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## Introduction: Researching Change and Continuity

This is a book about researching change in personal and social life. It showcases methods that privilege the temporal. We hope that you will be able to use it in a range of ways. Through case studies you will see how different methods work in practice, as well as understanding these as located in particular times and places. In combination, the chapters will give you an understanding of the epistemological and ethical dimensions of research that seeks to capture dynamic processes. This is not a book about using research to make change (Greenwood and Levin, 2006), or even researching people who are changing the world (see Andrews, 2007). Rather it is a book about the kind of research that we do and we respect, qualitative research that takes temporality seriously.

The genesis of this book is shaped by some of the temporal motifs that we explore within it – coincidence and remembering. Coincidence in that we met in 2000, finding that we had both designed studies that sought to explore common processes of personal and social change, that we shared methodological and theoretical interests in temporality, discovering the same conceptual tools to help us in this work. We soon became aware of others thinking along similar lines and converging trajectories of academic and popular thought, seeking to forge a dynamic understanding of social processes. It was at this point that we decided that we would like to write a book about the challenges of researching social change, drawing on the qualitative research traditions that had shaped us and that we employed in our own practice. This undertaking was an expression of friendship, a desire to collaborate and to make concrete our meeting and our affinities.

The project also demanded that we locate this endeavour in time and place, leading us to trace different research traditions and to re-engage in literatures and to remember what had come before and how we had arrived at this point. This remembering was both personal and academic, and we have enjoyed the opportunity to map the literatures that surround our chosen methodologies, to discover and rediscover classics and to bring these to a contemporary audience. In this introductory chapter we outline some of the theoretical and methodological motifs that run through the book. We then outline the structure of the book and the rationale for its organization.

## ***Telling stories about social change***

### **plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose**

In 1965 the British historian Peter Laslett published a book called *The World We Have Lost* in which he critiqued the tendency of Marxist accounts to read the past through theory. He criticized the way this work employed linear histories in order to focus on the assumed rupture of industrialization and the creation of a mass society from one based on the family as the unit of life and the home as the site of industry. Laslett's solution was to replace the narrative approach of 'recounting history' with a comparative approach in which pre-industrial and contemporary society are counterposed, enabling the analyst to see more of what is the same then and now, as well as what is different. He recognizes that such an approach may 'seem unhistorical in the final sense, since it abandons the method of explanation by telling a story' (1965: 232), yet warns against the seductions of nostalgic narratives. In his words:

there is more to it than a wrong account of how things have changed. Our whole view of ourselves is altered if we cease to believe that we have lost some more humane, much more natural pattern of relationship than industrial society can offer.[...] In tending to look backwards in this way, in diagnosing the difficulties as an outcome of something which has indeed been lost to our society, those concerned with social welfare are suffering from a false understanding of ourselves in time [...] historical knowledge is knowledge to do with ourselves, now. (1965: 236–7)

In 2007, the British historian and sociologist Jeffrey Weeks played on Laslett's title in a book called *The World We Have Won* in which he seeks to challenge what he sees as a widespread popular and academic 'nostalgia for a more settled and ordered moral culture than we apparently have today' (2007: ix). The target of Weeks' polemic is not the historical materialism of Marxist sociologists, but a body of cultural pessimists (in which he includes moral conservatives, communitarians and radical scholars) who fail, in his view, to recognize and celebrate 'changes in sexual and intimate life that are transforming everyday life and the rapidly globalizing world we inhabit' (p. ix). For Weeks, we are living 'in a world of transition, in the midst of a long, convoluted, messy, unfinished but profound revolution that has transformed the possibilities of living

our sexual diversity and creating intimate lives' (p. 3). His book provides a balance sheet of the gains and losses that contribute to the character of these changes over a 30-year period. His project is not simply to show that things have changed, but also to argue that they have changed for the better. In constructing his case he warns against a series of myths: the *progressive* myth which 'all too readily forgets the contingencies of history, the tangled roads that have brought us to the present'; the *declinist* myth associated with moral conservatives which 'celebrates a history that never was, a world that was not so much lost as nostalgically reimagined to act as a counterpoint to the present'; and a *continuist* myth associated with feminist and queer scholars who 'stress the recalcitrance of hidden structures, but in doing so forget the power of agency and of the macroscopic impact of subtle changes in individual lives that makes up the unfinished revolution of our time' (2007: 7).

Weeks argues that each of these positions 'occlude what seems to me to be the inevitable reality: that the world we have won has made possible ways of life that represent an advance not a decline in human relationships, and that have broken through the coils of power to enhance individual autonomy, freedom of choice and more egalitarian patterns of relationships' (2007: 7). Echoing the sentiments of Peter Laslett, he cautions against theoretically-laden accounts of social change, instead arguing that it is only by gaining 'a handle on the links, the tendencies, the interconnections of past and present in our present history and our historic present that we can measure our gains and losses, the successes and failures, the possibilities and intransigencies, the pleasures and dangers' (p. 3). For Weeks, having a sense of the past enables us to hold 'the present to account, denaturalizing and relativizing it, demonstrating that it is a historical creation, suggesting its contingency' (p. 3).

In counterposing these two examples we can see how enduring are questions about the status of claims regarding social change and continuity, involving debate over political positions, theoretical frameworks and empirical methods. While the targets of the two polemics are different, both share a skepticism towards the theoretical and sentimental narratives that shape the way in which temporal processes are conceptualized, as well as sharing an interest in the ways in which empirical practices can contribute towards and disrupt our understandings of the interplay of past, present and future. These are sentiments that we share, although we are less motivated by a desire to demonstrate or celebrate/mourn change than by exploring practical strategies that may enable us to document, imagine and represent temporal processes and to explore the relationship between personal and social dynamics.

## **Methods and moments**

We write this book in an interesting cultural moment. It is a moment characterized by a proliferation of increasingly anxious discussions of social change and the future. Theories of postmodernity, late modernity, high modernity and reflexive modernity all point to an epochal shift equivalent to the industrial revolution that is in the process of transforming economic, material, social and personal relations. Whether such accounts construct this transformation

in terms of the 'end' of modernity or the 'beginning' of a new, reinvigorated phase, they nevertheless share an interest in narrating processes of transformation. A vocabulary of detraditionalization, disembedding, reflexivity, and individualization constructs an understanding of the individual at the centre of social and historical processes, facing a landscape of increasing uncertainty. In temporal terms, we encounter an 'extended present' (Adam, 2003, 2004) that disrupts modernist temporal orderings (Harootunian, 2007). Brian Heaphy has characterized such theoretical orientations as a 'reconstructive turn' – similar in many ways to 'constructive' founding narratives of modernity (Marx, Durkheim, Freud and Weber) which shared a taste for 'knowing the direction of social change and the part that human agency played with respect to this' (2007: 26). The reconstructive turn is characterized by a shift to a more optimistic tone and to a temporal register that shrugs off the determinations of the past, concerning itself with the ways in which the future is created in the present. Notions such as the choice biography (Beck, 1992) and the reflexive project of self (Giddens, 1991) draw heavily on phenomenological traditions and the notion of the extended present. It is argued that such biographical forms are historically new, existing independently of the past, without memory, roots or traditions.

Our contemporary moment is also characterized by the recognition of our implication in discourses of change and self-consciousness as to the contingency of our knowledge claims. Heaphy suggests that this ambivalence arises from a 'deconstructive turn' – the coincidence of poststructuralist 'incredulity' towards grand narratives (which turn upon the notion of modernity as movement with a direction; Heaphy, 2007: 65) and other deconstructive impulses (initially simple and increasingly radical) emerging from feminism, LGBT/queer and post-colonial scholarship which problematized the claims of social science to neutral, objective and legitimate knowledge. Central to both intellectual trends has been Foucault's proposal for genealogies that make the present strange by identifying discontinuities and contingencies that give rise to particular power/knowledge relations that in turn produce regimes of truth and subjects. The deconstructive turn leads to a reflexive and ambivalent position from which 'sociology must acknowledge that it is involved in narrative production, and that it is in the business of producing contingent knowledge that is open to contestation and, at best, can provide the basis for diverse interpretations of the social world.' (Heaphy, 2007: 43).

The work of US political theorist and feminist Wendy Brown (1995) captures the ambivalence of this position perfectly. On one hand, she warns feminism of the dangers of its own narratives, in which injuries of the past are perversely defended in that they provide the basis for identities in the present. Yet she also calls on feminism 'not to reproach the history on which it is born' (1995: 51), suggesting that it is possible to maintain an attachment to subjectivity, identity and morality without indulging in *ressentiment* (a term derived from the work of Nietzsche to capture the reassignment of the pain that accompanies a sense of one's own inferiority onto an external scapegoat). For Brown, our very ability to create political identities is dependent on our ability to be free from such dependencies in order to imagine a future, which in turn demands a 'sense of historical movement' (2001: 9). Accepting the deconstructive inheritance of

poststructuralism and radical difference does not mean abandoning politics, but it does mean relinquishing simplistic historical narratives. Brown argues that ‘as the past becomes less easily reduced to a single set of meanings and effects, as the present is forced to orient itself amid *so much* history and *so many* histories, history itself emerges as both weightier and less deterministic than ever before’ (2001: 5).

## ***A turn towards time***

You will see from our approach in this book that we have been influenced by the reflexive inheritance of the deconstructive turn. We are interested in *histories* rather than history, and self-conscious of our own implications in the sociological and empirical narratives that we forge. Yet we do not wish to abandon the project of locating ourselves and others within historical and cultural perspectives, and we seek practical and empirical strategies that capture the interplay of past, present and future while also acknowledging how social, cultural and disciplinary positioning shape the resulting narratives and the questions we ask of methods. In his 2004 book *After Method*, John Law makes an impassioned plea for a new kind of social science methodology that recognizes that methods produce the realities that they understand, and which are able to capture ‘the ephemeral, the indefinite and the irregular’ (p. 4). In Law’s words, ‘we need to find ways of elaborating quiet methods, slow methods, or modest methods. In particular, we need to discover ways of making methods without accompanying imperialisms’ (p. 15). In this book we have not sought to invent new methods, but instead have looked at what we already have, but which we believe have some of the qualities outlined by Law. These are all methods that capture something of the fleeting character of the ephemeral and the interplay of the subjective and objective dimensions of time. They are methods that through different forms of ‘duration’ – in field-work and/or analysis – recognize movement, exchange and dynamic process.

Twenty years before Law, in an introduction to a collection of papers on historical psychology, Kenneth Gergen (1984) identifies three ‘romances’ or underlying myths about time that circumscribe the discipline. The first of these is the privileging of synchronic over diachronic analysis – a focus on static entities (such as social class) rather than states across a temporal period (such as social mobility). The second is an adherence to research methods which truncate temporal patterns rather than allowing for periods/flows of time. Here Gergen points to how familiar features of everyday life all require extended time horizons: whether this be phenomena at the micro-level (‘holding a conversation, playing games, teaching a lesson, having a fight, making love’ (p. 8), or phenomena that take place against a wider time horizon (‘getting an education, developing friendships, carrying out a romance, raising a child, getting ahead occupationally’), or even those macro-phenomena that qualify as historical and social changes. The third romance about time is what he terms ‘the privileging of phenomenological immutability over temporal contingency’ (p. 8) – the search for laws rather than situated meanings and the attempt to exempt the research process from a contingent location alongside

the data. More than 20 years later, we feel that the turn towards time in social research, of which this book is a part, goes some way towards overturning these romances. This is an interdisciplinary impulse, and in privileging sequential patterns one is better able to articulate the temporal and the spatial. It is a methodological project that needs to be historically aware, drawing on insights and traditions from across the social sciences and the arts, requiring recognition of its place at the intersection of a number of methodological and disciplinary histories. For historians, this may appear naïve, but a generous reading of the field can recognize its necessity.

## ***Methodological motifs***

The book reviews six methodological traditions: memory work, oral/life history, qualitative longitudinal research, ethnography, intergenerational and follow-up studies. These are overlapping approaches; some of our case studies could have appeared in more than one chapter and the same ‘methods’ are employed within the different traditions. In reviewing these approaches we have become aware of a number of recurrent themes, which are, in turn, implicated in our theoretical orientation. Before outlining the structure of the book we discuss each briefly.

## **Historicizing of method**

Research methods are the products of times and places. They have histories and the forms of knowledge that they produce are in turn productive of power-knowledge relations (Alastalo, 2008). The ‘invention’ of questionnaire-based survey methods and ethnographic fieldwork at the end of the 19th century enabled representations of the present, replacing a reliance on narrative and library-based approaches, which Peter Burke (1992) describes as an expression of a new moment in modernity and a shift in influence from the old Europe to the new world. The rise of biographical and narrative methods in the 1980s and 1990s spoke to the rise in influence of new social movements and a turn to subjectivity within western cultures and across academic disciplines. More recent talk of the ‘crisis in empirical sociology’, including anxieties about the lack of purchase of survey and interview methods in the face of commercial information technologies or real-life documentary genres, can be seen as yet another moment in this history of social research methods (Savage and Burrows, 2007). Talk of a ‘descriptive turn’ in the context of a new empiricism suggests a move away from causality and explanation as an ideal towards more connected, thick and theorized accounts (Latour, 2005; Savage and Burrows, 2007).

Each of the methods we feature in this book have had their moments in the sun, when they produced enthusiasm with researchers giving rise to new forms of representation and understanding which in turn forged a new sense of possibility. Memory work thrived in the 1980s yet is rediscovered regularly in different places. The heyday of oral history coincided with the heyday of feminist and socialist reclaiming of their pasts. Qualitative longitudinal methods are

popular as we write, and ethnography has a complex history spanning the last century, both reviled and reclaimed in different times, places and disciplines. Intergenerational approaches which emphasize psychic and material transaction become salient in moments of crisis and rapid change. With the rise of digital technologies the potential of data archiving and data sharing becomes more compelling, and as the baby boomers mature they become increasingly interested in revisiting their earlier studies. By attempting to tell the story of a range of different research approaches, each of which has some purchase in capturing processes of continuity and change, we hope to show the ways in which research methods are themselves historically situated techniques producing situated forms of knowledge.

### **Historicizing the subject, including the researcher**

Much has been written about the role of the researcher in producing knowledge in research encounters and their role in producing reflexivity (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Our explorations have helped us understand why the researcher can never be outside the process of knowledge production and data generation. By thinking in temporal and historical terms, both the researcher and the researched are located together within a hermeneutic circle. The extent to which we actually *notice* the presence of researchers in research accounts or data depends in part on the methods employed and the genre of reporting. For example, a deliberate commitment to reflexivity and accounting for oneself in the data produces an autobiographical representation of the researcher. The production of field notes as part of data generation forges a voice that can be represented directly or indirectly in research accounts. Revisiting data (whether in follow-up or secondary analysis studies) or revisiting oneself, as in returning to one's earlier work, in qualitative longitudinal research or memory work, also provides a way of producing the persona of the researcher as part of the data record. If we take the perspective of the intellectual biographer (of self or others) we could see the researcher in their choice of subject matter, or theory, and more subtly in what is and what is not seen in the data and the kinds of recognitions and omissions that characterize the stories they tell (Coslett et al., 2000; Stanley, 1992). Recent moves within psycho-social approaches to research that construct the research subject as defended also alert us to the reciprocal dynamics of transference and projection within the research encounter, as well as the implication of the defended researcher in the production and analysis of material (Frosh et al., 2002; Hollway and Jefferson, 2000; Lucey et al., 2003; Walkerdine et al., 2001).

### **Dynamic temporal relations**

Research methods, the data they generate and the interpretations that we make from them are characterized by a dynamic relationship between temporal registers. While it can be necessary for analytic and everyday purposes to distinguish the past, present and future, they are inseparable, constitutive of the temporal flow (Elias, 1992). Philosophers of time have conceptualized this in different ways. The key point that we take from this work is the distinction between an

objective measurable 'clock time' and an understanding of time as experienced subjectively. Bergson, for example, distinguishes between *temps* (a spatialized orientation to time characterized by extensity) and *duree* (a temporalized orientation characterized by intensity) (Ansell, Pearson and Mullarkey, 2002). Heidegger provides an ontological concept of existence, '*Dasein*', which is constituted by an orientation to the future (existentiality), an orientation to the past (facticity) and an orientation to the present (ensnarement) – corresponding respectively to the experiential modes of pursuit of the future, bearing the past and acting/drifted within the present (Farrell Krell, 1993). These concepts were influential in the formation of phenomenology and the psychologies of G.H. Mead and William James, and more recent theoretical engagements with temporality acknowledge their continuing legacy (Grosz, 2004, 2005).

The notion that the past and the future are always apprehended in the present has not always found its ways into empirical paradigms. Although different methodological strategies may emphasize different temporal registers (for example oral history may appear to be about the past), the interrelating dimensions of past-present-future are always in operation. So accounts of the past are created in relation to the demands of the present and in their telling evoke a possible future. Despite our recognition of the indivisibility of past-present-future, the book is organized to show how different approaches privilege particular temporal perspectives: Part 1, *Remembering* (methods that seek the past through memory and narration), Part 2, *Being With* (methods that seek to capture the present and the unfolding of events and lives), and Part 3, *Passing On* (methods that are oriented to the future, yet which approach it by exploring the passage of time and processes of inheritance).

Another element of this dynamism concerns the dual aspect of continuity and change. Traditionally social theory has been schematized as either explaining continuity or explaining change (for example, via distinctions drawn between conflict and consensus theories). Yet empirical research regularly confronts us with the paradoxical nature of phenomena which express aspects of both (Crow, 2008). So, for example, the idea of the 'invented tradition', a term coined by historians Hobsbawm and Ranger, helps us see how the creation of national celebrations which appear to establish continuity with the past are in fact highly modern phenomena speaking to the future. As Paul Connerton observes, beginnings demand recollection, and we tend to hear the 'echo of tradition at the moment of its de-authorisation' (1989: 9). Fred Davis characterizes this paradox in terms of nostalgia, suggesting that in times of rapid change we tend to assuage 'apprehension of the future by retrieving the worth of the past' (1979: 71), and that this 'allows time for needed change to be assimilated while giving the appearance ... of meaningful links to the past' (p. 110). Conversely, phenomena that appear to be entirely 'new' also speak to the past. So, for example, the formulation of the 'magical solution' generated by cultural studies accounts of youth culture in the 1970s showed how teenage skinhead culture could be understood as existing in conversation with the culture of the parents and the loss of traditional working-class communities (Hall and Jefferson, 1976). These kinds of understandings of the interdependent dynamic between continuity and change, which are rooted in empirical awareness of how lives are lived and cultures work, offer a way of thinking about change where the past and present co-exist and where social reproduction is a situated and emergent accomplishment.



## An articulation of contingency and relatedness

Abstraction is a tool for social research, and tends to work by taking the individual out of the social, or evacuating the social from subjectivity. Both, in turn, produce and sustain the theoretical problem of the relationship between structure and agency. These kinds of abstractions are useful, pragmatic and misleading. Doreen Massey (1993, 1994) has written about this in terms of tendencies, on the one hand, towards privileging the spatial (i.e. relationships of structure, social location, co-existence) and, on the other, of privileging the temporal, generally expressed through an emphasis on the individual, process, contingency and how things pan out over time. Certain methods are good at the former (such as cross-sectional methods), and certain methods are good at the latter (such as longitudinal and narrative approaches). Combined, they enable a three-dimensional perspective, yet this is static. Massey argues that movement needs to be introduced, to achieve a four-dimensional sociology that articulates the two and keeps them in motion. In our view, this is an inviting and ambitious approach, one which opens up possibilities to show the coalescence of place, time, subjectivity and the social: explaining why certain stories can be told and heard at certain moments, and the consequence of this. Each of the methods we consider in this book sheds some light on aspects of Massey's four-dimensional sociology and suggests both the promise and value of this approach, but also the difficulty in achieving the required level of analytical and methodological complexity across different types of research projects.

Various attempts have been made to capture this articulation of contingency and relatedness. For example, in earlier work Julie explored the value of Bourdieu's concept of habitus, which can be understood as 'socialized subjectivity', the dispositions and embodied 'ways of being', including values and ways of comporting oneself, which are formed in interaction with 'social fields' – how individuals 'become themselves'. She experimented with a temporalizing of the 'formation of habitus over time' within which individuals may 'improvise' (McLeod, 2000). To do this, she drew on Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen's appropriation of Freud's metaphor of the 'magic writing pad' through which resources are gleaned from experience and cultural forms to elaborate the kind of woman that one wants to be. These inscriptions are made metaphorically onto a page, to be overlaid with others, as they become available. Yet each inscription leaves a mark, or indentation, on a soft wax block behind the sheet of paper. While the page is wiped and overlaid with new inscriptions, all are accumulated into a less conscious yet more enduring record. The two dimensions of gender identity and gender subjectivity exist in a dynamic and dialectic relationship over time, giving rise to gender as a process. It is a 'dialectic which results in the "magic" situation that change does not exclude permanence, and permanence does not exclude change. Without inscription there is no change in subjectivity, without the wax block there is no subject for the identity work' (Bjerrum Nielsen, 1996: 10).

We do not propose a single theoretical framework or resolution in this book. Concepts and theories arise within chapters, led by the kinds of research questions posed and the methodological solutions pursued. Any number of theoretical frameworks could be relevant to the endeavour of this book, and our choices are a deliberate reflection of our wish to embed theory within the purposes of particular projects.

## **Organization of the book**

We have approached this book as a joint endeavour involving a division of labour. We have taken a lead on different chapters, each addressing one methodological approach within a section. Julie has taken responsibility for chapters on oral history, ethnography and follow-up studies and Rachel for memory work, qualitative longitudinal research and intergenerational studies. We have shared the task of editing as well as the job of creating an introduction and conclusion for the book and writing Chapter 8 on 'Time, Emotions and Research Practice'. The book is organized into three parts, representing different temporal registers. In the first part, 'Remembering', we explore methods that focus on the past, memory work and oral history. Chapter 2 tells the story of memory work through three examples: the original experiments of German feminist Frigga Haug and colleagues in the 1980s, the adaptation of this method by a group of Australian feminist psychologists in the 1990s, and finally a cultural studies approach represented by the work of Annette Kuhn. The chapter provides a guide to the method as well as exploring differences and commonalities in its use. Chapter 3 takes as its focus oral and life history approaches which employ interviews in order to capture biographies and testimonies that offer a window on the past. It creates a case study clustered around the *Bringing Them Home* report (1997), which gave voice to Indigenous Australians forcibly removed from their families (the Stolen Generations). We explore the complex relationship between experience and narrative, the impact of narrative accrual, and life stories as testimony and a form of inheritance. The second case study examines a life history study of New Zealand women teachers informed by Foucauldian genealogy and feminist theory, and considers how these approaches de-familiarize the present and interrupt linear accounts of history, progression and change.

The second section of the book, 'Being With', showcases two qualitative research strategies which privilege the present. Chapter 4 explores qualitative research that is longitudinal, and which seeks to walk alongside research participants over a determined period of time. Again we seek to place the method into historical and cultural context, asking why and how such approaches are gaining in popularity. We illustrate the potential of the method through examples taken from our own work into young people's lives, showing the way in which personal change can be connected to broader institutional and social processes as well as reflecting on the challenge of analysing, storing and sharing such data sets. Chapter 5 on ethnography explores the way in which a frozen 'ethnographic present' has become the focus of contemporary critique and how this is being extended in order to engage with questions of change as well as continuity. Through two exemplars of ethnographic studies, both informed by feminism and representing different moments in feminist theory and social research, the chapter illustrates how the method can be used to privilege a focus on action, performance and the passage of time, and in doing so reveal the contingency and construction of that which may be taken for granted or assumed as natural.

The third section of the book, 'Passing On', engages with two research strategies that speak to the future, capturing the passage of meaning and experience between generations. The first of these, Chapter 6, explores cross-generational research and qualitative studies of intergenerational chains. The chapter begins with an exploration of sociological approaches to generation, before considering two examples of intergenerational research in depth: a Norwegian study of three generation chains of women and a four generation study of English families. The chapter provides insights into the methodological challenges of such studies as well as outlining how data generated from such studies can enrich and complicate understandings of personal and social change. Chapter 7, 'Revisiting', considers looks at the shifts between generations of researchers. Here we consider the growing interest in returning to social science studies of the past. This may involve a new set of researchers or the original researcher(s) at a different stage in their life course. Such studies raise a range of compelling practical and epistemological questions about the possibility of recreating the original research context as well as the promise of new or re-contextualized data as a means of documenting social change.

The penultimate chapter in the book – 'Time, Emotions and Research Practice' – provides a case study of research analysis in practice, mobilizing some of the techniques and orientations described throughout the book. By returning to two troubling and related research incidents after a period of several years, we explore the ways in which research encounters can be interrogated retrospectively in order to better understand the 'present' that 'was'. Through critical examination of a performance of racism in a focus group we explore some of the ethical dimensions involved in conducting and writing about research, showing the recursive and iterative character of analysis and how the subjectivity of the researcher can be a resource for this work. The book ends with a conclusion in which we review the themes of temporality, change and continuity and the characteristics of the research traditions we have explored in this book.

By placing our chosen methods within a wider context of their intellectual histories we hope to have gone some way towards holding the dynamic between determination and hermeneutics – showing how the past influences the present and how the present shapes what we see as the past (Connerton, 1989). Methods may simultaneously help us think about processes of continuity and change while also being recognized as claims to knowledge. In our view these are tensions to be recognized rather than resolved, and they can be productive of rich accounts, not simply of relativist dead ends. What we offer in this book is a practical guide to a range of methods that have enormous potential if used thoughtfully and reflectively. We also offer a series of essays on the way in which different methods have arisen and the kind of insights that they may offer, including the theoretical palettes that they may inspire. We hope that the book encourages people to do research that not only privileges temporality, but which goes some way towards the kind of four-dimensional sociology envisaged by Massey: 'the point is to try to think in terms of space-time. It is a lot more difficult than at first sight it might seem (Massey, 1994: 264).

