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# A question of quality: the art/science of doing collaborative public ethnography

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## Abstract

Social science researchers have long stressed the importance of a more publically relevant and accessible science. Nevertheless, significant barriers remain within the academy, such as processes for peer review, promotion, and awarding of degrees, which discourage the use of nontraditional dissemination techniques that support a more public ethnography. Concerns over scientific rigor, best practices, and methods for disseminating ethnographic research to public audiences may act as some of the barriers, among others. The purpose of this article is to discuss challenges in doing and disseminating collaborative ethnography to public audiences while still operating within the constraints of the academy. By sharing this experience, my intent is to stimulate debate and scholarship around assessing the quality of public ethnography using less traditional modes of reporting, such as video, and to encourage changes in peer review and institutional practices to more effectively support quality and dialogic dissemination of public ethnography that aims to bring together both academic and public audiences to address issues of great public significance.

## Keywords

collaborative ethnography, dissemination, multiaudiences, participatory action research, video-based reports

## Introduction

Social science researchers have long stressed the importance of a more publically relevant and accessible science. Public ethnography is a specific social science genre whose aim is to utilize relevant and accessible dissemination formats (e.g. theater, blogs, video, etc.) and popular media channels to reach and engage public audiences in conversation about society (Adler and Adler, 2008; Gans, 2010; Plummer, 1999). Patricia Adler and Peter Adler (2008) write that public ethnography offers ‘the greatest potential for changing the social world in applied and policy circles’ (p. 23). Most social science and applied scholars see the value of public ethnography, but there remain specific barriers within

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institutions of the academy<sup>1</sup> to actually conducting this type of research. For example, the processes for peer review, tenure promotion, and requirements for these often discourage the use of nontraditional dissemination techniques that support a more public ethnography. Concerns over scientific rigor and a lack of clarity over best practices and methods for disseminating ethnographic research to public audiences may act as barriers to more widespread use and acceptance of public ethnography.

The practice of public ethnography brings to the fore tensions between obligations to the *scholarly community* and commitments to *public communities* who collaborate in research (Burawoy, 2009). This tension has been dubbed the ‘two communities’ (Caplan, 1979), suggesting that the needs and goals of each audience are inherently incompatible. While there is broad agreement that both scholarly and public communities should benefit from scientific research through public ethnography, scholars across a wide range of disciplines question whether a science focused on ‘going public’ involves sacrificing rigor in favor of relevance, or what Wacquant (2002: 1526) called the danger of ethnography becoming a ‘magazine sociology’ (Adler and Adler, 2008; Davison et al., 2004; Vanderlinde and Van Braak, 2010). Rigor and relevance, however, are not necessarily mutually exclusive (Davison et al., 2004), but the lack of specific criteria for reviewing or evaluating the quality of public ethnographic ‘texts’ may result in greater barriers to doing public ethnography, inhibiting wider dissemination of research to public audiences. The development and scholarly acceptance of guidelines for evaluating the scientific rigor of collaborative ethnographic texts may encourage broader use of this public science.

The purpose of this article is to discuss some of the challenges in doing and disseminating engaged public ethnography to the ‘two communities’ while still operating within the constraints of the academy. To illustrate these challenges, I describe a participatory action research (PAR) project that utilized video-based visual ethnographic texts for reporting and dissemination. Through the process of advocating for acceptance of these visual texts in an academic setting, I developed an initial framework of criteria for evaluating the quality and rigor of nontraditional public ethnographic reports. By sharing this experience, my intent is to stimulate debate and scholarship around assessing the quality of public ethnography using less traditional modes of reporting, such as video, and to encourage changes in peer review and institutional practices to more effectively support quality and dialogic dissemination of public ethnography that aims to bring together both academic and public audiences to address issues of great public significance.

## Criteria debate

The issue of how to judge the quality of public ethnography is seldom discussed in the literature. One reason for this may be due to public ethnography’s roots in critical anthropology and postmodernism. In an effort to address issues of power and authority in research and in the construction of ethnographic texts, postmodernists reject traditional ethnographic standards of objectivity, validity, and reliability because of its notions of authority and legitimacy (Adler and Adler, 2008; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Because public ethnography by its very nature is intended to reach the broadest range of audiences, or publics, the field often stretches the boundaries of what is seen as traditional

means of academic research dissemination in books and peer-reviewed journals. An attempt to reach and communicate to wider audiences stimulates experimentation with new ethnographic forms (theater, blogs, etc.), and the concern is that specifying standards for evaluating public ethnography might limit innovation in dissemination methods to reach and engage public audiences. Some scholars worry that generalized standards would be inappropriate, particularly if applied to a diverse range of artistic and technological media for communicating research results (Adler and Adler, 2008; Boydell et al., 2012; Lafreniere and Cox, 2012).

While these concerns are valid, they are not necessarily sufficient to reject any form of quality criteria. By definition, public ethnography is intended to reach and engage the public, but it is important to realize that there are also competing demands on researchers to use research findings for scholarly advancement. Otherwise, public ethnography becomes nothing more than an activist hobby separate from a scholar's career efforts. Tenure expectations and academy norms to 'publish or perish' in peer-reviewed journals often discourage students and scholars from doing this type of research (Hawkins et al., 2007; Kezar, 2000).

All types of research (qualitative, quantitative, participatory, etc.) are committed to the dissemination of knowledge with rigor, conscientiousness, and high ethical standards through a process of peer critique (Poortman and Schildkamp, 2012). Peer critique and scholarly debate have long been the engine to scientific discovery, public accountability, and ethical practice, and valid quality criteria are the starting point for this scientific discussion. By defining a broad framework of criteria for public ethnography research and elucidating narrower criteria for use in evaluating specific media and multimodal texts, we ensure quality standards and ethical accountability. To that end, I will present my own efforts and challenges encountered in creating criteria for use by an academic review committee for evaluating the quality and dissemination of a collaborative public ethnography project.

## **Collaborative ethnography**

*Collaborative public ethnography* is a way of doing engaged public ethnography at a local level by systematically involving various publics in collaborative research partnerships at all stages of the research process, moving from identifying the research focus, to data collection and analysis, and finally to the dissemination of knowledge and creation of research reports that are more readable, relevant, and applicable to local communities (Lassiter, 2005, 2008). Collaborative research refers to a variety of processes such as PAR, community-based research, action research, or collaborative ethnography, but all are founded on activist trajectories, with the underlying aim to represent the plurality of voices and concerns of local communities and to conduct research that is useful for local community collaborators (Lassiter, 2008).

As a kind of collaborative public ethnography, PAR has long recognized a responsibility to publics outside of the academy and is particularly appropriate when dealing with issues of voice, representation, and power (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005). PAR aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of a group of people and to furthering the goals of social science (Berg et al., 2009; Brydon-Miller and Maguire, 2009; Fine and Torre,

2005; Gilmore et al., 1986; Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005). The PAR process seeks to reduce power inequities between the researchers and researched by engaging participants as equal and full research partners in the research process (Stringer, 1999). Through the process of collaboratively conducting the research and cowriting texts, PAR bridges theory and practice through the translation of knowledge into accessible reports and pragmatic action that leads to meaningful social change.

## **An example using PAR**

Although the example I will discuss describes challenges doing PAR within dissertation requirements, these certainly extend to broader issues within the scholarly community relating to peer-review processes. As a doctoral student, I conducted PAR in collaboration with a registered nonprofit organization, Dignity Village, Inc., a peer-supportive and alternative housing community founded and run by people experiencing homelessness (Mosher, 2010; <http://www.dignityvillage.org>). As a small and economically disadvantaged community attempting to define their self-governed and democratic living system, participation in community activities and development was essential to their existence.

This multiyear research project used visual research and ethnographic methods to achieve two major aims. The first aim was to carry out PAR with Dignity Village (DV) residents to understand and address barriers to voluntary participation and community empowerment. An important part of this process involved engaging in repeated cycles of research, action, and reflection to develop a deeper understanding of the dynamics driving the lack of voluntary participation in the community and how best to change these dynamics. The long-term goal was to facilitate the empowerment of the DV community to participate and shape public discourse on homelessness. Using PAR and participatory video methods (Milne et al., 2012; Mosher, 2012), we cocreated a video-based ethnographic 'text' of the community narrative. Video was considered by the community to be a necessary and valuable tool for sharing the knowledge gained from the research and for continuing dialogue toward sustaining community empowerment.

The second aim of the research was to document and evaluate the implementation and impact of the PAR process and ethnographic text on the community as a whole. This second component utilized a more traditional researcher-driven mixed-method design (including visual research, in-depth interviews, participant observation, and group/community discussions) to document and assess individual-, group-, and organizational-level factors. Multiple data sources were collected, including videotaped group and community discussions, videotaped in-depth interviews, observational field-notes, and organizational records. The research report of the evaluation results was disseminated through a mixed format style that integrated both text and video. The introduction, methods, and discussion sections were written in a relatively casual, jargon-free narrative style as a more accessible way to include community partners in the dialogue around the research and in the public discourse on the research topic. I used a video-based Visual Results text to increase accessibility and dialogic critique of the evaluation component of the research results to multiple audiences. The multimodal research report had several audiences in mind, including the scholarly community, practitioner communities doing action

research, and specific public communities such as DV residents, as well as community stakeholders and supporters of DV and similar housing models across the country.

It is important to note that video can be a powerful and accessible tool for dissemination, but it can be time-consuming and expensive, and requires some skills in filmmaking (Mosher, 2012). Because I had a background in filmmaking and was using video as a documentation method in my research design, it made the most sense to keep data in its original format instead of ‘translating’ it to text. In my case, I was using video for data collection and the participants were familiar and comfortable with video as a communication channel, so video was a logical choice for at least a portion of the report. Other research might utilize other media or modes of communication, but the underlying point applies regardless of format. The choice of format and style for dissemination of research reports should be influenced by accessibility for multiple audiences while maintaining scientific rigor and ethical care, among other considerations.

### **Disseminating a report to multiple audiences**

Review of dissemination frameworks suggests a shift away from one-way communication of research to that of researchers developing collaborative relationships with research participants, community stakeholders, and policymakers (Wilson et al., 2010). A research report (the product of the translational or dissemination phase) has conventionally been intended for academic audiences, and the report language is often specific to experts in that field. In addition, the format is almost exclusively text-based for publishing in peer-reviewed academic journals. However, this format lessens the usefulness of the report to community partners, and in effect, creates more of a divide between scholarly and lay public communities during the reporting phase of the research. In some cases, particularly in PAR, traditional styles of reporting may actually undermine the foundational principles of democracy, empowerment, and collaboration that are inherent to this type of ethnographic research. A specific concern within PAR is the issue of power and partnership in creating and sharing knowledge, and thus, the quality of PAR is affected by these critical choices of dissemination format.

However, institutions in the academy still far too often place little value on community-tailored reports or alternative dissemination channels for public audiences as a contribution to scientific advancement. When public or community dissemination is not considered a part of scientific achievement and career advancement, there is little incentive to create such reports, particularly under the severe time constraints common to most researchers. When a community-tailored report is created as an afterthought or a secondary effort at best, this creates unnecessary barriers for lay audiences to critique or contribute in a timely manner to the scientific debate or questions that the study raises. This constructive critique and dialogue is critical to the health of science and society. Thus, there is need for the initial and primary public ethnography research report to be accessible to a wider range of audiences. This would have the added benefit of generating far more scientific discussion and innovation around the topic because of the value of multiple perspectives contributing to the understanding of a complex social issue.

In creating such a report, the main challenges lie in communicating the *scientific depth* and *rigor* of the research to the academic world while simultaneously ensuring that the research report is *accessible*, *relevant* and *useful* to community partners and other public audiences. However, there are trade-offs associated with this broadening of targeted audiences. First, there is the risk of sacrificing depth in order to traverse a more expansive terrain necessary to connect diverse audiences. Second, different audiences may 'read' this report for different purposes. For example, one reason that scholars may read the report is to evaluate the scientific rigor of the research, as well as the contribution to scientific theories and conformity to specific institutional and academic requirements. This agenda is quite different from readers who participated in the research and are community partners, who will more likely read for practical purposes such as using knowledge from research to improve their community. Multiaudience dissemination in the initial report requires a careful balancing of competing priorities. In an effort to accomplish this within a single arts-based report for the PAR project with DV, I worked with my dissertation committee to develop a set of broad guidelines that stayed true to the values of PAR and to the community needs while providing sufficient criteria for academic evaluation of a nontraditional reporting format.

## Discussion: addressing challenges

A lack of familiarity and knowledge about how to evaluate different types of research and dissemination methods could hinder academic institutions in encouraging and supporting public ethnography in practice. There are few clear guidelines for conducting and disseminating research in ways that are understandable across disciplines, let alone to public audiences. Qualitative researchers, in general, have debated this topic over many years, with success in developing frameworks to evaluate research quality, resulting in general acceptance of its use in the social sciences (Carter and Little, 2007; Fine et al., 2000; Lincoln and Guba, 1986; Poortman and Schildkamp, 2012). In specific areas within qualitative inquiry that are applicable to PAR, scholars have discussed possible criteria within arts-based research (Boydell et al., 2012; Finley, 2003; Lafreniere and Cox, 2012), performance ethnography (Alexander, 2005), visual research (Pink, 2007), action research (Bradbury and Reason, 2006), participatory research (Anderson, 1998), and social justice studies (Charmaz, 2005). Many of these criteria frameworks focus on achieving validity through practical, political, and moral questions, as a means to stimulate open dialogue to guide inquiry and ensure that research conforms to broad standards of quality and ethics (Reason, 2006).

I modified criteria from the above literature to develop a tailored list of reflection questions to use as a guide for assessing the quality of PAR from its beginning stages to its dissemination and use by communities. The reflection questions are organized in four interconnected categories: rigor, representation, relevance, and transformative criteria. Questions concerning power inequities and the relationship between the researchers and participants are embedded across all four of the categories. Within each category, I have included a few of the criteria questions as examples as well as a brief illustration of how I attempted to address one or more of the criteria.

### *Rigor and ethics criteria*

Without rigor and care, even transformative, publically accessible, and aesthetically pleasing reports will not be trustworthy or credible accounts. Some reflection questions related to rigor and ethics include the following:

- Is the research designed, implemented and presented in a way that demonstrates internal consistency among its core elements—research epistemology, theoretical framework, ethical principles, and methodology—and are they adequately communicated to audiences along with relevant criteria for critique and assessment of the research?
- Is there evidence that the research was an emergent process and that there was democratic partnership between researchers and participants?
- Is the selected dissemination medium appropriate for communicating research results? Were critical choice-points related to inclusion/exclusion of visual or text data in the report documented and discussed?

Specific to video-based dissemination, the latter question relates to balancing care for the community while maintaining transparency and rigor. Because video is less ‘general’ or anonymous than written text, video clips that illustrate certain volatile community issues can create an overemphasis on an individual and could potentially cause harm to the individual shown. However, simply excluding such clips that are relevant to the community issues and to the research questions would limit the dialogue necessary for understanding the research processes and issues that emerge from this type of community-based research. To address these criteria, I used a ‘transparency journal’ to document critical choice-points encountered while writing the report. This text-based document described my decision-making process and rationale for any cases where I intentionally omitted relevant video documentation for the visual report because of concerns for the safety and well-being of participants (individuals or the community as a whole). The transparency journal served two purposes: (1) to improve the quality of the research through self-critique and reflection, and (2) to increase transparency in my decision-making and in acknowledging the limitations of addressing competing priorities that are inherent in communicating to diverse audiences, particularly related to the reporting format. Many of these limitations are not necessarily any different from text-based reporting, but because text reports are standard, this translation process is rarely questioned or made explicit.

### *Representation and voice criteria*

Engaged public ethnography should accurately represent the diversity of voices involved in the research, including community members and researcher(s). Quality research will reflect this diversity both in the reporting format as well as the data collection and feedback process for creating the report. A sampling of reflection questions related to representation and voice include the following:



- How does the research, including the report, give *voice* to participants?
- Is the selected communication medium for reporting/disseminating research adequate for presenting the plural structure, multiple voices, views, departures, and agreements leading to multiple possible actions and interpretations?
- Does the report make clear the researchers' positionality (in relation to politics, intentions, etc.) in order for audiences to understand the process through which data were interpreted and represented?
- How have community members been involved in *reviewing the material* with the researcher and challenged researchers' interpretations and representations of them?

In order to enhance study credibility and ensure accurate representation, member checking is a procedure used for sharing and obtaining feedback from participants on the interpretation of the research findings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). However, its methodological and ethical goals have been questioned, particularly in qualitative research contexts that are less collaborative, as participants may feel uncomfortable providing feedback and engaging in dialogue over representation of research with researchers (Goldblatt et al., 2011). In PAR, it is commonplace to cocreate texts with participants as partners in the research and dissemination process, and therefore, reviewing, challenging, and discussing the presentation of the research were well within the dynamics and context of our relationship in the DV PAR project.

To ensure quality translation of research into reports, it is important to obtain feedback on the reports before dissemination. This translation process may involve using research methods such as individual or group interviews, private video screenings or art exhibits, among others. When the first draft of the multimodal report was finished, I gave copies of the text and video sections to my dissertation committee and research community partner. DV hosted three weekend events to watch the Visual Results (video portion of the report) as a group. It was a community event where people could react to and discuss pieces of the video as they watched it. I provided copies of the written portion of the report for any individuals interested in reading it, although only two did so (out of 60 residents). By the dissemination stage of the research, only a handful of the original participants in the research remained in the community. Nearly all of these individuals watched the video. Surprisingly, a total of 20 or so people (more than a third of the community), many of them new residents, joined the crowd to watch and comment on the research.

The reactions to the research report were positive; participants felt that it provided an honest account of their experience with the research process, while newer residents in the community felt that the findings and video continued to be relevant to community challenges and provided a useful means for analysis and dialogue in the community. During the discussion afterward, many community members commented that the video was 'difficult to watch sometimes' because it detailed a traumatic time period within the community, which was heartbreaking to relive. Some felt that perhaps a few clips were 'too honest'. With additional dialogue, the community decided that it was important to keep most of these clips intact, as they described issues faced by the community, and honest depictions ('warts and all') might be valuable to other communities and to their own in

the future. We also talked openly about the first-person narrative of the Visual Results section, which is narrated from the point of view of the 'scholarly' researcher. This format did not fit naturally within the long history of collaboration and cocreation between me and DV. I explained to participants that my academic committee wanted to make sure that my voice came through in the report due to the importance of interpretation and self-reflection as critical quality criteria for PAR and for dissertation research in particular. The community partners respected my voice and felt that it also pushed them to think of their history differently, from another perspective.

In addition to feedback from the community, I also requested input from my academic committee. I provided them with a custom formulated worksheet that was structured for easy comprehension and efficiency in providing feedback on the video-based results section, which included a description of the visuals (including titles) and a transcript of the audio corresponding to the video time-code, so they could write comments while watching and pausing the video. Although my committee members did not attend the initial screening of the draft report with the community, they asked questions regarding the specific feedback from the community and how this addressed the quality criteria questions.

### *Relevance and usefulness criteria*

An inherent focus of PAR is to provide research that is useful and relevant to community partners and which encourages action toward specific community change. A few reflection questions related to these issues include the following:

- How open and *accessible* is the report to different audiences?
- Is the research, including its dissemination, performing a *useful*, local, community service? Does the representation, both through its form and its content, have the capacity to connect its local, community service purpose with purpose of its audiences?
- How has the researcher-facilitator prepared the community to continue using research data and texts at the end of the research? How is this measured and who evaluates this?

In the case of this PAR project with DV, community members involved in the research itself repeatedly commented on how valuable and empowering it was to be part of the project, and even individuals who did not participate during the research indicated that the visual report was extremely useful to the community for reflection on ongoing issues. The findings of the evaluation portion of the research backed up this commentary. The community continues to use a portion of the cocreated research report as an orientation video for new residents to this day.

### *Transformative criteria*

In public ethnography, theoretical knowledge can be enhanced with dialogic dissemination through peer and public review (Winter, 1989). Quality public ethnographic research

should encourage learning and engagement and lead to improvements in science and society. Some reflection questions related to transformative criteria include the following:

- Does participation in the research or as an audience of the report have a *transformative potential*? For example, does the research report create an *open space for dialogue* between community members and audience members?
- Does the report have an effect on audiences' *learning and engagement in critical reflexivity* that connects theory to practice, sparks further research, and contributes to the making of a better and more just society?
- Is it clear how the researcher is documenting or evaluating the effect on audiences using this specific medium?

The research dissemination process should offer an opportunity for critique and debate among different audiences. A dissertation defense is typically open to the public and is intended to be a forum for critique and inclusive dialogue. However, in practice, there is less often an opportunity for engaging in the dialogue between the participant community and other public or academic communities at dissemination events such as academic dissertation defenses or other peer-review processes (e.g. research grant review boards, reviewers/editors of journals, etc.). The barriers are particularly acute when community partners or publics whom researchers are trying to reach are from socially or economically disadvantaged groups, but these are exactly the voices that *should* be part of the dialogue.

At my presentation and oral defense, I made sure it was clear that everyone who had been involved in the research was invited and encouraged to attend. Because I was aware of some of the financial and scheduling barriers at DV, I scheduled the event as late in the day as possible to avoid scheduling conflicts and provided bus tickets to anyone from DV who was interested in attending the defense. I also used DV's Listserv to identify people and organizations in the broader city community to strategically promote and invite individuals to the presentation.

The enhanced openness of the event surprised many people from the 'public', whom I had invited. Several residents of DV asked, 'So this video is being watched by your professors too?' I explained that the defense was open to the public and that they would see the same report as my professors. I was surprised by how many people wanted to come, since many of them had not been part of the original research. However, having seen and commented on the initial drafts of the full dissertation report including the video, they now felt they were part of an ongoing conversation and there was much to discuss about the research with others in a more public forum. They were particularly enthusiastic and honored to be part of the peer-review process along with scholars (in this case, committee members).

On the day of the presentation, a full house arrived, with a quarter of the audience from DV, a quarter from the broader city community (some past supporters of DV), and the other half from the academic community, including professors from several disciplines (psychology, education, systems science, urban studies, and social work) and graduate students. The questions and answers afterward stirred fascinating dialogue and

interaction among community members and academic faculty and students. It became a forum for building knowledge between groups that might rarely have a chance to engage in such dialogue.

Despite the importance and transformative potential for doing public ethnography, challenges and barriers remain. There is need for change in institutional policies and practices to allow for more flexibility in research reporting and dissemination, making it 'count' for required professional work within the academy. Like almost everyone else, scholars have many demands on their time to fulfill requirements for a degree or to 'publish or perish' for professional advancement. Often, these obligations to the academy compete with other important responsibilities such as public dissemination, community partnerships, and a desire to do relevant and socially meaningful work (Lassiter, 2005).

Although my academic institution was willing to support an engaged public ethnography, the broader scholarly community remains slow to accept the value of alternative dissemination formats and multiaudience reports as rigorous and scientifically valid contributions to a researcher's professional advancement. This lack of openness extends to scientific journals; however, the domain of publishing is now being contested and discussed in innovative ways, and there are a growing number of open access and online scientific journals that publish digital products. In a recent review of open access journals that use a multistage process of publication and peer review combined with interactive public discussion, Ulrich Pöschl (2012) claims that highly interactive open access journals are 'by most if not all standards more successful than comparable scientific journals within traditional or alternative forms of peer review (editorial statistics, publication statistics, citation statistics, economic costs, and sustainability)' (p. 2).

The interactive open access publishing philosophy enables an efficient balance of rigor and relevance, providing unlimited access to relevant publications across different scientific disciplines and communities to promote interdisciplinary discussion and quality assurance (Pöschl, 2012). These changes in publishing and review processes offer an opportunity for valuable public exchange and scrutiny of scientific results, which is consistent with the principles of public ethnography, scientific inquiry, and open, democratic societies.

## Conclusion

My hope is that my experience can contribute to the ongoing dialogue to further develop an accepted and valid rubric for assessing the quality of engaged public ethnography. This article has presented arguments for integrating dissemination more thoroughly into an overall research plan in ways that are consistent with the theoretical and methodological frameworks used and which encourage the development of criteria for evaluating both the research and reports. The article also presents some potential strategies for creating more accessible research reports for community partners, while maintaining scientific rigor. Challenges remain in attempting to translate research reports into a single format for multiple audiences, but as demonstrated by my experience, it is indeed possible to create a single report that is scientifically valid and rigorous, yet accessible to community partners. Making this effort is critical to the health of science and society.

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## Note

1. The 'academy' is defined in this article as *any* institution conducting research or training scholars to do research, not just universities.

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### **Author biography**

Heather Mosher is a community psychologist and documentary filmmaker who uses participatory methods and digital technologies to engage diverse populations in research and action, including working in collaboration with those who are marginalized and directly affected by an issue. Her work focuses on using research and innovative communications as a tool to address social and health inequities, and as a mechanism for bridging research, policy and practice.