

The Pleasures and Challenges of Collaborative Qualitative Research

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Contemporary qualitative research often involves teams of researchers collaborating on a project. Armstrong will discuss the pleasures and challenges of this style of research, drawing both on her experiences working with Indiana University sociology alum Laura Hamilton and a team of graduate and undergraduate researchers on *Paying for the Party* and her more recent experiences at the University of Michigan. Larger teams can collect more data and leverage the diverse social identities of researchers to gain entree to research sites and participants. Collaboration can also add rigor to data analysis, as classifications and interpretations are debated by the research team.

However, collaboration introduces challenges of coordination at all stages of the process. These challenges grow with the size of the research team. In addition, the temptation to collect large volumes of data creates risks that the principal investigator may fall into the role of administrator rather than fieldworker and may lose touch with the data. Goffman argued for full immersion in the field and saw the ethnographer's embodied reactions as invaluable. This embodied knowledge can not easily inform the final product if the person who participated in the ethnographic or interview interactions is not the one doing the writing.



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