Introduction: Methodological variety in entrepreneurship research

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Introduction

Although entrepreneurship in its broadest interpretation is as old as civilization itself, and theory on the individual's role in the organizational genesis can be dated back some centuries, entrepreneurship theory is still considered quite a young academic field (Bygrave 1989; Brazeal and Herbert 1999; Low 2001). Nevertheless, it has become an increasingly popular field of inquiry in the past quarter of a century with a growing research community of scholars from a broad spectrum of disciplines entering the field (Aldrich 1992; Low 2001; Acs and Audretsch 2003; McDonald et al. 2004). The implication is that entrepreneurship can be studied using a variety of methods, including both quantitative and qualitative techniques (Perren and Ram 2004). Despite this richness in methodological approaches, entrepreneurship is still considered a field lacking in methodological diversity and rigour (Wortman 1987; Aldrich 1992; Huse and Landström 1997; Low 2001); a criticism repeatedly directed at both quantitative and qualitative contributions since the late 1980s (Hornaday and Churchill 1987; Bygrave 1989; Low 2001, Hindle 2004). Indeed, it is argued that 'Entrepreneurship is less steeped in the rigors of traditional disciplines' (Low 2001: 20). Whilst this may be so, we would ask whether the pattern is a reflection of entrepreneurship being an applied science rather than a 'pure' science. Further, does not the entrepreneurial phenomenon itself, in all its complexity and dynamics, invite a methodological toolbox of broad variety? Indeed, entrepreneurship is a phenomenon in a state of constant flux, shaped by the behaviour of entrepreneurs whose responses to perceived opportunities may be highly difficult to predict.

In entrepreneurship research, calls for more qualitative approaches are made at regular intervals (e.g. Bygrave 1989; Huse and Landström 1997; Gartner and Birley 2002; Hindle 2004), seemingly without much effect. A less pessimistic angle is that the field is not lacking methodological diversity; rather qualitative entrepreneurship research merely faces a liability of legitimacy from mainstream editors which in part may be due to a varying quality of qualitative contributions. Often researchers who advocate

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qualitative research blame this on lack of rigour (see e.g. Hindle 2004). Indeed, Hindle (2004: 577) express his opinion in no uncertain terms:

Unless entrepreneurship . . . begin[s] to embrace higher volumes of higher calibre qualitative research, the relevance and potency of the entrepreneurial canon will be severely compromised by a lack of the methodological variety that is so strongly displayed in other social sciences.

Research in entrepreneurship has, in other words, to a large extent been descriptive in nature, and empirical research has predominantly been based on structured surveys (see also Bygrave, Chapter 1 in this volume). When a qualitative research approach was adopted and reached publication, often such studies were based on single or multiple case studies in which the primary sources of information were archival data and/or interview data, the latter being procured by means of a structured or semi-structured survey. More innovative qualitative research in entrepreneurship is more often disseminated via journals explicitly aimed at the qualitative paradigm and anthologies such as the *New Movements of Entrepreneurship* series, also published by Edward Elgar. Keeping in pace with a growing demand for expanding the repertoire of research designs, analytic techniques and more interpretative approaches to understanding the phenomenon of entrepreneurship (Bygrave 1989; Aldrich 1992; Davidsson and Wiklund 2001), it is important to provide an outlet for such approaches. Simultaneously, it is necessary to respond to the call for more stringency in research methods.

This handbook can be perceived as a response to the trend and critique directed at the entrepreneurship field for producing (i) predominantly descriptive research and (ii) qualitative research of doubtful standard. We can only second that qualitative methods are 'demonstrably underrepresented in entrepreneurship research' (Hindle 2004: 577) at least when we are concerned with publications in peer-reviewed mainstream journals. The first reason for this pattern may be that the use of quantitative approaches has traditionally resulted in more publications compared with other methodologies (Huse and Landström 1997). Indeed, Chandler and Lyon (2001) found only 18 per cent of the contributions in their sample of 418 papers to be qualitative. A more recent review of 2234 articles by McDonald et al. (2004) also demonstrates the dominance of positivist approaches and research methods. A second reason for this situation is the pressure for publication for untenured faculty. This is particularly found among American scholars, whereas European academics have until recently been faced with less publication pressure. Therefore they have had the freedom to adopt a greater methodological diversity. Further, Europeans tend to be more tolerant of methodological diversity (Huse and Landström 1997).

Since so few qualitative studies apparently find their way into the mainstream journals, we felt obliged to check whether the pattern found in these journals reflects the direction of the field's research efforts. To this end, we reviewed abstracts from a randomly selected Babson–Kauffman Entrepreneurship Research Conference (2002). This review is by no means exhaustive, but it none the less provides an interesting indication of the pattern of methodological choices of American and European researchers respectively, as illustrated in Box I.1. Simultaneously, it shows that there is a great difference between the kind of research presented at one of the most prestigious entrepreneurship conferences and what is being published in entrepreneurship journals.

As the evidence shows, the number of abstracts purporting to use some form of qualitative research method is considerable, particularly among European researchers. This suggests that qualitative research proliferates,

BOX I.1 METHODOLOGICAL CHOICES IN CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

An assessment of conference abstracts accepted for presentation at the Babson–Kauffman Entrepreneurship Research Conference 2002 revealed that there was a profound difference in the type of research method chosen by American and non-American researchers. Researchers from American universities authored 108 abstracts. Only *six* of these were exclusively case or interview-based, *five* were triangulated using both case method and survey or database, *four* were conceptual, *seven* did not give any method indication and *four* were literature reviews or other method. Further, there was *one* quasi-experiment, *two* experiments and *one* simulation study. The rest were based on surveys (42), existing databases (30), a combination of these (3), desk research and (3) or face-to-face administered structured questionnaires (1).

In contrast, scholars from non-American universities authored 111 abstracts. *Nine* of these were written together with American researchers, of these only *one* was case based. Of the remaining 102 articles there were 47 case or interview-based contributions, i.e. almost 50 per cent in comparison with less than 10 per cent of those written by researchers from American universities. In research teams of mixed origin, quantitative research also dominated.

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at least in Europe. It is also a trend that we have encountered in the profile of the contributors to this handbook. Despite our continued efforts, only six of our contributors are from outside Europe. However, although the publication pressure trend has taken considerably longer to hit Europe, European business schools and universities are increasingly hiring and promoting faculty primarily based on research productivity measured by publication in highly ranked international journals (Gartner and Birley 2002). It is therefore time to consider whether and how it is possible to avoid falling into the trap of enforced methodological orthodoxy that such a strategy might well entail. On the other hand, we need to consider the consistent criticism directed at qualitative research for lacking rigour and stringency as a stumbling block to publication of qualitative research. In sum, these observations collectively point to a need for a handbook of qualitative research methods in entrepreneurship research.

As qualitative research in entrepreneurship is often rejected by mainstream journals due to lack of sufficient methodological detail and rigour (Gartner and Birley 2002), a better set of method selection guidelines therefore seems to be needed (Hindle 1994). The aim of this handbook is to introduce a spectrum of the qualitative research methods currently used, to increase the understanding of the versatility, usefulness and systematic rigour of these research methods, and to provide guidance on how they can be appropriately and fruitfully employed. The handbook aspires to assist existing and future researchers to make informed choices of design by providing concrete examples of research experiences, and offering tangible ‘how-to’ advice. We hope that by clarifying what these methods entail, how they are currently being used, and how they can be evaluated, this handbook may come to be perceived as ‘a methodological toolbox’. Ultimately, we hope that it will enable advocates to respond to reasonable criticism, enlighten the critics and cut off unfounded attacks while at the same time demonstrating the width, scope and variety of qualitative methods.

The goal of qualitative research is to develop concepts that enhance the understanding of social phenomena in natural settings, with due emphasis on the meanings, experiences and views of all participants. The general assumption underpinning this handbook is that the phenomenon of entrepreneurship is too dynamic and complex to be captured by a single method. This is not advocating that ‘anything goes’, but should be seen as an encouragement of methodological pluralism and tolerance. We believe that qualitative research has the ability to explore hitherto uncharted depths in the field of entrepreneurship and to contribute significantly to the advancement of the field.

The audience for this book, therefore, includes all academics who wish to study the entrepreneurship phenomenon, based upon qualitative approaches.

In the process of producing this book we have discussed its potential merits with several national and international colleagues. A question that kept cropping up was ‘What is qualitative research?’ That is a reasonable question to ask, particularly because several chapters compare qualitative to quantitative research. One definition, provided by Denzin and Lincoln (1994), is considered by many an authoritative contribution on qualitative research methodologies. They define qualitative research as

multi method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals’ lives. (Denzin and Lincoln 1994: 2)

Clearly, entrepreneurship is a field that abounds in such empirical material. This handbook will adhere to the definition above.

The next question that springs to mind is ‘Why do we undertake qualitative research?’ A simple answer is that we use qualitative approaches when we wish to go beyond mere description at a generalizable level in our empirical investigations. Qualitative and quantitative approaches are frequently presented as adversaries in a methodological battle. However, even within qualitative research a similar battle is taking place as we write. Basically, qualitative researchers adopt two opposing approaches. On the one hand, there are those who are totally committed to using qualitative methods and advocate these even to the extent that they may dig new trenches from which they can shoot at quantitative research. On the other, there are those who choose between qualitative and quantitative methods depending on the topic of interest and the related research questions (Brannen 1992).

We perceive ‘trench warfare’ as unproductive. We embrace the scope and richness of qualitative entrepreneurship research while at the same time acknowledging the qualities of the more established, traditional or well-accepted approaches, both qualitative and quantitative. Various forms of quantitative approaches are indeed useful when there is a need to provide generalizable and representative description as well as statistical analyses. A key issue is therefore to combine respect for the current traditions with an open mind to innovative approaches. However, the adoption of different and sometimes (at least at first sight) contradictory research methods into the same subject, we would hold, may often pave the way for new inspiration and insight. As this is a handbook of qualitative research methods, we do not include contributions that are quantitative in their approach,

although some contributions may use certain types of quantification. We further interpret qualitative studies quite broadly and have chosen to include in this volume contributions that represent both well-known and tested as well as some more daring approaches to conducting qualitative research in the field of entrepreneurship. This notwithstanding, we take the stance that qualitative approaches cannot be adequately understood independently of the ontological and epistemological basis and the related research questions. We also hold that concepts, terms and assumptions surrounding qualitative research should be explicitly stated and assessed on their own terms. Finally, we perceive individual approaches as embedded in the research process. In consequence we have organized the book around a procedural perspective.

The structure of the handbook

The handbook aims to provide a reference point for some of the most essential elements and critical choices in qualitative research design, reflecting the steps of the research process. We perceive the various choices in the research process as arising from the research questions; hence we adopt a pragmatic approach to the study of entrepreneurship (Schulz and Hatch 1996). According to Kyrö and Kansikas (2005: 124), ‘adopting pragmatism to the research process requires parting from the traditional way of describing it as theoretical and empirical parts and instead views it as a process, in which the previous step creates presumptions and leads to the next step’. Accordingly, we have organized the handbook into four parts, each representing a step in the research process (see Figure I.1).

Source: Inspired by Saunders et al. (2003).

Figure I.1 Steps and choices in the research process

Metaphors abound in entrepreneurship research. The most often used is the biological metaphor. Most entrepreneurial processes and acts are likened to the development of human beings and means of sustaining life. However, the research process can be described by means of various metaphors. The vehicle metaphor conveys a number of different associations. For example, according to Collins English dictionary, a vehicle can be interpreted in four ways. Each interpretation may be applied in the production of entrepreneurial knowledge: (i) it may be a medium of expression, communication or achievement of ideas; or (ii) it enables a performer to display his or her talents; or (iii) it constitutes a base in which composite elements are suspended; and last but not least (iv) it may give associations to an automobile. Each of these are valid interpretations with regard to qualitative research methods. Entrepreneurial ideas certainly need to be expressed, communicated and achieved in order to contribute to advancement of society (i). Indeed, entrepreneurs need to display their talents in some way or other (ii). However, most entrepreneurial inventions or innovations are made up of numerous and sometimes complex ingredients without which entrepreneurship could not take place (iii). And finally, entrepreneurship itself and the entrepreneurial process starts with the perception of some idea that is brought to fulfilment, often in a race against time (iv). It is the last interpretation that guides the structure of this book. The research process begins with the choice of vehicle, a paradigm in which the research is anchored. It starts out by delimiting the research challenge and choosing a research strategy. It then gains speed as it proceeds through the turns and straights of planning how to collect data and analyse them. It winds down in considering various approaches to assessing quality and achieving publication.

Part I: Choosing a vehicle

Considerations concerning the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of research or the so-called paradigmatic dimensions of science easily generate controversy and heated debate. It is, however, only through such debate that a field advances. According to Kuhn (1962/70), a paradigm emerges when a group of researchers agree on operating within specifically agreed boundaries, which define what is important, legitimate and reasonable research, an idea that is broadly accepted (McDonald et al. 2004). Over time social consensus is reached on a specific point of reference concerning a definitive set of precepts and methodological procedures (Gummesson 1991). Paradigms in Kuhn's understanding exist primarily in mature fields of science and not, for example, in the social sciences and humanities. Such areas are often described as fragmented in terms of theory and methodology. There are researchers who perceive the field of entrepreneurship as an

example of such a pre-paradigmatic research field, in the Kuhnian sense of the word. However, there are also some who contest this perception. The debate typically hinges on the various definitions of a paradigm that researchers invoke.

However, the concept is often used arbitrarily, thus masking the fundamental meaning (Morgan 1980). Some use the concept about schools of thought, others use the term to describe basic theoretical perspectives or research domains. Not all readers may agree with these definitions. They may instead choose to define entrepreneurship as a discipline, a theoretical field of academic inquiry. Differently put, it is difficult to see how the field of entrepreneurship can be contained within a single or unifying paradigm in the Kuhnian sense; rather it constitutes what Aldrich (1992), for example, would call a pragmatic stance. In methodological terms, according to this stance a researcher should choose the procedure, that is most suitable with respect to the research question(s). It means that for a given research project within entrepreneurship the researcher may choose between a number of research strategies – and even mix them.

The importance of understanding alternative paradigms lies in augmenting the individual's understanding of how certain world-views delimit methodological flexibility and adaptation. This is not to say that 'anything goes', but is rather a question of understanding how important research questions may best be addressed. This sentiment is echoed by, for example, Hofer and Bygrave (1992). We advocate if not an elimination of paradigm boundaries, then a recognition that paradigms are not incompatible, that paradigm boundaries can be penetrated, and that paradigms, even if they cannot be united, may interact instead of being sharply delimited. This approach is proposed by an increasing number of scholars, for example Gioia and Pitre (1990), Hassard (1991), Schulz and Hatch (1996) and Lewis and Kelemen (2002). This invites researchers to look at the world in new ways.

Part I will debate the consequences of a researcher's world-view for the research process. There are fundamentally two ways in which to view the relationship between philosophy and research method: whether the research question(s) (and hence the theory) frame the philosophical stance, or whether the philosophical stance directs the choice of research questions (Creswell 1998; Saunders et al. 2003). In this book we include both approaches. However, the relationship between the philosophical debates and the methods used in the research process is often poorly understood and badly accounted for (Knox 2004), and it is one of the areas that qualitative researchers need to address. The three chapters in this part therefore represent different philosophical arguments and alternatives. However, they should not be seen as exclusive with regard to the approaches that are applied by scholars in the field.

Chapter 1, 'The entrepreneurship paradigm (I) revisited', includes two contributions. The first is a reprint of Bygrave's seminal article, which is next updated with a commentary by Bygrave himself on the developments in the field since 1989. Bygrave invokes the interpretation of the word paradigm as a research domain starting the chapter with 'Entrepreneurship is one of the youngest paradigms in the management sciences' (ibid.: 28). Bygrave's original article probably does not need any introduction. However, in his update he looks back to look ahead, and provides an insight into the background for the original article as well as leaving the distinct impression that the field has not changed significantly in the past 17 years with regard to methodological advancement.

In Chapter 2 Blundel introduces critical realism as one philosophical alternative. 'Critical realism: a suitable vehicle for entrepreneurship research?' provides an outline of the origins and principal features of critical realist social theory and reviews of the methodological implications of this philosophical perspective. The chapter also considers how critical realism might offer a suitable 'vehicle' for qualitative research in the field of entrepreneurship and assesses its explanatory potential.

Berglund in Chapter 3, 'Researching entrepreneurship as lived experience', presents aspects of philosophical phenomenology that are relevant to entrepreneurship and exemplifies how phenomenology can be used to capture and communicate the meanings of different entrepreneurial experiences, allowing for a more detailed understanding of how theoretical concepts and empirical events are understood and translated into action by entrepreneurs.

Part II: Starting out and gearing up

The six chapters in this part deal with focusing and delimiting the research challenge and choosing a relevant research strategy. Some research strategies are deductive (quantitative in nature), others inductive (qualitative in nature). However, research strategies are not necessarily mutually exclusive. To illustrate, Saunders et al. (2003) operate with case studies, grounded theory, ethnography and action research as examples of research strategies. However, a grounded theory study may well be a case study and vice versa. Moreover, in this section we include semiotics and discourse analysis. It is arguable whether these constitute research strategies or are techniques/methods for data collection, because in reality there is no hard-and-fast boundary between the two. A research strategy leads seamlessly into the choice of data collection methods. However, the research strategy is concerned with the overall approach that is adopted, whereas the data collection methods constitute operational, methodological decisions.

The first three chapters in Part II deal with more conventional types of field studies, whereas the last three chapters represent in our view more

unorthodox approaches to the study of entrepreneurship, advocating sign and text analysis as a way to produce new knowledge. What distinguishes the latter from the former is predominantly that they do not necessarily include interaction with the field.

In Chapter 4, 'Ethnographic methods in entrepreneurship research', Johnstone invites the reader to consider the potential of an ethnographic research strategy for developing grounded theory in entrepreneurship. Ethnography originates in the anthropological field, and the purpose is to access the interpretation of world of the research subjects. It is a very time-consuming research strategy that requires the researcher to be flexible and responsive to the research subjects. It is definitely a very appropriate strategy for entrepreneurship researchers. Johnstone discusses the cyclical nature of ethnography and considers the strengths and weaknesses of the approach.

Mäkelä and Turcan discuss 'Building grounded theory in entrepreneurship research' in Chapter 5. They describe the history of grounded theory methodology and the location of the methodology within the umbrella of qualitative research methods, reaching out to the field of entrepreneurship. In order to make the discussion more topical, throughout they illustrate the discussion with examples from contemporary grounded theory research.

Chapter 6, 'An action research approach to entrepreneurship' by Leitch, illustrates the relevance of the entrepreneurship discipline to the world of practice through an action research approach. Leitch argues that such an approach not only enhances our understanding of entrepreneurship in action, it also helps entrepreneurs develop their organizations, partly because it creates ownership of the entrepreneurial process.

In Chapter 7 Smith and Anderson propose that semiotics, the doctrine of signs, is a practical tool for exploring the depth and scope of what we mean by entrepreneurship. Consequently the chapter, 'Recognizing meaning: semiotics in entrepreneurial research', argues that an appreciation of entrepreneurial semiotics enables an understanding of the meanings of enterprise; what it is; how it is practised; why it is practised and why it is encouraged. The authors operationalize and explain semiotics so that even the layperson should be able to apply this technique.

Chapters 8 and 9 both present discourse analytical approaches to female entrepreneurship. Achtenhagen and Welter introduce discourse analysis as applied to the representation of female entrepreneurs in the printed media in Chapter 8, 'Media discourse in entrepreneurship research'. Using German newspaper articles as their basis, Achtenhagen and Welter illustrate how discourses continually contribute to shaping the entrepreneurial environment (and vice versa) and provide an understanding of how understanding a particular discourse can generate new insights.

Chapter 9, 'A Foucauldian framework for discourse analysis' by Ahl, develops a discourse analytical approach of research texts on female entrepreneurs building on an interpretation and translation of Foucault's theories of discourse analysis. Ahl provides a detailed description of her interpretation of Foucault and introduces a step-by-step account of her analytical approach. In this unfolding of the research it becomes apparent just how much discursive practices in research influence the general understanding of women's role in and execution of entrepreneurship.

Part III: Gaining speed

The four chapters in this part of the book primarily focus on techniques for collecting information. Apart from the first chapter, which concentrates on the issue of identifying and choosing informants and cases, the chapters are concerned with different ways of working with 'text', making sense of the information and developing the findings for publication. The examples included here are by no means exhaustive of the variety of techniques for collecting and analysing data; indeed the area is so varied that it really warrants a book exclusively on data collection techniques.

Before the researcher can start to collect data and indeed think of analysing it, it is highly appropriate to consider who or what may be the best information source. In Chapter 10, 'Sampling in entrepreneurial settings', Neergaard highlights the need to document sampling procedures and provides guidance on how to select cases and informants purposefully. Neergaard argues that sampling constitutes a crucial element in securing the quality of the outcome of a research project, and that all research projects need to choose cases and informants that are able to provide the best possible information. This can only be achieved through purposeful sampling.

Brundin concentrates on real-time methodologies for collecting empirical material and how these can contribute to enhance our knowledge of entrepreneurial processes in Chapter 11, 'Catching it as it happens'. Real-time methodologies have the advantage that they do not rely on historical recall and therefore the danger of informants recollecting incorrectly or leaving out embarrassing occurrences and the like is reduced. Brundin accounts for a range of real-time methodologies and provides an example from her own research which illustrates a rarely investigated phenomenon, namely the feelings and emotions of entrepreneurs. She shows how using a real-time methodology can lead to an alternative understanding of the entrepreneurial process.

This is followed by McKenzie in Chapter 12, 'Techniques for collecting verbal histories', which focuses on concrete techniques for obtaining the life stories of the entrepreneur. McKenzie's honest and down-to-earth

account of the challenges in achieving access to these stories emphasizes the quality dimension of interviews and how to ensure that the reporting is accurate.

E-mails are quite a recent phenomenon research-wise as a means of gathering data, but with the increase in the use of the Internet for business correspondence, they are very likely to become an important source of data in the future. In Chapter 13, 'Using e-mails as a source of qualitative data', Wakkee, Danskin and During seek to explain the value of e-mails, distinguish them from other sources of data, and provide suggestions for analysing the text. They offer a step-by-step account of the procedure from obtaining access to the analysis and presentation of the data.

Chapter 14, 'The scientification of fiction', by Pihl, Klyver and Damgaard, introduces the construction of dialogue and drama as a way to understand entrepreneurial perceptions and processes. They suggest that this alternative way of approaching the empirical field may provide a useful shortcut to theorizing.

Part IV: Winding down and assessing the ride

This part addresses criteria of goodness and quality assessment as well as the challenge of publication. Earlier, we noted that qualitative research was rarely published in mainstream journals. The quality of qualitative research has often been under scrutiny from quantitative researchers – and unfortunately not always unfoundedly. The lack of generally agreed upon rules for what good quality is in qualitative research may indeed be one of the reasons that publication in mainstream journals is notoriously hard to achieve. The two first chapters in this part therefore address the quality control issue from two different points of view. The remaining two chapters focus on the important issue of getting qualitative research published, one from an author's point of view and the other seen from an editor's perspective.

The criteria of representativeness and reliability generally do not belong in the qualitative research tradition. Further, the traditional validity concept is increasingly being substituted by other concepts. The crux of the matter here is that, as researchers, we have an obligation to conduct rigorous, correct and credible research and we must expect to be held accountable in this respect. Therefore we must provide detailed descriptions of how knowledge has been procured and how it is possible to establish that it is valuable knowledge. It has to be transparent how the research has led to certain findings and conclusions. This should not, however, be confused with the existence of any objective truth to which an account should be compared (Maxwell 1996). Validity as a constituent of the research design consists of the strategies used to rule out the threat of alternative explanation. It is, unfortunately, the exception rather than the rule that qualitative research

explicitly addresses this issue (Andersen and Skaates 2005). Identifying how to evaluate qualitative research is not a clear cut case, the criteria for evaluation depend on both the paradigm in which the research is embedded and the research strategy chosen, as Wigren shows in Chapter 15, 'Assessing the quality of qualitative research in entrepreneurship'. Wigren starts out by presenting an overview of quality criteria, after which she discusses particular quality criteria that can be applied to ethnographic research.

From a critical realist approach, Bøllingtoft in Chapter 16, 'A critical realist approach to quality in observation studies', focuses on how to incorporate quality criteria into the process of an observation study, and thus overcome some of the potential problems of this technique. Ensuring quality in observation is probably the greatest challenge of all, because observation is inherently subjective and relies excessively on the observer's ability to disengage and be neutral. Bøllingtoft suggests stringent procedures as a solution to minimizing researcher bias.

In Chapter 17 Smith and Anderson present a dialogue on the problems of getting qualitative research published. Smith provides an insightful account into the frustrations of a doctoral student trying to make publication headway. Anderson enters the discussion from a seasoned supervisor point of view providing, probably to some, provocative ideas. 'Daring to be different' is exactly that and, together with Chapter 18, we believe a fitting way to end the book.

In Chapter 18, 'Avoiding a strike-out in the first innings', Brush provides hands-on useful guidelines on how to get published. It answers many of the questions that particularly Ph.D. students and junior researchers may have, not only in entrepreneurship, but across various disciplines.

Finally, in closing we address a few remaining key challenges for those scholars who conduct qualitative research in entrepreneurship.

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