

Insider or Outsider? The Salience of Researcher Identity in the Context of a Qualitative Study of Early Help for Families Where There is Child Neglect

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Contributor Biographies

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Abstract

This methodologically focused case arises from the lead author's professional doctorate in social work at the University of Portsmouth that was supervised by the two co-authors. It considers issues that are encountered in the context of professional doctorate research, particularly changes in the research context during the study, working across professional practice and academic settings, and insider–outsider researcher issues. A change of job and work location for the lead author part-way through the study provided an opportunity to compare researching organizational issues as an “insider” (in the early stages of the study) and as an “outsider” (in the latter stages). Analysis of the differences between the findings generated from each of these perspectives highlights how the positioning of the researcher in relation to the organization under investigation can impact on the research process. The study was a qualitative investigation of access to early help for families where there is neglect of young (pre-school) children. It was conducted from a social constructionist perspective, and the findings were considered using ideas from ecological analysis and street-level bureaucracy. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews of parents, focus groups of children's services practitioners, and a focus group of community volunteers. Data analysis used NVivo 11 coding and thematic network analysis.

Practical strategies that the lead author found helpful in the research are outlined, for example, negotiating commissioning decisions, maintaining reflexive research logs, peer shadowing and debriefing, achieving clarity around dual supervision arrangements, using a research design evaluation framework, ways of monitoring organizational change, and negotiating with reluctant gatekeepers.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this case, students should be able to

- Understand and take account of the influences that are likely to arise when conducting applied research as an insider to an organization
- Apply reflective questioning to the planning of research in a dynamic practice context
- Use a structured self-review process to analyze the impact of their own positioning on their planning and conduct of research

Case Study

Introduction

Research conducted within an organization or social group where the researcher is also a member raises important questions about the methodological and ethical decisions that need to be made. Ethnographic research offers many studies where insider–outsider roles are explored and, increasingly, qualitative organizational studies are advancing our knowledge about dual-role research issues. The emergent nature of this research is particularly so where insider status arises from the work-role of the researcher in the context of professional doctorate studies (Hellawell, 2006).

As professional doctorate programs seek to promote their relevance and application to professional practice, they may increasingly expose students to research contexts where there are challenging issues, complex relationships, and competing vested interests, who may view the study as a threat or as a vehicle to pursue agendas within the organization. This case discusses

the methodological choices thrown up by this context and draws on the lead author's thesis research for his professional doctorate in social work at the University of Portsmouth, England, that was supervised by the co-authors.

Project Overview and Context

The Practice Context

The research was commissioned by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) in a city in England and was conducted in that city area. LSCBs were established in England in 2006 with the statutory purpose of drawing all the relevant partner agencies together to work cooperatively to improve safeguarding outcomes for children and young people and to hold those agencies to account in this respect. Their work can be regarded as an example of applied research in the real-world setting. This is typically done through analyzing data (e.g., from practice reviews and audits, evaluation projects, and serious case reviews) to clarify local needs, identify safeguarding priorities, and promote awareness of the best ways of securing practice improvements. The *Munro Review of Child Protection* (2011) saw LSCBs as key to the development of a “learning system.”

Aim and Objectives

This study aimed to investigate the provision of early help for families where there is neglect of young children.

The key research question was: What factors influence access to early help for families where there is neglect of young children? The question was explored through the following research objectives:

1. To explore how participants understand and recognize child neglect (i.e., the failure to provide for the physical, emotional, or safety needs of a child).
2. To clarify how participants respond to child neglect once it is recognized.
3. To examine what participants do differently at early levels of child neglect
4. To identify factors that influence access to early help in families where there is child neglect
5. To understand participants' perceptions about what would improve access to early help

Research Approach

A qualitative approach was taken because the study sought to understand a social phenomenon that was occurring in a natural context, and the focus was on exploring the experiences and meanings for those involved. The value laden, culturally defined, and socially interactive nature of the issues also indicated the suitability of a qualitative approach.

Theoretical Perspectives

The study was conducted from a social constructionist perspective (Burr, 2015) because the active construction of meaning by the participants in a social context was key to understanding the issues. Findings were also considered using an ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) that is, where the understanding of the individual case is achieved through taking into account all environmental and contextual factors. The concept of street-level bureaucracy (Lipsky, 1980) also provided a helpful theoretical frame as this addresses the discretion and autonomy exercised by frontline public service workers and the strategies they use as they seek to manage their pressurized workloads.

Participants and Data Collection

The study involved:

- Seven individual interviews with parents/carers from families where there had been children's social care service involvement because of neglect of young (pre-school) children.
- A focus group of five community members all working as volunteers in a home visiting, befriending, and family support service including work with issues of child neglect.
- Three focus groups of practitioners from universal services who have day-to-day experience of work with child neglect issues (eight health visitors; five housing officers; six workers from children's centers/nurseries). A focus group of GPs was convened but, as only two turned up, this should perhaps be regarded as an interview rather than a focus group.

- Data collection involved a total of 11 hours of contact time with participants producing around 50,000 words of transcribed interview/discussion content.

Method in Action

Much has been written about conducting research as a practicing professional within an organization—an 'insider' In contrast, a different set of issues may apply to conducting research at a distance from the participants' context which is a typical caricature of university-based researchers (Boucher & Smyth, 2004; Breen, 2007; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). It has been suggested that insider positionality refers to “the aspects of an insider researcher’s self or identity which are aligned or shared with participants” (Chavez, 2008, p. 475). However, Melanie Greene (Greene, 2014, p. 2) has also observed that “no clear definition of the term has been developed, due to the difficulties associated with determining what degree of social experience merits this classification.” It is therefore important to guard against an oversimplified binary analysis here. Calin Goina (2008) has helpfully suggested thinking in terms of the degree of immersion in an organization by which the researcher could be viewed as either a full member, a member, or a quasi-member.

Study Phase 1: Insider Researcher Role

For the first 18 months of this study, the lead author was in a strategic role as the business manager of the Local Children’s Safeguarding Board that commissioned the study. This period included the study stages of commissioning, planning, participant recruitment, data collection, immediate data analysis, and reporting back of initial findings. The data analysis in this initial phase consisted of a quick and straightforward visual scanning of the transcribed discussions

followed by identification and manual coding of content themes based on my knowledge of the practice issues in the context. This led to the production of a brief report for managers highlighting recommended actions in five areas.

1. Improving public awareness of the supportive role of social workers rather than their surveillance role.
2. Providing better information (and improved access to it) about available services.
3. Co-ordinating services better to reduce overlap.
4. Communicating more clearly about two early help processes in use locally.
5. Developing support for families by members of their local communities.

The first phase report was well received by managers in the context and could be argued to have contributed to changes in policy and practice that were observed. It could be characterized as providing the priority points for immediate practical action and, as is typical of such practice-focused reviews, it made no reference to underlying theoretical perspectives nor to published studies.

Study Phase 2: Outsider Researcher Role

Shortly after completion of the data collection, I moved to a frontline service management role in another local authority. This move meant that I became an outsider in relation to the original research site with no routine professional contact with those involved in that setting. This coincided with me becoming more embedded in an academic culture as the doctorate progressed and as increasingly more time was spent in university supervision sessions and contacts. My experience of this was a gradual one, and it was only with more in-depth reading of the insider-outsider research literature, prompted through supervision discussions, that I was able to

articulate the subtle processes that were operating and were influencing how I conducted the research.

The subsequent 2-year period covered the stages of further analysis of data, setting the findings in the context of the research literature, appraising the overall quality of the research, and reporting the findings. This phase of the study featured systematic data analysis using explicit, defined methodologies with their own evidence base, namely NVivo 11 coding of data and thematic network analysis where coded extracts are organized into basic themes, organizing themes, and global themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001). This permitted more exhaustive consideration of the fine-grained detail of the data and using the theoretical perspectives underpinning the study to interpret the findings. This phase benefited from formal supervision and peer feedback and made explicit use of published research studies and other professionally driven data to contextualize the issues.

Comparing the Two Phases

The contrast in roles at different stages of the research gave an opportunity to reflect on the perspectives of being both an insider–researcher and an outsider–researcher in relation to one set of data.

The insider status conferred a number of advantages. In terms of access to participants, it made recruitment easier because the managers of relevant services were aware of my role and of their statutory duty and organizational commitment to partnership work with the children’s safeguarding board that I managed. This encouraged cooperation and freeing-up people to take part. In terms of access to helpful resources, insider status enabled crèche facilities to be

provided for the young children when their parents were being interviewed and took care of the safeguarding checks necessary for such arrangements. Insider status further gave me a detailed understanding of the organizational context and participants would have been aware that I had previously worked within their settings in audits sampling day-to-day practice. This may have enabled data collection discussions to progress more quickly on to the key issues without my needing any preliminary briefing.

Disadvantages of insider status were also noted. These included being subject to the power relations within the organization and less free to challenge the commissioning decisions made by senior managers. This was reflected in some of the commissioning and research design decisions made. For example, the decision to focus on particular universal services (services generally available to any member of the public rather than services targeted on people with identified needs). These decisions were reached through discussions in formal committee meetings with several tiers of seniority in the managers involved. In this study, this steered the discussion away from including services such as children's social workers because they were construed as a targeted and specialist service. This removed areas of valuable investigation from the study and raises question about the extent to which a student practitioner-researcher (who also happens to be an insider) can truly be involved in a meaningful commissioning negotiation as opposed to being on the receiving end of a more directive commission for the research.

Another disadvantage of insider status was being subject to the "received wisdom" of the organization thereby increasing the likelihood of confirmation bias in data analysis and interpretation. This could be seen in the belief, widely held in this study context, that early help and the related inter-professional collaboration was occurring and was generally of good quality. This made it more difficult for an insider practitioner-researcher to stand aside from this world

view and recognize some of the less positive messages emerging from the data, for example, about silo thinking and a default position of 'referring-on' to others rather than working collaboratively with partner agencies.

Pre-existing close relationships with key research stakeholders could also be seen as a disadvantage by acting as a source of bias. For example, this could lead to an unconscious "massaging" of the findings to make them more palatable for these organizational players who were also my close colleagues and friends and where findings might reflect negatively on their work role responsibilities. The practical lessons from work on these issues are discussed below.

Comparison of the Insider and the Outsider Perspectives

The outcome was that the later analysis (the outsider perspective) surfaced new findings that were not apparent in the first practice-focused report. These included the following:

- Recognizing gaps in some practitioner groups' understanding of neglect (e.g., emotional neglect, neglect as lack of 'educational' aspiration/support, and the impact of neglect on children's neurological development). This illustrates the benefit of spending more time in multiple analyses and re-analyses of the data to unearth aspects that were not apparent on first examination.
- Identifying the distinctive positions taken by different practitioner groups, that is, the characteristic differences between them. This shows the value of systematic analysis where different professional groups of participants are contributing to the overall data.
- Providing a vivid picture of the fear among parents about their children being removed (and the associated 'feigned compliance' or 'disguised compliance' (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, 2014) that was noted by many practitioners). This

illustrates how rigorous analysis can unearth a strength of feeling that was not initially evident.

- Highlighting the powerful psychological defenses that may prevent parents recognizing their own neglectful behavior (e.g., denial, re-framing concerns as about practical/financial problems). This arose from peer feedback and supervision discussions and shows how helpful these processes can be in developing interpretations of the findings.
- Articulating that there was no shared, local model for early help that was understood, owned, and referenced by those involved. This highlights how points that are not articulated by any one participant can be identified from a systematic overview of the data including reflection on what was not said by participants.
- Reflecting the complexity of the themes and networks of themes (e.g., contradictions within them, omissions and links between them). The later analyses identified 45 basic themes in the data that could be grouped into 12 coordinating themes and 3 global themes—namely, 'How we work with neglect,' 'Constraints on access to early help,' and 'Factors making neglect resistant to change'. This understanding of the complexity of the data and the interconnectedness within it would not have been possible without the structure provided by NVivo coding and thematic network analysis.
- Setting out how discourses shape participants' perceptions (e.g., around power relations and the 'positioning' of parents as recipients of professional help rather than as active partners, framing the understanding of neglect as being primarily due to parental lack of awareness, a 'referring-on' outlook from practitioners and the 'learned helplessness' around lack of information about support that may be available). This shows the value of

the theoretical perspectives used (social constructionism, street-level bureaucracy) in identifying meanings in the data.

- Clarifying how workload pressures, especially in health services, operate to inhibit practitioners from taking responsibility for early help. This was shown in practitioners' use of self-management strategies that reflect the street-level bureaucracy constructs of 'routinising' 'stereotyping', 'rubber stamping,' 'favouritism', and 'street-level referrals'. Practitioners in U.K. children's services commonly talk of budget-driven reductions in service staffing levels as a constraint on the quality of their practice. This point is made so often, that it risks being dismissed as so obvious as not to require empirical research to illuminate it. However, it was shown to be an important part of people's understanding of barriers to improved practice and therefore attracted due attention in the findings within the context of researcher judgment about what elements of the data are important.

Reflections

The later analysis provides a stronger evidence-base for forward planning, and it is suggested that the contrast between the two analyses was not merely a difference in emphasis. A good number of the later findings were not picked up in the initial analysis/feedback. In practical terms, this does not invalidate the first analysis, which those who commissioned the research reported was of value to their planning, that is, it was 'good enough' in context. The second analysis should therefore not automatically be regarded as 'better' but rather it can be viewed as offering different and deeper insights.

It is recognized that other factors may have contributed to the difference between the two analyses (e.g., a more thorough and systematic methodology in the later 'outsider' analysis). This

does have some validity and the ultimate effect is almost certainly due to a combination of these factors and of insider effects.

However, critical review of the self-reflection log maintained during the study indicates that the earlier analysis was influenced by the subtle, powerful (and probably unconscious) dynamics of the workplace. The effect can be interpersonal and emotional (Perriton, 2000) where the findings have implications for the well-being of colleagues who may also be close friends of the researcher or may even be the researcher's partner (Taylor, 2011). It can also be structural in that the researcher has some responsibility, in her or his 'day job' for the quality of the practice being investigated and so may be less likely to hold up an impartial mirror to the issues. In this study, such influences may have led to a more favorable initial picture of the quality of inter-professional collaboration than was in fact supported by the data.

These comments illustrate how being an insider may be helpful in terms of contextualization and attunement to the subtleties and nuances of data. However, being more of an outsider may well be helpful in terms of 'objectivity' (within the limits of this term in a reflexive, social constructionist approach) when framing the analysis and interpretation of the meanings and their implications, for example, making more independent judgments and facing up to challenging issues (Ellis, 2006). The later analysis also benefited from supervision feedback from independent and experienced researchers (the university supervisors) who would not otherwise be available to an insider, thus adding another dimension to the comparison.

The issues highlighted here are not limited to this study but rather appear fundamental to conducting research as a professional doctorate student working across the boundaries between the academic setting and the professional practice setting.

Practical Lessons Learned From This Study

Taking Account of Insider-Outsider Influences

A key issue for this methodology case is the impact of being an insider or an outsider researcher. Ways of working with these issues that were found to be helpful are set out below:

- Keeping research logs of (a) day-to-day communications/contacts, (b) methodological issues, and (c) personal reflections on interactions, feelings, and thoughts arising from the process, for example noting when colleagues would refer in later conversations to the data collection and its interpretation. These logs helped to raise my awareness of ways that interpretation may become influenced (or even managed) by others. This is illustrated by examples where managers of the professional groups involved would meet me and informally comment on the research before data analysis was complete. Often, they were seeking a “heads-up” about emerging themes or content but if their own colleagues’ reported comments appeared to be indicating questionable practice on the ground, they often would make a defensive comment. Other examples involved senior managers subtly reminding me of the prospect of external inspection regimes and how helpful it would be for the research to be highlighting good practice for use in such processes.
- Using practitioner peer shadowing and feedback to strengthen the trustworthiness of the transcription and coding of data. I engaged a colleague to sit in on a sample of interviews to enable her to moderate the later transcription process by checking my produced transcript against the audio recording and against her own experience and recall of the

session. This strengthened trustworthiness by providing a check on my transcription accuracy and reliability.

- Using peer debriefing to reflect on the identification and grouping of themes and the translation of these into findings. Colleagues were recruited to review my coding of data extracts and organization of these extracts into groups and clusters within thematic networks in line with Jennifer Attride-Stirling's thematic network analysis model (Attride-Stirling, 2001).
- Having clear arrangements for research supervision both within the workplace and within the university setting (see the following section on dealing with multiple stakeholders).

The reflection process was further strengthened by using a structured framework for evaluating the quality of qualitative research (HM Treasury, 2012). This framework provides useful reflective prompts under the headings of “Design, Sample, Data Collection, Analysis, Findings.” It is recognized that the influences arising from being an insider may be impossible to shed (and indeed may confer advantages that are welcome), and it may be more a matter of recognizing/acknowledging them, reflecting on their impact, and taking this into account in conducting the research and presenting the findings. Indeed, it has been suggested that a continuum is a more useful construct rather than a dichotomy and it may be a case of monitoring how one's place on this continuum changes during the different phases of the research (Breen, 2007; Goina, 2008).

Negotiating the ‘Research Deal’—Reaching a Workable Agreement

The commissioners of this study were very clear that the focus should be on issues for children from pre-birth to school age. This narrowing of the focus had implications for the study (e.g.,

obtaining the direct involvement of pre-verbal children is methodologically challenging; it rules out schools although they are recognized as having an important role in preventing neglect; neglect may take quite different forms at older ages). This limiting commissioning decision prompts reflection on the degree of assertion that is possible and appropriate for the student researcher in the negotiation phase of planning research. Large scale funding sources may well pre-determine all aspects and involve a yes/no funding outcome with little or no expectation of negotiation about the focus (Corbyn, 2009).

However, in the context of professional doctorates, research funding may well not be involved at all, and the context is much more likely to offer scope for negotiating the parameters of the study by the student researcher rather than this being absolutely predetermined by the commissioners. The importance of peer feedback and supervision discussion cannot be overemphasized in preparing for such commissioning negotiations. It was found helpful to work through the questions suggested by Rosalie Holian and David Coghlan as useful to consider at the different stages of conducting a research project. Particularly relevant to the commissioning stage, are the questions they suggest for researchers to pose before they start a project. These are:

“Does the choice of research question, focus and approach have any ethical implications? Why was this topic selected? If the research question is successfully addressed, then “so what”? Why was insider action research chosen? What information will be collected: how, when, where? Who is to be included or excluded? Who is likely to benefit or carry the burden of the research? How will members of the organisation be advised and invited to participate?” (Holian & Coghlan, 2013, p. 411)

Dealing With Gatekeepers—Addressing Organizational Drift and Delay

As Holian and Coghlan (2013) noted “Organisational sponsors and gatekeepers also have agendas, sometimes hidden, about what they expect to be the outcomes of the research and how these can be used to their advantage” (p. 405). In this professional doctorate study, a key group of practitioners (midwives) was unable to take part because of delay in granting ethical management approval by their host organization. This highlighted the political skills I needed in working through organizational delay and drift to achieve a timely outcome for the reporting cycle of the study. In the example cited here, I was unsuccessful in overcoming the delay, and this meant losing a key group to the study. Review of this process suggested that repeated polite requests for clarification of the reasons for the delay were not a sufficient strategy. A better outcome would have been likely if I had been able to make informal contacts with others in the organization to better understand and influence the process. Eventually, the process was unblocked by escalating the issue to a much more senior level within the organization and permission was finally secured. However, the 9 months that this took meant that it was ultimately impractical to involve the participants. Again, it is helpful to recognize the importance of peer and supervision discussions in planning how to prevent or respond to such scenarios through developing an understanding of the target organization and the scope for building alliances and relationships within it (Ahern, 2014).

Enlisting Support—Securing Co-Researcher Capacity in a Resource Constrained Context

In this study, I single-handedly managed all of the practical arrangements for interviews and focus groups. These important, but demanding, administrative functions risked distracting from facilitating, understanding, and keeping up with the complex dynamics of the interactive sessions as they happened. This prompts questions about the strategies the student researcher can use to recruit workplace practitioners as co-researchers to share the workload and strengthen the facilitation and recording of data. In current U.K. public service contexts, there will typically be severe and increasing resource constraints that may make this seem like a ‘big ask’. However, it is well worth exploring in terms of practitioners’ interest in developing their own research skills. The idea can also be sold in terms of their organization’s profile (external inspectors likely to approve of organizations encouraging workforce development through research and helping to reduce the well-known research-practice gap). Having a joint practitioner–researcher dissemination document at the end may well also strengthen its credibility in the workplace.

Different Perspectives on Timescales—How Long Is Too Long?

The experience of conducting this study highlighted very different cultures around timescales in the professional setting and in the university setting. The professional context set a clear expectation that initial reporting back would be done within 3 months of the completion of data collection. The professional doctorate timeline permits and expects some years (2-4 years) before completion of the final thesis ([University of Portsmouth, 2016](#)).

This difference raises issues about the likelihood of changes occurring in the practice context after data collection but before the final report is available. In this study, there were important personnel changes (all four of the main commissioners of the study moving on to new employment). There were also changes in workplace processes related to the research questions (new early help practice guidelines, new multi-agency staffing structures, new early assessment processes). Such changes may undercut or anticipate the research findings. These changes may not affect the validity of the study findings as such, but they will require a change in how they are presented so that their relevance to the new context is clear. This required me to maintain contacts within the organization and to put arrangements in place (access to news sheets, staff bulletins, and scheduled staff briefings) to keep me updated about changes as they occurred while I was writing the thesis and pending the final report.

This raises important questions about how doctoral research may become of limited practical value because of changing practice contexts. Where the research culture tends to assume that the organizational context should adapt to academic timescales, it is more likely that the student may become stuck in the middle, struggling with a mismatch between the two.

Dealing with Multiple Stakeholders—Getting the Best From Professional Supervision and From Academic Supervision

Professional doctorate students are likely to have a supervisor in the practice context and in the university context. This has the potential for different approaches and views between the two supervisors that may or may not always be helpful. The potential tensions in this arrangement are helped by having an explicit supervision contract that clarifies expectations, processes, and linkages between the two processes. As a minimum, this should set out:

- The purposes of supervision
- The frequency of expected supervision contacts
- Responsibility for recording the content and agreed actions
- How supervision records will be shared between the two contexts
- How difficulties or disagreements will be resolved.

The explicit sharing of information between the two supervision processes is vital to avoid the student falling between the two and to ensure he or she experiences maximal benefit while working through the complex challenges that arise in doing real-world research.

Conclusions

Being in a practitioner–researcher role in the professional doctorate context may inevitably lead to tensions between

- The knowledge and beliefs that guide practice in the workplace
- The academic expectations linked to formal course requirements
- The experiences, and professional development journey of the student researcher

The dynamics of this context make demands on the student’s personal, psychological, and political skills to manage the triangulation of these pressures and require skilled supervision to enable this ([Lee, 2009](#)).

Further reflection and exploration of these issues should be helpful for any practitioner–researcher who works across the boundaries between different communities of knowledge and practice, that is, universities, voluntary and community bodies, public services.

There are likely to be implications for

- Knowledge (e.g., different understandings of the place of theory in illuminating the 'truth')
- Methodology (e.g., the degree of systematization and transparency in data analysis that is necessary for credibility in any context)
- Ethics (e.g., the importance attributed to ethical issues and thorough approval processes)
- Dissemination of research outcomes (e.g., the balance between practical/action-oriented/speedy reporting and approaches more focused on fully justifying the evidence base or advancing the frontiers of knowledge).

Lessons can doubtless be learned from substantial research collaborations on 'messy' practice issues where university researchers work in partnership with researchers who are embedded in the field of professional practice concerned (e.g., work on child neglect by Burgess et al., 2014; Burgess, Daniel, Whitfield, Derbyshire, & Taylor, 2013). Publications from such studies understandably concentrate on the issues that are the focus of the work and the relevant methodology behind their findings rather than on the 'meta-methodological' issues about researchers working cross-sector as discussed here. However, they do provide an excellent model of how the challenges discussed here can be met and research outcomes can be presented in timely and credible ways, offering a 'win-win' situation where methodological rigor is secured without sacrificing the impact on practice.

At the outset of this study the concepts around insider-outsider positioning were not part of the main author's 'toolbox' of ideas. It was only through further reading, prompted by reflective supervision discussions, that the value of this frame was understood and could be

applied to the data interpretation and reporting of findings stages of the study. The thoughts set out here are put forward in the hope that other students involved in studying ‘messy’ organizational issues may be able to apply the lessons to the planning and implementation stages of their own research.

Exercises and Discussion Questions

1. For the case presented here, consider what you see as the advantages and disadvantages of being an insider practitioner-researcher. What could you do in this context to avoid insider–outsider issues weakening the conduct of the research?
2. For a study that you are planning, consider the parameters being requested by the commissioners of the study. Do these have limiting implications for your study (e.g., recruitment processes, sample adequacy, data collection method)? How could you communicate with the commissioners to influence a change in their view?
3. Use the quality evaluation framework cited in this case study (HM Treasury, 2012) to review selected aspects (e.g., Design, Sample, Data Collection, Analysis, Findings) of *either* (a) a qualitative study you are conducting or (b) a published qualitative study of your choice or (c) the paper by Breen, L. J. (2007). The researcher “in the middle”: Negotiating the insider/outsider dichotomy. *The Australian Community Psychologist, 19*, 163-174. Retrieved from https://espace.curtin.edu.au/bitstream/handle/20.500.11937/22045/192294_94707_Insider_outsider_ACP.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y (accessed 22 September 2017)

4. Consider a project where you are meeting gatekeeper resistance. What strategies could you use to overcome this (e.g., building alliances in the organization, escalating the issue within the organization, amending your proposal, writing off this part of your project)?
5. For a project that you are conducting, review the milestones with a focus on the timing of reports back to the organization. How could you learn about potential changes in the organization during your study? For example, who within the context is identifying and anticipating likely changes in the operating context? How can you access the forward thinking in staff bulletins and briefings?

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