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Donde Ashmos Plowman
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, dplowman2@unl.edu

Anne D. Smith
University of Tennessee - Knoxville, asmith51@utk.edu

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The Gendering of Organizational Research Methods: Evidence of Gender Patterns in Qualitative Research

Donde Ashmos Plowman [1] and Anne D. Smith [2]

1. College of Business Administration, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska, USA
2. Department of Management, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, USA

Corresponding author – D. A. Plowman, dplowman2@unl.edu

Abstract

Purpose — The purpose of this paper is to explore the role that gender plays in choice of research methods.

Design/methodology/approach — The publication patterns of men and women in four prominent management journals over two decades were analyzed in three North American journals—*Academy of Management Journal, Administrative Science Quarterly,* and *Organization Science*—and one European journal—*Journal of Management Studies.* The authors coded the research methodology—qualitative or non-qualitative—and author gender for each article from 1986 through 2008, other than *Organization Science* which began in 1990. The authors also coded the stage of career for the journals whose author bios provided this level of detail and conducted chi-square tests of the gender authorship between qualitative and non-qualitative journals.

Findings — It was observed that women are over-represented and men are under-represented in published qualitative studies as compared to non-qualitative authors. This trend remained steady across the study period. As well for each journal. this relationship was significant. Quantitative findings about trends in authorship of qualitative research were connected to three theoretical perspectives that help explain these findings—information processing theory, separate vs. connected ways of knowing, and social identity theory.

Originality/value — Management scholars work in a profession that rarely speaks of itself in terms of gender. One may control for gender or explore gender implications in studies of organizational behavior. but gender is not spoken of as a factor that influences the tools used to study organizations. In this study. the authors use quantitative methods to address trends in gender and type of methodology in published papers across two decades and four academic journals.

Keywords: gender, research methods, serials, qualitative research, academic staff

Introduction

Suppose gender makes a difference. Suppose researcher gender influences one's choices about how to study organizations. Suppose female organizational scientists choose one research method more often than male organizational scientists do. Such assertions challenge conventional wisdom that scholars design studies and select methods according to the nature of the re-

search problem, the study's goals, or even the intended audience (e.g. Creswell, 2007). The political incorrectness of suggesting a relationship between gender and choice of research method, indeed, gives us pause in writing this article. We work in a profession that rarely speaks of itself in terms of gender. As organizational scientists we may study gender in organizations (Ely and Padavic, 2007; Ibarra, 1992, 1997), we may control for gender in studies of organizational behavior, but we do not speak of gender as a factor that influences the tools we use to study organizations. The provocative nature of our assertions engendered strong reactions from some of our colleagues, which also propelled us to explore the relationship between gender and choice of methods. The hot-button nature of this issue made us curious.

As we began to review the scarce literature on research methods choices for studying organizations, we uncovered a few voices suggesting that nonepistemological considerations sometimes guide the choice of research methods. For example, Buchanan and Bryman (2007) acknowledge the influence of factors such as organizational characteristics, political, ethical, and even personal considerations on choice of research methods. Dutton and Dukerich (2006) assert the importance of relationships in conducting high quality, interesting research. Clearly, researchers bring their perceptual lenses, cognitive biases, and personal beliefs to the choice of research design and methods (Creswell, 2007) that, no doubt, affect any study's design. They also bring their gender, and no one speaks the unspeakable—perhaps gender also influences choices about research design and methods.

Our interest in this topic came from a hunch and a concern—a hunch that more women than men pursue qualitative research as compared to quantitative research and a concern, if it was true, for what that means for women in our field given the up-hill struggle many scholars encounter in trying to publish qualitative research (Pratt, 2008). As we began to list informally the established qualitative researchers, many more female names than male names quickly came to mind. We also recalled Gersick et al.'s (2000) study of professional relationships in academia, in which they stated "the world of men is more inside the center of the profession and that the world of women is more outside that center" (p. 1039). In their study, Gersick and colleagues observed that men valued their professional relationships for the career building and strategizing help they received, while women rarely spoke of receiving such help from their relationships. We began to wonder about these two phenomenon: the one established by Gersick et al. (2000)—that men received instrumental career advice more often than women did—and the one we hypothesized—that females may be over represented in published studies of qualitative research. If gendering is occurring in our research methods, what social processes might be causing this? What might be the implications for how we train and educate the next generation of organizational scholars? We began to wonder and undertook an exploratory study organized around the following questions: What role does gender play in authorship of qualitative studies, and if gender does play a role, what might explain it?

Gender and publishing in the social sciences

The topic of researcher gender and its impact on research appears in the disciplines of sociology, psychology, education, social work, and gender studies, but is noticeably absent from the management literature. Two themes characterize this stream of literature in the social sciences:

(1) gender differences in research productivity; and

(2) gender differences in choice of methodology.

Sociologists and psychologists have often framed the topic of gender and publishing in the social sciences around the perceived disadvantages women researchers face in trying to publish their work. Studies in the sociology, psychology, social work, and gender studies literatures report that women academics publish less than men (Cole and Cole, 1979; Over, 1982). A variety of reasons are offered in this literature for why the quantity of publications by women, regardless of methodological type, may be less than those by men. For example, a number of authors argue that women often have unequal access to resources, such as reduced teaching loads, access to graduate assistants and research teams (Grant and Ward, 1991; Helmreich et al., 1980; Simeone, 1987; Zuckerman, 1987). Another study showed, for example, that men are more productive because they are more likely to specialize than women (Leahy, 2006). Traditional arguments also include the assertion that women face greater family demands and therefore publish less than men (Cole and Cole, 1973; Helmreich et al., 1980). Similarly, in their review of 1,400 manuscripts submitted to *Academy of Management Journal* (*AMJ*) during a three-year period, Janice Beyer et al. (1995) found that the accumulative advantage of being male and having funding resulted in more positive reviews of submissions to the journal. In general, this line of research has established that gender accounts for differences in publication rates, with mixed explanations for why that happens.

In addition to the research about researcher gender and publication rates, there has been an ongoing debate among a small group of scholars in sociology, psychology, and related disciplines focusing on whether there is a relationship between research method and gender (Grant and Ward, 1991; Leahy, 2006). This "feminist methods" (Peplau and Conrad, 1989) conversation has centered around whether women scholars who pursue feminist or gender-related research topics are more likely to use qualitative rather than quantitative methods. Early work in this area argued that because qualitative methods involve prolonged, and even emotional ties with research subjects, female researchers, who presumably have better relational skills, prefer qualitative methods (Grant et al., 1987; Stanley and Wise, 1983). Much of the "feminist methods" (e.g. Graham and Rawlings, 1980; Bernard, 1973; Cook and Fonow, 1985) argument centers around the notion that research questions about women and women's issues cannot be accurately addressed by quantitative methods that ignore the contextual complexity of organizational life. Feminist sociologists (e.g. Griffin, 1986; Stacey and Thorne, 1985) have argued that qualitative methods are more likely than other methods to correct for the male-centered view of most sociological research. Similarly, feminist psychologists (e.g. McHugh et al., 1986) argue for "sex-fair" research but as psychologists such as Peplau and Conrad (1989) point out, there is nothing inherent in qualitative methods that make them free of biases; rather "all methods can be feminist methods".

Conclusions in this literature about the relationship between gender and methods are muddied, as studies show that while women are more likely than men to use qualitative studies for studying gender issues, quantitative methods are the preferred choice for both genders (Grant and Ward, 1991; Grant et al., 1987) when studying gender issues. Further, Reinharz (1992) argued that feminist methods in social research include many different methods, including survey research and statistical research formats. Much of this literature is prescriptive and a bit dated, and proposes a philosophy or world view about how scholarship should be conducted.

As we looked at the management and organizations literature, the silence on the topic of gender and research methods was palpable. Rather, the conversation that has occurred about gen-

der in the mainstream management journals has largely focused on the inadequacies of organizational theories because of researcher inattention to the "gendering" of organizations. Feminist organization theorists [1], many of whom come from disciplines related to management, argue that organizations are gendered processes that marginalize and control women (Hatch, 2006, p. 273). From a feminist perspective, masculine attitudes and values are inherent in the definition of work (Fletcher, 1998), as well as organizational structure, processes, and language (Acker, 1992; Ferguson, 1998; Martin, 1990). Gendering of organizations results in a devalued, powerless, and underpaid female work force.

A feminist perspective in the study of organizations questions the values underlying traditional research on organizations. In books such as *Gendering Organizational Analysis* (Mills and Tancred, 1992), numerous scholars argue that gendered organizations have led to disadvantages for women at work (Acker, 1992). These scholars advocate for gendering organizational analysis, which means to account for differential processes and study organizations accordingly. Feminist organization theorists argue that traditional, gender blind approaches to organization theory have led researchers to draw erroneous conclusions about how organizations operate (Mills and Tancred, 1992).

In the last two decades mainstream management journals have included feminist critiques or re-readings of organizational phenomenon to illustrate the strikingly different conclusions that a feminist perceptual lens offers (see e.g. Ely and Padavic, 2007; Calás and Smircich, 1991; Martin, 1990; Meyerson, 1998). Calás and Smircich (1996) reviewed seven different approaches to feminist theory, including liberal, radical, psychoanalytic, Marxist, poststructuralist, and Third World. They argue that these feminist theory approaches have surfaced inquiry in the organizations literature around topics such as women-in-management, feminist organizations, women's ways of managing, and the gendering of organizing. Their only mention of research methods was to suggest that a variety of methodological approaches, quantitative, experimental, case study, and text analysis have been used across these various approaches. In reflecting on what some called "postmodernism" Calás and Smircich (1999) expressed disappointment with the progress of feminist theorizing: "despite the emphasis on gender in the women-in-management literature, most of this literature has skirted the issue of gender-specific theory development, and scholars have carried on their research agenda sustained by traditional organizational theories" (p. 650).

The gender conversation in the management literature has largely focused on theory, with little attention to methods or how gender may influence one's general approach to scholarship. One exception is a provocative article in *Journal of Management Inquiry* in 1995 by White, Jacobson, Jacques, Fondas, and Steckler in which they called attention to gendered power relationships that occur in professional meetings of organizational scientists. They chided the profession for failing to acknowledge "women's ways of knowing" (Belenky et al., 1986), for a lack of diversity among journal editors and journal topics, and argued for the need to "modify our practices of 'doing' academic knowledge" (White et al., 1995, p. 372). White and her colleagues suggested that not only are the organizations we study gendered, but that perhaps our profession, the journal review process, and approach to conducting research are gendered as well. The feminist theorists define gendered processes as "advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine" (Acker, 1992, p. 146). Could it be true that our research methods are gendered, as well? We undertook a study to explore this idea.

Building upon insights from the above literature, we specifically address the role of gender and research methods. To explore this possible relationship between gender and choice of methodology, we systematically reviewed over two decades of published articles in four top management journals. Though our interest focused on the gendering of qualitative research, we used quantitative analysis, specifically chi-square analysis, to determine statistically if the proportion of men and women engaged in qualitative or non-qualitative research differed.

Methodology

The data for this study come from articles published in *AMJ, Administrative Science Quarterly* (*ASQ*), and *Journal of Management Studies* (*JMS*) from 1986 through 2008 and *Organization Science* (*OS*) from its inception in 1990 through 2008. We chose these journals because they are mainstream and highly regarded management journals (Podsakoff et al., 2008), and each has a reputation for being selective in acceptance decisions and for publishing qualitative research. Following Locke and Golden-Biddle (1997), we wanted at least a 20-year period in order to identify patterns in authorship. We picked 1986 as a starting point because qualitative articles seemed to become more prevalent after that year. For example, Locke and Golden-Biddle (1997) identified only three qualitative articles published in *AMJ* between the years 1975 and 1985, but between 1986 and 1995 there were 18 qualitative publications. As well, we included *OS* which began in 1990 because the early editors encouraged qualitative research by calling for the use of "heretical research methods" and the study of "outliers" (Daft and Lewin, 1990, p. 6).

Because qualitative research is a wide umbrella and the qualitative/non-qualitative research divide is not absolute (Johnson et al., 2007), we followed a careful procedure for determining if an article was qualitative in nature. We first reviewed each article to determine if it was empirical and contained a description of its methodology. Special issue introductions, book reviews, essays, and editor forum articles were removed from our article and author counts. For instance, about 30 percent of *OS* and *JMS* articles did not have a methods section, and we thus considered them to be essays or conceptual articles and removed them from our counts. Of the remaining articles, we then considered if each article fit criteria provided by Locke and Golden-Biddle (2002) for selecting as a qualitative approach:

(1) the research took place in natural setting and the primary data were obtained through observation, interviewing, corporate or organizational texts or documents, and images; and

(2) conclusions were derived by working with the verbal language rather than numerical analysis.

Following Locke and Golden-Biddle (1997), we selected studies that were both wholly qualitative as well as those that included two studies—one qualitative and one quantitative. Similar to Van Maanen's survey (1998, p. xix), we included dual study articles if there was an "emphasis on the qualitative materials [2]".

Finally, we reviewed each article to determine its fit with traditional qualitative research design approaches. Published categories of qualitative research designs (Creswell, 1998; Gephart, 1999; Lee, 1998; Locke and Golden-Biddle, 1997; Suddaby, 2006; Van Maanen, 1998) include: case study (which included multiple case study designs), grounded theory, ethnography, historical analysis, participant observation, interview studies, biography, phenomenology, action

research, focus groups, and conversational or linguistic analysis. Almost all qualitative articles in our study were clearly linked to at least one qualitative research tradition. All other empirical articles that did not fit into one of the above categories of qualitative research designs, we refer to as "non-qualitative" studies. Using these guidelines, each researcher separately reviewed each issue of *AMJ, ASQ, JMS,* and *OS* and coded each study as qualitative or not. We reviewed our codes, and where we had disagreement, we reviewed the article, and made a decision as to whether to designate it as a qualitative article. Our coding procedure resulted in 621 qualitative articles, with a total of 1,188 authors (average of almost two authors per paper), as seen in Tables I and II. (A complete list of the qualitative articles is available from the authors.) A third researcher identified the gender and rank of each author. (Because *JMS* did not include biographical statements that indicated career stage, we could not identify career stage for this journal.) When this information could not be discerned from the biographical statement in the journal, she used the Internet to obtain the appropriate information. We thoroughly reviewed her coding and found and corrected very few mistakes (less than 1 percent). We also coded author gender characteristics for the 2,241 non-qualitative articles during the same years with a total of 4,965 authors (average of 2.2 authors per paper).

We put considerable thought into how to operationalize "author". We considered using only first authors, but felt that we would lose important information regarding trends in authorship for either type of method—qualitative or non-qualitative. While it is possible that using all authors may over-represent graduate assistants or marginal members of research teams who did not make the choice of methodology, we also thought that to restrict the sample to only first authors would lose valuable data regarding trends in authorship. Thus, we chose to use all the authors and conducted *post hoc* analyses to explore whether this approach skewed the results in ways that led to the over-representation of one gender or the other.

Table I. Qualitative papers: Four journals, 1986–2008 [a]

	Qualitative papers	Qualitative papers as pct. of total empirical papers	Non-qualitative papers	Total empirical papers
Academy of Management, 1986-2008	98	8%	1,169	1,267
Administrative Science Quarterly, 1986-2008	99	21%	383	482
Organization Science, 1990-2008	135	29%	335	470
Journal of Management Studies, 1986-2008	289	45%	354	643
Total papers	621		2,241	2,862
Qualitative papers as a % of total empirical papers	22		78	100

a. 22 years for all journals except *Organization Science,* which was coded from its inception in 1990 through 2008

Table II. Author gender by research methodology, all journals

Total authors	Qualitative	%	Non-qualitative	%	Total	%
Female authors	435	37	1,243	25	1,678	27
Male authors	753	63	3,722	75	4,475	73
Total authors	1,188	100	4,965	100	6,153	100
Authors as a % of total authors	19		81			
Gender × research type $\chi^2 = 64.8$, $p < 0.0001$						

Findings

Across the four journals, the percentages of total empirical publications that were qualitative have been erratic, but on somewhat of an upward trend. For the year 2008 the percentages of published empirical papers in *AMJ, ASQ, OS,* and *JMS* that were qualitative were 11 percent, 20 percent, 12 percent, and 38 percent, respectively. For more detailed analysis on overall qualitative publications trends, see Smith and Plowman (2008).

With regards to gender, our results show that of the 2,862 articles with 6,153 authors published by these four journals during our study period, 27 percent of the *AMJ, ASQ, JMS,* and *OS* authors were female (n = 1,678) and 73 percent of authors (n = 4,475) were male. Yet, when we compared the gender proportions for the qualitative articles with 1,188 authors, we found that the percentage of female qualitative authors was 37 percent (n = 435). As seen in Table II, the overall proportion of female authors for qualitative research as compared to non-qualitative research was significantly higher (χ^2 = 64.8, p < 0.0001). In Table III, our analysis shows that the gender proportions for the qualitative authors were significantly different from the expected proportions of all published authors for each journal (significant chi-square for each journal). Thus, our findings show an association between gender and type of methodology with female authors over-represented and male authors under-represented in the qualitative category as compared to overall authorship in these four journals.

When we conducted a *post hoc* analysis on our data, we found that if we used only the first author of each paper, the proportion of female researchers was slightly higher for both qualita-

Table III. Author gender by research methodology, each journal

	Qualitative	%	Non-Qualitative	%	Total	%
Academy of Management Journal, 1986-2008						
Female authors	109	50	689	25	798	27
Male authors	108	50	2014	75	2122	73
Total authors	217	100	2703	100	2920	100
Authors as a % of total	7		93		100	
Gender × research type χ^2 = 61.9, p < 0.0001						
Administrative Science Quarterly, 1986-2008						
Female authors	73	42	198	26	271	29
Male authors	101	58	578	74	679	71
Total authors	174	100	776	100	950	100
Authors as a % of total	18		82		100	
Gender × research type χ^2 = 18.8, p < 0.0001						
Organization Science, 1990-2008						
Female Authors	99	37	217	29	316	32
Male authors	166	63	521	71	687	68
Total authors	265	100	738	100	1003	100
Authors as a % of total	26		74		100	
Gender × research type χ^2 = 5.7, p = 0.019						
Journal of Management Studies, 1986-2008						
Female authors	154	29	139	19	293	23
Male authors	378	71	609	81	987	77
Total authors	532	100	748	100	1280	100
Authors as a % of total	41		59		100	
Gender × research type χ^2 = 18.9, p < 0.0001						

tive and non-qualitative publications. When we ran chi-square analyses for gender by research methods, we found the same significance level for each journal. Thus, our approach of using all authors provided a robust test of whether gender is related to methodology choice.

We assessed the trends over the study period. As presented in Figure 1, the proportion of female qualitative researchers was higher than the proportion of female non-qualitative researchers in 21 of 22 years (1995 was the exception when the percentage was even). As well, the proportion of female non-qualitative researchers remained steady in the mid-20 percent range of total non-qualitative authors; the proportion of female qualitative research, while initially volatile in our study period, remained steady in the high 30 percent range, never dipping below 30 percent since 1995.

Career stage can influence the choice of research projects (Frost and Taylor, 1996). Given the findings of Gersick et al. (2000) about the difference in career advice that men and women receive from professional relationships, we were interested in patterns in publication strategies by career stage. We investigated the career stage of the 656 qualitative researchers in the three journals (*AMJ, ASQ,* and *OS*) that provided detailed biographical data on authors. We categorized each author using four categories:

(1) doctoral student (and other positions without an earned PhD);

(2) assistant professor (or other positions indicating lower or untenured academic rank);

(3) associate professor; and

(4) full professor.

We coded the stage of career for the 656 authors, using his or her stated rank at time of publication. In Table IV, we compared gender by career stage for the 656 qualitative authors and identified a pattern wherein female authors at early career stages accounted for 53 percent of all qualitative authors, compared to 39 percent for male qualitative authors at early career stage (χ^2 = 11.8, $p < 0.01$). Thus, female qualitative authors were publishing earlier in their careers than their male counterparts.

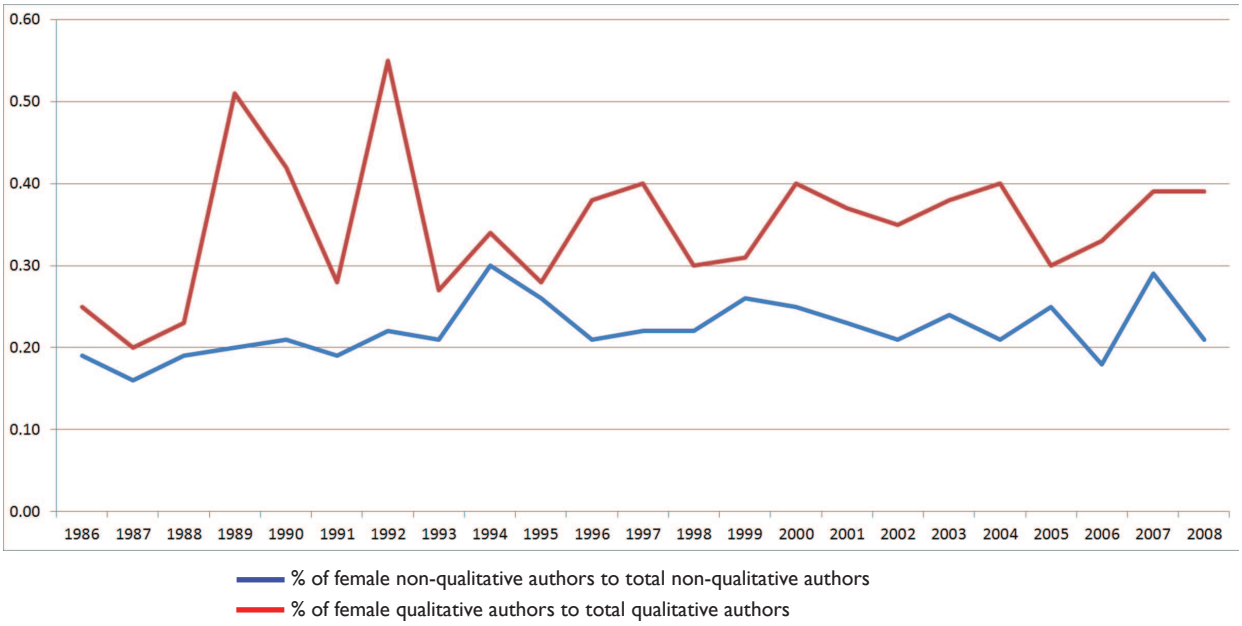

Figure 1. Proportion of female authors for all journals by methodology

Table IV. Qualitative researcher career stage, by gender, all journals except *Journal of Management Studies*

	Female	%	Male	%	Total	%
Doctoral student or consultant (without PhD)	30	11	35	9	65	10
Assistant professor or reader (untenured positions)	118	42	112	30	230	35
Associate professor	66	23	82	22	148	23
Full professor	67	24	146	39	213	32
Total qualitative authors in *AMJ, ASQ, OS*	281	100	375	100	656	100
Comparison of early career stage vs. later career stage by all authors						
Early-stage authors (doctoral students or assistant professors)	148	53	147	39	295	45
Later-stage authors (associate or full professors)	133	47	228	61	361	55
Total qualitative authors in *AMJ, ASQ, OS*	281	100	375	100	656	100
Career stage × gender $\chi^2 = 11.8$, $p < 0.01$						

Discussion

We began this study with a desire to know more about who is publishing qualitative research and to pursue our hunch that this choice of methodology tends to attract more women than men. From our multi-year, multi-journal data, we identified a pattern: females are over-represented in published qualitative research as compared to their proportion in non-qualitative research. Further, we found evidence that female qualitative authors tend to be at early career stages, such as doctoral students and assistant professors, while male qualitative authors were at later stages in their careers. Why would this be? Why might these differences in publication strategies be occurring? Why would it be the case that women seem to be more drawn to "heretical research methods" (Daft and Lewin, 1990, p. 6) than men? Are we observing the gendering of research methods or could there be some other explanation? We looked for systematic theoretical explanations and reviewed the literature to help interpret our findings. We developed possible explanations around three theoretical themes:

(1) information processing;

(2) connected knowing; and

(3) social identity.

Information processing perspective

The first possible explanation for our findings grows out of an information processing perspective, which argues that males and females, for any number of reasons, may process information differently. The information processing literature includes a number of empirical studies showing significant differences in how males and females process information. Some of these reported findings include:

- women tend to be more accurate than men in decoding non-verbal cues (Rosenthal and DePaulo, 1979);
- the language of females reflects an interpretive mode that is more subjective and evaluative compared to the language of males, which reflects a narrow concentration on readily available and objective states (Haas, 1979; Kiecker et al., 2000); and

- females use a broader scope of information than males (Meyers-Levy, 1989; Silverman, 1970).

In studies of gender differences in response to advertising claims, studies have shown males to be somewhat detail-insensitive processors relative to females (Meyers-Levy and Maheswaran, 1991; Meyers-Levy and Sternthal, 1991). This literature has also shown that males tend to use a single, highly available cue or cues and women respond to more subtle cues and try to incorporate all available cues (Kiecker et al., 2000) when processing information. While there is a substantial literature around gender differences in information processing styles, considerable disagreement also exists about this line of research. Psychologists such as Hyde (2005), Hyde and Plant (1995), Epstein (1988), and others have found claims of differences between the genders to be to be overstated and inaccurate—that is, the differences are usually small (Spelke, 2005) and often do not account for context, stereotyping, etc. (Hyde, 2005).

Successful qualitative research, in particular, grounded theory, requires unique information processing abilities in order to make constant comparisons, collect data and analyze it simultaneously, create categories that "may have 'subcategories' and associated 'dimensions' and 'properties', which are gradually elaborated and refined as specific incidents are examined, systematically coded, and compared" (Langley, 1999, p. 700). The inductive nature of qualitative research "involves researchers working back and forth between the themes and the database until they establish a comprehensive set of themes" (Creswell, 2007, p. 39). Thus, the information processing task for qualitative researchers involves attending to multiple items at one time—data and theory, collection and analysis, themes and sub-themes. Further, the data collected in qualitative studies have characteristics identified by Langley that make them hard to analyze and manipulate: they deal with ambiguous events, involve multiple units and levels of analysis, are temporally imprecise, and are eclectic (Langley, 1999, p. 692).

People are often drawn to tasks they understand and with which they are comfortable. Qualitative research is bound to attract people whose information processing abilities include interpretive abilities, paying attention to multiple cues, considering broad categories of information, etc. To the extent that women possess these information processing skills more than men do, it is possible that women will more often choose qualitative methodologies than quantitative research methodologies. The information processing argument offers one possible theoretical interpretation of our finding that women are over-represented in authoring qualitative research, under-represented in publishing non-qualitative research, and men are under-represented in publishing qualitative research. However, this argument is limited in that men as well as women are drawn to qualitative research. We found two other explanations to be more useful.

Separate vs. connected knowing

One plausible explanation for the over-representation of women in qualitative research has its roots in a feminist or "women's voice" perspective, which suggests that men and women often do not come to "know" things in the same way. Early feminist scholars criticized accepted models of human development and learning, because these models grew out of studies conducted exclusively by men with only male subjects. For example, the theories of Piaget (1965) and Kohlberg (1981) regarding the development of moral reasoning grew out of studies conducted by men using only boys and men as subjects. These male-only studies generated

the concept of a "morality of rights", in which individuals resolve moral dilemmas by relying on abstract rights and principles that they apply impartially to conflict situations. However, when studies of moral development included females as subjects rather than males, scientists observed stark differences. For example, Gilligan (1982) observed that women tend to operate with a "morality of responsibility and care", requiring an understanding of the setting and the context in order to resolve moral dilemmas. In resolving moral issues, men prefer distance from the moral conflict while women prefer to know the other's perspective before determining what's moral.

In another landmark "women's voice" study, Belenky et al. (1986) articulated "women's ways of knowing" that identify differences in epistemological orientation according to gender. Based on interviews with 135 women from various economic backgrounds and diverse situations, the authors observed two epistemological orientations: separate knowing vs. connected knowing, depending on the relationship the knower has with the object to be known. People who are separate knowers maintain distance from the object of knowing, they use doubt and suspicion to develop arguments, all the while maintaining personal distance from the object and the argument. Separate knowers learn the standards of authorities and apply those standards with rigor and dispassion to the object they are trying to know, seeking to exclude their own concerns while attempting to influence the listener's reactions. Much like the morality of rights approach to resolving moral conflicts, separate knowing relies on disinterested reason. Connected knowers, on the other hand, have a more intimate relationship with the object of knowing, believing that knowledge that can be trusted comes from personal experience rather than from authorities. Connected knowers find ways to gain access to other people's knowledge and ways of thinking. Connected knowing requires patience as the knower seeks to understand the object's perspective (e.g. what is the author trying to say, what was happening to the author at the time that would lead to a particular text). At the heart of the connected knower's way of knowing is trust that the other person has something useful to say, that knowledge can be gained by listening. Belenky et al. (1986) conclude that connected knowing often represents women's way of knowing, while separate knowing more often characterizes the male way of knowing.

Qualitative research has many of the characteristics of connected knowing, where non-qualitative research resembles separate ways of knowing. In qualitative research, the researcher has a more intimate relationship with the data. In most cases, the words in the transcripts were spoken by people the researcher spent many hours interviewing. The words of a transcript are the data, but lack meaning without the researcher's theoretical lens or mental framework. Words are understood in a context, in a setting, in relationship to other words, to other ideas, to other theories. Researchers develop coding schemes, read and re-read texts, and identify patterns. As rigorous as qualitative researchers can be in their analysis, their way of discovering and learning about the phenomenon of interest depends on the type of connected knowing that Belenky et al. (1986) describe. In contrast, non-qualitative research resembles the separate knowing described above, in which the researcher, from a distance, applies a set of statistical procedures and infers meaning—likely the same meaning that other researchers applying the same set of statistical procedures would infer. The knower and the object to be known are separate from each other.

If, in fact, women tend toward connected knowing as the women's voice literature suggests, one explanation for the over-representation of women in qualitative research is that the

steady increase of women entering the academy [3] has encouraged another way of knowing—"connected knowing". This explanation, of course, could be confounded with the journals, at the same time, becoming somewhat more receptive to qualitative methods.

Social identity perspective

A third theoretical explanation for the over-representation of women in qualitative research comes from the social identity literature. According to social identify theory, people categorize themselves and others into various social categories such as gender, age, organizational membership, religion, etc. (Tajfel and Turner, 1985) and most people consider themselves part of more than one group. Social identification "is the perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human categories" (Ashforth and Mael, 1989, p. 21). To identify with a group a person perceives himself or herself as psychologically intertwined with that group and experiences the success and failures of the group (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Individuals identify with a group in part based on how distinctive the group is, that is, in a social context people identify with those with whom they share characteristics that are relatively rare in that context (McGuire, 1984; Mehra et al., 1998).

A basic assumption of social identity theory is that people have a need to achieve and maintain a favorable self-image and will identify with groups, in part based on the prestige of the group. From this perspective, people prefer in-group interactions to out-group interactions. However, when there are clear prestige differences between groups, it is difficult for members of low-prestige groups to maintain positive in-group distinctiveness and hence find in-group interactions less attractive (Ely, 1994; Hinkle and Brown, 1990). Under these circumstances members of low-status groups may engage in personal self-enhancing strategies, such as disassociating themselves from members of their group. Further, identification with a group can arise even in the absence of interaction and still have a powerful impact on behavior (Ashforth and Mael, 1989).

Women in academia may consider themselves not only part of the social group called "women" but also part of the group called "professors", "baby-boomers", "mid-Westerners", and "authors" (and there are others). The social groups with which women academics identify help shape an identity and self-image and help answer the question Who am I? (Ashforth and Mael, 1989) as a professional. Consider for a moment the group "author" with which aspiring women academics identify. Our analysis shows that during our study period, men outnumbered women as authors in *AMJ, ASQ, OS,* and *JMS* by over 2.5 to 1, placing women in what social identity theory would call a low-status group. However, the status of women is quite different among the category of authors called "qualitative authors". In this group, not only are women more visible but they maintain high status. For example, in the first decade of our study, the two most highly cited qualitative studies in *AMJ* were single authored by women—Gersick (1988) and Eisenhardt (1989). Also, in the period 1986-1991, four of the six best *AMJ* articles were awarded to authors of qualitative papers, and the authorship of these four papers was dominated by women. The four papers had six authors, one of which was male (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991; Gersick, 1989; Isabella, 1990; Sutton and Rafaeli, 1988). Further, because this visibility of female qualitative authors occurred early in the periods we studied, it may be that a primacy effect occurred with frequent reference to those female names. For example, in two different commentaries, one by Lee (2001) and the other by Gephart (2004), the studies presented as ex-

emplars all have female authors. Below are statements that appeared in *AMJ* "From the Editors" essays in 2001 and 2004 (emphasis indicating female name or pronoun is added).

> AMJ's editors are proud of our long-term commitment to publishing outstanding qualitative research. In the 1980's, for example, *Eisenhardt* and colleagues' classic qualitative work was published in the Journal; *her* 1989 work and *her* 1988 collaboration with Bourgeois are representative, as is *Gersick's* 1989 award-winning article on time and transitions. In the next decade AMJ published outstanding qualitative research by *Rafaeli* and *her* associates; this work included *Rafaeli* and Sutton's 1991 publication and a 1997 article by *Rafaeli, Dutton, Harquail* and *Mackie-Lewis.* In the current decade, we continued our long-standing goal of publishing the highest-quality qualitative studies with the 2000 publication of *Gersick, Bartunek,* and *Dutton's* piece on academic careers. (Lee, 200l, p. 215)

> The coveted AMJ Best Article Award has been won by three qualitative papers—Gersick (1989), Isabella (1990), and Dutton and Dukerich (1991) and by one paper that combined qualitative and quantitative methods: Sutton and Rafaeli (1988). (Gephart, 2004, p. 454)

It is rare that so many attributions of outstanding scholarship in our field are made to so many women, and in such disproportion relative to men, in such a short space. The names Gersick, Isabella, Eisenhardt, Rafaeli, Dutton, and Dukerich may have become synonymous with qualitative research, lending it status for women aspiring to be *AMJ, ASQ*, *OS,* or *JMS* authors. The successes of these women are shared by others who belong to the social group called female academics, and offer a more positive self-image for female academics than the failures that female academics may perceive via their lack of representation in non-qualitative articles. To identify with a social group is to share the successes and failures of members of that group.

Social identity theory probably does not explain completely the findings in our study, in part because "one's identity is an amalgam of loosely coupled identities [...] the popular notion of the self-concept as a unified, consistent, or perceptually 'whole' psychological structure is ill-conceived" (Ashforth and Mael, 1989, p. 30) quoting Gergen, (1968, p. 306). However, it is an additional powerful theoretical lens through which to interpret our findings.

Conclusions

Our study identified a pattern of women pursuing qualitative research in greater proportions than would be expected given the patterns of publication by gender for *AMJ, ASQ, OS,* and *JMS* as a whole. Women are over-represented and men are under-represented as authors of qualitative articles. Further, women have been publishing qualitative research earlier in their careers than have men. Our attempt to explain these findings focused around three possible theoretical perspectives.

The information processing perspective is a theoretical lens that offers one possible, but inadequate explanation, suggesting that there may be informational processing skills inherent in being female, or inherent in being socialized as a female that are different from the information skills inherent in being male or in being socialized as a male. A second explanation—from the ways of knowing perspective—offers more explanatory power. Given the contextual nature of qualitative research, researchers who pursue this method must rely on connected knowing more so than separate knowing. The final explanation— social identity perspective—suggests that the early successes of a number of female qualitative researchers (Gersick, Eisenhardt, Rafaeli, Isabella, Dutton, and Dukerich) gave other women in the field "virtual mentors" who became guideposts and highly visible representations of scholarly success. Perhaps these early "virtual mentors" provided an indirect and unintended publication and career guidance strategy for

aspiring women academics. While the patterns we observed of gender differences in the proportion of qualitative authorship are clear and warrant further investigation, we note the limitations, also of our study. Our findings are based on the empirical review of articles of four leading journals—*AMJ, ASQ, JMS,* and *OS.* While anecdotal evidence suggests our findings would hold up in a review of other journals, we cannot conclude that from this study. We recognize the irony of conducting a quantitative analysis on qualitative publication trends. Yet, the patterns we identify in this paper are provocative and require further study. While raising issues of gender might seem controversial, our findings made us think about why men and women might choose different methodologies. For a more in-depth understanding of these trends, future research should include interviews with highly published qualitative researchers—males and females—to look for differences in why men and women pursue qualitative research. Clearly, attention to how and where researchers receive their training warrants consideration as well. The findings from our study may provide additional evidence that women are being socialized into this profession differently from men. Do women rely on and receive different types of advice regarding publication strategies than do men? Are the patterns we observed here a result of the lack of career strategizing type of advice that Gersick et al. (2000) reported that women receive? Regardless of the socialization processes that may or may not be occurring in graduate schools, one result of the increased numbers of qualitative papers appearing in *AMJ, ASQ, OS,* and *JMS* is that it has resulted in a high-level visibility for female scholars, which can only be a good thing for aspiring female academics. If the intention in including journal space for qualitative research has been to increase the diversity in acceptable methodologies, a by-product has been an increased diversity, at least by gender, in authorship.

Notes

1. Feminist theory as described by Karlene Roberts (1990) is theory that "challenges functionalist assumptions, particularly those that disproportionately serve the interests of men. Feminist theory seeks a fuller understanding of both overt and suppressed gender conflict [... it] reveals how female interests have been subordinated to those of males, with the ultimate goal of eradicating that subordination and transforming relations between men and women" (p. 339).
2. If two studies were equally weighted in one article and one was qualitative and the other quantitative, we coded the article as a qualitative study. However, if the article contained two studies (one qualitative, one quantitative) but the qualitative project was clearly ancillary and tangential to the quantitative study (e.g. interviews to develop a survey), we coded the article as non-qualitative. Only a very few articles fell into this latter category.
3. The AACSB report entitled "Business School Faculty Trends 2008" reports a steady increase in women faculty in business in the last five years: from 24.2 percent of full-time faculty in 2002–2003 to 26.5 percent of full-time faculty in 2006–2007.

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Further reading

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Donde Ashmos Plowman (BA, Southern Methodist University; PhD, the University of Texas at Austin) is Dean of the College of Business Administration at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Her research focuses on organizational change, leadership, decision making, and interpretation among top and middle managers in complex organizations. Her research has been published in *Academy of Management Journal, Academy of Management Review, Organization Science, Leadership Quarterly, Decision Sciences, Journal of Operations Management,* and other academic journals. Her qualitative study on emergent radical change was awarded the *Academy of Management Journal* Best Paper Award for 2007.

Anne D. Smith (BS, McIntire School of Commerce, University of Virginia; MBA and PhD, Kenan-Flagler Business School, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) is the Flaskerud Professor in Business, Director of PhD Program in Organizations & Strategy, and Associate Professor of Management at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Her research focuses on issues related to strategy-making processes, gender and management, qualitative methodology processes, and middle manager sensemaking. Much of her research has used a qualitative, interpretative approach to understand how managers make sense of their organizational processes. Her research has been published in *Organization Science, Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice, Journal of Management Inquiry, Journal of Operations Management, European Management Journal, Journal of High Technology Management Research, Journal of Business Research,* and other academic journals. She currently serves on the editorial board of *Organizational Research Methods.*

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Commentary on: "The gendering of organizational research methods: Evidence of gender patterns in qualitative research"
by Donde Ashmos Plowman and Anne D. Smith

Fiona Wilson • *Why should gender influence research design?*

Karen Locke • *Looking for what we have a case of*

Albert J. Mills • *Madness in their methods: Gender blindness as discursive effect*

Why should gender influence research design?

Fiona Wilson
Business School, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK

Introduction

The provocative question that this paper addresses is "Does gender influence choice of research design so that females are more likely to choose qualitative methods?" It is relatively easy to see why the authors (Donde Ashmos Plowman and Anne D. Smith) might have had a hunch that this could be the case. It may be because men and women researchers are seen as different. But is this simply a stereotype?

The stereotype of the male and female researcher

Though the author(s) do not argue this, there may be a stereotype at work where female researchers are seen to be different to male researchers; this stereotype can be found in the literature on research methods. Male researchers have been perceived as adopting "the methods of the male-stream" (Griffin, 1986) involved in quantitative research that produces "hard data" ensuring objectivity, neutrality, precision in quantification, rigor and allowing valid predictions. Conversely women are portrayed as being drawn to the "softer" qualitative methods. Indeed some researchers have argued that women have an especial affinity for qualitative methods because these approaches embody qualities stereotypically associated with feminine social roles: empathy, evocation of emotion, establishment of rapport and relatively intense, egalitarian relationships with informants (Bernard, 1985; Stanley and Wise, 1983). However, qualita-

tive methods can be seen as more subjective, less "robust". Further, objectivity and rationality are seen as masculine traits where as subjectivity and personal experience are feminine ones (Kelly, 1978). As women are seen as lesser in much research on perception of gender (Pheterson *et al.*, 1971; Deaux and Taynor, 1973; Heilman, 2001) and techniques associated with men are accorded greater prestige and worth (Grant *et al.*, 1987), it is not surprising that women and "weaker" research methods may be linked. The problem with arguments such as this which polarize men and women and emphasise difference between them is that women are stereotyped as "lesser" and these arguments legitimize social inequality. This polarization the sexes is also found in statements such as the following – a women who thinks "scientifically or objectively is thinking 'like a man'; conversely a man pursuing a non-rational argument is arguing 'like a woman'" (Keller, 1985, p. 77). Stereotypes such as these should be resisted and we must be wary of unwarranted scientific justifications of male pre-eminence and privilege, particularly those that discredit qualitative research.

Responding with some further questions

My response to the author's provocative question would be to pose these three question "Why should gender influence research design?" If as Peplau and Conrad (1989) argue all methods can be feminist methods, and quantitative methods are the preferred choice for both genders and articles about gender and sex roles are actually more likely to use quantitative methods (Grant and Ward, 1991; Grant *et al.*, 1987) why would one argue that qualitative research is favored by females? And why would not male qualitative researchers also have empathy, evocation of emotion, establishment of rapport and relatively intense and egalitarian relationships with informants? My own choice of qualitative research methods is motivated by a wish to gain an in-depth understanding, to go behind the numbers that demonstrate women's disadvantage in organizations (e.g. unequal proportions of women in senior management or inequity in pay) to examine the social processes that lead to it and maintain it. This means asking how the inequity has developed, what maintains it and whose interests are served by inequity. That can require a mixture of research methods. The methods of traditional science and quantification are not adequate in themselves, in my view, and can be complemented by descriptive qualitative research. While I might argue for the benefits of qualitative research there may have been a systematic association being made between gender and methods.

Has there been a systematic association between gender and methods?

On page 1 the authors argue that "we do not speak of gender as a factor that influences the tools we use to study". However, the question of whether or not there is a systematic association between gender and methods has been investigated before, for example in sociology (Mackie, 1985; Grant *et al.*, 1987) and in psychology (Carlson, 1972). The paper on which I am commenting systematically reviews Organization and Management journals examining three mainstream North American highly regarded journals published between 1986 and 2008 (*AMJ*, *ASQ*, *Organization Science*) and another British-based journal (*JMS*) from its inception in 1990-2008. The research in this paper chooses a quantitative research method, counting the numbers of qualitative papers and authors. Only 22 percent of the published empirical articles in this study of the four journals were described as qualitative. For each journal more than twice (2.5:1) the number of

males than females were authors and the overall proportion of female authors for qualitative research as compared to non-qualitative research was significantly higher. Further female qualitative researchers tended to be at earlier career stages than the males. There appears then to be an association between gender and methods.

Why the systematic association?

The reasons behind the figures are not researched but the authors do discuss what they might be. They discuss how the results may have come about because males and females may process information differently but then males and females are drawn to qualitative research. Alternatively women may have a different way of "knowing". However, as noted, we should beware of stereotypes that draw on male and female difference, though we do need to clarify the psychological, biological and social cultural determinants of male and female behavior. A third and final explanation is that successful female authors who have published qualitative research in these top journals became "virtual mentors" to those women who followed. But is this equally the case for men? Perhaps these results tell us more about the bias in the journals as well as that women are more likely to be found concentrated at the bottom of academic organizational hierarchies.

Questions for further research

The authors are also keen to know what might explain why women might be more likely to be involved in qualitative studies. The paper touches on other provocative questions such as do male academics receive more help than female ones (Gersick *et al.*, 2000). This would be an interesting question for further research.

There are other interesting research questions that may form the focus of further research and which lie behind the author's quantitative research in the more qualitative research questions, such as why individuals might be drawn to qualitative rather than quantitative research method (e.g. do they dislike numbers or statistics), whether top-quality journals are biased against qualitative methods, or as the paper acknowledges, why it is such a struggle to publish qualitative research (Pratt, 2008). It is easy to argue that one reason for the bias in favor of quantitative research could be because a finding or a result is more likely to be accepted as a fact if it is quantified (expressed in numbers) than if it is not. For example, there is little or no scientific evidence to support the well known "fact" that on man in ten is homosexual yet most of us are happy to accept uncritically such simplified, reductionist and incorrect statements so long as they contain at least one number (Black, 1994; Greenhalgh and Taylor, 1997).

Some final thoughts

If we accept that women are more likely to use qualitative methods, one reason not discussed in the paper may be because feminists have questioned the scientific method as being the best tool for capturing the human experience in general and women's experiences in particular (Harding, 1986; Oakley, 1988; Peplau and Conrad, 1989). All research is value laden (Myrdal, 1969). Science is influenced by the values and beliefs of its practitioners and since scientists have been predominantly white-middle-class males, it is not surprising that the scientific method,

which is taught as the method and practice of objectivity is replete with andocentric and sexist biases (Denmark *et al.*, 1988; McHugh *et al.*, 1986). These biases have gone largely undetected and the scientific method continues to be seen as an objective exercise (Campbell, 1995). Yet science is not objective and value free and objectivity is a value in itself. Further it could be argued that the standard of objectivity serves to separate the detached and knowing observer from the individuals subject to analysis, thus reinforcing the power of the researcher. Some researchers (both men and women) may aim to reduce unequal power relations and so may choose qualitative methods. We should avoid the equation that female equals feminist and male equals non-feminist (Peplau and Conrad, 1989).

It would be safer to argue that it is not gender that determines choice of qualitative or quantitative methods. Both genders use both methods. The type of research question posed, or other factors (Yin, 1994) will determine methods; the paper acknowledges this. It may be that quantitative research, due to its assumed objectivity and rigor may not need to be justified as much as qualitative methods. We need to continue to question the dominant intellectual tradition that is inclined to treat quantitative research as having objectivity, rigor and other attributes that qualitative research methods are seen to lack. We especially need to be wary of stereotypes which undermine the credibility of qualitative research.

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About the author

Fiona Wilson is Professor of Organizational Behavior and currently Head of Management at the University of Glasgow in Scotland. She has also been employed at the University of St Andrews, Bradford Management Centre and Manchester Business School. Her current interests are focussed mainly on gender relations at work and disadvantage. Fiona Wilson can be contacted at: f.m.wilson@glasgow.ac.uk

Looking for what we have a case of

Karen Locke
Mason School of Business, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, USA

Drawing on quantitative analyses, Donde Plowman and Ann Smith have culled through 2,862 articles published in selective mainstream management journals over more than two decades pursuing a hunch that women appear more likely than men to be involved in qualitative research. And, through this empirical exercise they have obtained some statistically significant relationships. In these journals, proportionately more women author qualitative studies and more do so during their early careers. The question is "what are these relationships a case of" – that is, from what class of phenomena are they drawn and what can they tell us about the processes in this class of phenomena. Plowman and Smith submit that their data represent a case of gender-based elective affinity with qualitative research. And they invoke the concept of social identification to describe its possible process: specifically, within the context of the management academy where female authors are in the minority they argue their findings instantiate women seeking membership in a professional group in which gender is positively distinguished. Even so, I am not sure.

The question, "what is this a case of", is, of course, Howard Becker's, as is the enjoinder that as researchers we should pose this question of what it is that our studies point to again, and again, and again, cycling repeatedly between ideas and expanding data to crystallize and refine

our conclusions (see Ragin, 1992, p. 6). At the heart of his point is the relationship between data and the insights that might be drawn from them. Furthermore, as my colleagues and I have argued, understanding is grown over time in a layered process in which observations are made, hunches occur, ideas are developed, tried out, set aside and so on creating not only the opportunity for refinement but also for a shift in perspectives. Productive analytic processes are ones in which prevailing ideas about what might be happening are upended, disrupted and transformed over time (Locke *et al.*, 2008).

So, where are we with respect to what Plowman and Smith's data signifies? We are not sure. Given its narrowness, really all we know is that gender-based patterns do exist in qualitative research publications in management and organization studies journals. After all, their data are the authorship of achieved publications in selective journals. There is thus some distance between achieved publications and the social transactions through which research preferences are developed, studies are shaped and articles are crafted, developed and advanced through the publication process. The data presented in their article do not directly access these phenomena. With respect to the particular data of the current study, then, I wonder if any compelling explanation lies beyond its reach. That said, the obtained relationships are nevertheless intriguing, and they do beg the question of what exactly they express and how that "what" might be accomplished.

To satisfy these questions, and move beyond their bare bones findings, however, we need more data and more cycles of generating and trying out ideas against them. For example, on the issue of what exactly their data express, instead of their data pointing to the development of gendered research preferences, what if we took a different perspective on it and considered it a case of gender-based publication success. For example, Plowman and Smith think about authorship in the context of all empirical publications in their sample, what if, instead, we consider the authorship data against membership in the management and organization studies community? According to AACSB International (2010), in 2009-2010 in US business schools approximately 37 percent of assistant professors were women (and according to Plowman and Smith's data, this career stage is when most of these qualitative publications are achieved). Additionally, membership in the Academy of Management over the last seven years has been at approximately 37 percent women. [This is among members who choose to report demographic data. I am grateful to AOM membership services office for sharing these statistics.]

So, perhaps female and male authorship of successful qualitative publications in management and organization studies is proportionate to their representation in the business school professoriate, whereas female authorship of successful quantitative publications is underrepresented! Perhaps Plowman and Smith have a case of gendered research achievement in quantitative approaches. Again, I am not sure. But, I do know that they do not yet have a satisfying perspective on what their data are a case of, that the quantitative analysis they pursued would befit from more and more refined structural data, and that ongoing transformation of understanding through continued interaction with both quantitative and qualitative data and ideas is central to settling on what their data are a case of.

Recognizing the need for more data, in their article's conclusion, Plowman and Smith call for further interrogation of their study's findings with a qualitative approach setting up a broader research strategy in which qualitative and quantitative data might be used complementarily (Hammersley, 1996). They suggest that it would be useful to conduct "in depth" interviews with highly published qualitative researchers to get closer to what is happening on the ground to

generate the patterns expressed in their findings, for example, by exploring differences in socialization, publication advice and career guidance. Certainly, interview qualitative data might be helpful to shed light on the associations indicated by any quantitative data. But, what form of interview data?

One option might involve shaping up their data theoretically. If the authors continue to believe that their findings represent a case of social identity, they might draw on an interview-based approach to generate the data that would allow them to test out this assumption. For example, perhaps they could develop a theoretical sample (cf. Glaser and Strauss, 1967) of early and late career researchers and interview them about their projects. They might compose a structured interview guide whose questions enable responses to be categorized according to predefined codes indicative of their social identity explanation. For instance, they might ask about specific professionally relevant social groups with which their respondents did and did not identify, the presence and gender of mentors (real and symbolic), peer relationships, perceived power and influence and so on. This would be a theoretically constrained qualitative approach in the hypothetico-deductive tradition. And, such heavily theoretically shaped data would provide some insight in to whether or not the gender patterning represents a case of social identity.

A different interview-based approach (and one that Plowman and Smith appear to be signaling they are inclined to pursue) would attempt to bring more understanding to the established gender pattern by organizing data collection in a more open-ended way, working inductively or abductively. Again, pursuing a theoretical sampling strategy, they might invite interview participants to tell the story of how they came to pursue or bring to publication given research projects. For instance, with respect to participants' dissertation research, Plowman and Smith could explore and map out their processes: what were the motivations and considerations involved in their disposition to pursue their projects; who were the people who left their mark on their research enterprise, particular manuscripts and their careers in one way or another and how did they do this; what institutional enablers and barriers did they encounter (such as the range of research methods courses offered, the availability of senior faculty members who themselves use qualitative research) and what actions flowed from them; and so on. By moving forward with less theoretical constraint, Plowman and Smith could obtain data that would enable them to develop a more grounded explanation for what contributes to the gendering of research in the management academy.

While data from any one of the above qualitative approaches will bring in a broader range of data to interact with and take the researchers further in understanding what is going on in the gendering of research, such data would be limited in a number of ways. First, none of the data generated through the above projects would take into account the interpretive dimension of social reality. Actions are meaningful and we need to appreciate the webs of significance (Geertz, 1973) in which the gender patterning of research occurs. What meaning do actors assign to their own and others' actions that are consequential to successfully pursuing research? Are there different frames and meaning structures that men and women bring to bear in their conversations and deliberations about their possible research projects? And if so, what might they be? What feelings are associated with these frames? What institutional meanings relevant to the choice and prosecution of research approaches operate in the management academy?

Second, the above potential qualitative projects rely on interview data whereas explanations of how social action comes to be patterned in particular ways often expand beyond and lie outside the accounts that research participants themselves provide (Hammersley, 1989). Indeed one of the

major warrants for generating data through the ethnographic mode of participant observation is to be able to learn things that insiders do not themselves see – often because they are so taken for granted (Stewart, 1998). Without also gathering observations of everyday interactions, then, it is difficult to identify ordering elements and dynamics outside participants' focal awareness.

Third, related to this, while the above proposed data gathering designs will certainly identify factors that contribute to gendering, they likely will not help us to understand how such factors work on the ground to accomplish the observed gendered patterns. They will not help us understand how they work in practice.

In order to generate data that will yield "thick descriptions" to use the phrase Geertz invoked – and which appears ubiquitously in published qualitative studies – Plowman and Smith would need to learn the particulars of scholars "constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to" in the contexts in which they were made (Geertz, 1973, p. 9). They would need data that describe action within the institutional and cultural context in which it takes place and that relates the thoughts, emotions and intentions associated with those actions. Such data would bring together both cultural and institutional context and also the everyday talk and interaction (which both draws on and produces that context), to describe the gendering of research both from the top down and bottom up (Holstein and Gubrium, 2004).

From the top, then, in order to gather data on the cultural and institutional context, Plowman and Smith might want focus on the discursive elements that build and shape prevailing orientations to qualitative and quantitative research in the academy. As an illustration, Gehrardi and Turner (1987) have argued that language patterns in the social sciences have linked quantitative approaches to inquiry and data collection with a "hard" view of the world while qualitative approaches have been connected with a "soft" view and that such distinctions connote the former as masculine and the latter as feminine – and a lower order of social science activity. They reflected this argument in their monograph's title "Real men don't collect soft data". The point is that examining gendering in how methodological approaches are shaped in the management academy will require data on the language patterns – often unexamined – and their associated codes which shape the meaning of particular research approaches, supporting the institutionalization of particular patterns of research activity. So what are the discursive elements constituting qualitative and quantitative research that permeate the various settings making up the management and organization studies academy – courses and seminars, conferences, colloquia, department social events, job interviews, etc.? What are the terms in which qualitative research is discussed … "hard" … "soft" … "relevance" … "rigor" … "exploratory" … "thick description" … "valid" … "in depth" … "generalizable" … etc. – and what are the taken for granted and accepted cultural meanings they signify?

From the bottom up, we would need to have the data that distinguish how such terms are formulated, used and responded to in scenes of interaction that are consequential to the shaping of research sensibilities. For example, within the setting of a PhD class on, say, organizational ethics in which both qualitative and quantitative studies are examined, how do participants interact with and respond to the studies and to each other. What sentiments are operative in the discussion? This would provide us the data that describe how various constructions enter into everyday interactions and anchor and order consideration, selection and prosecution of research approaches.

This top-down/bottom-up approach to generate data from *where the action is* is really what is needed to understand the processes through which methodological orientations are built up

and find success. Plowman and Smith have an opportunity to move beyond the received view of combining qualitative and quantitative data (that is where the latter is used to validate propositions indicated by the former) to work complementarily to understand the gender pattern in their data. It may center on the processes though which research affinities are developed. It may center on the processes through which women achieve more or less publication success. It may center on something else. We simply need more cycles of more data, and more ideas.

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About the author

Karen Locke, PhD, is W. Brooks George Professor of Business Administration at the College of William and Mary's School of Business. She joined the faculty there in 1989 after earning her PhD in Organizational Behavior from Case Western Reserve University. Dr Locke's work focuses on developing a sociology of knowledge in organizational studies and on the use of qualitative research for the investigation of organizational phenomena. Her work appears in journals such as *Academy of Management Journal*, *Organization Science*, *Organizational Research Methods*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *Journal of Management Inquiry* and *Studies in Organization, Culture and Society*. She has also authored *Grounded Theory In Management Research* and co-authored *Composing Qualitative Research*, both books published by Sage. She is recipient of the 2003 Robert McDonald she has also Advancement of Research Methodology from the Academy of Management Research Methods Division. Her current work continues her interest in the processes of qualitative researching and focuses on exploring and explicating their creative and imaginative dimensions. Dr Locke has served as an Associate Action Editor for *Organizational Research Methods* and is a member of the editorial board for the *Academy of Management Journal*. She recently served on the Academy of Management Board of Governors. Karen Locke can be contacted at: karen.locke@mason.wm.edu

Madness in their methods: Gender blindness as discursive effect

Albert J. Mills
Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Canada

Introduction

"The gendering of organizational research methods" (GORM) is a fascinating read, not so much because of what it has to say but the way it says it. At first glance the paper seems to offer an account of how the adoption and use of research methods is shaped through gendered processes. This much is clear, not only from the title but also from a series of references to feminist theory, and discussion of the work of noted female organizational analysts. Indeed, if further proof was needed, the authors continually ask questions about the impact of gender on the processes of method choice and potential outcomes, reaching into the feminist literature for insights. Yet, despite these various cues, the paper has almost nothing to say on the relationship between gender and research methods. In essence, it is about the extent to which female more than male academics are likely to adopt qualitative research methods. It is an exercise in "body counting" rather than "a discussion of the social construction of gender at work" (Alvesson and Billing, 2002, p. 72).

To characterize the paper as "body counting" is not intended as a critique in itself: that has been well debated elsewhere (Alvesson and Billing, 2002; Konrad *et al.*, 2005). What has proven far more intriguing is the way that the paper manages to engage at length with feminist theories of gendered relationships while systematically managing to ignore the issues raised: this is particularly the case in terms of the paper's central question of the impact of gender on choice of research methods. At an earlier point in time Hearn and Parkin (1983) may have termed this inability to deal with gendered processes "neglect", while Wilson (1996) may have called it a form of "gender blindness",

Building on Wilson (1996), gender blindness can be defined, in large part, as an inability to recognize that cultural processes serve to construct notions of male/female, masculine/feminine, and as an inability to recognize the far-reaching implications of these processes. In developing the notion of gender blindness, Wilson (1996) provided a number of examples of how gender was generally ignored in management and organizational analysis. What she did not develop at that time was analysis of how gender blindness is created and maintained. I think the GORM paper provides us with some interesting cues and it is to that analysis that the rest of this paper will be dedicated. In the process, I am also highly interested in how certain marginalizing notions of qualitative methods are developed. Again the GORM paper will prove instructive.

Gender blindness and GORM: A discursive approach

My approach to analysis of the GORM paper—appropriately enough for a qualitative research methods journal—draws on a feminist-informed (Weedon, 1997) use of critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 1995). Viewing the GORM paper as a text (i.e. a bounded area within a field of enquiry), I ask questions about what subjectivities are constructed and privileged by the text (Foucault, 1965); what are the central elements involving the text's emplotment (White, 1985); what are the key tropes (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1999) used to construct the argument; and what types of rhetorical strategies are engaged in (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005).

GORM as text

On its own the GORM paper arguably provides an interesting example of the way that certain notions of gender and qualitative methods are utilized. It is a relatively self-contained text that affords the opportunity to explore certain processes in a bounded and limited way. However, its potential influence can be seen to rest in the fact that its speaks to and draws upon a broader research community that primarily treats gender as a variable, or some form of essential difference in the make up of men and women (Alvesson and Billing, 2002). In that regard it can be argued that the paper contributes to certain notions of gender (and qualitative methods). Thus, the text needs to be simultaneously read as operating in its own right but also as part of a broader text or discursive field. Arguably, blindness to gendered processes is reinforced through discursive forces that are reproduced through a focus on gender as variable in numerous individual texts such as GORM.

Subject positions

At least two pairs of subject positions emerge from the analysis of GORM. The central subject position (i.e. the one that is the main focus of the study) is that of the "feminist organizational scientist". From a CDA perspective, the term "subject position" is used to denote an image or idea of a type of person who is constituted by rather than focused on within the text. Clearly there are people who, at times, may refer to themselves as "organizational scientists" but there are also those who would distain such a label. It is also clear that there are females who consider themselves organizational scholars and even female organizational scholars but there are also those who would neither self-identify as female organizational scientists or as organizational scientists *per se*. In other words, the seemingly unified notion of the female organizational scientist is a discursive effect of the text (GORM) that produced it.

The female organizational scientist is introduced early in the paper:

> […] suppose female organizational scientists choose one research method more often than male organizational scientists do (p. x).

We can note here that this introduces a second, and more privileged subject position, the "male organizational scientist", who is cast as the norm, or point of departure. The following quote is one of several examples that reinforce the view that the "female organizational scientist" is less privileged than the "male organizational scientist":

> Our interest in this topic came from a hunch and a concern – a hunch that more women than men pursue qualitative research as compared to quantitative research and a concern, if it was true, for what that means for women in our field given the up-hill struggle many scholars encounter in trying to publish qualitative research […] (p. x).

The quote also introduces a secondary yet important pair of subject positions – the "qualitative researcher" and the "quantitative researcher". Throughout the paper the latter is constructed as the norm or privileged position: it is the former that faces the "up-hill struggle". While qualitative research is described as "heretical research" (p. x), quantitative research is characterized as "the preferred choice for both genders […] when studying gender issues" (p. x). The authors themselves identify with "quantitative analysis, specifically chi-square analysis, to determine statistically if the proportion of men and women engaged in qualitative or nonqualitative research differed" (p. x).

Emplotment

Emplotment refers to a story's plot and the way it is structured (White, 1973). In the GORM paper, the plot centers on the "female organizational scientist" and the degree to which she uses qualitative methods. Several plot constructions serve to center this story and to make it interesting and relevant. Those plot structures include the rooting of subject positions in individual and essentialist characteristics, contrasting subject positions, the creation of drama and mystery and a (methodological) solution for solving the mystery. As I hope to demonstrate, each of these plot structures serve to obfuscate gender dynamics.

The essentialist individual

Despite numerous references to gender processes the paper primarily draws on the notion of women as essentially different from men. This can be seen in the story's opening lines:

> Suppose gender makes a difference. Suppose researcher gender influences one's choices about how to study organizations. Suppose female organizational scientists choose one research method more often than male organizational scientists do.

While the first two lines talk about gender the concluding line references females vs males. This approach is confirmed in the research design and the discussion of results. The design focuses on comparisons of female with male authors of qualitative studies in the journals of four "leading" management journals, finding:

> an association between gender and type of methodology with female authors overrepresented and male authors underrepresented in the qualitative category as compared to overall authorship in these four journals (p. x).

The point is even stronger in the discussion of results when the authors state:

> We began this study with a desire to know more about who is publishing qualitative research and to pursue our hunch that this choice of methodology tends to attract more women than men (p. x).

And where they argue that:

> One plausible explanation for the over-representation of women in qualitative research has its roots in a feminist or "women's voice" perspective, which suggests that men and women often do not come to "know" things in the same way (p. x).

This focus on essential differences arguably discourages if not inhibits the story line from taking gender processes into account: individual "gender" differences are portrayed as relatively fixed, pre-existing conditions. The potential for a focus on gender processes is further reduced by the equation of "sex" (as the basic physiological differences between males and females) and "gender" (as culturally specific patterns of behavior that come to be associated to the sexes—see Oakley, 1981). As we have seen in several examples above, references to gender are ultimately linked sex differences.

Contrasting subject positions

As argued (and exampled) above, the use of contrasts between female and male organizational scientists provides a dynamic that tends to highlight sex rather than gender difference. This is reinforced in more nuanced ways through a linking of maleness with quantitative methods and femaleness with qualitative methods. This is at its sharpest when the authors attempt to explain their findings through reference to the feminist debate around separate knowing vs connected knowing. Ostensibly about ways of knowing, the argument turns into a distinction between quantitative and qualititative research. Thus, "qualitative research has many of the characteristics of connected knowing" involving "a more intimate relationship with the object of knowing" and seeking to "find ways to gain access to other people's knowledge and ways of thinking" (p. x). Quantitative (or "nonqualitative") research, on the other hand, is viewed as having the characteristics of separate knowing, where the researcher maintains "distance from the object of knowing", maintains "personal distance from the object and the argument", and "learns the standards of authorities and applies those standards with rigor and dispassion" (p. x). It can be noted that the authors describe their own research project in terms that mirror the separate knowing approach; undertaking a quantitative study of qualitative methods (p. x); following "a careful procedure" (p. x); "thoroughly reviewing the coding of a third researcher" (p. x); etc. Likewise, one of their main conclusions links qualitative studies with feminine characteristics in the argument that:

> One plausible explanation for the over-representation of women in qualitative research has its roots in a feminist or "women's voice" perspective, which suggests that men and women often do not come to "know" things in the same way (p. x).

Drama and mystery

The MacGuffin is a term that refers to elements that move a story along without being a necessary part of the plot (Truffaut *et al.*, 1983). In this case, the MacGiffin is the authors continual reference to a gap in the literature as one of several conventions used to attract publication. Mystery is established through continual reference to the fact that the relationship between gender (viz. sex differences) and choice of research methods has not previously been considered. They suggest that while leading research methods scholars have hinted at the influence of personal characteristics on choice of research methods they have not considered gender (p. x). And,

they stress that this potential link is "noticeably absent from the management literature" (p. x). The point is attenuated through insertions of drama into the text, calling their approach "unspeakable" (p. x), challenging "conventional wisdom" (p. x), "politically incorrect" (p. x), "provocative" (p. x) and a "hot-button issue" (p. x). However, this impression was achieved by first, simplifying the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research; second, ignoring a considerable body of feminist theorizing; and third, obfuscating the difference between gender and sex. These factors, as we shall see, simultaneously involved and contributed to a blindness of gender dynamics.

Solving the puzzle

Integrally linked to the other plot structures, particularly the mystery element, is the method of solving the puzzle. In this case, the preferred solution was linked to "quantitative analysis […] to determine statistically if the proportion of men and women engaged in qualitative or non-qualitative research differed" (p. x). It is not hard to imagine how this structuring element contributed to an inattention to gender dynamics. After the introduction and discussion of methods in the first third to half of the paper, feminist theories of gender construction—with one notable exception—are not discussed again. Instead, the findings section focuses on the relative authorship of qualitative research by women compared to men. As we shall see below, the interpretation of the findings leads to a search for explanations that support the focus on comparative sex differences.

Tropes and rhetorical strategies

A trope refers to a figure of speech; a way of speaking that appears to simply explain the facts of the story but which arguably constitute those facts (White, 1985). For example, the paper's opening supposition tries to suggest that the *discovery* of the facts (i.e. that a significant number of female compared to male organizational scientists prefer qualitative methods) began as a normal scientific process of deductive investigation that started with a theory (expressed as a "hunch"). In fact it could be argued that the authors' hunch actually led to the invention (rather than discovery) of the facts through the process of selecting one or two thoughts from a field of ideas and building a story around the pursuit of those thoughts (White, 1985). The so-called facts do not stand on their own but need emplotment to make them plausible to an audience (Weick, 1995).

The central trope used by the authors to ground the story is that of normal science. Despite the claim that their "interest came from a hunch and a concern" the scientific indexing throughout overshadows any concern with anything other than scientific outcomes. Indeed, "concern," is barely used and, beyond one initial reference to the potential "up-hill battle" of female organizational researchers, become associated with scientific discovery. The following is an example: "What role does gender play in authorship of qualitative studies, and if gender does play a role, what might explain it?" (p. x).

This trope, and its underlying motivation, go some way to explaining the inattention to gender dynamics. Indeed the equation of women-female organizational scientists-qualitative research sets up a gender dynamic within the paper that is itself a powerful trope that becomes self-referential.

A third and lesser trope – irony – adds to the interplay between the other two tropes. The first example appears early on when the paper embraces Daft and Lewin's (1990, p. 6), otherwise ironic, notion of qualitative methods as "heretical research"; asking, do "women seem to be more drawn to 'heretical research methods' […] than men?" (p. x). The phrase is repeated later on. The other major reference is where the authors "recognize the irony of conducting a quantitative analysis on qualitative publication trends" (p. x). Both uses of irony, however, seem more likely to marginalize qualitative research rather than problematize all research methodologies. In the words of Haraway (2004, p. 325), irony can be "a dangerous rhetorical strategy […] because it does things to your audience that is not fair".

This leads us to rhetorical strategies or statements intended to persuade, more often by embedded references as overt pleading (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005). The main rhetorical strategies in the GORM paper include those aimed at revealing the expertise of the authors and the value of their research project and findings. Three elements are worth pointing out:

1. ignorance as confidence;
2. inclusion by association; and
3. clarification through simplification.

In the first element, the authors set out to convince the reader that there is an argument to be made for their research focus. In the process of claiming that studies of gender and research methods have not been done they overstate their case by ignoring key aspects of the literature. For example, the authors state (without citation) "we work in a profession that rarely speaks of gender" (p. x). This appears to be stated as if (a) it was a discovery of the authors because (b) no one else was making that point. They go on to say: "As we looked at the management and organizational literature, the silence on the topic of gender and research methods was palpable" (p. x). This may well be true in regard to their own narrowly focused project but ignores considerable feminist work on gender and research methods (Konrad *et al.*, 2005). The authors also claim that "The gender conversation in the management literature has largely focused on theory, with little attention to methods or how gender may influence one's general approach to scholarship" (p. x). Apart from the fact that this completely ignores almost 40 years of feminist organizational analysis (Mills and Tancred, 1992), the rhetoric reduces the literature on gender and organizations to a "conversation" and marginalizes "theory".

Perhaps uneasy about creating too much distance from feminist theorizing, the second of the rhetorical strategies associates the authors with selected but leading theorists in the field, including Acker, Calas, Ely, Ferguson, Gilligan, Martin, Reinharz, Smircich and many others. And this, for me, is the real irony of the paper because it manages to draw on a rich feminist literature without having much to say about the relationship between gendered processes and research methods. An exemplar of this irony is captured in discussion of Acker's (1992) work on gendered processes at work:

The feminist theorists define gendered processes as "advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine (Acker, 1992: 146)". Could it be true that our research methods are gendered, as well? We undertook a study to explore this idea (p. x).

Reference to Acker serves as little more than a cloak around a narrow focus on sex differences and research methods.

Finally, simplification of gender, feminist theory and qualitative methods helps to reduce the potential complexity of concerns that a focus on gender and research might usually be expected to surface. Gender is reduced to sex differences. Feminist theory is reduced to a single variant, as exemplified in a reference to Roberts (1990) as providing a definitive definition (see footnote, p. x). The selection is likely not coincidental as Robert's (1990) talks in terms of "female interests" and "relations between men and women". The recent debates about different feminisms (Calas and Smircich, 2005), that may have raised difference questions about gender and research, is completely left out of account. And the key discussion of qualitative methods also ignores well-established debates about the difference between positivist, post-positivist and post-positivist qualitative methods (Corman, 2000; Johnson and Duberley, 2000; Prasad, 2005). In the process, the authors reference forms of post-positivist qualitative research when discussing the fact that female organizational researchers are more likely to adopt qualitative methods, yet reference examples of positivist qualitative research when discussing the success of selected female researchers. Now that is an interesting "finding!"

Discursive effects

In summary, in an attempt to convince about the viability of studying gender and research methods and of, what turned out to be, very limited results, the GORM paper produced several discursive effects, including the creation and marginalization of the female organizational scientist, the qualitative researcher and gender blindness.

Analysis of the GORM paper using CDA suggests that the latter, gender blindness (by which I include studies that view gender as a variable but in a context that is motivated primarily by scientific rather than feminist concerns), is an effect of gendered influences that are embedded in ways of emploting research projects. Gender blindness is not simply a problem of inattention or distraction, to be dealt with by attention to detail. Nor is it simply a problem of discriminatory attitudes. It involves the way we are taught to structure, design and emplot research projects. Thus in arguing that gender blindness is a discursive effect does end up signaling that there is a relationship between gender and research methods after all, but not one anticipated by the GORM paper.

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Further reading

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About the author

Albert J. Mills, PhD, is Professor of Management at Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Canada. His research interests revolve around the theme of human liberation and the impact of organization on people. He has co/authored and co-edited more than 20 books, including: *Gendering Organizational Analysis* (Sage, 1992), *Gender, Identity and the Culture of Organizations* (Routledge, 2002), *Sex, Strategy and the Stratosphere: Airlines and the Gendering of Organizational Culture* (Palgrave/MacMillan, 2006) and *Business Research Methods* (Oxford University Press, 2011). Albert J. Mills can be contacted at albert.mills@smu.ca

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Authors' response to the commentaries: Too hot to handle, still

Donde Ashmos Plowman
University of Nebraska—Lincoln

Anne D. Smith
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

At almost every point in the journey of our paper, "The gendering of research methods: evidence of gender patterns in qualitative research," its focal topic seemed too hot to handle. Early on as we struggled to explain what we had found—that women are over-represented in qualitative publications and under-represented in quantitative publications—we shared our work with colleagues and asked for their impressions. The first two responses we got from male colleagues were the same: "that's easy to explain — women can't do math." We were shocked at the deeply ingrained, negative stereotypes of both women and qualitative research that this paper provoked (and continues to provoke). As much as anything, our surprise at this initial, but somewhat persistent, explanation probably spurred us on to publish our findings. Two journals chose not to send the paper out for review because it did not fit the mission of the journal; although we agreed, we also felt frustration at the narrowness of many journals' missions. Another journal rejected the paper after one review warning us not to be "too polemic." The editor eventually admitted that we could never have pleased the three reviewers because, in our words, the topic was too hot to handle. Thus, we were pleased that our paper found a home at *Qualitative Research in Organization and Management*, and we found an editor and set of reviewers who encouraged the controversial nature of our paper.

We were delighted when the editor asked us if she could send the paper out for commentaries, and offered us the opportunity to respond. Not only was our too-hot-to-handle paper going to be published but an open dialogue about our findings would ensue! As qualitative researchers and experts on gender and organizations, Karen Locke, Fiona Wilson, and Albert Mills offer three unique views on our paper and its findings.

While reviewing the commentaries, we reflected how our identities and relationship with each other are inextricably tied up in this study. During our time together on the same faculty, we forged a strong bond around issues of qualitative research and gender. We trusted each other and shared stories about our own personal journeys. Both of us graduated from strong public university PhD programs where quantitative approaches and the positivist scientific method dominated the curriculum. We were, in essence, stereotypical US PhDs in management. One of us used qualitative methods in her dissertation and the other came to it later in her career. We

have taken different personal journeys but ended up in a similar place—drawn to qualitative research. We wanted to test our suspicion that women might be more drawn to qualitative methods than men and, if so, we wanted to know why. We stepped back from the quantitative patterns to consider why female involvement in qualitative methodologies is over-represented as compared to non-qualitative methodologies. Yet, this is just the beginning of a journey of exploration—as many qualitative endeavors are. As Karen Locke points out, this is the first step in a series of investigations that are needed to tease out what our identified patterns mean. We are excited about the journey ahead. We still have much to learn about research on gender and feminist studies, but we appreciate the guidance of thoughtful commentators. We focus on three important take-aways from the commentaries:

1. What do we have a case of?
2. Avoiding stereotypes? and
3. Who is blind?

What do we have a case of?

Karen Locke correctly asks "what is this a case of?" She provides several ways to tease out and uncover more richness around this "why" question. Given our self-reflection about the commentaries about our paper, we found valence in her comments about how PhD program sentiments toward qualitative and quantitative studies may anchor selection of research approaches. Given that our PhD experiences affected our choices of methodologies, when we had the opportunity to design a strategy PhD program for our department, we purposely required a seminar in strategy process. We also actively promoted courses in qualitative methods to encourage our doctoral students toward qualitative methods. That said, a clear division in faculty attitudes toward and experience with qualitative methods still exists.

After reading Karen's commentary, we considered what else our findings might mean. First, Karen identified that 37 percent of the members of the Academy are female assistant professors. One study found that 26 percent of the faculty at AACSB-accredited schools are female (AACSB, 2007; found in Kelan and Jones, 2010, p. 27). What our patterns may be showing us is an increase in the number of women in business school faculties. This supports what we found as well; the 26 percent statistic fits with what we saw in the percent of female authorship in non-qualitative papers and the growth in the number of female faculty in business schools is in keeping with the 37 percent female authorship on qualitative papers that we observed (see Table 1 in our paper). Right now, the proportion of female management professors in business schools is still "tilted" in that women make up less than 35 percent of faculty, and female professors are still in the "out group" (Sackett and DuBois, 1991). We might expect the percent of female faculty in both types of research to increase over the next decade. Let's hope so!

A second possible explanation of our findings could be the interaction between management doctoral programs more open to qualitative methods and more women in these programs. We identified that more qualitative papers are sole-authored by women, which may be publications of dissertation research. Male faculty publish qualitative research later in their career which might reflect their roles as dissertation advisors or pursuit of different, and perhaps riskier, research questions later in their careers. We use term "riskier" in that it is acknowledged that qualitative is a more difficult road (Gephart, 2004). Thus, the path for women and men in pursuit of qualitative research may be different.

A third explanation may be that authors are able to produce more publications per quantitative data set than per qualitative data gathering effort. We know that our counts of total male authors (and males are over-represented in qualitative studies) include many of the same authors. This leveraging of data could be over-inflating the gender differences.

We cannot tease out which effects or combinations of effects may explain our article's core findings. Karen's suggestion of a different cohort study might help us see the effects of different institutions and lengths of tenure in the field. With some effort, we could identify how multiple studies from the same or sub-parts of a data set exacerbate the trends that we found between women and men; however, we do not think more quantitative work alone will answer the "a case of?" question. Karen Locke has generously laid out several qualitative approaches to help us and other researchers interested in delving into issues of gender and research methodologies. There is more work ahead to understand the patterns we observed.

Avoiding stereotypes

Some of the remarks in these commentaries, frankly speaking, made us blush. Did we really mean to exacerbate stereotypes, as Fiona Wilson suggested? The honest answer is "no" but we see how stereotypes can be inferred from our findings.

Let us be clear—more women in our data published using non-qualitative methods (1,243 women, or 74 percent of all women in our data) than qualitative methods (435 women, or 26 percent of all women in our study), so the subtext that women cannot do math needs to be dispelled! Certainly, psychology researchers of stereotype threat theory have studied female students and math performance (Nguyen and Ryan, 2008). They argue that stereotype stress related to math can lead to more processing inefficiencies and poorer performance than male students' experience. This threat, however, can be overcome with energy, effort, and experience. By the time a female doctoral student completes graduate school, having performed well on graduate admission tests, and many statistics and quantitative courses, surely this issue of math anxiety has been removed.

We should also consider stereotypes of the two main methodological approaches, although we recognize that we are potentially stepping into "hot water." We believe that we need to stop apologizing for qualitative research and instead highlight the positive stereotypical features of published qualitative research. First, qualitative research generates new theory and as Bartunek *et al.* (2006) showed, often tops the list of "most interesting" empirical research. We make this point in our paper and note that many of the *AMJ* award-winning papers are qualitative as well as being mostly written by female authors. Second, qualitative research requires the ability to connect to others in a positive way to earn the trust of organizational members. This fieldwork requires a significant time investment, but a researcher will benefit from close connection with the data, resulting in a rich story. Third, qualitative research requires a lot of time to find the story in the text as well as the theoretical contribution (Langley, 1999), but it has the potential for novel and new insights for fields of study. These are positive methodological stereotypes that might be attracting both men and women equally. We also consider stereotypical features of quantitative research using the scientific method. First, getting to the story or findings is more straightforward than with qualitative research—an alpha value is universally understood and clearly identifies the findings. Second, theory is usually clear at the outset; typically, there is no need to explore a new theory lens to understand findings. Third, presentation of quantitative re-

search has a set format, which is not the case with qualitative research (Pratt, 2009). We appreciate Fiona Wilson calling our attention to stereotypes about gender in research because it spurred us to consider stereotypes when it comes to methodologies. These stereotypes about methodologies might explain why we see the gender differences.

Who is blind?

Albert Mills accuses us of marginalizing the female organization scientist (that would be us), the qualitative researcher (that would be us), and of being gender blind. How subtle that the male commenter charges the female researchers with being blind to their own gender! Using critical discourse analysis, Mills pretends to prove through his review of the "text," the "subject positions," the "emplotment," and the "tropes," that there is no research problem; that in fact, we are the problem.

It is unfortunate that Mills attacks the authors for their (using his own words) "inability to recognize that cultural processes serve to construct notions of male/female, masculine/feminine, and as an inability to recognize the far-reaching implications of these processes." Our analysis of author trends in 20 years of management publications resulted in observable patterns in choice of research methods by males and females. Pointing out these patterns and initiating a conversation about why these patterns may have occurred provoked the charge from Mills that the authors do not understand that affect of culture on notions of what it means to be male/female or masculine/feminine? Really? As we reflected on Mills' comments we were reminded of one of the stories Weick (1999, p. 803) told in his comment on theory construction as disciplined reflexivity. "Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is said to have once left a dinner party raving about [Oscar Wilde's] gift as a conversationalist. 'But you did all the talking,' his companion pointed out. 'Exactly!' Conan Doyle said." Mills did all the talking, and it was not about our paper. Rather than contribute to the discussion about gender and research methods, he put himself at the center of the story and attempts to cleverly deconstruct our paper pointing out that in the end, we are the ones who marginalize both women and qualitative researchers. While we agree that critical discourse analysis has value, Mills' use of it illuminated nothing that contributes to the conversation about gender and research methods. For that reason we were disappointed in his comments. He chose monologue over conversation and when that happens little learning takes place.

We are grateful to *Qualitative Research in Organization and Management* for publishing our controversial paper and to Karen Locke, Fiona Wilson, and Albert Mills for taking the time to comment on our work. We appreciate the opportunity we were given to respond to the commentaries. This kind of back-and-forth among scholars does not take place in our journals nearly enough and we hope the exchange has stirred new interested in the questions we raised. Our paper continues to provoke strong reactions, although we are still surprised, at times, just how "hot" the reactions about gender and methodology are. The heat suggests there is more to know and we hope both male and female qualitative researchers will become involved in this conversation.

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