

Bond University
Research Repository



Getting On With Field Research Using Participant Deconstruction

Wright, April L.; Middleton, Stuart; Hibbert, Paul; Brazil, Victoria

Published in:
Organizational Research Methods

DOI:
[10.1177/1094428118782589](https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428118782589)

Licence:
Other

[Link to output in Bond University research repository.](#)

Recommended citation(APA):
Wright, A. L., Middleton, S., Hibbert, P., & Brazil, V. (2020). Getting On With Field Research Using Participant Deconstruction. *Organizational Research Methods*, 23(2), 275-295. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428118782589>

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

For more information, or if you believe that this document breaches copyright, please contact the Bond University research repository coordinator.

GETTING ON WITH FIELD RESEARCH USING PARTICIPANT

DECONSTRUCTION

APRIL L. WRIGHT

Institution: University of Queensland.

Address: UQ Business School, The University of Queensland, Blair Drive, St Lucia, Brisbane, QLD, Australia 4072.

Email: a.wright@business.uq.edu.au

Bio: April L. Wright is Associate Professor of Strategy at The University of Queensland, Australia. Her research focuses on processes of institutional maintenance and change and professions. She specializes in qualitative methods and her research has been published in the *Academy of Management Journal* and other leading journals.

STUART MIDDLETON

Institution: University of Queensland

Address: UQ Business School, The University of Queensland, Blair Drive, St Lucia, Brisbane, QLD, Australia 4072.

Email: s.middleton@business.uq.edu.au

Bio: Stuart Middleton is Lecturer in Strategy at the University of Queensland. His research applies institutional theory to focus on social innovation, particularly how organisational responses to grand societal challenges are enabled and constrained by embeddedness in institutional environments.

PAUL HIBBERT

Institution: University of St Andrews

Address: The University of St Andrews, College Gate, North Street, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9AJ, United Kingdom

Email: ph24@st-andrews.ac.uk

Bio: Paul Hibbert is Dean of Arts and Professor of Management at the University of St Andrews. His research addresses collaborative and relational processes of organizing and learning, and is published in leading international journals. He specializes in qualitative research methods and he is an *Organizational Research Methods* editorial board member.

VICTORIA BRAZIL

Institution: Bond University

Address: School of Medicine, Bond University, 14 University Drive, Robina, QLD 4226 Australia

Email: vbrazil@bond.edu.au

Bio: Victoria Brazil is Associate Professor at the School of Medicine at Bond University, Australia and a staff specialist in Emergency Medicine at the Gold Coast and Robina hospitals

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR: April L. Wright, UQ Business School, University of Queensland, Australia. Postal address: UQ Business School, University of Queensland, Blair Drive, St Lucia, Queensland, 4072, Australia. Phone: 61 7 3365 8154. email: a.wright@business.uq.edu.au

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: We acknowledge the support of the Australian Research Council in providing funding for this project under Linkage Project grant LP0989662 and Discovery Project grant DP140103237. We also acknowledge the following people for their helpful insights: Alex Markwell, Rob Mitchell, Julia Brownlie, Carla Wright, Mattia Anesa, Sabrina Amir, Beth Bindon, Gemma Irving, Alexandra Kriz, Nkosana Mafico, Richard O'Quinn, Rui Torres de Oliveira, Ross Strong, Kelvin Tan, and Mark Tanner.

USING PARTICIPANT DECONSTRUCTION TO GET ON WITH FIELD RESEARCH

ABSTRACT

This paper adds to the repertoire of field research methods through developing the technique of ‘participant deconstruction’. This technique involves research participants challenging and re-interpreting organizational texts through the application of orienting, disorienting and re-orienting deconstructive questions. We show how participant deconstruction complements existing strategies for ‘getting on’ with field research – cultivating relationships, developing outsider knowledge and mobilising insider knowledge – by facilitating research participants’ questioning and challenging of organizational texts and thus opening up alternative latent understandings, illuminating concealed meanings and supporting reflexivity for participants and researchers, thereby opening up fruitful lines of inquiry. We illustrate the application of the technique with examples drawn from healthcare research projects. Through gathering further practitioner feedback from a variety of alternative contexts, we go on to demonstrate the potential application of participant deconstruction in a range of field contexts, by different types of practitioners undertaking deconstructive readings of a wide variety of organizational texts. We also offer suggestions for further research to extend the technique.

Keywords: field research; deconstruction; research relationships; qualitative methods; texts

Field research involves “systematic collection of original data – qualitative and quantitative – in real organizations” (Edmondson & McManus, 2007: 1155) and has been conceptualized as following a four-stage process of ‘getting in, getting on, getting out, and getting back’ (Buchanan, Boddy, & McCalman, 1988). At the initial ‘getting in’ stage, researchers identify suitable participants and secure their commitment to the research through participation in interviews, observation, ethnography, case studies, and/or action research (Peticca-Harris, deGama, & Elias, 2016). At the ‘getting on’ stage, researchers enter the field and try to gain understanding of the lives of research participants (Buchanan et al., 1988). At the ‘getting out’ and ‘getting back’ stages, researchers exit from fieldwork and return to the field in ways that facilitate theorizing about phenomenon and support scholarly writing (Michailova et al., 2014). While each stage presents challenges for field researchers, the ‘getting on’ stage is particularly challenging because entering the social world of the field requires building relationships and trust with suspicious or reluctant research participants (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016; Dundon & Ryan, 2010). Researchers often feel confused about what data sources are available and relevant to the research question, and when and how they might collect this data (Okumus, Altinay, & Roper, 2007). Reflexively withholding preconceived assumptions and biases is also challenging, as researchers must “make extraordinary efforts to give voice to the informants in early stages of data gathering” (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012: 17).

The methods literature points to three strategies that are commonly used by researchers to get on with field research (Feldman, Bell, & Berger, 2003; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Patton, 2002). The first strategy applies when a researcher has gained access to a field context as an insider (Anteby, 2013; Brannick & Coghlan, 2007). This strategy involves the researcher mobilizing their own insider knowledge and social connections to get on with data gathering,

such as Michel (2007) using her professional networks and experience as a former banker to progress her research into Wall Street banking. Having prior understanding of everyday life within the field expedites the transition from the ‘getting in’ to the ‘getting on’ stage of field research (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007), and reduces frustrations and time investment needed to build relationships with research participants (Karra & Phillips, 2008). The researcher already knows insider language and jargon (MacLean, Anteby, Hudson, & Rudolph, 2006) and has empathy with participants (Michel, 2007), which may be essential for getting on with field research involving sensitive or socially disapproved topics and organizational contexts.

However, the strategy of mobilizing insider knowledge makes the researcher vulnerable to interpretive assumptions about the ‘rules of the game’ (Karra & Phillips, 2008) and emotional over-involvement and relational tensions (Adler, Adler, & Rochford, 1986). Without extra care, insider knowledge may undermine professional distance, criticality and reflexivity (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), or paradoxically lead to restricted access because field participants do not want insiders having unbounded knowledge of the business (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007).

The second strategy for getting on with field research is based on an outsider researcher’s cultivation of relationships with key informants and leveraging the informants’ insider knowledge and connections (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016), an approach that is widely accepted in the methods literature (Adler et al., 1986). Effectiveness depends on identifying suitable informants and ensuring they understand the researcher’s aims (Van de ven & Huber, 1990). The “wrong insider” can direct the research down unhelpful paths and may disrupt wider participant engagement (MacLean et al., 2006: 63). Cultivating relationships is time consuming and hard for the outsider researcher to control (Feldman et al., 2003). While this second strategy mitigates the potential lack of critical distance and reflexivity that may affect insider researchers, an informant

may be even less critical and reflexive about the organizational world because of their socialization within it (Patton, 2002). Thus, this strategy may restrict the diversity of perspectives that come to the researcher's attention (Whittle, Mueller, Lenney, & Gilchrist, 2014).

The third strategy for getting on with field research involves more general development of an outsider researcher's familiarity with the field. Familiarity can be developed through reviewing field documents, conducting pilot interviews, and maintaining a general observational presence at a field site to build trust (Feldman et al., 2003; Pettigrew, 1990). Outsider knowledge relevant to getting on with field research is built incrementally and systematically at low cost and with low risk (Pettigrew, 1990), and may be the only option in contexts suspicious of outsiders (Dundon & Ryan, 2010; MacLean et al., 2006). At the same time, researchers may be frustrated by the slow and uncertain progress of gaining meaningful insights (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016) and be obstructed by jargon and insider language (MacLean et al., 2006). Researchers may also lack the detailed understanding needed to develop a critical and reflexive perspective that encompasses divergent views (Alvesson, 2003; Hibbert, Sillince, Diefenbach, & Cunliffe, 2014).

All three strategies commonly used for getting on with field research – mobilizing the researcher's insider knowledge and connections, cultivating relationships with key informants, and developing outsider knowledge – lack reflexivity and struggle to surface, critique and challenge latent assumptions and alternative ways of understanding the field. To address this issue, we suggest that deconstruction can provide a basis for engaging with participants and their social worlds in a different way (Martin, 1990). We derive a technique that supports research participants to undertake deconstructive readings of organizational texts to stimulate the surfacing of multiple, reflexive and critical interpretations of the social world of the organization at the 'getting on' stage of field research (Derrida, 1976, 1978, 1982).

Our technique – which we label ‘participant deconstruction’ – involves a research participant questioning and challenging a relevant organizational text. Interpretations of multiple and hidden meanings underlying the text emerge from this process and open up alternative perspectives and understandings of the organizational context to the field researcher. The technique supports getting on with field research by helping to counter the tendencies of insiders to impose their own biases and preunderstandings on the field research, and of outsiders to uncritically accept organizational accounts. We propose participant deconstruction as a technique that organizational researchers can add to their toolbox, complementing the three well-known strategies for getting on with field research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Patton, 2002) by surfacing alternative ways of seeing the organization on a participant’s own terms.

The remainder of the article is structured as follows. We first briefly review the literature on deconstruction in management and organizational studies the development of our technique. Next, we present an illustrative example of participant deconstruction from our research and analyse the benefits gained from the applying the technique. Finally, we discuss the opportunities and limitations that researchers face when putting participant deconstruction to use methodologically as a technique for progressing the ‘getting on’ stage of field research.

DECONSTRUCTION IN ORGANIZATIONAL RESEARCH

Deconstruction: An Overview

Our purpose is to provide organizational researchers whose projects “centrally involve collecting data in field sites” (Edmondson & McManus, 2007: 340-341) with a new technique to add to their tool box. Our approach aligns with that of other researchers who have applied deconstruction as a “tool” (Peterson & Albrecht, 1999: 170; Summers, Boje, Dennehy, & Rosile, 1997: 344), a “process” (Boje, 1998: 462), “analytic strategies” (Martin, 1990: 355) and

“research tactics” (Fougère & Moulettes, 2012: 10) for engaging with texts of and about organizations. Given this, the literature review that follows is selective rather than exhaustive.

Our use of the term deconstruction is associated with French philosopher Jacques Derrida (in particular 1976, 1978, 1982) and the practice of reading, interpreting and writing about texts. Deconstruction explores the infinite play of differences in meaning mediated through socially constructed practices. Derrida considers texts as one-sided and object-like in that they impose stability, coherence, morals, and structure to suppress differences. A deconstructive reading of a text calls on the reader to constantly reflect, question, and reformulate their understanding of what is happening ‘inside’ the text to construct its meaning, through the expression and suppression of difference. As socially constructed objects, texts are not limited by their present boundaries but are understood in relation to that which is absent. Such absences point to a lack of completeness in the text, which allows for (or requires) a supplement to be provided by the reader who constructs its meaning. Deconstruction therefore rejects the presumption that texts have a simple, contained and unified meaning. Instead of positing a single ultimate reality, deconstruction opens up multiple plausible interpretations, all of which have equal value.

Derrida’s writings have been invoked in the field of organization studies through a variety of entry points, one of which is their application in deconstructive readings of organizational texts to advance debate and offer critique (Jones, 2003: 106). Researchers have adapted Derrida’s ideas to analyse hidden meanings and implicit assumptions in particular texts produced by academics or practitioners. They have performed deconstructive readings of classic texts by seminal authors (e.g. Kilduff, 1993), other academic texts (e.g. Calás, 1993), and practitioner texts produced by organizations and from organizational life (e.g. Martin, 1990).

There is an inevitable tension when applying deconstruction to ‘read’ particular texts in and of organization. On the one hand, Derrida cautioned against reducing deconstruction to a method that readers impose mechanically on a text. For Derrida, deconstruction “*is* only what it does and what is done with it, there were it takes place” (Derrida, 1988: 141 emphasis in original). Therefore readers must remain open to moving, adjusting and changing in relation to the contours of the particular text being deconstructed (Kilduff, 1993). On the other hand, Derrida’s writing on deconstruction purposefully “avoids simplification of ideas” (Kilduff, 1993: 28), making it elusive and “extravagantly convoluted” (Aggar, 1991: 106). Practical application of deconstructive reading in social science therefore requires that deconstruction be “demystified” and that researchers develop analytical strategies and deconstructive moves that question the underlying meaning of a text (Martin, 1990: 340-341).

Applications of Deconstruction in Organizational Research

To gain deeper insight into how organizational researchers approach deconstruction as method, we undertook a literature review and assembled a set of studies that applied deconstruction to advance scholarly understanding of organizations. Our sampling rationale was based on three criteria: 1. the author(s) applied Derrida’s writings in a deconstructive reading; 2. the author(s) performed a deconstructive reading of a particular text related to organizations; and 3. the author(s) reported the process of their textual reading in a way that allowed us to discern their deconstructive ‘moves’ (Kilduff, 1993) or ‘analytic strategy’ (Martin, 1990). Our search generated thirteen studies that met our selection criteria and were published in peer-reviewed journals. Table 1 reports details of our sample and how researcher(s) presented their application of deconstruction “as if it were a method of empirical enquiry” (Learmonth, 1999: 1001).

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

The studies in our sample were conducted by academics with scholarly expertise in deconstruction with one exception. Learmonth (1999) deconstructed an NHS report early in his academic training when he was the chief officer of a community health council: “I was studying deconstruction as a possible technique for research ... (and my deconstructive reading) started simply as an experiment to see if deconstruction worked” (Learmonth, 1999: 1010). Reflecting on the value of deconstruction, Learmonth (1999: 1010) writes: “I feel that this exercise has helped me articulate some reservations about aspects of management which I have held in the past but been unsure about precisely why”. Learmonth’s description of his personal experience with deconstruction hints at its potential utility as a technique for getting on with field research. Research participants’ latent and unarticulated ways of seeing and experiencing at the field site – what Learmonth calls his “pre-existing beliefs” - can potentially be brought to the surface if participants perform deconstructive readings on texts relevant in and to their local context. However, exploiting this potential utility requires making deconstruction accessible to a novice practitioner who lacks the time or interest to commit to Learmonth’s (1999) preparatory study. In the next section, we explain how we used insights from our sample to develop our technique.

PARTICIPANT DECONSTRUCTION: A TECHNIQUE FOR FIELD RESEARCH

We applied three criteria when developing our participant deconstruction technique. First, the task requirements of a deconstructive reading had to be *comprehensible* to the research participant. Second, the text should be *open* to the participant to interpret according to his or her perspective and experiences and the technique should not close off interpretations. Third, the reading should be *time-efficient* for a research participant to prepare for and complete.

After discussion and debate among the research team, we came to a shared view that deconstructive reading could be made comprehensible for a participant by presenting the task as

a series of questions that he or she could ‘ask’ of a text. Reviewing the deconstructive moves identified from our sample studies (Column 4 in Table 1), we iteratively developed a set of five questions and accompanying explanations that we believed could be comprehended by research participants¹: (1) *what is the storyline?* orients the research participant to the basic storyline that serves to unify the text; (2) *are there dichotomies?* disorients the text and the research participant’s assumptions by identifying and dismantling concepts in the text that derive power from suppressing their binary opposites; (3) *are there silences?* continues the disorientation by inviting the research participant to search for and interrogate what is missing or absent from the text, including voices that have been silenced; (4) *what are the contradictions?* completes the disorientation by inviting the research participant’s to focus their attention on the places where the text fails to make sense, revealing contradictions and disruptions in meaning; and (5) *can the story be resituated?* shifts from disorientation to reorientation by inviting the research participant to consider how the story might be resituated to resolve the conflicts made visible by previous questions. We detail the questions and their derivations in Table 2.

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

When reading Table 2, it is important to note that alternative ways of selecting, integrating and ordering different deconstructive moves and analytic strategies are possible. Other researchers might develop alternative sets of questions and approaches in their practice. We nevertheless propose the five-question approach in Table 2 as one possible operationalization of participant deconstruction that meets the criteria of comprehensibility and openness. The five questions are sufficiently broad that research participants can adapt them to the contours of a

¹ The final questions include minor changes to wording directed by an anonymous reviewer.

particular text while bringing their own perspective and experience of a field site to bear on their interpretations of the text. Since the technique aims to help the researcher get on with field research, the deconstructive reading is most beneficial when performed by a 'knowledgeable agent'. A knowledgeable agent is defined as a participant who has a good understanding of the organizational context for the field research and "can explain their thoughts, intentions and actions" as a stakeholder (Gioia, Corley & Hamilton, 2012: 17).

Time efficiency depends to a large extent on the choice of organizational text to which the questions are applied. Column 3 in Table 1 highlights the texts that researchers selected for researcher-produced deconstructions in our sample studies. We propose that texts for participant-produced deconstructive readings can be selected by either the participant or the researcher. Participant selection ensures the text being deconstructed is meaningful to participants' lived experience of their organizational world. The time burden is lessened if the chosen text is familiar and referred to in everyday work, making the text more accessible to deconstruct. Alternatively, a researcher may prefer to choose the text to ensure fit with the intended focus of the field research. Whether selected by the researcher or participant, if the text is excessively long - such as a practitioner handbook or organizational code of conduct - a shorter extract can be deconstructed. A few of the deconstructions in our sample reduced text volume in this way.

In summary, the participant deconstruction technique we developed has three key elements: (1) task specification as a set of five questions to be applied in a deconstructive reading to orient, disorient and reorient a text; (2) application of the questions to an organizational text by participants who are knowledgeable agents of the context for field research; and (3) selection by either the participant or the researcher of an organizational text that is meaningful to everyday

work and which, when deconstructed by the participant, opens up latent understandings and assumptions of the field. In the next section we present an illustrative example of the technique.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT DECONSTRUCTION

We illustrate our technique by offering examples from our own research in an emergency department in Australia. The research seeks to understand the everyday experience of professional work in a health system managed for economic efficiency. After gaining hospital approval to access the emergency department field site, the researchers applied the technique of participant deconstruction. As business school academics, the researchers were outsiders. Participant deconstruction supported a broad strategy of leveraging informants to get on with field research and to progress data gathering through interviews and non-participant observation.

Operationalizing Participant Deconstruction in our Field Research

The organizational text for the deconstructive reading was selected by the researchers. They chose 'A Change Management Guide' (hereafter CG text) which outlined processes for changing the models of care used by hospital districts, divisions and/or individual units to deliver health services. As a business planning template written and disseminated by the government agency with responsibility for the fieldsite, the ten-page CG text was chosen for its relevance to the research topic of understanding professional work within managerialist organizing.

Five participants performed deconstructive readings. The first reading was undertaken by a Physician-Manager (M) who worked half-time as a doctor in the emergency department and half-time in a governance position with state health authorities. When the research team first visited the emergency department, M offered support. Perceiving an opportunity to surface latent ways of seeing at the field site and to develop a relationship with a potential key informant who was well respected in the emergency department, the researchers invited M to perform a

deconstructive reading on the CG text. After this first project was completed and M no longer worked at the hospital, the researchers began a new project at the emergency department. To assist the researchers to get on with this new field research, a further four participants deconstructed the CG text. A mid-career emergency physician (E), who the researchers developed a good relationship with through the first project, volunteered to perform a deconstructive reading and recruited an emergency physician who had recently completed his specialist training in emergency medicine at the field site (R) and a nurse practitioner (N). A patient, who suffered from a chronic illness that required multiple presentations to the fieldsite hospital, also volunteered to perform a deconstructive reading (P). By including more diverse voices in deconstructive readings of the CG text, the researchers hoped to unsettle any pre-understandings and assumptions they might have developed from working closely with key informants like M and senior emergency physician insiders in the initial field research project.

The procedure for operationalizing the deconstructive readings from participants followed three steps. First, in a face-to-face meeting and/or via email exchange, a researcher provided the participant with hard and/or soft copies of the CG text along with the five deconstructive questions and accompanying explanations from Table 2. The researcher also provided further clarification of the task, answered any queries or concerns, and offered additional explanatory material and examples of deconstruction if required. One participant (M) opted to receive additional material in the form of the Martin's (1990) article.

Second, each participant spent between two and three hours of their own time working independently to read the CG text and apply the five questions. Participants typically marked up a hard copy of the text to flag words, phrases and concepts that caught their attention and wrote notes of their responses to each question. No participant imposed the five questions as a rigidly

structured sequence. Instead, all participants described their deconstruction as a fluid process of moving back and forth between questions and placing more emphasis on those questions that – to their own personal reading – better fit the contours of the text. For example, the physician manager and early career physician were struck by a lot of binary oppositions and dichotomies, the mid-career physician and patient by silences and absences, and the nurse-practitioner by a fundamental contradiction. Participants also reported that as they moved within and between questions reflecting on and challenging the meaning of the text, they added more layers of interpretation by bringing their own lived experience in the field to bear on the text.

Third, when the participant had completed their deconstructive reading, they met with the researcher. Four of these researcher-participant meetings occurred face-to-face and one (R) occurred via phone call. In the meeting, the participant explained his or her responses to each question and interpretations of the text. The researcher took notes as the participant spoke and asked clarifying questions to confirm the participant’s perspective and deconstructive moves. Each meeting lasted around one hour. Afterwards, the researcher combined the meeting notes with the participant’s own notes of their deconstructive reading to produce a deconstructive account for that particular participant. A summary of the five deconstructive accounts that emerged from participant deconstruction of the CG text is presented in Table 3.

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

Benefits: Supporting Broad Strategies for Getting On With Our Field Research

The five deconstructive readings presented in Table 3 show how the technique of participant deconstruction opens up multiple possible interpretations rather than finding a ‘true’ perspective on a process or phenomenon. Any of the deconstructions offers a helpful start in getting on with our field research by illuminating latent understandings of the social world at the

hospital field site and bringing to the surface the plurality of meanings experienced by participants. That each participant brought their own assumptions and interests to bear on the same text is not a problem but rather, the point of participant deconstruction as a technique. Below, we present selected examples from our experiences to highlight the technique's benefits for getting on with field research in conjunction with, and in service of, the broad strategies already identified in the methods literature, as reviewed in our paper's introduction.

Cultivating relationships with key informants. Given our outsider status as researchers, we found that the participant deconstructions offered support for the cultivation of relationships with key informants as a broad strategy for getting on with our field research. This support played out in three benefits. The first benefit was informant reflexivity, as illustrated in participant M's experience. Performing a deconstruction (1) increased M's reflexivity about her organizational world and her interests in it as both a physician and a manager; (2) opened up M's assumptions to alternative understandings of the field; and (3) gave M an opportunity to build a relationship and trust with the research team and a deeper understanding of what we were aspiring to achieve from the first project. By helping informants to become more reflexive about their social world, the participant deconstruction technique counters a limitation of cultivating informants as a broad strategy for getting on with field research, as identified earlier in the paper.

A second benefit of including participant deconstruction within a strategy of cultivating informants is the ability to expose informants' latent understandings in a safe and de-personalized way. Latent understandings are participants' perspectives on their experience of a field research context that might not otherwise have been voiced. Sometimes understandings are latent at the getting on stage of field research because a participant initially lacks trust in the researcher; on other occasions, an understanding is latent because it is so ordinary or mundane

for the informant they do not think to mention it to the researcher. Participant E, for example, indicated they would normally be reticent to criticize the health system when talking with outsider researchers but applying the deconstruction questions to the CG text offered a means to give voice to negative perspectives and experiences from a safe distance.

Finally, a third benefit of participant deconstruction in supporting a strategy of cultivating informants concerns opening up lines of inquiry. Latent understandings, as perspectives evident in deconstructive critique, open up plausible and fruitful questions that might be explored through data collection in the field, rather than definitive or final answers. Thus, the latent understandings exposed by participant deconstruction *suggest* lines of inquiry rather than completing them – they are not ‘data’ per se. For example, latent understandings of the nuances of values work, identified from M’s deconstruction, opened up a new line of inquiry for our field research. Other lines of inquiry are opened up by the interplay within and between the five deconstructions, suggesting key themes when commonalities and differences are revealed.

Developing outsider knowledge. The deconstructive readings highlight how the technique of participant deconstruction also complements a broad strategy of developing outsider knowledge to get on with field research. Participant deconstruction brought multiple and alternative meanings of official storylines to our attention as outsider-researchers. As shown in Table 3, the five deconstructions generated multiple storylines of the CG text, all of which were plausible alternatives to the text’s intended official storyline. As outsider researchers in the first research project, we had no experiential basis for questioning the official storyline reported in field documents or recited by non-reflexive and/or untrusting clinicians in pilot interviews.

In addition, we found that participant deconstruction deepened our outsider knowledge of field jargon, phraseology, categories, and practices. The deconstructive readings alerted us, for

example, to how the commonly used phrase ‘model of care’ in the official language of field governance had performative meaning for clinicians and was enacted in different ways in local practice. Similarly, participant deconstruction exposed alternative perspectives on categories like ‘patient’ and ‘staff’ used to manage and organize the field context which, as outsider-researchers, we had accepted uncritically in our reading of field documents. For example, to us as outsiders, a ‘patient’ was simply a description of someone who receives medical care until the deconstructions of the CG text opened up multiple alternative perspectives of the patient within the field. These kinds of nuanced understandings of categories, practices, technical jargon, and official language in the field setting – arrived at relatively quickly and early in the field research using the technique of participant deconstruction – would have taken longer to discern from document review, pilot interviews and/or observations as a broad outsider strategy.

Mobilizing the researcher’s insider knowledge. Our illustrative example suggests the benefits of the technique as a complement to a strategy, used by insider-researchers, of mobilizing a researcher’s own knowledge and connections to get on with field research. Our experience in our second research project highlights the technique’s ability to expose and challenge researcher biases and preunderstandings. We found that the participant deconstructions of the CG text during the second set of readings supported reflexive thought and exposed potential biases and presumptions that we might be carrying from our time in the field with physicians, as a group of insiders with a particular worldview, in our first healthcare project.

PRACTITIONER FEEDBACK ON PARTICIPANT DECONSTRUCTION

We sought feedback from practitioners experienced in diverse organizational contexts to provide further verification of the technique and its benefits. We engaged a convenience sample of twelve practitioners who were currently or formerly working in commercial and government

organizations and social enterprises as managers, consultants and other professionals. English was a second language for three participants. Table 4 reports details of the sample.

INSERT TABLE 4 HERE

Feedback was obtained in one-to-one meetings involving a member of the research team and a practitioner. We presented the practitioner with a hypothetical scenario in which a researcher (1) has been granted access to the practitioner’s organization to conduct field research and (2) wants to use the technique of participant deconstruction to gain some initial familiarity with the organizational context. The practitioner was simply told the researcher wanted to study their organization. No specific research aim was communicated. We showed the practitioner the five deconstructive questions and accompanying explanations from Table 2. We then asked for feedback as to whether the questions and deconstructive task made sense and invited suggestions of a suitable document to deconstruct. Meetings lasted from 20 minutes duration to over an hour. Two practitioners provided feedback via email.

All twelve practitioners indicated they understood the questions, although one practitioner for whom English was a second language assessed the dichotomy question as potentially challenging. As shown in Table 4, every practitioner was able to suggest documents for deconstruction. During the meetings, practitioners offered commentary on the benefits of participant deconstruction compared to the simpler alternative of asking them direct questions about their organization. Practitioners explained how the deconstructive reading would “bring the subconscious out” and would prompt voicing seemingly obvious and latent understandings in ways that direct questioning may not. As a manager explained, “What is obvious to me in my world, I wouldn’t talk about with you as a researcher [in an interview] because it is so obvious to me. But that might be what you’re interested in.” Grounding discussion in applying the five

questions to a particular document could also overcome practitioner reservations about trusting a researcher with whom they have no established relationship. Deconstructing a document “creates a bit of personal distance and safety”, facilitates commenting “in a non-emotional way on emotional issues”, and may surface perspectives and interests related to culture, race, gender and political ideology in a safe and sharing way, which practitioners might not express if asked directly in an interview. This could lead to a more rapid identification of tensions in the fieldsite compared to other research methods, as the cultural heritage officer noted:

“These are the key tensions we have to manage every day in our working lives, right? So the tensions you uncover with a document deconstruction will be the same tensions you will see if you hang around for a while and observe us working in cultural heritage and then interview us. But the latter method will take you longer as a researcher to identify the key tensions that are important to understanding our organization and its work.”

In addition, practitioners considered the extent to which outsider knowledge could be developed by a researcher simply reading the organizational document rather than having the participant deconstruct it. Practitioners highlighted how participant deconstruction would open up the multiple meanings in the technical jargon and official language of a document, such as the word “risk” in a company code of conduct and the phrase “owners of the land” in a cultural heritage management guide, whereas researchers own outsider readings could not do this. Similar insights were offered in relation to surfacing alternative perspectives to the dominant oppositional categories and practices that structure everyday work, an example being the categories of teaching and learning in a school plan.

On a broader scale, practitioners suggested that participant deconstruction would lead to a more informative encounter for both researcher and participant. As the military officer explained, “...deconstructing [the organization’s official] values statement using these five questions would force me to challenge the institutional story and in doing so reveal more about the organizational

unit and about my own experiences within it.” Other practitioners emphasized that the technique allowed “a deeper reflection about hidden institutional norms that can then be discussed”.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we developed participant deconstruction as a new technique that can support existing strategies commonly used by researchers to get on with field research. Our technique has three key elements. First, the task specified is a set of five questions to be applied in a deconstructive reading to orient, disorient and reorient a text. Second, the questions are applied to an organizational text by participants who are knowledgeable agents of the context for field research. Third, the participant or the researcher selects an organizational text that is meaningful to everyday work in the field and which, when deconstructed by the participant, opens up latent understandings and assumptions of the field. Our application of this technique in our own field research in health care, and feedback meetings with a convenience sample of practitioners, points to participant deconstruction being (1) comprehensible to participants; (2) open to a participant’s interpretation and adaptation to the contours of a text rather than rigidly applied, and (3) not prohibitively onerous in the time burden imposed on participants.

We demonstrated the potential methodological application of participant deconstruction *in a range of field contexts* (e.g. hospitals, military units, universities, international companies, consulting organizations, financial services firms, schools, government departments) *by different types of practitioners* (e.g. physicians, nurses, patients, military officers, managers, consultants, financial advisors, teachers, cultural heritage officers) *undertaking deconstructive readings of a wide variety of organizational texts* (e.g. a change management guides, values statements, strategic plans, annual reports, policy and procedures manuals, codes of conducts, teaching and learning plans). In doing so, we revealed the comparative benefits that participant deconstruction

offers as a technique that supports and complements the strategies for getting on with field research commonly described in the methods literature. Table 5 summarizes these benefits.

INSERT TABLE 5 HERE

We argue that the benefits of participant deconstruction as a methodological technique have opportunities for broad application. Researchers planning to undertake field research using depth interviews or participant observation, for example, may find that participant deconstruction provides a ‘safer’ and less intrusive technique for accessing ‘insider’ views of the context when transitioning from the getting-in to the getting-on stage of field research because it positions the initial inquiry around a text. The participant is able to show – through critique rather than deliberate self-revelation – different patterns of interpreting and practising to those claimed or presumed in the text, opening up new interview questions and lines of observational inquiry. For researchers using ethnography, participant deconstruction may sensitize the ethnographer to silences and contradictions in the social world of the field site in ways that enable more voices to be heard and their values to be expressed. Finally, consistent with calls to use case study research to reconstruct concepts (Welch, Rumyantseva, & Hewerdine, 2016), case researchers may find resituating the story in light of the participant deconstruction allows the case context as a whole to be reconceptualized. The limits of the case study may seem to be different from initial presumptions, since new individuals and settings are emplotted in the resituated story.

Researchers can also use participant deconstruction as stimulus for greater reflexivity about their own field research practice. Scholars have demonstrated the value of engaging researchers and participants in relationally reflexive practice (Hibbert et al., 2014), especially when research involves ethnography (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013), extended case methods (Wadham & Warren, 2014), and depth interviews (Alvesson, 2003). We argue that participant

deconstruction supports and complements these general approaches by offering a specific technique that ethnographers, participant observers, case researchers, and interviewers can implement within their relationally reflexive practice. Moreover, the technique's focus on the getting-on stage of field research fills a gap between approaches for researcher reflexivity at the getting-in stage of gaining access (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016; Peticca-Harris et al., 2016) and getting-out stage of exit (Michailova et al., 2014).

Researchers who wish to use participant deconstruction may be concerned about the suitability of their particular research participant(s) to undertake a deconstructive reading. Our research suggests that any individual, with suitable support, can employ their latent understandings to disrupt texts. Some participants, because of their background and interests, will be more comfortable with the concept of deconstruction than others. Nevertheless, our research gives us confidence in the ability and curiosity of managers, professionals, frontline workers, and consumers of organizational services to undertake deconstructive readings of texts salient in their contexts. Since all texts have multiple meanings (Kilduff, 1993), there is no single 'correct' answer to reach and no single 'ideal' participant to perform a deconstructive reading. Any participant who deconstructs a text will generate some benefit for getting on with field research. When multiple participants apply the technique to the same text, researchers are likely to learn 'unexpected' or 'surprising' things about field phenomena.

Finally, methodological challenges and limitations are inherent in the more 'practical' stance (Martin, 1990) that we have taken in our conceptualization of the deconstruction process itself. In order to operationalize participant deconstruction as a technique, we have argued for research participants (who may be selected by researchers) to apply a set of five questions (developed by researchers) to a text (which may – but need not – be selected by researchers). We

acknowledge that our technique has the potential to elevate the power and agency of researchers over that of participants (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016; Whittle et al., 2014). We recognize, too, that our five questions have their own silences and contradictions and thus it can be argued the questions themselves constitute the text (Kilduff, 1993). It is for this reason that we do not offer our set of deconstructive questions as definitive and instead encourage alternative formulations. More generally, possibilities for empowering the research participant include inviting them to: select their own texts for deconstruction; recommend another participant to perform a second deconstructive reading; and develop their own questions to add to researcher-defined questions.

In a related vein, any instrumental application of deconstruction can be considered to be partial and incomplete from a philosophical standpoint (Martin, 1990). This suggests that rather than being restricted to the getting-on stage as we have argued for here, participant deconstruction could continue to be applied as texts are developed through the various stages of field research. For example, researchers might enhance theorizing at the getting-out stage – and/or before returning to the field at the getting-back stage - by generating a text that summarizes their experiences and interpretations of the field and asking one or more research participants to deconstruct the text. By opening up the dichotomies, silences and contradictions in emerging theorizing to participant scrutiny and by suggesting ways the storyline could be resituated, it is possible that more nuanced and/or radically refined theory building might emerge. We therefore invite further research that applies the technique of participant deconstruction more liberally across the whole process of field research.

TABLE 1: SAMPLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL STUDIES USING DECONSTRUCTION: MOVES IN ANALYSIS PROCESS

Citation	Study Focus	Text	Deconstructive Moves in Analysis Process
Martin, 1990	Gender conflict	Story told by a corporate executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Dismantle a dichotomy, exposing it as a false distinction b. Examine silences-what is not said (i.e., noting who or what is excluded) c. Attend to disruptions and contradictions, places where the text fails to make sense d. Focus on the element that is most alien to a text or a context e. Interpret metaphors as a rich source of multiple meanings f. Analyze "double-entendres" that may point to an unconscious subtext g. Separate group-specific and more general sources of bias by "reconstructing" the text with iterative substitution of phrases h. Explore, with careful "reconstructions," the unexpected ramifications and inherent limitations of minor policy changes i. Use the limitations exposed by "reconstruction" to explain the persistence of the status quo and the need for more ambitious change programs
Calás and Smircich, 1991	Organizational leadership as a seductive game	<i>The Functions of the Executive</i> (Barnard, 1938), <i>The Human Side of Enterprise</i> (McGregor, 1960), <i>The Nature of Managerial Work</i> (Mintzberg, 1973), <i>In Search of Excellence</i> (Peters & Waterman, 1982)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Search for an opposition in the text. b. Subvert the hierarchy so that the marginalised term is privileged c. Expose the equivalence between different discourses by showing marginal conversations and intertextuality. d. Reinterpret each text's meaning based on Feminist / poststructuralist readings of Freud's work.
Calás, 1993	Charismatic leadership and bureaucracy	Review article of charismatic leadership published in an academic handbook of leadership, (Bass, 1990)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Read to focus on a suspect binary opposition, where one term seems to be privileged and another is ignored b. Reverse the opposition and privilege the suppressed term c. Displace and disseminate the argument into other aspects that may have been ignored
Kilduff, 1993	Scientific management and positivism	<i>Organizations</i> (March & Simon, 1958)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Read for presence and absence b. Use the reading for presence to outline privileged metaphors in the text – e.g. the employee as 'machine' c. Use the reading for absence to identify limitations of the text
Beath and Orlikowski, 1994	IS-User relationship in information engineering	Three-volume handbook written by an IT consultant, <i>Information Engineering</i> (Martin, 1989, 1990a, 1990b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Dismantle a dichotomy and expose it as a false distinction b. Attend to disruptions and contradictions in the text c. Scrutinize naturalness claims or arguments which depend on something other than logical consistency or empirical evidence d. Examine silences or what is not said e. Focus on the element that is most marginalized f. Interpret metaphors as a rich source of multiple meanings g. Analyse double-entendres that may point to the unconscious subtext
Boje, 1995	Storytelling organization	Transcribed stories from the Walt Disney Enterprise archives, including audio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Read for the positive and negative duality in the stories b. Examine differences between CEO and non-CEO stories – looking for alternative stories that overtook the consensus of "official" Disney accounts. What are the stories that are not part of the

		and video from speeches, interviews, and television shows	grant story of Disney? What are the sweeping statements designed to gloss over the differences in other accounts? c. Read for exploitation, privilege, domination, power, and discipline in the stories – Who gets a voice in the stories? Who gets no voice at all?
Noorderhaven, 1995	Transaction cost economics	<i>Economic Institutions of Capitalism</i> (Williamson, 1985)	a. Focus on the binary opposition authors use to construct their argumentation b. Reverse the hierarchy c. Trace the commonality between the oppositions to show how the identity of both terms is constituted – how is the subordinated term inscribed in the privileged term?
Summers et. al, 1997	Definition of organizational behavior	Textbook used in undergraduate Organizational Behavior courses	a. Read for surface understanding of the story of the definition b. Identify key terms in definition and analyse how the meanings, hierarchies, and hidden assumptions are contextualised in relation to other words in the text c. Examine rhetorical practices (including examples, placement, marginal comments and author commentary) and use of values
Boje, 1998	Labor and environmental practices in Asia	Stories told by Nike, including Codes of Conduct and media stories	a. Define the dualities - who or what is at opposite ends in the story? b. Reinterpret - what is the alternative interpretation to the story? c. Consider rebel voices - deny the authority of the one voice. Who is not being represented or is under-represented? d. Consider the other side of the story - what is the silent or under-represented story? e. Deny the plot - what is the plot? Turn it around. f. Find the exception - what is the exception that breaks the rule? g. Consider what is between the lines - what is not said?
Learmonth, 1999	Reason and emotion	Extract from a report written chief executive of a UK National Health Service Trust	a. Search for the binary opposites in the text to identify the privileged and marginalized terms b. Present an alternate reading to reverse the hierarchy c. Show how the oppositional terms are intertwined and expressed through one another
Peterson and Albrecht, 1999	Gender, power and politics	Maternity leave policy of a US public hospital	a. Identify terms that recur in the text? b. Consider the way in which one term is used to explicitly imply its oppositional form. What is the opposite of that which is central to the text? c. Flesh out the ways the text contradicts itself. Where else does the text fail to make sense? d. Interpret metaphors as a rich source of multiple meanings. What are the implications of the metaphors that are central to the text? How do these support the dominant hierarchy? e. Examine silences/absences. What is not overtly stated in the text? What is explicitly missing?
Middleton, 2009	Reputation management	Dialogue segments of stories about Salvation Army, including the founders and other significant Salvationists	a. Ask: What is the dichotomy in the text? b. Ask: Who is privileged by the dichotomy? Who is alienated or marginalised? c. Subvert the hierarchy. Rewrite the story to privilege the marginalised. d. Tell the other side of the story. Where are the repressed voices not heard in the text? e. Ask: How do steps 1-4 reveal the plot of the story? Deny this plot. f. Find the exception/s to the moral in the story. g. Search for groups who have been silenced in the story. h. Resituate the story. Move it beyond its dichotomies, its plots, and its privileging.
Fougère and Moulettes, 2012	National culture as colonial discourse	Extracts from 17 mainstream international business textbooks	a. Search for contradictions within claimed storyline b. Identify and dismantle dichotomies c. Identify conspicuous absences

TABLE 2: DERIVATION OF PARTICIPANT DECONSTRUCTION AS A TECHNIQUE

Deconstructive Question	Purpose	Relevant Deconstructive Moves from Prior Studies (see Column 4 in Table 1)	Accompanying Explanation given to the Participant with the Question
What is the storyline of the text that is to be deconstructed?	<i>Orientation:</i> Allows the research participant to articulate the intended premise of the text by identifying a basic storyline that functions to unify the text, from their perspective.	Martin e and f ; Kilduff b ; Beath & Orlikowski f and g ; Boje 1995 b ; Noorderhaven c ; Summers et. al a and c ; Boje 1998 e ; Peterson and Albrecht a and d; Middleton e ; Fougère and Moulettes a	Can you suggest the basic storyline that functions to unify the document? That is, from your perspective as a practitioner, is there a basic storyline or premise that the document trying to sell you?
Do you see dichotomies and/or oppositions in the text? If so, what are they?	<i>Disorientation:</i> Invites the research participant to identify and dismantle dichotomies in the text by unpacking the different ways the text derives power for a concept through suppression of its binary opposite.	Martin a ; Calás & Smircich a and b ; Calás a ; Kilduff a ; Beath & Orlikowski a ; Boje 1995 a ; Noorderhaven a and c ; Summers et. al b; Boje 1998 a ; Learmonth a and c; Peterson & Albrecht b ; Middleton a and b ; Fougère & Moulettes b	Explore whether you can identify concepts in the document that derive power from suppressing their binary opposite. For example, the word ‘man’ derives power from suppressing its binary opposite ‘woman’ (and vice versa); the word ‘adult’ derives meaning from suppressing its binary opposite ‘child’; the word ‘public’ derives power from suppressing its binary opposite ‘private’. From your perspective as a practitioner, can you identify any words or concepts in the document where a binary opposite has been suppressed?
Are there silences that can be read into or beneath the text?	<i>Disorientation:</i> Invites the research participant to search for what has been ‘rendered absent’ in the text as it is presented and to consider voices that may have been silenced.	Martin b ; Kilduff c ; Beath & Orlikowski d and e ; Boje 1995 c ; Boje 1998 c, d and g; Peterson & Albrecht e ; Middleton d and g ; Fougère & Moultettes c	Consider what may be missing or absent from the document. From your perspective as a practitioner, are there any voices or perspectives that have not been considered or have been silenced?
Are there contradictions that are evident in the text?	<i>Disorientation:</i> Invites the research participant to consider places where the text fails to make sense, and so to highlight contradictions and disruptions in sensemaking.	Martin b and c ; Beath & Orlikowski b and c ; Boje 1998 f ; Peterson & Albrecht c; Middleton f ; Fougère & Moultettes a	Explore whether you can identify places where the document fails to make sense to you. From your perspective as a practitioner, are there any places where the text seems contradictory or hard to interpret?
Is there a way in which the story be resituated?	<i>Reorientation:</i> Invites the research participant to consider how latent conflicts in the story, illuminated by the previous questions, may be resolved by re-situating the story.	Martin h and i ; Boje 1998 e ; Middleton c and h	Your responses to the previous questions may have revealed some conflicts underlying the surface of the document from your perspective as a practitioner. If so, consider how the story might be re-situated to resolve suppressed conflicts beneath the surface of the text. From your perspective as a practitioner, what can be done to re-situate or change the storyline of the document to resolve any conflicts?

TABLE 3: ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE: OUTLINE OF PARTICIPANTS’ DECONSTRUCTIVE READINGS

Questions	Early-career Physician (R)	Mid-career Physician (E)	Physician Manager (M)	Nurse (N)	Patient (P)
<i>What is the storyline?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storyline is about the primary importance of fiscal accountability and management in changing models of care rather than prioritizing patient needs and outcomes for patients. Storyline empowers managers and administrators over clinicians. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storyline is about managing change by jumping through bureaucratic hoops. The prescriptive template for changing models of care groups clinicians with all staff and their special clinical expertise and commitment to patient care is devalued. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storyline is of a physician working for an administration system which prioritizes managers and reduces physicians to staff. Physicians wanting to change models of care should apply a framework that prioritizes making a business case over being patient-centered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storyline is a guide about how to manage change based on an assumption that the current model of care is the problem, rather than the processes and jurisdictional boundaries for different professions that happen around and within the current model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storyline is a ‘sales pitch’ on need to change current model of care because it is totally wrong. Patient experience is irrelevant to the sales pitch, while all staff are considered generic. Distinctiveness of doctors and nurses as primary carers for patients is not recognized or valued.
<i>What are the dichotomies?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change as an endorsed and prescriptive process opposes change as a discretionary and consultative process • Top-down decision-making and hierarchical structures suppress clinician-led decision making and collaborative structures • Financial performance and risk management suppress patient outcomes and the existence of safety within quality improvement • Patient as consumer suppresses patient as a sick and vulnerable person; seller-consumer relationship opposes doctor-patient relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinicians and managers are set up in opposition to each other • Focus on population collectives (unit, division, whole of district) opposes local relationships involving patients and clinicians • Patient as a category of consumer, client, or resident suppresses the patient as a person with human needs • Focus on problems that must be fixed stands in opposition to solutions that might be innovated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System care stands in opposition to individual care in a personal relationship between doctor and patient • Homogenous service delivery opposes heterogeneous delivery which is flexible to idiosyncrasies of patient situations • Codified ‘one-size-fits-all’ models of care stand in opposition to physician’s tacit approaches to patient diagnosis and treatment • De-personalized managerialist values stand in opposition to personal commitment to professional values of nurturing and caring for a patient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on incremental change to current models of care suppresses radical innovation that ‘breaks the glass jar’ of how health care is currently delivered • Focus on patients as passive receivers of something being done to them by a model of care suppresses the patient as an empowered agent who has a voice and input into their own illness and care journey – conceiving of patients as consumers is empowering • Text emphasizes management and suppresses the clinician involved in delivering care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on patients as cold statistics suppresses the patient as a feeling person - degrades human experience of care • Care delivery to patients as a collective opposes the individual nature of health care - must be customized to a patient’s illness and personal situation • Patients as consumers in a buy/sell transaction suppresses patient as a sick person needing help • Focus on problems stands in opposition to solutions – text denies possibility solutions already exist within current model of care
<i>What are the silences?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of voice for clinicians and patients in defining problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text is relatively silent on patients and completely silent on carers and families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of a voice of medical and nursing professions when defining problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of a voice for different types of clinicians – the word clinician appears only occasionally and is never defined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text is silent on the concept of illness and of the patient’s feelings as a component of patient outcomes

- Text is silent on community at the micro level - serving the particular needs of a specific patient clientele in a local environment with distinctive services
- Text is silent on how clinicians might recruit support from above or seek funding for clinician-led evidence-based initiatives
- Text is silent on research, and benchmarking national and international best practice
- Text is silent on training and education of new clinicians, which is core business for public hospitals
- Definitions of community privilege demand-side recipients of health care and are silent on supply side of professional community of practice
- Silence on professional associations and specialist colleges as stakeholders
- Absence of a voice for patients/consumers who have experiences using a health service
- Text is silent on the role of General Practitioners as consumers of public health services
- Text privileges medicine as the 'right' model of care for every patient condition and is silent on holistic approaches across traditional and new health professions
- Definitions of care do not mention the patient
- Lists of example services and programs do not articulate how a patient lies at the center of a model of care
- Text is silent on special role of doctors and nurses in caring for patients

What are the contradictions?

- Text contradicts itself by claiming committed to evidence-based change but providing no evidence for own change management template
- Contradiction implicit in use of 'you' – implies change is an individual endeavor but in reality, health system change is collective effort
- Listing high-level governance and unions as stakeholders before clinicians and patients doesn't make sense at the level of practice
- Contradictions in stakeholder order – consulting high-level governance, unions and consumer groups before clinicians and patients
- Prioritizing financial and risk management ahead of health outcomes is contradictory in a system of care
- Use of community is contradictory – text uses community as a geographic location not a concept of primary care
- Contradiction implicit in use of 'you' – physicians have to be convinced to work for the administration system
- Assumption that physicians must share values with the local community they serve doesn't make sense at level of practice
- Contradiction implicit in the requirement of an evidence base for change – no evidence exists for innovative new models of health delivery so must experiment and have safety measures around evaluation
- Use of community is contradictory and doesn't make sense at the level of practice – community profile of a patient population should come before, not after, the definition of a problem
- Principle of health providers sharing values with the community doesn't make sense - system values economic efficiency while a person in the community doesn't want health providers to cut corners and skimp on care
- Text asks only where a current model works well and why does it fail – implies success is only partial and failure is pervasive

How can the story be resituated?

- Re-situate to develop a clinician-centered, evidence-based and bottom-up process of change
- Re-situate to empower and inspire clinicians to drive innovation and improvement
- Re-situate to elevate clinician to sit alongside management by creating a blended category of clinician-managers
- Re-situate to empower patients as consumers of care and clinicians as drivers of innovation in models of care and professional jurisdictions
- Re-situate to prioritize patient at center of a model of care and doctors and nurses as primary caregivers

TABLE 4: PRACTITIONER FEEDBACK ON DECONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUE

Practitioner	Understanding of deconstructive questions	Suggested organizational text
Mathematics teacher in high school	Yes	School teaching and learning plan
Cultural heritage officer in regional government department	Yes	Government cultural heritage management guide
Talent management consultant in multinational company	Yes	Company code of conduct
Financial consultant in financial services company	Yes	Strategic plan, strategic vision statement, or company's annual report
Manager in a university science faculty	Yes	Program approval process in policy and procedures handbook
Senior officer in a military unit	Yes	Key values statement
Psychologist in HR with a national retailer	Yes	Vision and mission statement, codes of conduct, cultural statement
Founder of a social enterprise	Yes	Mission and vision statement
Event manager	Yes	Code of conduct, briefing to staff
Senior manager with a multinational company	Yes, but some concern over comprehensibility of dichotomy question for English as second language speakers	Company strategic plan
Financial consultant	Yes, even for speaker for whom English is a second language	Management discussion section of company annual report
Manager in oil and gas corporation	Yes, because explanations help English as second language speakers	Annual report, company mission statement

TABLE 5: BENEFITS OF TECHNIQUE FOR SUPPORTING STRATEGIES FOR GETTING ON WITH FIELD RESEARCH

Strategy for Getting on with Field Research	Benefits of Supporting Strategy with Technique of Participant Deconstruction
<i>Cultivating relationships with key informants</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provokes informant reflexivity and challenging of assumptions and social conditioning in the field (e.g. participant deconstruction of CG text by M and R; consultant ‘bringing the subconscious out’ in a company code of conduct) • Exposes informant’s latent understandings and perspectives in a safe and de-personalised way (e.g. E’s criticisms of bureaucracy in CG text; M’s exposure of values work in CG text; faculty manager creating personal distance from policy document; less threatening for financial consultant to dissect strategic plan) • Opening up lines of inquiry for exploration (e.g. values work as a line of inquiry from M’s deconstruction, willingness of international manager to ‘teach’ the researcher)
<i>Developing outsider knowledge through document review and pilot interviews and/or observations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges and critiques official organizational story reported in documents and recited in pilot interviews (e.g. multiple alternative storylines in participant deconstructions of CG text; key values statement of military organization) • Opens up technical jargon and core phrases in official language in field documents (e.g. ‘model of care’ in CG text; ‘risk’ in company code of conduct; ‘owners of the land’ in cultural heritage management guide) • Surfaces multiple alternative perspectives on categories and practices that organize the field context, which can be further explored in interviews and/or observations (e.g. ‘patient’ and ‘staff’ in health care in CG text; ‘teaching and learning’ in schools)
<i>Mobilising researcher-as-insider knowledge and connections</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposes and challenges biases and assumptions arising from uncritical acceptance of the dominant world view in the field setting (e.g. privileging of ‘medical’ world view in nurse deconstruction of CG text) • Stimulates reflexivity about identity and social conditioning within the organizational context (e.g. values-based social conditioning in military organization; ‘masculine’ social conditioning in financial services field)

References

- Adler, P. A., Adler, P. A., & Rochford, E. B. 1986. The politics of participation in field research. *Urban Life*, 14(4): 363-376.
- Aggar, B. 1991. Critical theory, poststructuralism, postmodernism: Their sociological relevance. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 17: 105-131.
- Alvesson, M. 2003. Beyond neopositivists, romantics, and localists: A reflexive approach to interviews in organizational research. *Academy of Management Review*, 28(1): 13-33.
- Anteby, M. 2013. Relaxing the taboo on telling our own stories: Upholding professional distance and personal involvement. *Organization Science*, 24(4): 1277-1290.
- Boje, D. M. 1998. Nike, Greek goddess of victory or cruelty? Women's stories of Asian factory life. *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 11(6): 461-480.
- Brannick, T., & Coghlan, D. 2007. In defense of being "native": The case for insider academic research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 10(1): 59-74.
- Buchanan, D., Boddy, D., & McCalman, J. 1988. Getting in, getting on, getting out, and getting back. In A. Bryman (Ed.), *Doing Research in Organizations*: 53-67. London: Routledge.
- Calás, M. 1993. Deconstructing charismatic leadership: re-reading Weber from the darker side. *Leadership Quarterly*, 4(3/4): 305-328.
- Cunliffe, A., & Karunanayake, G. 2013. Working within hyphen-spaces in ethnographic research: Implications for research identities and practice. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16(3): 364-392.
- Cunliffe, A. L., & Alcadipani, R. 2016. The politics of access in fieldwork: Immersion, back stage dramas, and deception *Organizational Research Methods*, 19(4): 535-561.
- Derrida, J. 1976. *Of Grammatology* (G. C. Spivak, Trans.). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Derrida, J. 1978. *Writing and Difference*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Derrida, J. 1982. *Margins of Philosophy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Derrida, J. 1988. *Limited Inc*. Evanston, IL: North Western University Press.
- Dundon, T., & Ryan, P. 2010. Interviewing reluctant respondents: Strikes, henchmen, and Gaelic games. *Organizational Research Methods*, 13(3): 562-581.
- Edmondson, A. C., & McManus, S. E. 2007. Methodological fit in management field research. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(4): 1155-1179.
- Feldman, M. S., Bell, J., & Berger, M. T. 2003. *Gaining Access: A Practical and Theoretical Guide for Qualitative Researchers*. Oxford: AltaMira Press.
- Fougère, M., & Moulettes, A. 2012. Disclaimers, dichotomies and disappearances in international business textbooks: A postcolonial deconstruction. *Management Learning*, 43(1): 5-24.
- Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G., & Hamilton, A. L. 2012. Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research: Notes on the Gioia methodology. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16(1): 15-31.
- Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. 2007. *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Hibbert, P., Sillince, J., Diefenbach, T., & Cunliffe, A. L. 2014. Relationally reflexive practice: A generative approach to theory development in qualitative research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 17(3): 278-298.
- Jones, C. 2003. Jacques Derrida. In S. Linstead (Ed.), *Organization Theory and Postmodern Thought*: 34-63. London: Sage.

- Karra, N., & Phillips, N. 2008. Researching "back home". *Organizational Research Methods*, 11(3): 541-561.
- Kilduff, M. 1993. Deconstructing organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 18(1): 13-31.
- Learmonth, M. 1999. The National Health Service manager, engineer and father? A deconstruction. *Journal of Management Studies*, 36(7): 999-1012.
- MacLean, T., Anteby, M., Hudson, B., & Rudolph, J. W. 2006. Talking tainted topics: Insights and ideas on researching socially disapproved organizational behavior *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 15(1): 59-68.
- Martin, J. 1990. Deconstructing organizational taboos: The suppression of gender conflict in organizations. *Organization Science*, 1: 339-359.
- Michailova, S., Piekkari, R., Plakoyiannaki, E., Ritvala, T., Mihailova, I., & Salmi, A. 2014. Breaking the silence about exiting fieldwork: A relational approach and its implications for theorizing. *Academy of Management Review*, 39(2): 138-161.
- Michel, A. A. 2007. A distributed cognition perspective on newcomers' change processes: The management of cognitive uncertainty in two investment banks. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 52(4): 507-557.
- Okumus, F., Altinay, L., & Roper, A. 2007. Gaining access for research: Reflections from experience. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34(1): 7-26.
- Patton, M. Q. 2002. *Qualitative Research Evaluation and Methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, AC: Sage.
- Peterson, L. W., & Albrecht, T. L. 1999. Where gender/power/politics collide: deconstructing organizational maternity leave policy. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 8(2): 168-181.
- Peticca-Harris, A., deGama, N., & Elias, S. R. S. T. A. 2016. A dynamic process model for finding informants and gaining access in qualitative research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 19(3): 376-401.
- Pettigrew, A. M. 1990. Longitudinal field research on change: Theory and practice. *Organization Science*, 1(3): 267-292.
- Summers, D., Boje, D. N., Dennehy, R., & Rosile, G. A. 1997. Deconstructing the organizational behaviour text. *Journal of Management Education*, 21(3): 343-360.
- Van de ven, A. H., & Huber, G. P. 1990. Longitudinal field research methods for studying processes of organizational change. *Organization Science*, 1(3): 213-219.
- Wadham, H., & Warren, R. C. 2014. Telling organizational tales: The extended case method in practice. *Organizational Research Methods*, 17(1): 5-22.
- Welch, C., Rumyantseva, M., & Hewardine, L. J. 2016. Using case research to reconstruct concepts: A methodology and illustration. *Organizational Research Methods*, 19(1): 111-130.
- Whittle, A., Mueller, F., Lenney, P., & Gilchrist, A. 2014. Interest-talk as access-talk: How interests are displayed, made and downplayed in management research. *British Journal of Management*, 25: 607-628.