INVITED ARTICLE

Journal of Marriage and Family

Qualitative family research: Innovative, flexible, theoretical, reflexive

Abbie E. Goldberg[1] | Katherine R. Allen[2]

[1]Department of Psychology, Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, USA

[2]Department of Human Development and Family Science, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia, USA

Correspondence
Abbie E. Goldberg, Department of Psychology, Clark University, Worcester, MA, USA.
Email: agoldberg@clarku.edu

Edited by: Liana Sayer

Abstract

Qualitative research is increasingly part of the methodological repertoire of scholars who study families. In this article, we examine contemporary trends, tensions, and possibilities for the interdisciplinary enterprise of qualitative research on and about families. We situate our collaborative approach as critical family scholars who pursue social justice work. We then examine four trends that have recently emerged or evolved in qualitative family research. First, we address methodological innovations associated with the pervasive emergence of online technologies and their possibilities for enhanced sample selection, data collection, and data analysis. Second, we address the potential for qualitative methodological orthodoxy to become rigidly embedded as a result of relying on a formulaic approach and instead we advocate for a continued commitment to analytic flexibility, which has characterized qualitative family research since its inception. Third, we emphasize the interlocking relationship between qualitative family research and the process of theorizing. Fourth, we highlight the potential of reflexivity—not simply in positionality statements, but throughout the qualitative knowledge production process. We conclude with guidance for scholars, reviewers, editors, and readers in utilizing and assessing excellent qualitative family research—research that embodies one or more of these trends of innovation, flexibility, theoretically driven, and reflexivity.

KEYWORDS

online methodologies, pluralism, qualitative family research, qualitative methodology, reflexivity, theory

INTRODUCTION

Qualitative family research is flourishing, as revealed by the assessments of qualitative family methods published in the *Journal of Marriage and Family* (*JMF*) in the past three mid-decade reviews, from Ambert et al. (1995), LaRossa (2005), and Matthews (2005) to Goldberg and Allen (2015) and Roy et al. (2015), among many other stocktaking efforts that address the advancement of qualitative family research, beginning with the first qualitative methods publications in *JMF* (e.g., LaRossa et al., 1981; LaRossa & Wolf, 1985). Although quantitative methods still predominate, family science increasingly recognizes qualitative work as making meaningful and substantive contributions to the field (Hardesty et al., 2022; Humble & Radina, 2019; MacTavish, 2022). The influence of qualitative family research can be found in formerly neglected areas, such as the study of trans and gender diverse individuals in families (McGuire, 2022; Reczek, 2020), low-income cohabiting couples and their families (Jamison, 2019), formerly incarcerated fathers (Haney, 2018) and their partners (Schueths, 2019), and adult children of undocumented immigrants in Latinx families (Delgado, 2022), to name just a few qualitative studies that have advanced knowledge about families.

The growth of qualitative research has led to enhanced representation of marginalized or invisible perspectives from diverse family experiences (e.g., Acosta, 2018; Gangamma, 2018; Goldberg et al., 2024; Goldberg & Allen, 2022; Hall, 2018; Hertz, 2021; Lareau, 2011; Meadow, 2018a; Rice, 2023; Sanner et al., 2018; Segev et al., 2021); increased attention to intersectional inequalities and the pursuit of social justice (e.g., Collins, 1990, 2000; Few-Demo & Allen, 2020; Goldberg et al., 2020; Moore, 2011); and reflexive understandings of hidden and taboo experiences in families (e.g., Allen, 2023; Goldberg, 2023; Gonzalez-Lopez, 2015; Mitchell, 2023). Qualitative family researchers are adding new variations of data collection and analysis methods to the previously dominant forms of in-depth interviews and participant observation (Matthews, 2005), increasingly taking advantage of innovations in technology, such as online surveys, video interviews, and social media, to gather in-depth data from a diverse range of communities (e.g., Braun et al., 2021; Lareau, 2021; Lee et al., 2020; Potter & Potter, 2020). These new variations have been very useful during times of social and political upheaval (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic; recent US presidential elections), enabling researchers to capture how families change in response to shifting empirical contexts (e.g., Gabriele-Black et al., 2021; Goldberg & Abreu, 2024). Indeed, family life is increasingly lived, performed, and studied online (Odasso & Geoffrion, 2023), and family researchers have deployed online innovations in new and exciting ways, such as gathering qualitative data longitudinally via online surveys and combining online data collection with interviews (e.g., Calarco et al., 2021; Gabb & Fink, 2015; Gueta & Klar-Chalamish, 2022). From its inception, qualitative family research has been noted for its flexibility by fostering an array of ideas, methods, and ontologies (i.e., ways of being in the world) that enable scholars to innovate methodologically and theoretically and thus come to a deeper understanding of family structures, processes, and contexts (Allen & Walker, 2000; Gilgun, 2012; LaRossa et al., 2014; LaRossa & Wolf, 1985).

Four current opportunities, tensions, and challenges

Opportunities, tensions, and challenges have accompanied this expansion and growth of qualitative family research. In this article, we build upon the history of qualitative research in family science by addressing four recent trends that feature the power and potential of qualitative family research. The first trend is the *emergence of online methodologies*, whereby researchers are increasingly collecting qualitative and mixed-methods data using the Internet (e.g., via online open-ended surveys or social media) and interviewing research participants on online platforms

such as Zoom, often to answer timely research questions or enhance understanding of under-studied groups. Online data collection using survey methods may seem like the antithesis of qualitative research, given the association of surveys with quantification and "the analysis of stable forms of interaction" (Denzin, 1989, p. 158) and the critique that closed-ended survey responses prohibit researcher-participant conversation and forego the possibility of follow-up questions (Small & Calarco, 2022, p. 67). Yet, doing research online now offers researchers new possibilities that were unimaginable until recently (Braun et al., 2021). The opportunity offered by online methods is in capturing family experiences and perspectives—especially during times of rapid social change and upheaval, when traditional in-person methods may be difficult to execute quickly or at all. Still, online methods remain underutilized, and their advantages for both researchers and participants are often underappreciated (Braun et al., 2021), particularly in qualitative family research, where the intense and prolonged nature of the connection between researcher and researched is highly valued (Lareau & Rao, 2022), though challenging for many researchers to carry out (Matthews, 2005). We therefore begin our assessment of recent trends by outlining how capitalizing on online methodologies—one form of methodological innovation—offers new empirical possibilities for knowledge production in qualitative family research.

Second, we address another timely issue related to qualitative family research: the proliferation of a "qualitative orthodoxy" when it comes to conducting and writing up one's qualitative analysis—and our corresponding encouragement of analytic flexibility to ensure continued innovation and creativity in the field. As authors, editors, reviewers, and readers, we have observed that a key challenge to fully realizing the dexterity offered by a flexible approach to qualitative family research is the tendency for some editors and reviewers to request, and for authors to follow, a formulaic or manualized approach to qualitative data collection and analysis, as opposed to one that both engages theoretical creativity and integrates pluralistic qualitative approaches that explicitly reveal the knowledge production process. Across many disciplines, the more formulaic approach has emerged amidst the increasing popularity of qualitative methods and the associated call to generate new standards for ensuring the validity and rigor of qualitative research (Chatfield, 2018; Corley et al., 2021; Levitt et al., 2018; Schoenberg et al., 2011). Instead of orthodoxy of analytic approach (e.g., a requirement to provide frequency counts of all qualitative themes), what is needed are agreed-upon indicators of what constitutes empirically effective qualitative social science research, as Braun and Clarke (2021) recently proposed for the reflexive thematic analysis method they developed after noticing the number of articles that misused or merely cited their method. In particular, indicators are needed to assist quantitatively trained reviewers in using appropriate criteria that are based on qualitative methods and epistemologies, and not the positivist approach that undergirds quantitative methods (DeLuca, 2023; Goldberg & Allen, 2015; LaRossa et al., 2014; Small & Calarco, 2022).

Third, we address what we see as a key challenge in qualitative research: *tension surrounding the positioning between theory and qualitative research*. Uncertainty abounds regarding whether and when to use existing theory to guide qualitative research. Some scholars adhere to the view that qualitative research must be strictly inductive (theory is generated from data), whereas others accept that qualitative research is rooted in symbolic interactionism, at the very least (Daly, 2007; Denzin, 1989; Hardesty et al., 2022; LaRossa, 2005), and critical qualitative researchers who study power and justice in families also rely upon some variation of conflict theory (Allen & Henderson, 2023; LaRossa, 1977). The embeddedness of interactionist and interpretive theoretical traditions in qualitative research renders an intimate relationship between theory and method (Denzin, 1989), with an interplay of induction and deduction. Thus, the place of theory—from the beginning, at the end, or working hand-in-hand with method—can be viewed as a contentious issue among qualitative scholars, depending on where they position themselves as theorists and the degree to which they are willing to acknowledge

and work with existing theories. We share the view that theory development in qualitative work is both essential *and* also challenged by the ambiguity that qualitative flexibility allows (Hardesty et al., 2022). We therefore discuss ways that theory may be used in and generated by qualitative work, and we take the perspective that however theory is or is not used, the researcher should be explicit about the ideas and theorizing process that undergird the method. As Mills (1959) noted in his classic work on the sociological imagination, scholars inherit a way of thinking from their academic discipline that indoctrinates them into using particular methods and theories. Developing theoretical capacity takes a lot of time and working back and forth between data and ideas, where one can create "a combination of ideas that no one expected was combinable" (p. 211). Theoretical flexibility in qualitative research involves "a playfulness of mind… as well as a truly fierce drive to make sense of the world" (p. 211).

Finally, we examine the issue of *reflexivity* in qualitative family research. We take up the "how" of a reflexive approach—how the researcher may position themselves in relationship to their research topic, process, and product (Allen, 2000, 2023; Gilgun, 2012). We concur with Charmaz (2014) and Daly (2007) that the researcher's critical reflections should be part of the entire qualitative research enterprise, yet it is still rarely made explicit in published reports (see Meadow, 2018b; Moore, 2018). From a practical standpoint, the question of if and how to use reflexivity statements is connected to the second issue we raise: pressure to employ a formulaic approach to qualitative work may encompass demands to use, or not use, reflexivity statements, as well as rules for what to include. We argue that a reflexive approach is especially important in studying families, because of the relational nature of family life, characterized by interiority, privacy, shared histories, and the intention toward permanence (Daly, 2003).

Our approach and positionalities

Our perspective and guidance are informed by our two-decade collaboration as critical intersectional feminist family scholars, and our experiences using pluralistic methodological approaches, especially in regards to qualitative methods. We bring a range of interdisciplinary training (e.g., psychology, family science, women's and gender studies, gerontology, sociology) and methodological training (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, autoethnography, life history, and mixed methods) to our approach. Our intergenerational pairing also informs our work, in terms of our own positionalities in the life course (mid and later life) and in our academic careers. We share a passion for research that is intent on making a difference for marginalized and invisible voices, and we have written extensively on these topics.

We are motivated by a desire to generate insight and guidance (not orthodoxy) that supports family scholars in both imagining and executing exciting and high-quality qualitative research. We begin with a current innovation in method (e.g., use of online data collection, such as open-ended surveys and social media) that has the potential to generate new insights into family life or tell a story in a new way (Goldberg & Allen, 2015). This is not the *only* recent innovation in qualitative family research methods, but it is one with which we have experience and thus can speak to its possibilities and challenges. Second, we underscore the limitations of a rigid or dogmatic approach to qualitative data collection and analysis—and, by extension, we underscore analytic flexibility (e.g., blending or merging different qualitative traditions or approaches) in highlighting the benefits of a pluralistic approach (LaRossa et al., 2014). Indeed, flexibility characterizes all of qualitative research. It has been the "maverick approach" since its inception, and is still rarely taught as a stand-alone methods course in graduate programs. Its outsider status has a flexibility that allows for the "ah ha" moments and the trying out of new ideas that has drawn many of us to qualitative work in the first place. Third, we highlight the symbiotic relationship between qualitative research methods and theory (Allen & Henderson, 2022; Denzin, 1989; Emerson et al., 2011). We urge transparency and rich

description of all aspects of the method so that the nature of theorizing and idea generation is ongoing, explicit, and apparent. Finally, we address reflexivity—whether, how, and in what circumstances researchers might position themselves in relation to their work. Reflexivity enhances resonance, which is a key indicator of qualitative rigor (Charmaz, 2014). Resonance is the extent to which a text is both aesthetic and evocative, and "meaningfully impacts an audience such that a reader can make connections between the themes or findings in the study at hand, and generalize those trends to his or her own life or other areas of research" (Tracy & Hinrichs, 2017, p. 7). Innovative and flexible methods, explicit theorizing, and reflexive practice are often present in compelling qualitative family research, and harken back to Mills' (1959) evocation of the sociological imagination.

In highlighting examples of qualitative work that illustrate our key points related to innovation, flexibility, theory, and reflexivity, we often draw on our own work—not to position it as "the model" to follow, but to expose the underbelly of the qualitative process of knowledge production. Because these are projects with which we have intimate familiarity, we can reveal the methodological, analytical, theoretical, and reflexive processes that informed them.

ONLINE METHODOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS

New variations of methods can upset accepted practices and understandings of the very nature of qualitative research, such as the assumption that there are only a few distinct types of data collection strategies—intensive interviews, participant observation/ethnography, and focus groups (Braun et al., 2017; Matthews, 2005; Small & Calarco, 2022). We advocate for embracing rather than resisting methodological plurality, and, specifically, for adapting standard qualitative methods for the online environment to capitalize on new opportunities. To quell fears that the rich, textual, and deep layers of the *qualitative* component will get lost with new online technologies, we rely on a mantra of qualitative research since its inception: the researcher is the primary instrument or constructor of knowledge (Allen, 2000; Charmaz, 2014; Gilgun, 1999). It is the researcher who produces the data in an in-depth interview or ethnographic study (Small & Calarco, 2022), features the participant's voice in the center of the study (Gerson & Damaske, 2021), listens to and safeguards the participant's story (Barrios et al., 2024)—and, constructs the questions in an online open-ended survey or video interview and analyzes the data generated from these encounters. The human element—as researcher and researched—is essential in all types of qualitative research (Allen & Walker, 2000).

Everything that is old was once new. In the past, tape recorders, and then video recorders, once provided new types of technology that were often met with skepticism by researchers who found mechanical recording devices of any kind obtrusive, expensive, and subject to human or mechanical failure (Denzin, 1989). Ever-passionate about there being no substitute for the human element, qualitative scholars urged novice researchers in particular to immediately write down any field notes or data lest the recording device fail or the participants resist its presence (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). Yet, over time, researchers and participants have become more accustomed to tape or video recording as necessary, even welcomed, accompaniments in field work and interviews. Lareau (2021) recently noted that, in addition to helping researchers gather more comprehensive data, video recordings can offer something tangible back to participants (a "nice gift… particularly if you create a polished, edited piece"; p. 158). Likewise, online technologies are now the new technology kid on the qualitative block, offering valuable tools to reach previously invisible populations, often in a timely manner. Our position is that the qualitative researcher has always been a *bricoleur*—a "jack of all trades" or a "professional do-it-yourself person" (Levi-Strauss, cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2). Qualitative researchers, in turn, must make use of the situation at hand, "inventing new strategies or piecing together meanings that arise in the research setting" (Allen & Walker, 2000, p. 20). It is in this

context that we highlight the methodological innovation of online methods for qualitative family research.

Indeed, although qualitative research has often been conceptualized as in-depth interviews, participant observations (or ethnography), or focus groups, the possibilities of qualitative work go beyond these formats, and discounting other approaches is limiting. As Braun et al. (2017) note (p. 1), these traditional methods are not

> uber-methods, suitable for any and all purposes, and without limitations. They can be costly with regard to time and resources, they require certain interactional skills to get the best out of data collection, and they aren't always the best way to address the range of research questions that interest qualitative researchers. [Yet], their often unquestioned dominance means that they… occupy a position as the 'gold standard', 'go to' method for collecting qualitative data, often being used to address research questions that would arguably have been better tackled through the use of other data collection methods.

Despite skepticism or unfamiliarity with online methods (see Braun et al., 2017, 2021), family research has become increasingly diverse methodologically over the past decade in part because of the technological advancements that have enabled a broader range of avenues for collecting open-ended data (Clarke & Braun, 2019; Humble & Radina, 2019; Odasso & Geoffrion, 2023) and conducting mixed methods research in which qualitative and quantitative methods are effectively integrated (Eales et al., 2021; Goldberg et al., 2021, 2023). Online surveys and virtual interviewing platforms such as Zoom are exciting, flexible tools that enable qualitative family researchers to quickly and cost-effectively access invisible and marginalized populations (e.g., sexual/gender minorities), who may be geographically dispersed, and to tackle taboo or sensitive topics (e.g., family instability or violence), such as via anonymous open-ended surveys (Archibald et al., 2019; Braun et al., 2017; Clarke & Braun, 2019; Lavender-Stott & Allen, 2023). Indeed, there is some evidence that disclosure of stigmatizing topics or experiences may be enhanced when participants are promised anonymity versus confidentiality (Murdoch et al., 2014); anonymity may also promote more honest responding (Gnambs & Kaspar, 2015).

Another advantage of online open-ended surveys and video interviewing is that they can be deployed with relative ease and efficiency to capture family processes in response to major—often time-sensitive—social, environmental, political, or cultural events (e.g., COVID-19, passage of key legislation; Gabriele-Black et al., 2021; Goldberg & Abreu, 2024; Goldberg et al., 2021). Conducting qualitative research during periods of intense sociopolitical change, such as the current era, requires adaptation and innovation (Vindrola-Padros et al., 2020), and online methodologies offer scholars opportunities to capture families' experiences with and response to such changes (Jones et al., 2021; LaMarre & Chamberlain, 2022). Faced with the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020, for example, Abaied et al. (2022) wanted to understand how White parents were talking to their children about these protests and associated racial justice movements, and moved quickly to construct, obtain IRB approval for, and launch a mixed-methods anonymous survey to explore this issue. Advantages of this approach included access to a large and geographically diverse sample of parents; the collection of anonymous data which may have allowed parents to feel more comfortable expressing controversial views; and access to "real time" reactions and behaviors (vs. retrospective reports). Of course, this study—and others using similar approaches to collecting qualitative data—was limited by the inability to pose follow-up questions to enhance clarity or gain more detailed information, resulting in variability in the length, quality, and detail of responses (Abaied et al., 2022).

Indeed, "new methods" present new challenges. Online open-ended survey questions must be crafted to elicit specificity and detail, such as with a series of follow-up probes (Braun

et al., 2021). Capturing nuances of in-person interviews may be challenging with video interviews, requiring skilled interviewers to compensate (Oliffe et al., 2021). Online methods such as open-ended surveys and video interviewing are also less ideal for some populations, such as older adults who may be unfamiliar with new technologies, or incarcerated people who lack access to video technologies; and, they may not be easily deployed in remote locations where Internet access is unreliable. Yet, online methods do hold great benefits to researchers and participants, offering substantial payoffs in sampling, scope, timeliness, efficiency, affordability, and convenience (Oliffe et al., 2021). Roberts et al. (2021), for example, describes how moving their research on student homelessness online during COVID-19 allowed their research to continue, and also "eliminated our travel and lodging costs associated with in-person data collection, allowing our team to… redirect resources to hire a native Spanish speaker to conduct interviews, thereby increasing our capacity to interview Spanish-speaking parents" (p. 9). For those researchers for whom anonymous online open-ended surveys are appropriate to their research questions and goals, the reality that their study may qualify for IRB exemption or expedited review based on the minimal risk to participants (Tsan et al., 2020; US Department of Health & Human Services, 1998) allows them to begin data collection quickly—an advantage when researchers wish to capture family processes in response to timely sociopolitical events or cultural moments.

Online open-ended surveys and video interviews

There are numerous examples of family researchers using online open-ended surveys and video interviews, especially in the past 5 years, to collect high-quality data. We highlight studies that use these methods to explore understudied groups or topics in ways that have deepened our understanding of family phenomena. We next examine how family researchers have used such approaches, particularly during times of national or global social and political change, thus enhancing our understanding of families in context, which is an enduring theme of qualitative family research (Gilgun, 2012; Lareau, 2011; LaRossa, 2005). In focusing on online open-ended surveys and video interviews, we are not suggesting that these are superior to other methodologies, including traditional ethnographic work or in-depth in-person interviewing. Rather, we address the possibilities associated with these emergent methods, which may not be as familiar to creators or consumers of qualitative scholarship. Next, we discuss three studies to highlight the possibilities of online open-ended surveys and video interviewing. In each example, researchers deployed online methods expediently during a critical time of social change, gathering qualitative data that informed a deeper understanding of family life. Each was also theoretically informed, in both the construction of the study and interpretation of data. Two of these examples are our own. Although there are many good examples of research using online methods to capture time-sensitive, marginalized experiences in meaningful ways, our deep familiarity with our work affords a "behind the scenes look" at the research process.

Goldberg et al. (2023) used an online open-ended survey to gather data during a time-sensitive period, from a marginalized community, during a legislatively and politically charged moment in US history. We collected data from 113 LGBTQ parents in Florida amidst intensifying anti-LGBTQ legislation in the United States, and just after the passage of the Parental Rights in Education Act ("Don't Say Gay") in Florida, in July of 2022. This law restricts the discussion of sexuality and gender, and LGBTQ identities in Florida public schools. The research team crafted questions to elicit parents' responses to and coping associated with the Act, and their feelings and tensions related to possible relocation, which we conceptualized as a strategy for survival and escape, but an option only for more privileged members of the sample.

Participants were mostly White and Latinx, with greater representation among cis LBQ women than cis GBQ men or trans folks. The researchers included White and Latinx individuals, and both cis men and cis women. We also varied in terms of our parental status, region (in versus outside of Florida), and disciplinary background, methodological approach, and research foci. As I (AEG) detail in the article, in recognition of the ways in which my personal and professional lens marks me as both an insider and outsider, both facilitating and limiting my understanding of this topic, I sought collaborators with different backgrounds and lenses. Our diverse perspectives informed our approach to coding, analysis, and interpretation, such that we were each sensitized to different aspects of and ways of conceptualizing the emergent themes. We worked together to ensure that certain framings and interpretations were balanced out by alternative or supplementary perspectives (e.g., queer activism can be viewed as both energy enhancing and energy depleting; and, it may be both a strategy of resistance but also an act born of necessity).

Our multistage coding process was intensive and iterative, whereby we repeatedly returned to the data to ensure that participants' perspectives were thoroughly and meaningfully accounted for. We used qualitative content analysis, a standard method for examining open-ended responses to survey questions, generating new insights through a process of systematically identifying, coding, and categorizing primary patterns in the data (Krippendorff, 2018). Our analysis revealed that participants espoused feelings of fear, anger, and disbelief, which were contextualized by the broader anti-LGBTQ climate in Florida as well as a growing sense of dread and uncertainty regarding the future. The analysis also highlighted diverse methods of coping with experiences of and anticipated minority stress associated with the law, including seeking social support, engaging in activism, avoiding the news media, and making plans to escape. Yet participants experienced tension between their desire to relocate and their anger at having to consider doing so; and, many felt hopeless about their ability to move amidst structural barriers (e.g., limited resources; caregiving obligations). This study revealed the "push-and-pull" in participants' experiences of living in a state that is increasingly hostile to one's identities, yet still holds one's treasured home and loved ones. Living in legislatively hostile or uncertain times produces grief, rage, fear, and resistance—and is mentally taxing to mental and physical health.

In sum, this study used an online open-ended survey to document how LGBTQ parent families are being impacted by anti-LGBTQ laws at a time of intensified uncertainty and stress in the United States. Wishing to gain access to participants' reactions to the passage of controversial legislation, our anonymous open-ended survey was approved by our IRB review boards quickly as the risks to human participants were low (US Department of Health & Human Services, 1998). An advantage of this approach was that it enabled the primary investigator, who does not live in Florida, to access participants many states away who were navigating the after-effects of legislation that could profoundly impact their families. The advantages offered by an anonymous survey also go beyond efficiency to researchers; they are also time efficient (participants can respond on their own time) and may also enable expression of perspectives and experiences that might be uncomfortable to convey in in-person interviews (Hewson, 2017). For example, a few participants in our study supported the Act; and, they acknowledged an awareness that their views might be viewed as unpopular or contradictory—views they might feel reluctant to disclose to an interviewer. Our approach also facilitated "maximum heterogeneity": it enabled access to a large enough sample that "a wide range of positions and identities" were captured, resulting in a "range of 'within-group' voices," including marginalized, often overlooked groups (Braun et al., 2021, p. 643). Had we only recruited 30 participants, we might have sampled just one (or zero) participant(s) who described a pro-Act position; and, we may have failed to surface a desire to "stay and fight" as a reason for staying in Florida—a rarely offered but significant reason. These elements of our approach, combined with the fact that our target population was clearly defined (LGBTQ parents in Florida), our questions were clear

and unambiguous with follow-up probes, and we engaged in a deep, intensive coding process, facilitated our ability to generate meaningful data using an online survey.

In a second example, Goldberg et al. (2021) examined the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic created for divorced ($n = 189$; 63.8%), divorcing (filed/planning to file for divorce; $n = 76$; 25.7%), and separated (never married, no longer together; $n = 31$; 10.5%) parents. Divorced/separated parents are a group uniquely impacted by the pandemic in that they were not necessarily a "unified front" with respect to their health-related beliefs, behaviors, and risk tolerance; they were often coparenting across multiple households; and courts were largely closed during the early part of the pandemic, requiring parents to navigate disagreements and challenges related to parenting and finances without legal oversight or input.

We conducted an online, mixed-methods survey with open- and closed-ended questions of 296 divorced parents: 204 women formerly partnered with men, 34 men formerly partnered with women, and 58 women formerly partnered with women, in 2020. The use of an anonymous online survey, which quickly received IRB approval given the timeliness of the topic and the anonymous nature of the data, enabled exploration of how divorced parents, who faced unique challenges vis-a-vis housing, schooling, parenting, and shared health behaviors (e.g., masks, handwashing), coped with the demands of early pandemic life. In this way, we seized on the opportunity to capture a time-sensitive phenomenon: how divorced co-parents were navigating a public health crisis with implications for coparenting, financial stability, and family life. We used a mixed-methods approach to harness the advantages of qualitative (e.g., in-depth description; subjective interpretation) and quantitative research (e.g., large sample, generalizability). We asked closed-ended questions about custody, financial arrangements (e.g., child support, alimony), and children (e.g., number, age, school types). We asked a complementary series of open-ended questions that included general questions (e.g., What are the biggest challenges you have had since March 2020 related to coparenting? What concerns do you have regarding your divorce, coparenting, custody, or financial support, amid COVID?) and more specific questions (e.g., Have you encountered difficulties with legal delays due to COVID? Please explain).

The qualitative component of our study used qualitative content analysis, which focused on parents' descriptions of divorce/separation, coparenting, and COVID, and was informed by the literature, a gender lens, and a systems perspective on family stress and resilience, attentive to how issues of conflict were managed across households during a pandemic. Coding involved reading each set of responses in their entirety, after which we generated initial codes for each response. Codes were both analyst-driven (e.g., we were interested in family dynamics and conflict) and data-driven (we focused on all other emergent themes).

Findings revealed how divorced families were experiencing and navigating life amidst the uncertainty and stress of a global pandemic. We documented increased financial strains, challenges negotiating remote schooling, and difficulties navigating discrepant views on the risks associated with COVID-19 and how to manage or mitigate them. We also found unique stresses in several groups: Those who had their divorce proceeding stalled during the pandemic, and those that were still living together, despite being separated/divorced (e.g., to save money). Both groups described a feeling of imposed stagnation or feeling "stuck"—an inability to move forward, the stress of which combined with the stress of the pandemic and coparenting with their ex-partners to generate distress, exhaustion, and helplessness. We also documented ways that gender and sexual orientation interfaced with experiences of coparenting during COVID-19, revealing, for example, that women formerly partnered with men described ways in which their primary responsibility for remote schooling represented an extension of the offloading of domestic labor that they experienced during more normal times. Women formerly partnered with women generally did not describe this type of exacerbated inequity in the division of labor.

In sum, this study involved an expedient deployment of online data collection methods during a critical period of change that allowed for open- and closed-ended responses. By using a

large sample, we could document small but distinct subgroups with unique experiences, as Braun et al. (2021) recommend, such as parents living with their ex-partners (Allen & Goldberg, 2022).

In a final example, Siegel and Dekel (2022) used video interviews to collect data about relationship dynamics during COVID-19. They took advantage of the fact that, even early in the pandemic, individuals had to adapt rapidly to using new forms of technology, including video interviewing, to communicate. On Zoom, they interviewed 29 spouses and romantic partners of New York City frontline health care providers to address how they dealt with the stress of the COVID-19 outbreak, the type of support they provided to their frontline partners, and how the crisis had impacted their relationship. Siegel and Dekel describe the interviews as being conducted in an informal manner that conveyed a tone of warmth, nonjudgment, empathy, and respect, in which interviewers encouraged participants to speak freely of their experiences, including negative or critical feelings about their partner or relationship. The authors' thematic analysis of the data was informed by family stress theory and prior literature while allowing the emergence of new, data-driven codes. They documented three themes: The burden of running the home independently; providing diverse forms of support (practical, emotional, and refraining from physical closeness); and the effects of the pandemic on the relationship (e.g., in the form of writing wills and discussing the possibility of death; pride in one's partner). Their findings illuminated how the demands of an unprecedented public health crisis exerted direct and indirect impacts on health care workers and their partners, resulting in a restructuring of their home lives and a reorientation of how they planned for the future.

Siegel and Dekel drew on the power and possibilities of video interviewing to capture key family processes during an historic event marked by uncertainty, fear, and death. They acted quickly during a global crisis to conceptualize and execute a study that gathered time-sensitive qualitative data on relational change. Not only did video interviewing allow the researchers to conduct in-depth qualitative interviews when in-person interviews were impossible, but, they offered the added advantages of convenience and cost-effectiveness (Oliffe et al., 2021). Zoom allows access to the richness of data that is only possible with in-person interviews—and this richness was perhaps enhanced because people were interviewed in their homes (Howlett, 2022). This study illustrates how necessity is the mother of invention: when faced with the reality that people could not leave their homes because of a global pandemic *and* were suddenly comfortable with video interviewing, Siegel and Dekel capitalized on this *and also* sought to understand unique family processes that were occurring in a high-stress group during a global stressor.

Social media

In addition to online surveys and video interviewing, qualitative family researchers are now using a variety of other online methods to examine timely experiences. Social media provides a promising outlet to gather data, particularly from marginalized populations and topics, and during times of major social or political change. To illustrate the potential utility of social media vis-a-vis qualitative family research, we next discuss four studies, which (a) accessed invisible or marginalized communities, (b) examined taboo topics, and/or (c) studied family processes amidst major national or international events.

We begin with McLeod (2020), whose study highlights the usefulness of social media to access invisible communities. McLeod examined the types of advice that Black fathers seek from each other using data gleaned from a Facebook group dedicated to fathers. Noting that research suggests that Black men are less likely to seek help from formal supports when dealing with life stressors, McLeod used a keyword search for "advice" within Facebook, which amassed 137 posts generated by 134 fathers. He used an inductive textual analysis to explore key themes for advice, and findings ultimately revealed how Black fathers who find themselves

marginalized in dominant parenting communities leveraged social media to communicate sensitive issues related to family life and to exchange support. McLeod drew on the power of social media—as a "free space" where fathers can strengthen their social and communal ties and shared identity—to explore how one stigmatized group of fathers used online communities as a source of emotional and informational capital.

Social media also offers an innovative and relatively nonintrusive way to investigate family phenomena that are highly sensitive, taboo, and challenging for researchers to access. In a second example, Lee et al. (2020) used Twitter to examine stay-at-home parents' posts about spanking. They collected publicly available tweets from self-identified stay-at-home parents, which were screened for discipline and spanking content. A qualitative analysis was applied to the resulting set of 648 tweets. They found that parents most commonly posted tweets that reflected antispanking beliefs compared with prospanking tweets, although tweets in support of spanking emerged as well, with fathers being more likely than mothers to espouse pro-spanking beliefs and desires in their posts. Lee et al. suggest that stay-at-home parents may turn to Twitter to obtain disciplinary information and to disclose antispanking and prospanking beliefs, noting that antispanking tweets may reflect changing social norms and/or selective self-presentation.

In a third example, Moore and Abetz (2019) drew on user-generated threads from Reddit, a popular online platform, as a data source to explore parental regrets about having children, using thematic analysis. Their findings revealed two types of regret related to having children: regretting the circumstances associated with having children, and regretting having children at all, the latter of which was associated with guilt and shame "based on the imagined reactions of the generalized other" (p. 406). The authors observed that the anonymous online forum provided a context wherein parents could voice feelings that they otherwise could never freely express, because the idea of regretting having children is viewed as so morally reprehensible in society amidst cultural norms that parenthood is supposed to be rewarding and fulfilling.

In a final example, Lyons and Brewer (2022) used social media to access a difficult-to-reach population regarding a sensitive topic during a world event. The authors conducted a thematic analysis of 50 online discussion forum posts on Reddit written by victims of intimate partner violence in an effort to understand their experiences during lockdown and the COVID-19 pandemic. Their study enabled investigation of a group that was highly vulnerable, especially in the pandemic, warranting an approach that maximized anonymity while seeking authenticity in disclosures. Lyons and Brewer documented four major themes associated with IPV victims' experiences during lockdown and the pandemic: (a) use of COVID-19 by the abuser; (b) service disruption; (c) preparation to leave; and (d) factors increasing abuse or distress. The authors emphasized the potential for their findings to inform interventions and guidance provided to individuals experiencing IPV during periods of crisis, thereby highlighting the potential for timely research to have immediate policy and practical implications.

These examples, as a whole, illustrate the potential for social media to be deployed to gather meaningful qualitative data related to stigmatized or understudied topics and groups, during periods of social, political, or cultural change or crisis, revealing key insights about families and relationships. Social media offers anonymity *and* community, thereby facilitating disclosure of potentially marginalized opinions and perspectives, as well as the sharing of sensitive or stigmatized experiences or identities—and, in turn, may also encourage the sharing of resources and support.

QUALITATIVE ORTHODOXY VERSUS FLEXIBILITY

We now discuss the possibilities when flexibility, plurality, and creativity are encouraged with regard to qualitative data analysis—as well as the limitations of an overly rigid approach. We

recognize that both editors and authors face the challenge of striking a fair balance between providing (and following) structured guidance on qualitative methods, and enacting creative, innovative methodological approaches, including the gathering, analysis, and writing up of qualitative data (Goldberg & Allen, 2015). We appreciate that multiple journals in the social sciences (e.g., *Sex Roles*, *American Psychologist*, *JMF*, *The Gerontologist*) have developed guidelines to assist qualitative scholars, particularly those who are new to qualitative work (Frieze, 2013; Levitt et al., 2018; Schoenberg et al., 2011), including quantitative researchers who are called upon to evaluate qualitative manuscripts and grant proposals (Small & Calarco, 2022). At times, these guidelines have been developed to indicate an openness to qualitative manuscript submissions—but also to establish the basic elements that such submissions should entail (LaRossa et al., 2014). Such guidelines vary in their level of detail and their flexibility—that is, the extent to which they serve as guidance versus must be followed precisely for a paper to be reviewed or accepted. The pull of a methodological *template* for qualitative work comes in part from the reality that researchers who are new to qualitative work seek out shortcuts to accelerate the process of learning qualitative methods (Köhler et al., 2022). The tendency for journals and editors to construct and rely on templates in evaluating qualitative research reflects the lack of a formalized or agreed upon guidebook from which to evaluate qualitative work.

One advantage of such guidebooks is they can provide a basis for rejecting manuscripts that do not meet certain standards related to style (e.g., they contain no participant quotations or original data), as well as method (e.g., they fail to provide enough details on the data analysis process to meet criteria related to transferability, or the extent to which findings can be assumed to extend to other settings and groups, and the like). Yet, one pitfall in overreliance upon a formal guidebook is that they promote standardization, where a given journal publishes papers that all follow the same basic structure and format in data analysis and findings, such that various papers from the same journal begin to look like pages pulled from the same cookbook. Striking a fair balance between encouraging rigor and allowing flexibility (Ferguson & Ferguson, 2000; Köhler et al., 2022) is a challenge that may be especially daunting for editors and reviewers who are not seasoned qualitative methodologists. When editors or reviewers hold strict requirements for data (e.g., certain number of participants or transcripts) or procedures (e.g., providing counts of themes, interrater reliability calculations), without a "holistic consideration of the study's goals and methodological variations" (Hardesty et al., 2019, p. 4801), and see these as indices or benchmarks of credibility (Gabriel, 2015), opportunities for creativity and variety are lost.

Such standardization is especially troublesome when considering qualitative researchers' varied goals, data collection approaches, samples, and theoretical frameworks. A "one size fits all" approach is especially inappropriate in the context of the rich, diverse, and dynamic nature of interdisciplinary qualitative work on families. Consider a researcher who conducts a series of focus groups with seven parents who have lost children under age 18, over three time points. This scholar develops a theory of how their identities and coping as bereaved parents changes over time. In contrast, consider a study of 45 engaged couples, wherein each partner ($N = 90$) completes separate online open-ended surveys focused on their expectations of marriage. The researcher is interested in how participants' gender, race, and age inform their ideas about marriage, as well as the "fit" between partners' narratives. Should these two scholars be expected to follow the same set of guidelines for reporting their work? If they seek to follow a given set of guidelines, will their efforts to "check the boxes" (wherein a prescribed set of phrases and steps are deemed acceptable and those that fall outside the set list are regarded as unacceptable) have the effect of narrowing the scope, depth, and meaning of their work?

Our perspective is that qualitative papers always need a clear description of the data analysis process, where the authors provide readers with "the concrete tools and, more important, the 'analytic journey' used, to identify 'the essence or meaning of data'" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008,

pp. 160–161). The goal should be to generate "an understanding of how the analysis was done in order to engender trust in and understanding of the story that the authors will tell about the data" (Goldberg & Allen, 2015, p. 10). Authors should articulate several elements relevant to the data analysis: (a) the theoretical framework and research questions guiding the study; (b) the sensitizing concepts derived from the literature review; (c) the researcher's positionality; and (d) the data and their source (e.g., interview questions, field notes, demographic questions). Authors should also establish trustworthiness (credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), via a number of different possible approaches (see Goldberg & Allen, 2015), and present their findings in rich and resonant ways (Charmaz, 2014).

Yet beyond this, we urge editors, reviewers, and authors not to enforce or capitulate to a manualized approach, in order to ensure methodological diversity and creative insights. Citing Mayan (2009), Sharp and Munly (2022) advocate for qualitative researchers to employ "creativity, sensitivity, and flexibility as we try to make sense of life as it unfolds" and not try to shape a phenomenon into something neat and tidy, "but to break it open, unfasten, or interrupt it so that a description of the phenomenon, in all of its contradictions, messiness, and depth, is (re)presented" (p. 47). Further, Clarke and Braun (2019) note that coding is fundamentally "an interpretative (and therefore situated) process," and observe that "an approach which places consistency above situated-interpretation of data (e.g., through using a [simplified] coding manual to generate inter-rater reliability) risks superficiality," such that the research becomes simplified to such an extent that "all of the richness attained from insight will be lost" (p. 22).

At various points in our own careers, we have contended with reviewers and/or editors who, far from encouraging flexibility and plurality, were deeply committed to a "certain way" of doing qualitative work. Each of us has been told by reviewers and/or editors that we must "count" the number of participants who endorse a particular theme—and, conversely, we have also been advised that "counting" is decidedly quantitative, and told *not* to do it. We have encountered reviewers who insist that theory has no place in qualitative work, on the front end: that, we are told, theory should come out of (and never inform) qualitative work. We have been told that our sample size is too small—or too large. We have been discouraged from using critical or postmodern approaches, or, told that a particular theory or set of theories must be incorporated in the context of a particular subject matter. Finally, we have at times found ourselves justifying why the use of a reflexive approach to qualitative work, far from detracting from the paper, is an essential part of the work—not simply naval-gazing for our own benefit. In turn, we have struggled with the tensions that arise when aspects of our approach (e.g., methodological plurality; use of less accepted qualitative approaches) are clearly at odds with the conventions preferred by the reviewer, editor, or journal—and in turn the chances of publication success seem to be enhanced by or even dependent on our compliance with such conventions.

We have thus far provided examples of work that suggest the power and possibilities of flexibility, which is a hallmark of qualitative family research. Because we are intimately familiar with the process of creating our own research, we now offer an example to further illustrate the different elements and benefits of a flexible approach to qualitative work. Seeking to build on the rich literature on LGBTQ families, which has made many important contributions yet has generally shied away from the most challenging issues in family life, we designed a study to explore various sensitive and hidden topics in LGBTQ family lives (Goldberg et al., 2024). We sampled 39 adults raised by LGBTQ parents using a mixed-methods online survey to examine topics that were barely featured in the literature on LGBTQ families from prior decades. We argued that through an anonymous online survey of open- and closed-ended questions, and given the maturation of the literature on LGBTQ families, it was now possible to inquire about some of the family secrets, problems, and challenges that researchers have avoided in the past. We named the theoretical frameworks that guided our research—communication privacy

management theory, minority stress theory, queer family theory, and a life course perspective—which we then drew upon to interpret our findings. We incorporated our reflexive experiences as family members, collaborators, and data analysts, such that during the process of writing our questions, analytic memos, and interpretations, we were transparent about how our lived experiences informed our views on participants' own words.

This flexible approach is grounded in methodological pluralism, which is another hallmark of qualitative family research (Gilgun, 1999). To the closed- and open-ended online data, we applied descriptive statistics, qualitative content analysis, and reflexive insights from personal experience with hidden family topics. At the same time that we drew from theory and the existing literature in approaching our data, we also stayed open to unexpected ideas. Specifically, we were sensitive to the ways that LGBTQ parent families are marginalized due to structural heteronormativity, while still uncovering participants' nuanced perspectives on their childhoods, whereby they were frank about the challenges they faced while also recognizing that such challenges were generally rooted in systemic oppressions as opposed to their parents' sexual identities per se. At no point did participants blame their parents' identities on the problems they faced; instead, participants revealed the complexity of growing up amidst parental or child challenges related to mental illness, substance abuse, poverty, and the like, and described how they coped with pressures to conceal or reveal such difficulties. Many of those who concealed such issues underscored the role of societal homophobia in their secrecy, emphasizing that their parents' sexual orientation would likely have been a focal target by outsiders as the root cause of family challenges. This was particularly the case for those who grew up in the 1980s and 1990s, illustrating the importance of a life course lens that is sensitive to the social-historical context in analyzing experiences and responses to minority stress.

As researchers, we also used our insider knowledge of queer families—informed by our research careers and life histories—to help us uncover and understand how to report and interpret the complexities our participants revealed. Specifically, we drew on our varied perspectives as members of LGBTQ families, as well as people who have lived through the hidden nature of some of our own family's issues, to approach the data, resulting in a fusion of independent but often overlapping, observations. We sought to "lean in" to and "trust… our queer sensibilities" as a source of information, rather than to create distance from or deny our personal "stake" in the data (Meadow, 2018b, p. 155). All of us have been transformed by hidden family dynamics in our own lives, which we have written about in reflexive narratives (Allen, 2023; Goldberg, 2023; Sanner, 2023). I (KRA), for example, have described how unclear I am about how many children I have: 2, 1, or none (Allen, 2023). My uncertainty reveals several sets of invisible, hidden family experiences, resulting from a lesbian breakup (losing contact with one child) as well as my other son's death at age 23. This is not a topic anyone wants to hear about—death and loss are highly taboo topics—and yet my experiences of losing children to divorce and death helps to sensitize my capacity as a qualitative researcher to others' experiences of topics that are kept hidden for fear of judgment, retraumatization, and the like.

QUALITATIVE THEORIZING: THE MAGIC OF COMPLEXITY, AMBIGUITY, AND FLUIDITY

Theory is fundamental to high-quality qualitative family research (e.g., Daly, 2007; Goldberg & Allen, 2015; Lareau, 2021). The theorizing process in qualitative research is often what draws most of us in and keeps us hooked. We know we are reading an excellent analysis when we feel it embodied—in the gut or in the heart. Just the title of Lillian Rubin's (Rubin, 1976) classic book based on in-depth interviews with working class couples, *Worlds of Pain*, provided a gut punch about blue-collar life in the midst of affluence in California, and made this book a "must read" for older generations of qualitative scholars. Another example that sings its theorized

content simply in the title alone is Annette Lareau's (Lareau, 2000) article "My Wife Can Tell Me Who I Know." The title conveys a truth that readers recognize about men in many heterosexual marriages, where wives/mothers are the family kinkeepers and fathers are "a poor source of information about children's daily lives" (p. 408). Lareau's (2011) book, *Unequal Childhoods: Class*, *Race*, *and Family Life* also represents an unparalleled example of intersectional family scholarship that is rich, resonant, and profoundly gripping. Likewise, how can anyone read Audre Lorde's (Lorde, 1984) autoethnographic, intersectional, and highly theorized writing—grounded in her lived experience as a Black lesbian mother—about "age, race, class, and sex" or "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" and not be deeply moved and want to respond in the direction of social change? And, Mignon Moore's (Moore, 2011) book, *Invisible Families: Gay Identities*, *Relationships*, *and Motherhood Among Black Women* demonstrates an intersectional Black feminist theoretical and methodological approach to family scholarship, offering profound theoretical and empirical contributions to the field. These are just a few examples of the elegance and resonance that theorizing with qualitative data can generate.

Yet, such "magic" can be elusive without an inclusive commitment to theory: theory on the front end, theory through the data analytic process, and theory at the conclusion. Theory is the connective tissue that is necessary to take words, actions, and other forms of data and to weave them together into a work of art. Theory and method are inextricably linked (Denzin, 1989). Even when messy, which qualitative research is increasingly leading us toward, theory is what makes the beauty happen (Jamison, 2019; Meadow, 2018b). The theorizing process helps the researcher to transform ordinary experience and language into new insights. Yet there is often disagreement—including confusion and ambiguity—about the role of theory in qualitative research: how theory relates to qualitative work in terms of methodological process and final written product. This tension can be traced back to Barney Glaser, one of the original authors of the classic grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), in reference to the inductive method, where researchers were instructed to enter the field objectively and "context-free," without any preconceived ideas (Charmaz, 2014, p. 235). Yet, the interdisciplinary study of families is not context-free, and family science is a discipline that is theory-rich and theory-informed (Allen & Henderson, 2022, 2023). Tensions about how and when to use theory vary by disciplinary context; for example, Besbris and Khan (2017) critique the superficial proliferation of vacuous "new" theories at the expense of relying upon fewer sociological ideas that would be "more powerful" (p. 147), but generations of family scholars have advocated for the importance of explicit theorizing (Adamsons et al., 2022; Bengtson et al., 2005; Doherty et al., 1993).

We assert at least two approaches to thinking about the relationship between theory and qualitative work. Such approaches are indebted to grounded theory procedures. Grounded theory, one of the engines of qualitative research, weds the scientific and creative process of theory development through close association with data (in the form of words, concepts, experiences, and graphics). Grounded theory procedures of theoretical sensitivity, sensitizing concepts, line-by-line and focused coding, constant comparison methods, theoretical saturation, and the like, are typically employed in most qualitative research (Charmaz, 2014). Such is the case even when the approach (as is common in thematic analyses) is more toward the development of a theoretical storyline in which themes are apparent (Allen & Goldberg, 2020; Sanner et al., 2018), rather than to "fully flesh out a theoretical model that can be usable and testable" (Hardesty et al., 2022, p. 326). In other words, there are multiple uses of qualitative procedures for theory development. Although, as Corbin and Strauss (2008) state, "quality in qualitative research is something that we recognize when we see it" while acknowledging that "explaining what it is or how to achieve it is much more difficult" (p. 297), we believe that the thoughtful use of theory is a strong part of what enables us to recognize the quality in qualitative family research.

To demonstrate the "how" and "what" of the significance of theory for qualitative family research, we now illustrate how these pathways to theorizing use creativity and depth to enhance rigor. As noted, most qualitative research uses some variation of grounded theory procedures to generate data and codes, but the data analytic process in one type concludes with a thematic analysis and in another type with a fully articulated theory. We advocate plurality in theory outcomes, which are either (a) a theoretical storyline that is the result of a thematic analysis, or (b) a full-fledged grounded theory. We see value in both, as well as in other possible approaches. For example, in their thematic analysis, Siegel and Dekel (2022), described above, were sensitized by family stress theory at the front end and used it to help interpret their findings related to relationship processes during COVID-19. They noted how spouses may have a buffering effect on one another in the face of a crisis via the provision of practical and emotional support, and, in turn, each partner may have buffered the other from stress. Couples' ability to maintain high cohesiveness and stability may have been aided by the fact that, even in couples where partners lost jobs due to the pandemic, they still had financial security because of the frontliner's hospital wages and job security.

Next, we provide several examples of theory-rich studies where grounded theory principles were applied and theoretical development was enhanced. In our first example, Giordano et al. (2022) conducted a study that was unique in its use of individual interviews with both intimate partner violence (IPV)-experienced respondents and their partners and its use of theory to frame and interpret the findings. Although the authors' initial goal in conducting interviews with both partners was to gain insight into each individual's view of the relationship dynamics associated with conflict and violence, and to highlight gendered aspects of their perspectives, their grounded theory analysis led them to develop the insight that certain "shared" understandings within couples (e.g., about the reasons for violence) exist. The authors refer to this as a "developing micro-culture," to "anchor the idea that meanings are crafted on-site, as well as based on imported elements such as family history and gender socialization" (Giordano et al., 2022, p. 1077). They used symbolic interactionist theory, which, along with conflict theory, underpins most qualitative research (Daly, 2007; LaRossa, 1977, 2005), to interrogate and highlight how

> the "intimate" features of IPV, and associated levels of interaction and communication, are a part of the meaning construction process along with imported elements (e.g., family history, individual differences in temperament, and/or gendered socialization). While a couple's micro-culture is comprised of many features, results highlighted three areas: (a) shared understandings about the couple's reasons for conflict, (b) ideas about "causes" of conflict escalation, and (c) views on the meaning and import of each partner's use of aggression within the relationship. (p. 1076)

Thus, partners' narrative accounts of conflict domains—which often centered on infidelity and other problem behaviors such as substance abuse, as well as perceived causes underlying the escalation of conflict—were characterized by notable partner agreement or concordance. In turn, "narratives at times reflected a keen understanding of the other partner's viewpoint. This suggests that a level of role-taking is likely to occur, even within the confines of highly conflictual relationships, and where the referent is the genesis of conflict itself" (p. 1077).

Giordano and colleagues demonstrated a thorough use of theory to motivate and analyze the findings. Additionally, they add richness by using both individual- and dyadic-level analyses to interrogate relationship dynamics and processes. Although not typical in the write-up of research findings, including qualitative work, they also referenced other studies in the Results, which was effective in highlighting how their findings echoed, built on, and challenged prior work. Finally, the findings had meaningful implications for prevention and intervention efforts.

In a second example of a theoretically informed study of an important yet invisible aspect of family life, Randles (2022) conducted phone interviews of 70 parents experiencing diaper need

(racially and ethnically diverse; generally near the poverty line) as well as 40 individuals involved in diaper distribution and advocacy. Randles used an abductive analytical approach (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014; Timmermans & Tavory, 2012), that relied on "knowledge of previous literature to deductively shape the research questions and interview guides, while remaining open to inductive findings and explanations that emerged from the data" (p. 1415). Randles noted that flexible coding uncovered racialized differences among mothers:

> Mindful that mothers of color were not a monolithic "non-white" group and that their racial identities were rooted in complex self-understandings of race, ethnicity, nationality, and language… notable patterned differences emerged between mothers who identified as white and those who did not. (p. 1414)

In the process of her analysis, she noted that mothers of color often addressed the race-based fear that they would be judged as "unfit," and white mothers did not address identity stigma. Instead:

> white mothers described diaper need as shaped primarily by economic stress and gendered stigma. Mothers of color described similar experiences of material deprivation and compromised maternal self-efficacy as unfolding within the context of additional and distinct racialized stress, stigma, and surveillance related to diapers. (p. 1415)

Randles creatively leveraged theory to motivate and conceptualize her findings, describing her study as a "case study of intersectional family justice," and highlighting how it reveals the interaction of racism, classism, and sexism to create a common but invisible form of material deprivation that shapes mothering experiences. She concludes that "triangulating mothers' and diaper bankers' perspectives revealed how the concern, shame, and fear of diaper distress are burdens some families face, while the taken-for-granted ability to access diapers without delay, difficulty, or indignity operates as a privilege of others" (p. 1423).

In a final example of theory-rich qualitative research, Scheibling and Milkie (2023) employed symbolic interactionism to study gendered parenting ideologies prevalent on mommy blogs and dad blogs. The authors saturated the study with theory from the beginning, positioning the contemporary analysis of parents writing about family issues online (in an increasingly monetized arena) in terms of sociological ideas about "intensive mothering." They used this conceptual sensitivity to wonder theoretically about how fathers are associated with any type of intensive parental norms and advice, and also about how intensive parenthood ideologies and norms are represented, resisted, or amplified in an online context. Their study was grounded in symbolic interactionism as the "conceptual scaffolding for examining how family discourse is generated and disseminated through media" (p. 499). They applied sensitizing concepts from the theory to 400 written posts from parent bloggers, coding the posts for their narrative orientation, using a "qualitative analysis of thematic meanings and framing process across these posts" (p. 500). Their theoretical work allowed them to extend, but also complicate, the concept of intensive mothering by bringing men's voices into the analytic frame, revealing new ideas about parental imperfection as well as shifts in parenting norms and cultures in the digital world.

Specifically, Scheibling and Milkie's findings revealed how both mommy bloggers and dad bloggers push back against the ideal of devoting their whole lives to their children, acknowledging that they are imperfect parents amidst an impossible standard. Both mothers' and fathers' posts similarly addressed the work of protecting children's health and well-being. Fathers specifically engaged in discursive resistance to intensive mothering norms and ideals, whereby they emphasized scaling back on work, challenging "toxic" masculinity, and calling for other men to

become more involved at home. And yet, the findings revealed how the enabling of children's success, via education and extracurricular activities, continues to be treated as a maternal responsibility. Intensive mothering is extended through mommy bloggers' discourse about using consumer goods and services as parenting solutions and the greater corporate sponsorship of their posts than dad bloggers. In sum, the authors articulated how discursive patterns documented across mommy blogs and dad blogs relate to the larger social construction of parenthood and advance our understanding of how gendered parental pressures are reinforced and resisted online. Taken together, these examples illustrate the many creative ways to theorize in conjunction with data collection and analysis.

REFLEXIVITY AS A CRITICAL COMPONENT TO QUALITATIVE WORK

Reflexivity offers a methodological strategy for connecting the particular of lived experience to the general of social structures that control our lives (Allen, 2000, 2023). Reflexivity has been conceptualized in many ways, across diverse disciplines. Reflecting on the researcher's positionality and stance is a hallmark of the earliest works of qualitative social science, from Du Bois's (1996) work on Black families at the turn of the 20th century, to Ernest Burgess's (Burgess, 1926) use of personal narrative to describe families, to the mid-century foundational works of Laud Humphreys (1970) and Lillian Rubin (1976), to its contemporary elaboration in autoethnographic practice (Adams & Manning, 2015). In family science, researchers have relied on reflexive analyses to situate their investment in work that often breaks new ground (Allen, 2023). Like Charmaz (2014), who critiqued the reduction of reflexivity to simply providing a positionality statement in a research report, we support a strong engagement with the reflexive process throughout the study. Reflexivity is the fuel that runs the entire qualitative process, from conceptualization to data procurement to interpretation, as many qualitative family scholars have noted (Allen, 2000; Daly, 2007; Gilgun, 2012; LaRossa, 2005). Revealing the underbelly of one's research experience, including one's own investment in the research, has been central to qualitative family methods from its inception.

Reflexivity as positionality statement

How to report reflexivity, often in the form of a positionality statement—the if, how, and when—can be a topic of confusion and contention in writing, evaluating, and providing solid guidance on qualitative manuscripts. Although we share Charmaz's (2014) view that the author's reflexive awareness should be transparent throughout the research process, journals do not typically encourage this type of comprehensive transparency. Yet a well-written, reflexive statement of one's positionality as researcher can significantly enhance the depth of analysis and reporting, and render a qualitative manuscript more engaging and readable. We argue for movement beyond a rote recitation of identities such that authors, editors, reviewers, and readers can consider the benefits of meaningful reflection on and writing about one's own identities and experiences and their relevance to the research process. We next provide illustrative examples of research wherein the authors' reflexivity arguably enhances the research process, analysis, and write-up of the findings, and highlights the creativity and richness of qualitative data analysis.

While reflexivity statements have multiple potential purposes and can take a variety of different forms, in many cases they are treated not as a key aspect of the research process, but as a

box to be checked, such that stating one's demographics is deemed acceptable and appropriate in the reporting of the coding and analysis process. In turn, such statements are often represented as recitations of one's demographics, and thus become diluted "performances" of positionality. Such recitations may represent "missed opportunities" for deeper engagement with positionality (Allen, 2023; Morrow, 2005). Depending on the study topic and the author's relationship to it, the author may find it appropriate to share their "approach to subjectivity; any assumptions, expectations, and biases [they] bring to the investigation… how reflexive processes affected the analysis… and how… power [was] managed among researchers" (Morrow, 2005; p. 259).

By including reflexivity, researchers make their own approach transparent, including their investment or stake in the study they have conducted (Dickie, 2003). Their decisions about what problems and questions are worth investigating, what type of data should be collected, how that data should be analyzed, and what the final research product looks like, always reflect overt or covert assumptions (Rubel & Villalba, 2009). Revealing one's reflexive process—including how one's identities mirrored or deviated from those of participants, and how this impacted researcher–participant interactions, data collection, and data analysis, can reveal precious insights into the research process as a whole, as well as the findings (Meadow, 2018b; Moore, 2018). Randles (2022) provided a positionality statement that conveys her approach and stake as informed by critical race feminism, and stands out in its richness, relevance, and insight:

> As a white, native-born, middle-class woman who never experienced diaper need, I was demographically different from mothers and similar to diaper bankers. Respondents did not have visual data to gauge my gender, race, or age; none inquired about my race, but many asked about my age and parental status. Sharing that I had a child in diapers was a key source of rapport for both mothers and diaper bankers, 80% of whom were parents…. Although mothers' and my experiences of diapering radically diverged due to distinct racial and economic social positions, I connected with respondents as fellow mothers of young children, while being cognizant of my multiple forms of privilege that protected my diapering practices from similar stigma and scrutiny.

Likewise, in reflecting on the ways her identities mirrored and differed from those of her participants—Black sexual minority mothers, many of whom she recruited via shared social and community spaces (see also, Moore, 2011)—Moore (2018) shared:

> While I might have been an insider because of my racial and sexual identity, there are many ways I was an outsider in lesbian communities of color. First of all, many of the "regulars" in the nightlife scene had come of age sneaking into bars and clubs in their late teens, whereas I had spent my teen years in a conservative Pentecostal church, and all of my twenties in graduate school. I had very few experiences in sexual-minority spaces…. Another way I experienced the permeability of insider-outsider status was through my ethnicity as a black American woman in a city with an ethnically diverse population of black people. During the first decade of the 2000s when I was conducting my fieldwork… Caribbean and African women constituted about 35 percent of the black population in New York City. As a black American woman with familial roots in North and South Carolina, my history and experiences were different from those of the immigrant and first-generation Caribbean and African women who were part of sexual-minority communities. This difference became acute at times, and redefined my role as insider or outsider, depending on the circumstances. (pp. 178–179)

As noted, there are benefits to not simply providing a singular statement of one's positionality, but incorporating reflexivity throughout the manuscript. Although reflexivity or positionality statements often appear in the Method section, they can be effectively revisited and integrated into the Discussion or Limitations. In Goldberg and Kuvalanka (2018), who studied nonbinary college students' experiences in higher education, the positionality statement first appeared in the Method (p. 6):

> The first author is a White cisgender woman who has been studying LGBTQ families for over 15 years and has extensive experience with qualitative analysis. Her experiences as an advocate for LGBTQ students as well as her experiences teaching a growing number of nonbinary trans students led her to initiate this project in collaboration with several TGNC students. The second author, also a White cisgender woman, is the lead researcher on a study of TGNC children… As cisgender researchers studying trans students, we aimed to be cognizant of how our personal experiences in regard to gender may have influenced our interpretations of the data. Thus, we continuously challenged each other as co-researchers and authors to consider how cisnormative bias could shape our analysis and interpretations. In addition, we intentionally centered participants' perspectives and checked our interpretations with participants… Gaining their input facilitated researcher reflexivity, and was instrumental in enabling us to identify underlying assumptions and potential biases.

Then, we returned to our positionality in the limitations of the study. We acknowledged how, despite going to great lengths to center participants' voices, as with all qualitative analyses, "we cannot wholly separate our perspectives from the process and acknowledge that other researchers would have approached the data with different lenses and may have reached different conclusions" (p. 10). In this way, reflexivity need not be "done" (i.e., performed) only in the Method, but returned to as part of the interpretive analysis or discussion that accompanies the presentation of findings. Acknowledging that the instrument of analysis is inherently human means also naming, without hesitation or shame, the reality that our own social statuses, personal experiences, and scholarly competencies and limitations necessarily shape the research product that has just been presented. As Clarke and Braun (2019) note, "positioning interpretations as accurate and unbiased—rhetorically inferring that anyone would have interpreted the data that way—[ultimately serves to] negate responsibility for [one's] interpretations" (p. 22). Editors and reviewers should aim to consider such ownership of one's humanity as a potentially central and honest component of the Method, rather than unnecessary "filler" or oversharing.

Reflexivity as showing the seams of the data analysis process

Reflexivity is not only the accounting of one's positionality in the actual, written manuscript or research product. Rather, it is imbued throughout the data analytic process. We next highlight an example of how we managed "bumping up" against our own experiences in the research process, and how we used our insights and discomfort gleaned from such encounters to deepen (as opposed to restrict) our analysis (see also Acosta, 2018; Allen, 2023; Craven, 2019; Goldberg, 2023). We do this to show the value of accounting for the researcher's positioning while also acknowledging that such accounting will necessarily be incomplete and will also vary across researchers. We also do this to illustrate the "behind the scenes" work of reflexivity, including the pieces that do not end up in the narrative description of one's positionality in relation to the research process. As Charmaz (2014) noted, more of this messiness needs to be incorporated into the research report.

We have often bumped up against each other in terms of the ideas and themes that we perceive as most valuable to highlight in the data. In our study of gay fathers interacting with heterosexual mothers in schools (Goldberg et al., 2020), we initially had different reactions and opinions about what to emphasize in the data. This affected not only how we coded line-by-line, but made us continually assess what our storyline would be. The second author (KRA) was particularly sensitive to how our discussion, contextualization, and centering of certain narratives might contribute to stereotypes of heterosexual mothers as "mean girls" (even though one of the gay dads had referred to some women this way, and several others used language that implicitly framed some mothers in this way). Given her own experience as a mother who raised children in a lesbian parent family, and whose adult son died by suicide, she acknowledged that the "red flag" she saw about possibly blaming mothers for negative child outcomes was reflexively linked to her own lived experience as a bereaved mother of a gay son. In a memo to the coding team, she wrote:

> "Mom Culture" is used in this passage by this man in an exceptionally negative, explicitly sexist way. Some of the earlier quotes aren't this overt. So, I think this section needs to hone in on whether we actually want to label ALL of this section as "mom culture"—because it is really pitting WOMEN against GLBT families, and as queer researchers, we don't want to do the either/or with this. I'm not sure Mom Culture is the best heading for this section—since its meaning by this one man is so vituperative. I like that we are focusing this section of data analysis on "gender", but I don't want it to come across as "moms are bad". It is so complex and we can't let the women take the fall for it.

The first author (AEG) was particularly sensitive to highlighting narratives in which gay fathers' quotations would render them as "bitchy queens" and other harmful stereotypes about gay men. Her years of studying gay fathers sensitized her to the complex ways in which gay men navigate hostility related to their roles as men, fathers, and gay men/gay fathers, particularly in the school setting. In a memo to the authorship team, she wrote:

> I think we want to be conscious about how our selection of quotes could be interpreted as reinforcing both gendered AND homophobic stereotypes—uncontextualized quotes could, to the untheorized reader, come across as suggesting these men are embodying the stereotypes of "bitchy queens" in their censoring of "mom drama" and blaming the moms at their kids' school.

As we combed through the data over and over again, we relied not just on our sensitizing theories of ecological, intersectional, and minority stress frameworks, but were also sensitized by our insider's knowledge of and first-hand experiences with motherhood, queer families, and queer research, all of which is intertwined with our commitment to feminist activist scholarship. We brought our "detective's eye" to the data (Thorne, 1982), and confronted our own fears and assumptions about who gets blamed in families, challenging each other on those assumptions, writing back and forth about the data, and working with our third coauthor, who also has studied gay fathers, to gain another perspective.

Ultimately, we used our reflexive practice to arrive at a theoretical storyline that was informed by our data, our personal experiences, our theories, and our own credibility checks. The storyline included key ideas about how institutional heteronormativity persists in schools, and how gay fathers engage with schools, including classrooms and parent networks. Gay fathers occupy ambiguous spaces where some have race, class, and gender privilege that allow them to pursue "better" schools, and, often, to have a voice within such schools. Others occupy multiple marginalized statuses that may impact the schools that they have available to them and also render them especially vulnerable to alienation from parent networks that consist

mostly of heterosexual mothers. Our coding, write-up, and interpretation of the data ultimately reflected our feminist reflexive sensibility, intersectional theory, and our own deep knowledge from years of collecting data from and living in and among queer families—and our commitment to hashing out in memos and conversations all of the possible leads and storylines embedded in the data.

QUALITATIVE FAMILY RESEARCH: GUIDANCE FOR AUTHORS, REVIEWERS, AND EDITORS

Qualitative publications have gained a crucial role in family journals. Top-ranked journals are communicating their commitment to innovative qualitative research. We are excited about the burgeoning interest in, publication of, and possibilities associated with qualitative family research, while also recognizing that editors, reviewers, and scholars alike continue to benefit from guidance (not orthodoxy) related to the implementation and evaluation of high-quality qualitative research. In keeping with our four themes of online methodological innovation, analytic flexibility, theoretical grounding, and informed reflexivity, we offer the following suggestions to authors, reviewers, and editors.

Embracing new methods and celebrating innovation

Online open-ended surveys, as tools for qualitative research, offer new methodological applications. Likewise, video interviews and social media offer opportunities for deepening our understanding of complex and taboo topics in relation to family life. Qualitative research projects are well-suited for methodological innovation (Braun et al., 2021). One particular advantage is that the advent of new technologies can be harnessed for greater accessibility in reaching formerly invisible populations, and tackling difficult, sensitive topics. A danger, though, is the fear of sacrificing depth and the human dimension when sample selection and data collection move to online environments. Researchers need to be keenly aware of the trade-offs of online research and commit to rigorous reporting methods so that transparency and rigor are not sacrificed. They should also be attentive to the unique ethical issues that arise when conducting research using online methods—such as taking all necessary steps to preserve anonymity if this is what is promised, and ensuring that participants are clearly informed about the nature and type of questions that will be asked (Smith et al., 2018). Sterzing et al. (2018), for example, outline a number of ideas for minimizing ethical issues in online research with vulnerable populations such as piloting the survey to determine which questions evoke the most distress and also providing mental health and support resources at the conclusion of the survey. Notably, concerns about vulnerable populations participating in research may be overblown: indeed, individuals reporting on challenging issues such as mental and physical health problems, grief, and intimate partner violence often share their feeling that the benefits of their participation (e.g., self-reflection, helping others) outweigh any distress that they have experienced (Alexander et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2018). Of course, caution must always be taken whenever conducting research on sensitive issues, regardless of whether it is online or in person, particularly if the study population or topic is new to researchers.

Honoring pluralism and avoiding the pitfalls of formulaic qualitative work

Like Gilgun (1999, 2012), we are strong proponents of methodological pluralism in qualitative family research. As Köhler et al. (2022) note, the overutilization of a small number of templates

that are deemed acceptable and mainstream "restricts methodological plurality and can ultimately limit innovativeness, creativity, and richness of qualitative research" (p. 193). Experienced qualitative researchers, ourselves included, worry that the utility of templates or overreliance on guidelines and models will lead to a mechanization of qualitative work that has the potential to impede novel insights and blunt the development of theory. The result may ultimately be a lack of originality in journal submissions and publications, and a "misfit" between the author's research questions or approach and the template they apply. For example, researchers could feel pressured to apply a particular set of steps to coding—or describe their coding—in ways that are a poor match to their research questions and/or analytic process.

In turn, it is important that authors, reviewers, and editors have the tools to appreciate, and assess, good qualitative family research. Drawing on their experiences as journal editors, Corley et al. (2021) urge authors, reviewers, and editors to assess qualitative research by considering how well the project has provided rich, unique, and engaging insights into a complex topic, rather than pursue the rote application of a template. We also encourage editors to be mindful of how they select reviewers of qualitative work and how they evaluate the feedback provided by reviewers in regards to qualitative work. We suggest caution and care in contextualizing the reviews of reviewers who are miffed that the author has not detailed a specified list of steps in their analysis. Although authors should always describe their method, coding, and analysis, it should not be the case that if they do not follow a template or manual, the paper is rejected.

To this point, in writing from their experience as editors, Corley et al. (2021) note how, in reviewing a paper one of them deemed to have "magic" but was not analyzed in the way one reviewer would have liked, after the first revision, the editor writes the following internal memo:

> Reviewer 2 continues to believe the methodological approach is flawed. I see where she is coming from, but I believe this reviewer is too concerned about templates and is not seeing the quality of the data and the constructivist paradigm from which the authors are writing. Again, I will gently signal in my decision letter that while Reviewer 2's comments are valid, the authors are not obliged to code the data as prescribed by Reviewer 2 as long as they indicate why they haven't.

Likewise, in offering feedback to authors on qualitative manuscripts, editors and reviewers should not simply seek to avoid deploying rigid sets of guidelines, but, should also carefully consider their tone and messaging. Specifically, they should ask themselves: if they do believe that a manuscript has merit and potentiality, what can they say to encourage authors to craft their most theorized, creative qualitative work? What kind of advice can they provide that will guide and inspire—as opposed to promoting dejection, confusion, or even fear? While change-oriented feedback can be challenging to receive, autonomy-supportive change-oriented feedback (i.e., feedback that is empathic, includes guidance and attainable goals, and is given in a respectful, considerate tone; Carpentier & Mageau, 2013) can inspire and encourage. We as authors feel most empowered to make changes when we feel "seen and heard" by the person giving us "instructions"—when we feel that we are invited, and trusted, do our best work; when we are valued and acknowledged as part of the scholarly production process; and when we feel as though the guidance is given is supportive (i.e., does not have a "gotcha" quality).

We invite reviewers and editors to consider what feedback will inspire an author to do their best work. Direction is more easily received, processed, and implemented when given with kindness and respect. Highlighting what works well, accompanied by specific guidance on what to focus on in revising, will enable authors to produce more impactful scholarship.

Explicit accounting of and respect for the "magic" of theory

Qualitative family research and theory are soulmates. Often, it is through the evocative use of a theorized analysis that readers become researchers, and ultimately, come to understand human and family life more deeply. Recognizing the so-called truth in a participant's words doesn't just happen: a painstaking process must take place where theory and data wed. This merger involves proposing sensitizing concepts, threading through words and narratives with theoretical prompts, and analyzing data so that the theoretical storyline is revealed. Explicit statements are needed about the choice and rationale for concepts used to sensitize the study, and then step-by-step statements about how the research team went from a to b to c and wound up at d. Reviewers and editors need not insist on a cookbook approach, but instead, we urge that authors, like Hansel and Gretel, provide the breadcrumbs that lead the way to discovery.

Valuing reflexivity

We encourage authors, reviewers, and editors to appreciate the value of reflexivity—which may include expanding page limits to journal articles to encourage and allow for its integration—and also recognize that it may take a variety of forms and vary in the degree to which it is part of versus at the center of the manuscript. We caution against "requiring" a specific type of positionality statement. We also wish to go beyond encouraging authors and editors to appreciate the value of reflexivity as part of the process and product of qualitative research, to also create space for autoethnographic and other methods that center reflexivity—indeed, where reflexivity is at the heart of the work, and constitutes the method (Adams & Manning, 2015; Allen, 2000, 2023; Daly, 2007; Gilgun, 2012). For example, Porschitz and Siler (2017) describe miscarriage and the experience of secrecy and stigma in the workplace, weaving in their own personal experiences of this issue. Winges-Yanez (2014) describes sexuality and disability, illuminating their standpoint as the sibling of someone with an intellectual disability, who also works with people with intellectual disabilities. We are not asserting that authors must always share the ways their personal experience—particularly if marginalized—interfaces with their research topic or participants. But, we encourage authors to critically evaluate and explore these intersections and determine if and how explication of them may enhance the research process and product. Ultimately, we encourage researchers to strive for self-awareness (Small & Calarco, 2022), recognizing how one's identities vis-a-vis one's research participants and topic may affect the processes and outcomes of data collection and analysis.

CONCLUSION

The value of qualitative family research is in providing in-depth understandings of misunderstood, invisible, and complex family processes and structures, and to do so in ways that resonate with readers' lives. Qualitative family research has a highly sophisticated and flexible set of tools that call upon art and science, and often in the service of social justice. In this article, we illuminated examples of four current trends in qualitative family research that help to forge pathways of inquiry and understanding: online methodological innovation, analytic flexibility, theoretical engagement, and critical reflexive practice. We concluded that qualitative family research is at its best when it is adapting its methods to new technologies, engaging in methodological pluralism, naming the theories and traditions in which the research is embedded, describing the methods and analyses rigorously, and working the data deeply and thickly so that the resulting interpretation produces in the reader that "ah ha" moment of recognition.

ORCID

Abbie E. Goldberg ⓘ https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7654-4539
Katherine R. Allen ⓘ https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9920-0333

REFERENCES

Abaied, J. L., Perry, S. P., Cheaito, A., & Ramirez, V. (2022). Racial socialization messages in white parents' discussions of current events involving racism with their adolescents. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *32*(3), 863–882. https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12767

Acosta, K. L. (2018). Queering family scholarship: Theorizing from the borderlands. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, *10*(2), 406–418. https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12263

Adams, T. E., & Manning, J. (2015). Autoethnography and family research. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, *7*(4), 350–366. https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12116

Adamsons, K., Few-Demo, A. L., Proulx, C. M., & Roy, K. (2022). Family theories and methodologies: A dynamic approach. In K. Adamsons, A. L. Few-Demo, C. M. Proulx, & K. Roy (Eds.), *Sourcebook of family theories and methodologies: A dynamic approach* (pp. 3–20). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-92002-9_1

Alexander, S., Pillay, R., & Smith, B. (2018). A systematic review of the experiences of vulnerable people participating in research on sensitive topics. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, *88*, 85–96. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2018.08.013

Allen, K. R. (2000). A conscious and inclusive family studies. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *62*(1), 4–17. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2000.00004.x

Allen, K. R. (2023). Feminist theory, method, and praxis: Toward a critical consciousness for family and close relationship scholars. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *40*(3), 899–936. https://doi.org/10.1177/02654075211065779

Allen, K. R., & Goldberg, A. E. (2020). Lesbian women disrupting gendered, heteronormative discourses of motherhood, marriage, and divorce. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, *24*(1), 12–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/10894160.2019.1615356

Allen, K. R., & Goldberg, A. E. (2022). Apart, but still together: Separated parents living in limbo during COVID-19. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, *48*(3), 845–860. https://doi.org/10.1111/jmft.12556

Allen, K. R., & Henderson, A. C. (2022). Family theorizing for social justice: A critical praxis. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, *14*(3), 364–383. https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12450

Allen, K. R., & Henderson, A. C. (2023). *Family theories today: A critical intersectional approach* (2nd ed.). Cognella Academic Publishers.

Allen, K. R., & Walker, A. J. (2000). Qualitative research. In C. Hendrick & S. S. Hendrick (Eds.), *Close relationships: A sourcebook* (pp. 19–30). Sage.

Ambert, A.-M., Adler, P. A., Adler, P., & Detzner, D. F. (1995). Understanding and evaluating qualitative research. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *57*(4), 879–893. https://doi.org/10.2307/353409

Archibald, M. M., Ambagtsheer, R. C., Casey, M. G., & Lawless, M. (2019). Using zoom videoconferencing for qualitative data collection: Perceptions and experiences of researchers and participants. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *18*, 160940691987459. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919874596

Barrios, V., Bermea, A., Luthy, E., & Xu, F. (2024). Testimonio as a methodology in the study of sexual and intimate partner violence. *Journal of Family Theory and Review*.

Bengtson, V. L., Acock, A. C., Allen, K. R., Dilworth-Anderson, P., & Klein, D. M. (2005). Theory and theorizing in family research: Puzzle building and puzzle solving. In V. Bengtson, A. Acock, K. Allen, P. Dilworth-Anderson, & D. Klein (Eds.), *Sourcebook of family theory and research* (pp. 3–33). Sage. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412990172

Besbris, M., & Khan, S. (2017). Less theory. More description. *Sociological Theory*, *35*(2), 147–153. https://doi.org/10.1177/0735275117709776

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis? *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *18*(3), 328–352. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1769238

Braun, V., Clarke, V., Boulton, E., Davey, L., & McEvoy, C. (2021). The online survey as a *qualitative* research tool. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *24*(6), 641–654. https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2020.1805550

Braun, V., Clarke, V., & Gray, D. (2017). Collecting textual, media, and virtual data in qualitative research. In V. Braun, V. Clarke, & D. Gray (Eds.), *Collecting qualitative data: A practical guide to textual and virtual techniques* (pp. 1–12). Cambridge University Press.

Burgess, E. W. (1926). The family as a unity of interacting personalities. *The Family*, *7*(1), 3–9. https://doi.org/10.1177/104438942600700101

Calarco, J. M., Meanwell, E., Anderson, E. M., & Knopf, A. S. (2021). By default: How mothers in different-sex dual-earner couples account for inequalities in pandemic parenting. *Socius*, *7*, 237802312110387. https://doi.org/10.1177/23780231211038783

Carpentier, J., & Mageau, G. (2013). When change-oriented feedback enhances motivation, well-being and performance: A look at autonomy-supportive feedback in sport. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *14*(3), 423–435. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2013.01.003

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Chatfield, S. L. (2018). Considerations in qualitative research reporting: A guide for authors preparing articles for *sex roles*. *Sex Roles*, *79*(3–4), 125–135. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-018-0930-8

Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2019). Feminist qualitative methods and methodologies in psychology: A review and reflection. *Psychology of Women and Equalities Section Review*, *2*(1), 13–28. https://doi.org/10.53841/bpspowe.2019.2.1.13

Collins, P. H. (1990). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. Unwin Hyman.

Collins, P. H. (2000). It's all in the family: Intersections of gender, race, and nation. In U. Narayan & S. Harding (Eds.), *Decentering the center: Philosophy for a multicultural, postcolonial, and feminist world* (Vol. 13, pp. 156–176). Indiana University Press. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1998.tb01370.x

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Sage. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452230153

Corley, K., Bansal, T., & Yu, H. (2021). An editorial perspective on judging the quality of inductive research when the methodological straightjacket is loosened. *Strategic Organization*, *19*(1), 161–175. https://doi.org/10.1177/1476127020968180

Craven, C. (2019). *Reproductive losses: Challenges to LGBTQ family-making* (Vol. 31, pp. 608–613). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353521997615

Daly, K. (2003). Family theory versus the theories families live by. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *65*(4), 771–784. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2003.00771.x

Daly, K. J. (2007). *Qualitative methods for family studies and human development*. Sage.

Delgado, V. (2022). Leveraging protections, navigating punishments: How adult children of undocumented immigrants mediate illegality in Latinx families. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *84*(5), 1427–1445. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12840

DeLuca, S. (2023). Sample selection matters: Moving toward empirically sound qualitative research. Book review symposium: Qualitative literacy. *Sociological Methods & Research*, *52*(2), 1073–1085. https://doi.org/10.1177/00491241221140425

Denzin, N. K. (1989). *The research act* (3rd ed.). Prentice Hall.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Introduction: Entering the field of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 1–17). Sage.

Dickie, V. A. (2003). Data analysis in qualitative research: A plea for sharing the magic and the effort. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *57*, 49–56. https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.57.1.49

Doherty, W. J., Boss, P. G., LaRossa, R., Schumm, W. R., & Steinmetz, S. K. (1993). Family theories and methods: A contextual approach. In P. Boss, W. Doherty, R. LaRossa, W. Schumm, & S. Steinmetz (Eds.), *Sourcebook of family theories and methods: A contextual approach* (pp. 3–30). Plenum Press.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1996). *The souls of black folk*. Penguin (Original work published 1903).

Eales, L., Ferguson, G. M., Gillespie, S., Smoyer, S., & Carlson, S. M. (2021). Family resilience and psychological distress in the COVID-19 pandemic: A mixed methods study. *Developmental Psychology*, *57*(10), 1563–1581. https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0001221

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (2011). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes* (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Ferguson, D. L., & Ferguson, P. M. (2000). Qualitative research in special education: Notes toward an open inquiry instead of a new orthodoxy? *Journal of the Association for Person with Severe Disabilities*, *25*(3), 180–185. https://doi.org/10.2511/rpsd.25.3.180

Few-Demo, A. L., & Allen, K. R. (2020). Gender, feminist, and intersectional perspectives on families: A decade in review. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *82*(1), 326–345. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12638

Frieze, I. H. (2013). Guidelines for qualitative research being published in sex roles. *Sex Roles*, *69*, 1–2. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-013-0286-z

Gabb, J., & Fink, J. (2015). Telling moments and everyday experience: Multiple methods research on couple relationships and personal lives. *Sociology*, *49*(5), 970–987. https://doi.org/10.1077/0038038515578993

Gabriel, Y. (2015). Reflexivity and beyond—A plea for imagination in qualitative research methodology. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, *10*(4), 332–336. https://doi.org/10.1108/QROM-07-2015-1305

Gabriele-Black, K. A., Goldberg, A. E., Manley, M., & Frost, R. (2021). "Life is already hard enough": Lesbian and gay adoptive parents' experiences and concerns after the 2016 presidential election. *Couple & Family Psychology*, *10*, 103–123. https://doi.org/10.1037/cfp0000162

Gangamma, R. (2018). A phenomenological study of family experiences of resettled Iraqi refugees. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, *44*(2), 323–335. https://doi.org/10.1111/jmft.12251

Gerson, K., & Damaske, S. (2021). *The science and art of interviewing*. Oxford University Press.

Gilgun, J. F. (1999). Methodological pluralism and qualitative family research. In M. Sussman, S. K. Steinmetz, & G. W. Peterson (Eds.), *Handbook of marriage and the family* (2nd ed., pp. 219–261). Plenum Press. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4757-5367-7_10

Gilgun, J. F. (2012). Enduring themes of qualitative family research. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, *4*(2), 80–95. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1756-2589.2012.00118.x

Giordano, P. C., Grace, M. M., Longmore, M. A., & Manning, W. D. (2022). "Micro-cultures" of conflict: Couple-level perspectives on reasons for and causes of intimate partner violence in young adulthood. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *84*(4), 1062–1080. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12864

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Aldine de Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1177/003803856900300233

Gnambs, T., & Kaspar, K. (2015). Disclosure of sensitive behaviors across self-administered survey modes: A meta-analysis. *Behavior Research Methods*, *47*(4), 1237–1259. https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-014-0533-4

Goldberg, A. E. (2023). From seeking safety in silence to speaking up for LGBTQ+ families: A reflection on the personal, professional, and political through a feminist lens. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, *15*, 219–234. https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12500

Goldberg, A. E., & Abreu, R. (2024). LGBTQ parent concerns and parent-child communication about the parental rights in education bill ("Don't Say Gay") in Florida. *Family Relations*, *73*(1), 318–339. https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12894

Goldberg, A. E., Abreu, R., & Flores, A. (2023). Perceived impact of the parental rights in education bill ("Don't Say Gay") on LGBTQ parents in Florida. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *52*, 224–266. https://doi.org/10.1177/00110000231219767

Goldberg, A. E., & Allen, K. R. (2015). Communicating qualitative research: Some practical guideposts for scholars. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *77*(1), 3–22. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12153

Goldberg, A. E., & Allen, K. R. (2022). "I'm not just the nonbiological parent": Encountering, strategizing, and resisting asymmetry and invalidation in genetic/gestational parent status among LGBTQ parents. *Journal of Family Nursing*, *28*(4), 381–395. https://doi.org/10.1177/10748407221123062

Goldberg, A. E., Allen, K. R., & Carroll, M. (2020). "We don't exactly fit in, but we can't opt out": Gay fathers' experiences navigating parent communities in schools. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *82*(5), 1655–1676. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12695

Goldberg, A. E., Allen, K. R., & Sanner, C. (2024). Cherished families, unspoken truths: Navigating hidden and challenging family experiences while growing up with LGBTQ parents. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *86*(1), 219–244. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12941

Goldberg, A. E., Allen, K. R., & Smith, J. Z. (2021). Divorced and separated parents during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Family Process*, *60*(3), 866–887. https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12693

Goldberg, A. E., & Kuvalanka, K. A. (2018). Navigating identity development and community belonging when "there are only two boxes to check": An exploratory study of trans nonbinary college students. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, *15*, 106–131. https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2018.1429979

Gonzalez-Lopez, G. (2015). *Family secrets: Stories of incest and sexual violence in Mexico*. New York University Press. https://doi.org/10.18574/nyu/9781479855599.001.0001

Gueta, K., & Klar-Chalamish, C. (2022). "The global sense of disaster was synchronized with my own disaster": Implications of the COVID-19 crisis on the wellbeing of survivors of sexual violence. *Qualitative Health Research*, *32*(6), 985–997. https://doi.org/10.1177/10497323221089878

Hall, E. D. (2018). The communicative process of resilience for marginalized family members. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *35*(3), 307–328. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407516683838

Haney, L. (2018). Incarcerated fatherhood: The entanglements of child support debt and mass imprisonment. *American Journal of Sociology*, *124*(1), 1–48. https://doi.org/10.1086/697580

Hardesty, J. L., Crossman, K. A., & Haselschwerdt, M. L. (2022). Grounded theory methods. In K. Adamsons, A. L. Few-Demo, C. M. Proulx, & K. Roy (Eds.), *Sourcebook of family theories and methodologies: A dynamic approach* (pp. 315–333). Springer.

Hardesty, J. L., Haselschwerdt, M. L., & Crossman, K. A. (2019). Qualitative research on interpersonal violence: Guidance for early career scholars. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *34*(23-24), 4794–4816. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260519871532

Hertz, R. (2021). Single mothers as bricoleurs: Crafting embryos and kin. *Journal of Family Issues*, *42*(1), 58–87. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X2091076

Hewson, C. (2017). Research design and tools for internet research. In N. G. Fielding, R. M. Lee, & G. Blank (Eds.), *The sage handbook of online research methods* (2nd ed., pp. 57–75). Sage.

Howlett, M. (2022). Looking at the 'field' through a zoom lens: Methodological reflections on conducting online research during a global pandemic. *Qualitative Research*, *22*(3), 387–402. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794120985691

Humble, A. M., & Radina, M. E. (Eds.). (2019). *How qualitative data analysis happens: Moving beyond "themes emerged"* (Vol. 70, pp. NP3–NP5). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1177/0741713620902731

Humphreys, L. (1970). *Tearoom trade: Impersonal sex in public places*. Aldine.

Jamison, T. (2019). Uprooting grounded theory: The messy reality of understanding low-income couples' cohabitation transitions. In A. M. Humber & M. E. Radina (Eds.), *How qualitative data analysis happens: Moving beyond "themes emerged"* (pp. 142–156). Routledge.

Jones, A., Caes, L., Rugg, T., Noel, M., Bateman, S., & Jordan, A. (2021). Challenging issues of integrity and identity of participants in non-synchronous online qualitative methods. *Methods in Psychology*, *5*, 100072. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.metip.2021.100072

Köhler, T., Smith, A., & Bhakoo, V. (2022). Templates in qualitative research methods: Origins, limitations, and new directions. *Organizational Research Methods*, *25*(2), 183–210. https://doi.org/10.1177/10944281211060710

Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (3rd ed.). Sage.

LaMarre, A., & Chamberlain, K. (2022). Innovating qualitative research methods: Proposals and possibilities. *Methods in Psychology*, *6*, 100083. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.METIP.2021.100083

Lareau, A. (2000). My wife can tell me who I know: Methodological and conceptual problems in studying fathers. *Qualitative Sociology*, *23*(4), 407–433.

Lareau, A. (2011). *Unequal childhoods: Class, race, and family life* (2nd ed.). University of California Press.

Lareau, A. (2021). *Listening to people: A practical guide to interviewing, participant observation, data analysis, and writing it up*. University of Chicago Press.

Lareau, A., & Rao, A. H. (2022). Intensive family observations: A methodological guide. *Sociological Methods & Research*, *51*(4), 1969–2022. https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124120914949

LaRossa, R. (1977). *Conflict and power in marriage: Expecting the first child*. Sage.

LaRossa, R. (2005). Grounded theory methods and qualitative family research. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *67*(4), 837–857. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2005.00179.x

LaRossa, R., Bennett, L., & Gelles, R. (1981). Ethical dilemmas in qualitative family research. *Journal of Marriage & the Family*, *43*, 303–313. https://doi.org/10.2307/351382

LaRossa, R., Goldberg, A. E., Roy, K., Sharp, E., & Zvonkovic, A. (2014, January 14). Qualitative research commission report. https://www.ncfr.org/system/files/use_qrc_report_-_larossa-goldberg-roy-sharp-zvonkovic_-_14jan2014_2.pdf

LaRossa, R., & Wolf, J. H. (1985). On qualitative family research. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *47*, 531–541. https://doi.org/10.2307/352256

Lavender-Stott, E. S., & Allen, K. R. (2023). Not alone: Family experiences across the life course of single baby boom sexual minority women. *Family Relations*, *72*(1), 140–158. https://doi.org/10.1002/fare.12721

Lee, J. Y., Grogan-Kaylor, A., Lee, S. J., Ammari, T., Lu, A., & Davis-Kean, P. (2020). A qualitative analysis of stay-at-home parents' spanking tweets. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, *29*, 817–830. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-019-01691-3

Levitt, H. M., Bamberg, M., Creswell, J. W., Frost, D. M., Josselson, R., & Suárez-Orozco, C. (2018). Journal article reporting standards for qualitative primary, qualitative meta-analytic, and mixed methods research in psychology: The APA publications and communications board task force report. *American Psychologist*, *73*(1), 26–46. https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000151

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.

Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches*. Crossing Press.

Lyons, M., & Brewer, G. (2022). Experiences of intimate partner violence during lockdown and the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Family Violence*, *37*(6), 969–977. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-021-00260-x

MacTavish, K. (2022). Ethnographic methodologies in family research. In K. Adamsons, A. L. Few-Demo, C. M. Proulx, & K. Roy (Eds.), *Sourcebook of family theories and methodologies: A dynamic approach* (pp. 155–168). Springer.

Matthews, S. (2005). Crafting qualitative research articles on marriages and families. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *67*(4), 799–808. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2005.00176.x

Mayan, M. J. (2009). *Essentials of qualitative inquiry*. Routledge.

McGuire, J. (2022). Queer theory. In K. Adamsons, A. L. Few-Demo, C. M. Proulx, & K. Roy (Eds.), *Sourcebook of family theories and methodologies: A dynamic approach* (pp. 459–475). Springer.

McLeod, B. A. (2020). "Hello group, I need advice": A textual analysis of Black fathers' help-seeking posts on Facebook. *Family Relations*, *69*(5), 944–955. https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12500

Meadow, T. (2018a). *Trans kids: Being gendered in the twenty-first century*. University of California Press.

Meadow, T. (2018b). The mess: Vulnerability as ethnographic practice. In D. Compton, T. Meadow, & K. Schilt (Eds.), *Other, please specify: Queer methods in sociology* (pp. 154–166). University of California Press. https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520963993-011

Mills, C. W. (1959). *The sociological imagination*. Oxford University Press.

Mitchell, S. (2023). Figuring out how to participate in the system: Using reflexive feminist autoethnography to explore intersectional experiences in the professional and political spheres of academic. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, *15*(2), 235–247. https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12502

Moore, J., & Abetz, J. S. (2019). What do parents regret about having children? Communicating regrets online. *Journal of Family Issues*, *40*(3), 390–412. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X18811388

Moore, M. (2011). *Invisible families: Gay identities, relationships, and motherhood among Black women*. University of California Press.

Moore, M. (2018). Challenges, triumphs, and praxis collecting qualitative data on less visible and marginalized populations. In D. Compton, T. Meadow, & K. Schilt (Eds.), *Other, please specify: Queer methods in sociology* (pp. 169–184). University of California Press. https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520963993-012

Morrow, S. L. (2005). Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *52*, 250–260. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.250

Murdoch, M., Simon, A. B., Polusny, M. A., Bangerter, A. K., Grill, J. P., Noorbaloochi, S., & Partin, M. R. (2014). Impact of different privacy conditions and incentives on survey response rate, participant representativeness, and disclosure of sensitive information: A randomized controlled trial. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, *14*, e90. https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-14-90

Odasso, L., & Geoffrion, K. (2023). Doing family online: (in)formal knowledge circulation, information-seeking practices, and support communities. *Family Relations*, *72*(2), 389–405. https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12865

Oliffe, J. L., Kelly, M., Gonzalez Montaner, G., & Yu Ko, W. F. (2021). *Zoom interviews: Benefits* and concessions. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *20*, 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211053522

Porschitz, E. T., & Siler, E. A. (2017). Miscarriage in the workplace: An autoethnography. *Gender, Work and Organization*, *24*, 565–578. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12181

Potter, E., & Potter, D. (2020). Methods, recruitment, and sampling in research with LGBTQ-parent families. In A. E. Goldberg & K. R. Allen (Eds.), *LGBTQ-parent families: Innovations in research and implications for practice* (pp. 507–533). Springer.

Randles, J. (2022). Addressing diaper need as racial stratification through intersectional family justice. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *84*(5), 1408–1426. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12847

Reczek, C. (2020). Sexual- and gender-minority families: A 2010-2020 decade in review. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *82*(1), 300–325. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12607

Rice, T. M. (2023). Echoes of slavery: Reflections on contemporary racial discrimination in Black Americans' romantic relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *40*(8), 2637–2659. https://doi.org/10.1177/02654075231154934

Roberts, J. K., Pavlakis, A. E., & Richards, M. P. (2021). It's more complicated than it seems: Virtual qualitative research in the COVID-19 era. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *20*, 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211002959

Roy, K., Zvonkovic, A., Sharp, E., Goldberg, A., & LaRossa, R. (2015). Sampling richness and qualitative integrity: Challenges for research with families. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *77*(1), 244–261. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12147

Rubel, R., & Villalba, J. (2009). How to publish qualitative research in JSGW: A couple more voices in the conversation. Guest editorial. *Journal for Specialists in Group Work*, *34*, 295–306.

Rubin, L. (1976). *Worlds of pain: Life in the working-class family*. Basic Books.

Sanner, C. (2023). Studying stepfamilies, surfacing secrets: A reflection on the private motivations behind efforts to humanize family complexity. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*. Advance Online Publication. https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12512

Sanner, C., Coleman, M., & Ganong, L. (2018). Relationships with former stepgrandparents after remarriage dissolution. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *32*(2), 251–261. https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000377

Scheibling, C., & Milkie, M. A. (2023). Shifting toward intensive *parenting* culture? A comparative analysis of top mommy blogs and dad blogs. *Family Relations*, *72*(2), 495–514. https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12824

Schoenberg, N. E., Miller, E. A., & Pruchno, R. (2011). The qualitative portfolio at *the gerontologist*: Strong and getting stronger. *The Gerontologist*, *51*(3), 281–284. https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnr032

Schueths, A. M. (2019). Not really single: The deportation to welfare pathway for U.S. citizen mothers in mixed-status marriage. *Critical Sociology*, *45*(7–8), 1075–1092. https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920518784641

Segev, E., Regev, I., Hochman, Y., Zafrany, Y., Sherfi, Y., & Elkayam, A. (2021). Widow and bereaved mother relations after loss of husband or son: A double perspective. *Family Relations*, *70*(1), 43–58. https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12441

Sharp, E. A., & Munly, K. (2022). Reopening a can of *words*: Qualitative secondary data analysis. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, *14*(1), 44–58. https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12443

Siegel, A., & Dekel, R. (2022). Frontline love: Romantic partners of frontline doctors and nurses during the New York City COVID-19 outbreak. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *84*(3), 900–919. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12831

Small, M. L., & Calarco, J. M. (2022). *Qualitative literacy: A guide to evaluating ethnographic and interview research*. University of California Press.

Smith, K. V., Thew, G. R., & Graham, B. (2018). Conducting ethical internet-based research with vulnerable populations: A qualitative study of bereaved participants' experiences of online questionnaires. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, *9*(Suppl 1), 1506231. https://doi.org/10.1080/20008198.2018.1506231

Sterzing, P. R., Gartner, R. E., & McGeough, B. L. (2018). Conducting anonymous, incentivized, online surveys with sexual and gender minority adolescents: Lessons learned from a national polyvictimization study. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *33*(5), 740–761. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517744845

Tavory, I., & Timmermans, S. (2014). *Abductive analysis: Theorizing qualitative research*. University of Chicago Press. https://doi.org/10.2979/trancharpeirsoc.53.1.10

Taylor, S. J., & Bogdan, R. (1984). *Introduction to qualitative research methods: The search for meaning* (2nd ed.). Wiley.

Thorne, B. (1982). Feminist rethinking of the family: An overview. In B. Thorne & M. Yalom (Eds.), *Rethinking the family: Some feminist questions* (Vol. 8, pp. 1–24). Longman. https://doi.org/10.1177/019251387008001002

Timmermans, S., & Tavory, I. (2012). Theory construction in qualitative research: From grounded theory to abductive analysis. *Sociological Theory*, *30*(3), 167–186. https://doi.org/10.1177/0735275112457914

Tracy, S., & Hinrichs, M. (2017). Big tent criteria for qualitative quality. In *The international encyclopedia of communications methods research* (pp. 1–10). Wiley. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118901731.iecrm0016

Tsan, M. F., Ling, B., Feske, U., Zickmund, S., Stone, R., Sonel, A., Arnold, R. M., Fine, M., & Hall, D. E. (2020). Assessing the quality and performance of institutional review boards: Levels of initial reviews. *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics*, *15*(5), 407–414. https://doi.org/10.1177/1556264620956795

US Department of Health and Human Services. (1998). OHRP expedited review categories. https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/guidance/categories-of-research-expedited-review-procedure-1998/index.html

Vindrola-Padros, C., Chisnall, G., Cooper, S., Dowrick, A., Djellouli, N., Symmons, S., Martin, S., Singleton, G., Vanderslott, S., Vera, N., & Johnson, G. (2020). Carrying out rapid qualitative research during a pandemic: Emerging lessons from COVID-19. *Qualitative Health Research*, *30*(14), 2192–2204. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732320951526

Winges-Yanez, N. (2014). Why all the talk about sex? An autoethnography identifying the troubling discourse of sexuality and intellectual disability. *Sexuality & Disability*, *32*, 107–116. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11195-013-9331-7

How to cite this article: Goldberg, A. E., & Allen, K. R. (2024). Qualitative family research: Innovative, flexible, theoretical, reflexive. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 1–30. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12981