Press and Cole were able to identify an important rift within the pro-choice movement.

Metzl, a psychiatrist and cultural critic, has similarly employed methods from both the humanities and the social sciences in his attempt to understand how the gendered meanings associated with clinical depression have shifted over time in relation to changes in psychiatric opinion on how the disease is best treated. In his book *Prozac on the Couch* (2003), he conducted a close interpretive reading of news and fashion periodicals and popular literature (such as memoirs and novels) dealing with psychotropic drugs and, more recently, the serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs, such as Prozac and Zoloft). Through the methods commonly employed in the humanities, Metzl persuasively demonstrated that notions of gender informed by psychoanalysis are pervasive even within the realm of scientific, biologically based psychiatry. In a subsequent paper, Metzl and Angel (2004) adopted standard social science methods to approach the same research question in a very different way: systematic content analysis of a random sample of popular representations of depression appearing between 1985 and 2000. These data showed that as the SSRIs gained in social acceptance and visibility, conditions that had previously been viewed as normative for women (such as emotional disturbances associated with menstruation, childbirth, or menopause) became conceptualized as biologically based, pathological, and treatable. Side by side, these two projects could be viewed simply as the triangulation of methods, long recommended even in mainstream thinking on methodology (e.g., see Jick, 1979). Yet by freely drawing on two very disparate traditions of scholarship, Metzl's important contribution to

## 338 • HANDBOOK OF FEMINIST RESEARCH—CHAPTER 15

current thinking about medicine and mental health and illness continued a tradition of ardent conversation between the humanities and the social sciences that has been taking place in Women's Studies programs since their inception in the early 1970s.

Clearly, this approach to combining qualitative and quantitative approaches is particularly fruitful for those who are interested in popular culture and visual imagery. Moreover, by expanding traditional social science notions of what constitutes "data," this approach could open new avenues of inquiry and may be a particularly promising approach for the study of individuals and groups that are not literate (for innovative examples of such qualitative work, see Killion & Wang, 2000; Painter, 1994).

### Bringing Together Qualitative and Quantitative Researchers in a Team

Some projects address the issue of bringing together qualitative and quantitative research methods by bringing together teams of researchers with different dispositions, backgrounds, and talents. (Obviously, these researchers do not, and cannot, view the epistemological barriers to this kind of collaboration as insurmountable.) Most often, studies using this approach have fairly substantial resources, which permits them to involve researchers who will impose quite different design and measurement constraints and who may operate both independently and collaboratively within the study. The teams may include feminist scholars (as do the ones discussed here), but because the studies tend to be designed to be broad and inclusive in their reach, the scholars are unlikely to take an exclusively feminist perspective throughout the project.

One study that deliberately set out to draw on both types of methods is the New Hope Project, an evaluation study of a large-scale poverty intervention program (Huston et al., 2001). The intervention employed a truly experimental design and aimed to assess the relative benefits for working poor families of a comprehensive support package, including a wage supplement, subsidies for health insurance, child care vouchers, and a job opportunity program (Huston et al., 2004). Of course, many of the key outcomes for the program were quantitative (actual

income, assessed performance of all family members in many social arenas, etc.), and many of the collaborators on the project were primarily quantitative researchers (e.g., psychologists Huston and McLoyd and economist Duncan). However, the project also included an anthropologist (Weisner), who set up a fieldwork team of seven ethnographers who worked in the Milwaukee, Wisconsin, areas of the project. The aim was to use ethnographic data collected from a stratified random sample of cases

to assist in gaining a richer, more detailed understanding of the impact of New Hope on participating families than could be gained from the . . . survey alone. The ethnographic study was also linked closely to the quantitative data from the surveys and child assessment data, with ongoing conversations among the group. (Lieber, Weisner, & Presley, 2003, p. 411)

Several New Hope Project collaborators were impressed by the power of the qualitative data to reveal things that could be confirmed with the larger quantitative survey but had not been guessed at the outset of the study. In their valuable consideration of these issues, Gibson and Duncan (2005) report that Gibson and Weisner (2002) found, using the qualitative data, that the family participants in the study valued the elements of the program in vastly different ways (e.g., some in cost-benefit terms and others because it served some personal preferences; see also Romich & Weisner, 2000). These different values in turn guided service use. Basing her analyses on these insights, Gibson used the survey data to confirm the importance of this heterogeneity in shaping the program's effect on families.

In a more complicated example of the iterative relationship between the qualitative and the quantitative findings, quantitative researchers noted that the boys in the experiment, but not the girls, were rated as significantly higher achieving than the controls (see Gibson & Duncan, 2005). The qualitative data helped researchers recognize that in fact parents tended to view their male children as more "at-risk" than the females and to channel more of the program's resources to their sons than their daughters. Armed with this insight, quantitative

researchers were able to examine other aspects of national survey data and to show that parents with both sons and daughters who live in impoverished neighborhoods systematically direct time and other resources toward boys rather than girls (Romich, 2000).

On a project like this, it was critical, then, for the dialogue between qualitative and quantitative researchers to be continual and respectful. It is clear that in this context the New Hope Project benefited greatly from its own successful mixed-method collaborative environment. Attempting this kind of collaboration does not, though, guarantee its success: One can easily imagine a project in which insights and findings would be on parallel tracks and would never meet. Moreover, even when successful, this sort of effort exacts a high cost in communication labor.

The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study is another umbrella project involving many collaborators and including both qualitative and quantitative researchers on a variety of narrower subprojects. In fact, two feminist sociologists with different backgrounds (England, a quantitative researcher, and Edin, a qualitative researcher) have joined forces with each other and several other collaborators (including the economist McLanahan) on a subproject within that study that aims to understand “why some couples with very young children break up while others remain together, and why some fathers remain actively involved with their families” (Institute for Policy Research Web site [www.northwestern.edu/ipr/](http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/)). The Time, Love, Cash, Care and Children Study (TLC3) was set up to examine a subsample of 75 low-to-moderate-income couples drawn from the larger Fragile Families Study (of nearly 5,000 families). In this project, qualitative and quantitative researchers actually joined together to examine qualitative findings in the context of quantitative data and quantitative findings in the context of qualitative data. For example, Gibson, Edin, and McLanahan (2003) began by noting that quantitative data suggested that the Fragile Families couples who were unmarried had positive views of marriage and said they plan to marry. Yet few did. Gibson, Edin, and McLanahan used qualitative data from the TLC3 data to explore this contradiction and argued that the qualitative data suggest that actually the views these couples hold of

marriage were so positive that they felt their relationships did not warrant it. There are a variety of economic and achievement milestones they believed they must reach in order to justify marriage. In another paper, England, Edin, and Linnenberg (2003) found that the women struggled in relatively unsatisfying nonmarital relationships with their children’s fathers because they believed that financial independence and stability are prerequisites for marriage they have not yet achieved.

It is clear that this kind of collaborative project has remarkable potential to leverage insight from both quantitative and qualitative data to account for, enrich, and validate one other. That potential is only realized, though, to the extent that these projects engage researchers with both kinds of gifts and training, who are willing and able to collaborate. Feminist research—which often aims to excavate key voices and perspectives that are relatively silent, powerless, or subordinated—is particularly likely to benefit from this sort of collaboration.

### **Building a Narrative Account From a Quantitative Description**

The final strategy we have encountered for combining quantitative and qualitative methods is perhaps the least common. It involves researchers taking quantitative indicators—for an individual or group of individuals—and constructing a qualitative analysis on the basis of those indicators. There is no doubt room for more inventive efforts along these lines. Perhaps the most straightforward example of this approach involves identifying an individual outlier or a group of people who score very high (or low) on some dimension and then conducting a case study of those individuals or that group. Helson, Mitchell, and Hart (1985) did this when they studied the “lives of women who became autonomous,” by selecting the seven women in Helson’s longitudinal study who scored at the Autonomous stage on Loevinger’s (1976) measure of ego development at middle age. By conducting a group “case study,” they hoped to identify the personality and life experiences that might underlie successful personality achievement and specifically to evaluate both Levinson’s (1978) model of male development

## 340 • HANDBOOK OF FEMINIST RESEARCH—CHAPTER 15

and Gilligan's (1982) model of female development. They found that the theories were uneven in their applicability and that different paths led to successful ego development. They were struck, though, that "to an unusual degree, the seven sought out the challenges and suffered the hardships particular to their time in history" (Helson et al., 1985, p. 283). They concluded that

it may still be true that *autonomous* ways of thinking and behaving are so much discouraged in women that only those who have known pain or marginality develop a high ego-level, and those who have a high ego-level are unlikely to live a conventional life. (p. 284)

This emphasis on both suffering and unconventionality offered new insight into the pathway toward the highest levels of ego development.

Peterson (1998) used a similar strategy in his study of women who were high in different forms of midlife generativity. He aimed to identify the characteristics of women who are high (and low) in generativity realization or generativity motivation or both. He selected 12 women who scored high on both measures, on one measure, or on neither measure. With 3 women in each group, he hoped to avoid being distracted by highly idiosyncratic details and instead to identify some patterns across the 3 women within each cell that differentiated them from the women in the other three cells. His analysis pointed to the centrality of life's disappointments and ongoing preoccupations (rather than specific personality qualities or life experiences) as differentiating the groups from each other. Thus, the women who were high on both forms of generativity were currently engaged in generative activities, but (unlike the group low in realization but high in motivation) they did not report frustration or disappointment with past generative efforts. The group with the reverse pattern (high in realization and low in motivation) was not actively focused on generative activities in the present at all, although they also reported no frustrations or disappointments in that domain. Finally, the group low in both was also low in well-being, and quite distressed. These midlife portraits certainly "fit" the pattern of scores (and Peterson's account is of course much richer than this one!), but they also extend

our understanding of how two related but separate personality characteristics may interact to produce distinctive patterns.

Finally, Singer and Ryff (2001; see also Singer, Ryff, Carr, & Magee, 1998) pioneered a person-centered method that goes further. They actually prepared a narrative account of the individuals in their studies, based on the quantitative data about their lives. They then used this narrative as data, constructing taxonomies of life histories or profiles that reflect different pathways to a range of health outcomes.

### DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

Our hope in presenting alternate models to our students, and to the readers of this chapter, is that it is both stimulating and empowering to consider a range of alternative ways to conduct research. Our view, then, is frankly pragmatic and thereby finesses one of the key debates among some feminist scholars. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) outlined in detail the ways in which positivism and postpositivism (normally philosophical positions promoted by quantitative methodologists), on the one hand, and constructivism (a position often promoted by qualitative methodologists), on the other, have resisted reconciliation. They detailed six important differences in the assumptions made by researchers adopting one or the other position (assumptions about the nature of reality, the relationship of the knower to the known, the role of values in inquiry, the nature of generalizations, the possibility of establishing cause and effect, and the importance of induction or deduction). This polarized debate has been reproduced in a slightly different form among feminist scholars, among whom an additional issue is added: which kind of method produces knowledge compatible with feminists' goals (Jayaratne & Stewart, 1991; Peplau & Conrad, 1989). Even to consider combining narrative and numbers in a single study, one must refuse this binary framing and proceed instead from something like the assumption associated with pragmatism, that there is no essential link between epistemology and method (see Tashakkori & Teddlie's, 1998, exposition, pp. 11–13).

Because social scientists and feminist researchers have been so preoccupied with the

incompatibilities between these kinds of methods, certain developments have been quite uneven. For example, we have well-developed criteria for evaluating validity in quantitative research. Although there have been increasing efforts along these lines with regard to qualitative methods, a consensus on criteria has not yet emerged among qualitative researchers, much less been widely disseminated among all researchers. Even more, we have virtually no established criteria for assessing the success of any given combined or integrated use of both kinds of methods. Such criteria can be successfully developed only if we have more models of successful combinations and integrations. We will all benefit—in our own research and in our efforts to equip students for the future—when there are many more models of individuals and projects that have brought narratives and numbers together in a fruitful way on many different topics.

## NOTES

1. Epistemology is concerned with the study of knowledge and how it is possible to make knowledge claims. Sprague and Zimmerman (1993) argue that positivism, which holds that definitive knowledge can be obtained only through the systematic and objective observation of observable phenomena, has been the dominant epistemology since the mid-19th century. Ontology refers to the metaphysical study of existence.

2. The context of discovery refers to the creative or even intuitive phase of the research process in which ideas are generated; in contrast, the context of justification involves testing these ideas using the stringent and objective principles of the scientific methods.

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## 342 • HANDBOOK OF FEMINIST RESEARCH—CHAPTER 15

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## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

**Kum-Kum Bhavnani** is Professor of Sociology at the University of California at Santa Barbara and chairs the program in Women Culture and Development in Global and International Studies. She has written books, articles, and essays on several topics, including feminist methodologies, women in prison and feminist theory. She has also been studying the relationships between and interconnected configurations of “race”/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class. She now conducts research on women in the Third World where she, along with coauthors Peter Chua, John Foran, Priya Kurian, and Debashish Munshi, has been developing a new approach to development studies—the women, culture development paradigm. From that theoretical frame, she has recently completed a 2006 documentary, *The Shape of Water* ([www.the-shapeofwatermovie.com](http://www.the-shapeofwatermovie.com)), which centers women making change in Brazil, India, Jerusalem, and Senegal.

**Katherine Borland** is Associate Professor of Comparative Studies in the Humanities at Ohio State University at Newark, where she teaches Folklore, World Literature, and Post-Development Theory. She has published articles in the *Radical History Review*, the *Journal of American Folklore*, and in several edited collections. She has also published two ethnographically grounded, book-length studies: *Unmasking Class, Gender and Sexuality in Nicaraguan Festival* (2006) and *Creating Community: Hispanic Migration to Southern Delaware* (2001). She is currently embarking on an ethnography of the salsa scene in North Jersey. Outside the academy, she has worked as a public folklorist and as director of a

nonprofit educational organization serving inner-city youth.

**Sharon Brisolaro** is a program evaluator, and she founded and owns Evaluation Solutions, an evaluation organization operating in Northern California. Her areas of expertise include feminist evaluation, participatory evaluation, qualitative methodology, and mixed-method studies. She is an active member of the American Evaluation Association and of the Feminist Evaluation Topical Interest Group (TIG), and she is currently serving as the group’s program chair. She coedited *Feminist Evaluation: Explorations and Experiences: New Directions for Evaluation* (2002) with Dr. Denise Seigart and has written and presented in various forums on feminist evaluation and feminist theory. She received her doctorate from Cornell University in program evaluation and planning with concentrations in women’s studies and rural sociology.

**Abigail Brooks** is a PhD candidate in sociology at Boston College. Her areas of interest include feminist theory, sociology of gender, critical gerontology and feminist age studies, sociology of the body, science and technology studies, and social theory. Her dissertation investigates women’s lived experiences and interpretations of growing older against the contextual backdrop of growing prevalence, acceptance, and approval of cosmetic surgery. She recently published an article titled “‘Under the Knife and Proud of it:’ An Analysis of the Normalization of Cosmetic Surgery” in the *Journal of Critical Sociology*.

**Kathy Charmaz** is Professor of Sociology and Coordinator of the Faculty Writing Program at

Sonoma State University, a program to assist faculty in writing for publication. She has written or coedited six books, including her 2006 volume, *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis* (Sage, London) and *Good Days, Bad Days: The Self in Chronic Illness and Time*, which won awards from the Pacific Sociological Association and the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction. She has also written numerous papers on grounded theory methods as well as on medical sociology and social psychology. She serves as vice president of Alpha Kappa Delta, the international honorary society for sociology, and she has served as president of the Pacific Sociological Association, vice president of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction, editor of *Symbolic Interaction*, and chair of the Medical Sociology Section of the American Sociological Association.

**Adele E. Clarke** is Professor of Sociology and Adjunct Professor of History of Health Sciences at the University of California, San Francisco. Her work centers on studies of science, technology, and medicine (with special emphasis on medical technologies and women's health) and qualitative research methods. Her latest book is *Situational Analysis: Grounded Theory After the Postmodern Turn* (Sage, 2005). She is best known for her study of the reproductive sciences in biology, medicine, and agriculture, *Disciplining Reproduction: American Life Scientists and the "Problem of Sex"* (1998). She coedited *Revisioning Women, Health and Healing: Cultural, Feminist and Technoscience Perspectives* (1999) with Virginia Oleson and anticipates her forthcoming book, *Biomedicalization: Technoscience and the Transformation of Health and Illness in the U.S.*, which she coedited with Janet Shim, Laura Mamo, Jennifer Fosket, and Jennifer Fishman (2006).

**Elizabeth R. Cole** is Associate Professor of Women's Studies and Afro-American and African Studies at the University of Michigan. She coauthored *Speaking of Abortion: Television and Authority in the Lives of Women* with Andrea Press (1999). She and Joan Ostrove coedited an issue of the *Journal of Social Issues* (Vol. 59, No. 4, 2003) that focused on the psychological meanings of social class in educational contexts.

She earned her BA from Boston University and received her doctorate in psychology from the University of Michigan. Her research focuses on how individuals' sense of themselves as connected to social groups (such as race, gender, or social class) is related to how they understand their social environments, issues of public concern (such as abortion or affirmative action), and their choices about political participation.

**Judith A. Cook** is a professor of psychiatry at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She directs the Center on Mental Health Services Research and Policy, and her recent research explores the lives of women with psychiatric disabilities and those living with HIV/AIDS. She is also focusing much of her research on the intersection of gender, class, and race in health and human services public policy.

**Erzulie Coquillon** holds a master's degree in counseling psychology from Boston College and a BA in history from Harvard College.

**Bronwyn Davies** is Professor and chair of the Narrative Discourse and Pedagogy Research Group at the University of Western Sydney. Her publications include *Poststructural Theory and Classroom Practice* (1994), *(In)scribing Body Landscape Relations* (2000), *A Body of Writing* (2000), *Gender in Japanese Preschools: Frogs and Snails and Feminist Tales in Japan* (2004), and she also published second editions of *Frogs and Snails and Feminist Tales* (2003) and *Shards of Glass* (2003). She coauthored the chapter on "Feminism/Poststructuralism" in the *Sage Research Methods in the Social Sciences* (2005) with Susanne Gannon, and they also coedited the book *Doing Collective Biography* (2006).

**Marjorie L. DeVault** is Professor of Sociology and a member of the Women's Studies Program at Syracuse University. She has been learning about institutional ethnography from Dorothy Smith and others in the "IE network" since the 1980s, and she currently works with graduate students on IE projects. Her research has explored women's "invisible work" in families and in the historically female field of dietetics and nutrition education. Trained in the Chicago-School fieldwork tradition and deeply influenced by the feminism of the 1970s, she has

written extensively on qualitative and feminist methodologies. She also maintains an IE website at <http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/mdevault>. She is the author of *Feeding the Family: The Social Organization of Caring as Gendered Work* (1991) and *Liberating Method: Feminism and Social Research* (1999).

**Bonnie Thornton Dill** is Professor and Chair of the Women's Studies Department and Program and Director of the Consortium on Race, Gender, and Ethnicity at the University of Maryland. Her research focuses on intersections of race, class, and gender with an emphasis on African American women and families and has been reprinted in numerous collections and edited volumes. Before coming to Maryland in 1991, she was professor of sociology at the University of Memphis, where she founded and directed the Center for Research on Women. Under her leadership, this organization gained national prominence for outstanding work on the intersections of race, class, and gender. Her more recent publications include "Disparities in Latina Health: An Intersectional Analysis" (with R. E. Zambrana) in A. Schulz and L. Mullings, *Gender, Race, Class & Health* (2006), "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Motherhood, Choice and Welfare in the Rural South" (with T. Johnson), in Sharon Harley et al. (Eds.), *Sister Circle: Black Women and Work* (2002), and "Poverty in the Rural U.S.: Implications for Children, Families and Communities," in Judith Blau (Ed.), *Blackwell Companion to Sociology* (2001). Her work has also been published in journals, including *Signs*, *Feminist Studies*, *The Journal of Family History*, and *The Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, and these articles are widely reprinted. She has received several prestigious awards, including the Distinguished Contributions to Teaching Award and the Jessie Bernard Award for research in gender studies. These were both given by the American Sociological Association.

**Michelle Fine**, Distinguished Professor of Social Psychology, Women's Studies and Urban Education at the Graduate Center, City University of New York (CUNY), has taught at CUNY since 1990. Her recent publications include *Working Method: Social Research and Social Injustice* (2004, with L. Weis), *Off White: Essays on Race, Privilege and Contestation*

(2004, with L. Weis, L. Powell Pruitt, & A. Burns), *Brown v. Board of Education* (2004), and *Changing Minds: The Impact of College in Prison* (2001, with Kathy Boudin, Iris Bowen, Judith Clark, Donna Hylton, Migdalia Martinez, "Missy," Rosemarie Roberts, Pamela Smart, Maria Torre, & Debora Upegui).

**Mary Margaret Fonow** is Professor and Director of the Women and Gender Studies Program at Arizona State University. Her research areas include global unions, feminist methodology, and social movements. She is the author of *Union Women: Forging Feminism in the United Steelworkers of America* (2003), and she is currently writing a book about feminists' roles within global union networks as advocates for women's transnational labor rights.

**Susanne Gannon** lectures in the School of Education at the University of Western Sydney. She is a founding member of the Narrative Discourse and Pedagogy Research Group. Her research has examined writing practices through feminist poststructural theory. She has published studies on research methodology and feminist approaches to embodiment and writing in a range of journals, including *Sex Education*, *Qualitative Inquiry*, *Qualitative Studies in Education*, and *Auto/Biography*. She coauthored the chapter on "Feminism/Poststructuralism" in the *Sage Research Methods in the Social Sciences* (2005) with Bronwyn Davies, and they also coedited the book *Doing Collective Biography* (2006).

**Glenda Gross** is a Doctoral student in sociology at Syracuse University. Her research interests include feminist theory; qualitative methods and feminist methodologies; race, class, gender, and work; studies in the social organization of knowledge; institutional ethnography; and antiracist feminist pedagogies. Her work explores the social organization of antiracist feminist educators' work in U.S. colleges and universities. She earned her MA in sociology, with a certificate of advanced studies (CAS) in women's studies.

**Sandra Harding** teaches Philosophy of Social Science and Postcolonial and Feminist Studies at University of California at Los Angeles. She has written or edited 14 books and special issues of journals that focus on feminist and postcolonial

epistemology, methodology, and philosophy of science. *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies* was published in 2004 and *Science and Social Inequality: Feminist and Postcolonial Issues* appeared in April 2006. She coedited *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* from 2000 to 2005 and she is currently working on *Women, Science, and Modernity*.

**Mary Hawkesworth** is Professor of Women's and Gender Studies at Rutgers University. Her teaching and research interests include feminist theory, women and politics, contemporary political philosophy, philosophy of science, and social policy. Her major works include *Globalization and Feminist Activism* (2006); *Feminist Inquiry: From Political Conviction to Methodological Innovation* (2006); *Beyond Oppression: Feminist Theory and Political Strategy* (1990); *Theoretical Issues in Policy Analysis* (1988); and *The Encyclopedia of Government and Politics* (1992; 2nd revised edition, 2003). She is currently the editor of *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*.

**Catherine Hundleby** is Assistant Professor in Philosophy and cross-appointed with Women's Studies at the University of Windsor, Canada. She focuses on feminist naturalism and feminist standpoint theory, with special attention to the relationships between cognitive and sociopolitical values. Her papers on these topics have appeared in *Hypatia*, *Social Epistemology*, and *Women & Politics*. She received her doctorate in philosophy from the University of Western Ontario, and her research focuses on feminist epistemology from an analytical perspective.

**Toby Epstein Jayaratne** is currently a research psychologist at the University of Michigan and directs the Beliefs and Understanding of Genetics Project, a study exploring Americans' perceptions about possible genetic influences on perceived gender, class, and race differences and on sexual orientation. Her academic interests focus on the use of genetic explanations to justify and support various social and political ideologies. She has written and presented several papers on the topic of feminist methodology. She received her PhD in developmental psychology from the University of Michigan.

**Debra Renee Kaufman** is the former founder and Director of Women's Studies, a Matthews Distinguished Professor, and Professor of Sociology at Northeastern University. Among her award nominated and selected books are *Achievement and Women* (coauthored with Barbara Richardson, honorable mention, C. W. Mills Award), *Rachel's Daughters: Newly Orthodox Jewish Women* (nominated for three awards), and an invited guest-edited edition of *Contemporary Jewry* titled *Women and the Holocaust*. Her commitment to feminist scholarship is evident in her published articles and chapters on post-Holocaust Jewish identity politics and her forthcoming books *From the Protocols of Zion to Holocaust Denial: Challenging the Media, the Law and the Academy* (coedited with G. Herman, J. Ross, and D. Phillips) and *Post Holocaust Identity and an Ever-Dying People: Contemporary Narratives*. She is currently researching intergenerational ties among adult Jewish daughters and their mothers.

**Hyun Sook Kim** is Chair and Professor of Sociology at Wheaton College in Massachusetts. She teaches a range of courses in sociology, women's studies, and Asian/American studies. Her research and publications have focused on postcolonial and transnational feminist studies of nation/state violence, gender, ethnic conflicts, nationalism, and history writing. She recently coedited a special issue (April, 2005) of *Gender & Society* that calls for retheorization of the linkages between "Gender-Sexuality-State-Nation" and the development of transnational feminist sociology.

**Sally L. Kitch** is Professor and Vice Chair in the Department of Women's Studies at Ohio State University, where she was Chair from 1992 to 2000. Her research focuses on the mechanisms by which women in various historical and cultural contexts have exerted pressure on gendered expectations and developed their own strategies of resistance. She has published numerous articles and three books of interdisciplinary scholarship analyzing gender, feminism, and utopianism: *Chaste Liberation: Celibacy and Female Cultural Status*; *This Strange Society of Women: Reading the Lives and Letters of the Woman's Commonwealth*; and *Higher Ground: From Utopianism to Realism in*

*American Feminist Thought and Theory*. Her articles and book chapters on interdisciplinary feminist scholarship include *PhD Programs and the Research Mission of Women's Studies: The Case for Interdisciplinarity* (2003) and *Disciplined by Disciplines? The Need for an Interdisciplinary Research Mission in/and for Women's Studies* (1998, coauthor Judith Allen). Both articles appeared in *Feminist Studies*.

**Noretta Koertge** is Professor Emeritus in History & Philosophy of Science at Indiana University and has written extensively on the relationship between scientific research and social values. Her coauthored and edited books include *Professing Feminism* (1994, 2003), *A House Built on Sand* (1998), *Scrutinizing Feminist Epistemology* (2003), and *Scientific Values and Civic Virtues* (2005). After working in chemistry, she studied philosophy of science in London during the time when Popper, Lakatos, and Feyerabend were very influential. Her earlier publications address problems in scientific methodology and social science with an emphasis on the conceptual issues that arise in the study of homosexuality. Although she has taught in Turkey, England, and Canada, she has spent most of her academic life at Indiana University. After receiving tenure, she published two novels that deal with the lesbian experience in pre- and post-Stonewall America: *Who Was That Masked Woman?* (1981) and *Valley of the Amazons* (1984). She is the current editor of *The New Dictionary of Scientific Biography*.

**Julie Konik** is now a Scholar in Residence at Antioch College, where she is continuing her research on social identity and well-being, with a special focus on sexual minorities. Her recent research examines the role of individual differences in the development of sexual identity and the lived experiences of sexual minorities in a variety of contexts. She completed PhD in psychology and women's studies from the University of Michigan, where her dissertation focused on the negative effects of sexual harassment and heterosexual harassment in the workplace.

**Rachel Kulick** is currently a doctoral candidate in sociology at Brandeis University. Her areas of interest include feminist theory and methodology, visual sociology, media democracy, and

globalization. Her current research examines the ways in which feminist artists aesthetically confront injustices and asymmetries of power across national, gendered, and racial borders. She holds a master's degree in education from Harvard Graduate School of Education.

**Helen E. Longino** is Professor of Philosophy at Stanford University. Her teaching and research interests are in philosophy of science, social epistemology, and feminist philosophy. She is the author of *Science as Social Knowledge* (1990), *The Fate of Knowledge* (2001), and many articles in the philosophy of science, feminist philosophy, and epistemology. Her many coedited volumes include *Feminism and Science* (with Evelyn Fox Keller, 1996) and *Osiris 12: Women, Gender and Science* (with Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, 1997), and the forthcoming *Scientific Pluralism* (Vol. 19) of the Minnesota Studies in Philosophy of Science (with Stephen Kellert & C. Kenneth Waters, 2006). She is currently completing a book-length comparative analysis of four approaches in the sciences of human behavior, focusing on research on aggression and research on sexual orientation. This analysis includes both an examination of the logical structures and interrelations of these approaches and study of their social and cultural reception and uptake.

**M. Brinton Lykes** is Professor of Community-Cultural Psychology at the Lynch School of Education and Associate Director of the Center for Human Rights and International Justice at Boston College. She is an activist scholar whose research explores the interstices of indigenous cultural beliefs and practices and those of Western psychology, toward collaborating in the design and development of community-based programs that respond to the effects of war in contexts of transition and transformation and in the development of training programs and post-graduate diplomas for psychosocial trauma workers. She has published extensively about this work in journals and edited volumes and is also a community activist, cofounder, and participant in many local, national, and international NGOs. These organizations include the Boston Women's Fund, Women's Rights International, and the Ignacio Martín-Baró Fund for Mental Health and Human Rights.

**Sarah Maddison** is Lecturer in the School of Politics and International Relations at the University of New South Wales. She is currently working on the focused audits for women and sexual minorities for the Democratic Audit of Australia (<http://democratic.audit.anu.edu.au>) and is engaged in ongoing research on Australian Indigenous activism. She has been active in the Australian Women's Movement since 1995, and she has served as a national media spokesperson for the Women's Electoral Lobby since 1999. She has published many works in the areas of young women and feminist activism, social movements, nongovernment organizations, and democracy. Her first book, *Activist Wisdom: Practical Knowledge and Creative Tension in Social Movements* (2006, with Sean Scalmer), addresses important questions concerning the ways that activists manage tension and conflict in social movements. Her forthcoming book, *Silencing Dissent: How the Howard Government Is Eroding Democracy in Australia* (coedited with Clive Hamilton) is due in early 2007.

**Cris Mayo** is Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Policy Studies and the Gender and Women's Studies Program at University of Illinois at Urbana, Champaign. Her work includes *Disputing the Subject of Sex: Sexuality and Public School Controversies* (2004) as well as articles in the areas of philosophy of education, sexuality studies, gender studies, and multicultural theory.

**Amy E. McLaughlin** is Associate Director of the Consortium on Race, Gender and Ethnicity (CRGE) and works to further the organization's agenda of theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical insights into intersectionality. Her research agenda uses an intersectional lens to examine the symbolic and physical role that violence plays in the lives of women. She also pursues an interest in processes of institutional change and is currently working on a life history analysis of faculty members who engage in advocacy for social justice on university campuses.

**Jennifer Bickham Mendez** is Associate Professor of Sociology at the College of William and Mary. She wrote *From the Revolution to the Maquiladoras: Gender, Labor and Globalization in Nicaragua* (2005) and presents an ethnographic

case study of a Nicaraguan working women's organization to demonstrate how globalization affects grassroots advocacy for social justice, particularly as it relates to the situation of women maquila workers. She has published articles in *Social Problems*, *Organization*, *Mobilization*, *Identities*, and other journals. Her current work focuses on Latino/a migration to Williamsburg, Virginia, and explores migrants' experiences of exclusion and incorporation in this new immigration receiving site.

**Maria Mies** is former Professor of Sociology of the Faculty of Applied Social Sciences at the University of Applied Social Sciences, Cologne. She worked for 5 years as a lecturer of German at the Goethe Institute in Pune, India. On her return, she wrote her PhD dissertation on "Indian Women and Patriarchy" (1972). Her study of Indian patriarchy helped her discover German patriarchy, and this encouraged her to become active in the international women's movement and other various social movements. She always combined theoretical work with social activism. In 1979, she initiated the program "Women and Development" at the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, The Netherlands. It is the first of its kind in the world. She is the author of several works that include *Women: The Last Colony*, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*, *Ecofeminism* (with V. Shiva) and *The Subsistence Perspective*.

**Kathi Miner-Rubino** is currently Assistant Professor of Psychology at Western Kentucky University. She teaches courses in social psychology, psychology of women, and research methods. She has published several papers in the areas of gender, social class, and psychological well-being. Her most recent publications focus on vicarious exposure to the mistreatment (i.e., incivility and harassment) of women in work settings. She received her PhD in psychology and women's studies from the University of Michigan.

**Pamela Moss** is Professor in the Studies in Policy and Practice Program, Faculty of Human and Social Development, University of Victoria, Canada. Her research coalesces around themes of power and body in different contexts—feminist methodology, constructs of contested illness, and activist practices. She draws on

feminism and poststructural thinking to make sense of women's experiences of changing environments and uses autobiographical writing analytically in her empirical and theoretical work. She is also active in feminist politics on issues of chronic illness and invisible or unapparent disabilities. She edited *Placing Autobiography in Geography* (2001) and *Feminist Geography in Practice* (2002). She also coauthored *Women, Body, Illness: Space and Identity in the Everyday Lives of Women With Chronic Illness* (2003) with Isabel Dyck.

**Nancy A. Naples** is Professor of Sociology and Women's Studies at the University of Connecticut where she teaches courses on feminist theory; feminist methodology; sexual citizenship; gender, politics and the state; and women's activism and globalization. She is the author of *Feminism and Method: Ethnography, Discourse Analysis, and Feminist Research* (2003) and *Grassroots Warriors: Activist Mothering, Community Work, and the War on Poverty* (1998). She is also the editor of *Community Activism and Feminist Politics: Organizing Across Race, Class, and Gender* (1998). She is coeditor of *Women's Activism and Globalization: Linking Local Struggles with Transnational Politics* and *Teaching Feminist Activism*. Her next book, *Restructuring the Heartland: Racialization and the Social Regulation of Citizenship*, focuses on a long-term ethnographic study of economic and social restructuring in two small towns in Iowa. She is currently working on a comparative intersectional analysis of sexual citizenship and immigration policies.

**Angel David Nieves** is Assistant Professor in the School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation at the University of Maryland, College Park. He is an affiliate faculty member in the Departments of American Studies, Women's Studies, African American Studies, and Anthropology. He is also an affiliate member of the Center for Heritage Resource Studies. He completed his doctoral work in architectural history and Africana studies at Cornell University in 2001. His book manuscript, "*We Gave Our Hearts and Lives To It:*" *African American Women Reformers and Nation-Building in the Post-Reconstruction South, 1877-1968*, is currently being revised for

publication. His scholarly work and activism critically engages with issues of heritage preservation, gender, and nationalism at the intersections of race and the built environment in the Global South.

**Daphne Patai** is Professor of Brazilian Literature and Adjunct Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She spent 10 years in the Women's Studies Program before deciding to leave it for reasons that are explained in her essay in this volume. She is the author and editor of 11 books, including *Heterophobia: Sexual Harassment and the Future of Feminism* (1998). Her 1994 critique of academic feminism, written with Noretta Koertge, was recently reissued in a new and expanded edition as *Professing Feminism: Education and Indoctrination in Women's Studies* (2003). Her latest book, coedited with Will H. Corral, is *Theory's Empire: An Anthology of Dissent* (2005). Many of her essays on academic foibles have appeared in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. A recipient of fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the National Humanities Center (all for feminist projects), she has come to appreciate that education and politics are not the same thing.

**Deborah Piatelli** is an activist and doctoral candidate in sociology at Boston College. She is currently writing her dissertation on the challenges contemporary mobilizations for peace and social justice face as they work across race, class, and gender. She works with the Global Justice Project at Boston College (an undergraduate student-led program) and a local community group of the United for Justice With Peace coalition based in Boston. Taking a feminist, participatory approach, she collaborated with activists over a 2-year period and uncovered how hidden cultures of privilege were preventing collective work across difference. Through participatory discussions with activists, this work has opened up a space for activists to reflect and exchange dialogue to potentially transform their beliefs, practices, and identities.

**Wanda S. Pillow** is Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana, Champaign.

She is author of *Unfit Subjects: Educational Policy and the Teen Mother* (2004) and coeditor of *Working the Ruins: Feminist Poststructural Theory and Methods in Education* (2000).

**Judith Preissle** (formerly Preissle Goetz) is the 2001 Distinguished Aderhold Professor in the Qualitative Research Program at the College of Education, University of Georgia (UGA), and she is an affiliated faculty member of UGA's Institute for Women's Studies. Although she began her career teaching middle grades in 1965, Preissle has worked at UGA since 1975 and teaches, researches, and writes in educational anthropology, qualitative research, gender studies, and ethics. She founded the qualitative research program at UGA that now offers a graduate certificate program. She is the coauthor of *Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research* (1984, 1993), which was translated into Spanish in 1988, and coeditor of *The Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education* (1992). Her most recent book, coauthored with Xue Lan Rong, is *Educating Immigrant Students* (1998). She and her spouse, a computer network manager at UGA, have two miniature schnauzers and two Chinese pugs. All five share her interest in philosophical quandaries.

**Diane Reay** is Professor of Education at Cambridge University. She is a feminist sociologist working in the area of education but is also interested in broader issues of the relationship between the self and society, the affective and the material. Her priority has been to engage in research with a strong social justice agenda that addresses social inequalities of all kinds. She is particularly interested in developing theorizations of social class and the ways in which it is mediated by gender and ethnicity, and she has worked extensively with Pierre Bourdieu's conceptual framework. Recent research includes understanding white-middle-class identities in multiethnic urban spaces and the experiences of working class students in higher education. Her most recent book (with S. Ball & M. David) is *Degrees of Choice: Social Class, Race and Gender in Higher Education* (2005).

**Shulamit Reinharz** is the Jacob Potofsky Professor of Sociology at Brandeis University. She directed the Brandeis University Women's

Studies Program in the 1990s and founded the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute (HBI) in 1997 to develop fresh ways of thinking about Jews and gender worldwide. In 2001, she founded the Women's Studies Research Center (WSRC) where research, art, and activism converge. The WSRC is housed in a 10,000 square feet facility, which she designed and for which she raised all the funds. Both the HBI and the WSRC are members of the National Council for Research on Women. Reinharz is the author/editor of 10 books, including *On Becoming a Social Scientist* (1979/1984), *Qualitative Gerontology* (1987), *Feminist Methods in Social Research* (1992), and *American Jewish Women and the Zionist Enterprise* (2005). She is also the chief editor of the *Brandeis Series on Jewish Women*.

**Laurel Richardson** is Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the Ohio State University. She specializes in the sociology of knowledge, gender, and qualitative methods. She has been honored with visiting lectureships in many countries and has published over 100 articles—many of them demonstrating alternative writing formats, including poetic representations. She is the coeditor of *Feminist Frontiers* and author of seven other books, including *The New Other Woman* (translated into seven languages), and the Cooley award winning book *Fields of Play: Constructing an Academic Life*. Her most recent book, *Travels With Ernest: Crossing the Literary/Sociological Divide* (2004), was coauthored with novelist Ernest Lockridge and models a new writing format that preserves the individual voice, breaks down hierarchies, and demonstrates feminist communication strategies across gender and disciplines. Her current research expands her interest in alternative reading/writing practices through an ethnographic and textual study of *Altered Books*.

**Judith Roof** is Professor of English and Film Studies at Michigan State University. She is the author of *A Lure of Knowledge: Lesbian Sexuality and Theory, Come as You Are: Narrative and Sexuality, All About Thelma and Eve: Sidekicks and Third Wheels*, and the forthcoming *The Poetics of DNA*. She is coeditor (with Robyn Wiegman) of *Who Can Speak? Authority and Critical Identity*.

**Sue V. Rosser** has served as Dean of the Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts at Georgia Tech since 1999, where she is also Professor of Public Policy and of History, Technology, and Society. The author of nine books, Rosser has also written more than 120 refereed journal articles on issues of women and feminism in science, technology, and health. Her most recent book is *The Science Glass Ceiling: Academic Women Scientists and Their Struggle to Succeed* (2004).

**Denise Seigart** is Professor in the Health Sciences Department at Mansfield University, Pennsylvania, and is currently serving there as Interim Associate Provost. She has been an active member of the American Evaluation Association and has served as Chair and Program Chair of the Feminist Issues in Evaluation Topical Interest Group. In collaboration with Dr. Sharon Brisolaro, she edited *Feminist Evaluation: Explorations and Experiences: New Directions for Evaluation*, a critical work regarding Feminist Evaluation, which was published in December, 2002. She received her PhD in human service studies/program evaluation from Cornell University in 1999.

**Dorothy E. Smith** is Professor Emeritus at the University of Toronto and Adjunct Professor at the University of Victoria. Her published books include *Women Look at Psychiatry: I'm Not Mad, I'm Angry* (coedited with Sara David, 1975); *Feminism and Marxism: A Place to Begin, A Way to Go* (1977); *El Mundo Silenciado de las Mujeres* (1985); *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* (1987); *The Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge* (1990); *Texts, Facts, and Femininity: Exploring the Relations of Ruling* (1990); *Eine Soziologie Für Frauen* (translated and edited by Frigga Haug, 1998); *Writing the Social: Critique, Theory and Investigations* (1999); *Mothering for Schooling* (coauthored with Alison Griffith, 2005); *Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People* (2005); and an edited collection of essays by institutional ethnographers, *Institutional Ethnography as Practice* (2006).

**Liz Stanley** is Professor of Sociology at the University of Edinburgh. Her main research and

writing interests focus on the questions of methodology and epistemology, and many projects were produced with Sue Wise. Substantively, her research has been on historical topics for the last two decades, in particular, regarding South Africa. Relevant books include *Imperialism, Labour and the New Woman: Olive Schreiner's Social Theory* (2002), and *Mourning Becomes . . . Post/Memory, Commemoration & the Concentration Camps of the South African War 1899-1902* (2006).

**Abigail J. Stewart** is Sandra Schwarz Tangri Professor of Psychology and Women's Studies at the University of Michigan and director of the UM ADVANCE project, supported by the NSF ADVANCE program on Institutional Transformation. She was director of the Women's Studies Program (1989–1995) and the Institute for Research on Women and Gender (1995–2002), and she is a former Associate Dean in the College of Literature Science and the Arts at the University of Michigan (2002–2004). She has published many scholarly articles and several books that focus on the psychology of women's lives, personalities, and adaptations to personal and social changes. Her current research combines qualitative and quantitative methods and includes comparative analyses of longitudinal studies of educated women's lives and personalities; a collaborative study of race, gender, and generation in the graduates of a Midwest high school; and research and interventions on gender, science, and technology with adolescent girls, undergraduate students, and faculty.

**Lynn Weber** is Director of the Women's Studies Program and Professor of Sociology at the University of South Carolina. Cofounder of the Center for Research on Women at the University of Memphis, her research and teaching has explored the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality for over 20 years. Since the publication of *Understanding Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality: A Conceptual Framework* (2001), her work has focused on bringing the insights of intersectional scholarship to the problem of persistent social inequalities in health. Her recent publications include "Intersectionality and Women's Health: Charting a Path to Eliminating Health Disparities," in *Advances in Gender Research*, and "Reconstructing the Landscape of Health

## 724 • HANDBOOK OF FEMINIST RESEARCH

Disparities Research: Promoting Dialogue and Collaboration Between the Feminist Intersectional and Positivist Biomedical Traditions” in *Race, Class, Gender and Health*, edited by Amy Schulz and Leith Mullings. She is also coauthor of *The American Perception of Class*.

**Sue Wise** is Professor of Social Justice at Lancaster University, the United Kingdom. She is interested in all aspects of social justice and teaches and writes on social divisions and social diversity. The oppression and exploitation of children is a particular interest. She has written many books and articles on feminist epistemology and ontology with Liz Stanley. One of their most noted collaborations is *Breaking Out Again: Feminist Ontology & Epistemology* (1993).

**Diane L. Wolf** is Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Davis. She edited *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork* (1996) and authored *Factory Daughters* (1992) and *Beyond Anne Frank: Hidden Children, Family Reconstruction and the State in Post-war Holland* (2006, in press). With Judith Gerson, she coedited *Sociology Confronts the Holocaust: Identities, Memories and Diasporas* (2007, in

press). She also studies the children of Filipino and Vietnamese immigrants in California.

**Alison Wylie** is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Washington. She works on epistemic questions raised by archaeological practice and feminist research in the social sciences. Her analyses of evidential reasoning and normative issues in archaeology are collected in *Thinking From Things: Essays in the Philosophy of Archaeology* (2002), and appear in *Embedding Ethics* (2005) and *Ethics Issues in Archaeology* (2000). She coedited *Feminist Science Studies* (2004), and her essays on the philosophical implications of feminist research practices and feminist critiques of science appear in *Science and Other Cultures* (2003), *The Difference Feminism Has Made* (2001), *Primate Encounters* (2000), and *Changing Methods* (1995). She has also been active on equity issues as organizer of “Women, Work and the Academy” (2005: [www.barnard.edu/bcrw/womenandwork](http://www.barnard.edu/bcrw/womenandwork)) and as contributing coeditor of *Breaking Anonymity: The Chilly Climate for Women Faculty* (1995). She is currently working on a monograph, “Standpoint Matters,” in *Feminist Philosophy of Science*.