REMark – Revista Brasileira de Marketing
e-ISSN: 2177-5184
DOI: 10.5585/remark.v13i4.2762
Data de recebimento: 30/05/2014
Data de Aceite: 23/07/2014
Editor Científico: Otávio Bandeira De Lamônica Freire
Avaliação: Double Blind Review pelo SEER/OJS
Revisão: Gramatical, normativa e de formatação

THE QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW IN MARKETING AND CONSUMER RESEARCH: PARADIGMATIC APPROACHES AND GUIDELINE

ABSTRACT

Interviews are the most pervasive means of collecting data in qualitative research projects. The purpose of this paper is to discuss how the practice of conducting interviews has evolved within consumer and marketing research and to offer insights for those who would like to gather qualitative data via interviews. To do so, we first identify and differentiate two broad perspectives on qualitative marketing and consumer research: the phenomenological approach and the post-structuralist approach. We then develop a step by step guideline on how to conceive, conduct, and analyze interviews under both approaches. As much as the paper provides a useful toolkit to researchers with initial and intermediate degrees of intimacy with qualitative methods, it also contributes to the mapping of important ongoing paradigmatic discussions in the field of qualitative marketing and consumer research.

Keywords: Qualitative Research; Qualitative Interview, Phenomenology; Post-Structuralism.

ENTREVISTA QUALITATIVA NA PESQUISA DE MARKETING E DO CONSUMIDOR: ABORDAGENS PARADIGMÁTICAS E ORIENTAÇÕES

RESUMO

A entrevista é a forma mais prevalente de coleta de dados em projetos de pesquisa qualitativa. Este artigo tem o objetivo de discutir como a prática da realização de entrevistas vem evoluindo na pesquisa de marketing e do consumidor, além de oferecer um guia para pesquisadores que pretendem coletar dados qualitativos via entrevistas. Para tanto, nós inicialmente identificamos e discutimos duas perspectivas qualitativas na pesquisa de marketing e do consumidor: a abordagem fenomenológica e a abordagem pós-estruturalista. Em seguida, desenvolvemos um guia com diferentes etapas para a concepção, condução e análise de entrevistas qualitativas nas duas abordagens. Além de oferecer uma ferramenta de utilidade para os pesquisadores com níveis iniciais e intermediários de intimidade com a pesquisa qualitativa, o artigo também contribui com o mapeamento das importantes discussões correntes no campo da pesquisa qualitativa de marketing e do consumidor.

Palavras-chave: Pesquisa Qualitativa; Entrevista Qualitativa; Fenomenologia; Pós-Estruturalismo.

Eileen Fischer[1]
Rodrigo B. Castilhos[2]
Marcelo Jacques Fonseca[3]

[1] Profesor da Schulich School of Business, Toronto. Canadá. E-mail: **efischer@schulich.yorku.ca**
[2] Doutorando em Administração pela Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul – UFRGS. Professor da Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos – UNISINOS. Brasil. E-mail: **rbcastilhos@gmail.com**
[3] Doutor em Administração pela Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul – UFRGS. Professor da Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos – UNISINOS. Brasil. E-mail: **mjfonsec@terra.com.br**

1 INTRODUCTION

Among those who do qualitative research on consumers and markets today, the most popular means of gathering data is through interviews, whether they are described as "open-ended," "in-depth," "informal" or "semi-structured" (Belk, Fischer, & Kozinets, 2013). Indeed, so taken-for-granted is the interview as tool for data collection that many reviewers would find it surprising to see a qualitative paper that did *not* include some interview data. The extent to which consumer and marketing researchers who choose to gather and analyze qualitative data rely on interviews is perhaps surprising given that seminal works which introduced qualitative methods to the field were often based as much on observational as on interview data (e.g. Arnould, 1989; Belk, Sherry, & Wallendorf, 1988; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988; Workman, 1993). And questions may be raised about whether consumer and marketing researchers might benefit from seeking a better balance between observational, archival and interview data. It is indisputable, however, that qualitative researchers have found and will continue to find value in collecting and analyzing interview data as they build theories and develop insights. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to provide insight on how the practice of conducting interviews has evolved within consumer and marketing research and to offer a guideline for those who would like to gather qualitative data via interviews.

We differentiate "qualitative interviews" from data collection in which a researcher uses a closed-ended research instrument to obtain quantified responses to a pre-set series of questions. Qualitative interviews typically involve a dialogue between a researcher and one or more informants, sometimes but not always shaped by an interview guide that the researcher has prepared in advance (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006).

It is also important to clarify the kinds of assumptions that we make about the data that are generated in the course of a qualitative interview. The people involved in a qualitative interview will have different agendas, repertoires, experiences, backgrounds, and the data that is generated as interviewees respond to questions and converse with the researcher cannot be seen as producing facts or timeless truths (Alvesson, 2003). Thus the data produced in an interview can best be regarded as a culturally shaped and situationally influenced outcome of the interview process that is co-constructed by interviewers and interviewees.

As such, even with its limits, interviews are an important tool for researchers who are seeking to understand what informants think and believe in a qualitative project. Notwithstanding the limitations of what interviewees can and do say in the context of interviews, some researchers, depending upon their goals and the research tradition in which they are grounded, approach interviews as authoritative accounts by individual regarding her or his own lived experience (e.g. Thompson, Locander, & Pollio, 1989). Others with differing goals and/or research traditions place more emphasis on interviews as one source of insight into shared social constructions influenced by macro-institutional forces and by micro-social dynamics in the interview setting (Moisander, Valtonen, & Hirsto, 2009). In the remaining of this paper, we first explore these distinctive (albeit overlapping) approaches to doing and using qualitative interviews, situating them in distinctive approaches to doing qualitative research. After, we develop a step by step guideline on how to conceive, conduct, and analyze interviews under both approaches, then closing with some reflections about the interview vis-a-vis other techniques in qualitative research projects.

2 THE EMERGENCE AND NATURE OF TWO APPROACHES TO QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

Qualitative research in the fields of consumer behaviour and marketing emerged during the late 1970s and early1980's. Up to that time, these fields were dominated by the paradigms of microeconomics and cognitive psychology. Under these paradigms, the consumer was assumed to be a rational decision maker, whose utterances could be taken as indicators of an objective reality and quantified through processes of reduction and scaling. During the 1980's in particular, proponents argued for the legitimacy of paradigmatic alternatives that regarded consumption and consumers as non-instrumental, emphasizing the role of the symbolic in markets and marketing (Belk, 2014). Consumer researchers seeking to work within this alternative paradigm shifted their attention away from the decision making process toward the lived experience of consumers (e.g. Holbrook & Hirchman, 1982). Marketing researchers embracing the new paradigm correspondingly focused, for instance, less on the objective attributes of products and more on their symbolic meanings. During the early years of the qualitative turn in consumption and marketing research, a "phenomenological" approach to interviews appeared as the most influential one (Thompson et al., 1989).

In the recent years, qualitative consumer and market researchers, sometimes operating under the label "Consumer Culture Theory " (CCT), have problematized what has been argued to be an overly agentic and methodologically individualistic view of the consumer subject, adopted largely in reaction to positivist perspectives that prevailed in the 1970s and

1980s. According to these critiques, the research approach powered by the phenomenological interview fails to fully appreciate the "underlying ideological and mythological forces" producing consumer subjectivities as well as the "forms of power" circumscribing consumer agency (Askegaard & Linnet, 2011, p. 387). This emerging "socially embedded" epistemology is grounded in post-structuralist approaches that recognize the "historical, sociological, ideological, and institutional shaping of consumption and marketplace phenomenon" (Thompson, Arnould, & Giesler, 2013). Under the post-structuralist paradigm, qualitative interviews are reconceptualised as tools for grasping the social construction of reality by using individual interviewees as informants about the settings and cultures with which they are familiar (Moisander et al., 2009).

We acknowledge that this distinction between phenomenological and post-structuralist approaches is somewhat arbitrary; indeed, some qualitative studies straddle the boundary between these types. We also acknowledge that some scholars may take an evolutionary view of qualitative interviews, advocating that the phenomenological interview and its associated research projects have been eclipsed or surpassed by post-structuralist approaches. We take a more agnostic position, suggesting that either of the two approaches to interviewing may be valid. We therefore do not advocate for replacing the once-pervasive phenomenological interview with a post-structuralist approach. Rather, we discuss how to conceive, conduct, and analyze interviews under both approaches. First, however, we describe the main characteristics and concerns of each of them.

2.1 The Phenomenological Standpoint: Interview as an Exploration of Lived Experience

In a seminal paper on the method of existential phenomenology, Thompson and colleagues (1989) argued for an alternative paradigm to what they called Cartesianism, dominant at the time. According to them, Cartesianism presents a mechanistic world view that reduces (consumption) phenomena to measurable properties and a dualistic understanding of the human being that separates body and mind, context and experience, subjective and objective world. As a result, under Cartesianism, research efforts turn to the search for relations of cause and effect in different component parts of consumption phenomena. In contrast, existential-phenomenology "focuses on the life-world of the individual. Rather than separating and then objectifying aspects of the life-world, the purpose is to describe human experience as it is lived." (p. 136). As such, existential-phenomenology provides a view in which experience is contextualized, switching from a third-person depiction of theoretical structures to the description of the experience from a first-person perspective.

As Thompson and colleagues point out, existential-phenomenology draws on the philosophy of existentialism, having Sartre, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty among the main influencers. This philosophy is basically concerned with the "human-being-in-the-world", which implies the study of human experience as a totality in which different events can be more prominent than others and where context and experience are co-constituting of each other. When looking for the understanding of these experiences as they are lived, researchers believe they are able to apprehend patterns of experiences as they emerge (Thompson et al., 1989). Within this perspective, the qualitative interview produces narratives from consumers to understand themes of the subjects' daily world from their own perspective (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009)

Although more prominent in the 1990`s, exemplar studies in this approach can be found among works across the last decades until today. Drawing on 10 phenomenological interviews, Thompson, Locander, and Polio (1990) provided an existential-phenomenological account of the consumption experiences of married women with children. Arnould and Price (1993) rely on a mix of methods along with two rounds of interviews to understand the hedonic experiences of white river rafting trips in Colorado, USA. In their cross-cultural study, Belk, Ger, and Askegaard (2003) also combine interviews with other techniques to analyze consumers experiences of longing for and fantasizing about particular goods. Lastly, Russel and Levy (2012) conducted 23 phenomenological interviews in order to understand "why consumers choose to repeat hedonic experiences, what they get out of them, and how the linkages between past, present, and future are revealed in these endeavors" (p. 342). In common, these studies provided thick descriptions, identified patterns, and highlighted internal contradictions, contributing to generate both practical and theoretical insights on different domains of consumption experiences.

2.2 The Post-Structuralist Standpoint: Interview as a (Polyphonic) Discourse

Thompson, Arnould, and Giesler (2013) point out that while phenomenological articulations took prevalence in CCT-related studies, a broad array of approaches gradually emerged as researchers started moving beyond the experience itself, "systematically explicating layers of cultural meaning, elucidating sociohistorically grounded connections between emic articulations and cultural and ideological frames" (p. 9). Recent critics of the phenomenological paradigm, however, helped to mark

a sharper distinction between these approaches (see Askegaard & Linnet, 2011; Moisander et al., 2009). In their already mentioned essay, Moisander and colleagues (2009) point to the analytical limitations of existential-phenomenology. First, they question the alleged belief in an "essential human nature" of the existential-phenomenological tradition, which, they argue, conceptualizes human beings as "fairly autonomous agents" (p. 336). Second, the authors point out that subjects are also viewed as autonomous containers of knowledge that can be grasped via narratives of their experience, without the interference of a "neutral" researcher. As a consequence, it would hide interests and power relations throughout consumer subjectivities are continuously constructed. The post-structuralist view, instead, views consumer subjectivity as socially and culturally constructed and locates meanings in social practices, literary texts and discourses (Moisander et al., 2009). Its focus shifts from the lived experience to the analysis of the systemic and "complex intertwining of the individual and the social in consumption contexts as it manifests itself in consumer lives and life conditions" (Askegaard & Linnet, 2011, p. 397).

Thompson and colleagues (2013) highlight that the post-structuralist turn in consumer research draws on a variety of frameworks, such as Giddens' structuration theory, Michel Foucault's theory of knowledge and power, governmentality and technologies of the self, and Pierre Bourdieus' social praxeology. The authors state that while those approaches differ, they all cohere in the basic premise of human action as at the same time structured by social forces and cultural categories and structuring of these same forces and categories through human agency. Askegaard and Linnet (2011) well exemplify a basic distinction between the post-structuralist and the phenomenological approach through the concept of *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1979). While phenomenologists would be concerned with the experience as lived, Bourdieulians regard consumption as a practice, which is circumscribed by the agents embodied and pre-reflective competence (*habitus*) to perform in a given social field. This competence stems from the internalization of social norms and conventions and differs across actors due to their differentiated position in the social structures. This means that even the most mundane experience, such as the appreciation of a meal, can be understood through this prism. As a consequence, the focus of the qualitative interview changes from the collection of information via people`s narratives about their views, facts and experiences of consumption, "to the socially instituted discursive practices or cultural practices through which people produce meaning, make sense of their everyday life and achieve social order, as well as to the cultural discourses or systems of representation that people draw from in doing so" (Moisander et al., 2009, p. 337).

Exemplars of this approach can be found more often on studies from the 2000's. Holt and Thompson (2004) interviewed 15 white middle-class American men in order to understand how they pursue the celebrated cultural model of heroic masculinity through daily practices of consumption. In the same vein, Fischer, Otnes, and Tuncay (2007) shed light on how consumption practices are shaped by pervasive cultural discourses. Specifically, they analysed through interviews, how the many dimensions of a broad discourse that equalizes biological parenthood with normalcy shape women's (and couples') decision to strive against infertility and persist for many years to become parents, via assisted reproductive technologies. Using a combination of methodological procedures along with interviews with 20 U.S. Hummer owners, Luedicke, Thompson, and Giesler (2010) show how the cultural myth of American exceptionalism provides a moral justification to the consumption of an notoriously fuel-consuming vehicle against ecologically correct competing discourses against consumerism. Lastly, Üstüner and Holt (2010) conducted interview with 36 upper-middle-class Turkish women with different endowments of cultural capital to understand the nuances of status consumption and the role of the western lifestyle myth in less industrialized countries. In common, these studies are able to provide insights on how different cultural discourses and myths play out framing consumption practices, which by their turn, reproduce these discourses and myths, contributing to the practical and theoretical understanding of the inextricably entanglement of consumption, markets and culture.

As these examples show, despite the variation in focus, the interview remains as a fundamental data source for understanding consumption and consumers. And as we will argue, despite the differences between phenomenology and post-structuralism as perspectives, the interview processes that are consistent with each are not dramatically differentiated.

3 THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

We now develop guidelines for conducting interviews of both types. We present a general guideline for each step and differentiate the particularities of the phenomenological and post-structuralist approach in each of the steps when needed. In order to better illustrate our case we close each of the following sections with a box where we apply our propositions to a research project conducted by one of the authors on the context of family domestic dinners.

Step 1: Scoping the Research Project

Before even the most preliminary interview can be undertaken, it is important that the researcher have some sense of the purpose of, or anchor for, a research project (Belk et al., 2013). Some people start with a research question. For example, Fischer, Otnes, and Tuncay (2007) started with a research question about how culture may influence the extent to which and the way in which consumers persist in achieving elusive goals. Others start with the goal of understanding a particular type of lived experience. For example, Belk, Ger, and Askegaard (2003) wanted to understand the lived experience of desire. Many researchers start with an interest in understanding a particular group of consumers, such as men who engage in do-it-yourself consumption (Moisio, Arnould, & Gentry, 2013) or a market context, such as hair salons in Turkey (Üstüner & Thompson, 2012).

When a research project is situated within a particular community or market context, the researcher will benefit from immersing him or herself in it before beginning to conduct interviews. Whenever possible, there is much to be learned from some "hanging out" in the context (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 107) and observing the consumers, marketers, or other actors who are to be studied. This will provide interviewer with a sense of localness from getting acquainted to local language, daily routines, power structures, taboos, and particularities of the field.[4]

The scoping of the research project will help to determine whether phenomenological or post-structural interviews are appropriate. In general, when the goal of the research project is to understand some type of lived experience, or some particular category of consumers, a phenomenological approach may be warranted. When the goal of the research project is to understand why and how some aspect of contemporary culture shapes and is shaped by consumer behaviour or market dynamics, a post-structural interview is more likely to be the appropriate approach.

If a phenomenological approach is adopted, the preparation the interviewer takes after scoping the research project is minimal, since the interviewer's goal prior to interviewing is to come up with a "single opening question" (Thompson, Locander, &Pollio 1989, p. 138). If, however, an interviewer is taking a post-structural approach, there are other preparatory steps that should be taken since a more extensive interview guide is warranted for such interviews. McCracken (1988) recommends identifying "cultural categories" that are relevant to the research topic or goal. This might be done, for example, by reading historical accounts, or popular press coverage related to the topic or context at hand. Discussions within the research team (if a team approach is being taken) can also help to identify what "pre-understandings" or "a priori themes" the researcher might surface and investigate in the context of the interview. To the extent that the theoretical research question is clear, reading the scholarly literature in advance of the interview can also help to identify other pre-understandings that could be explored. In general, any means the research might use to become more aware of the presuppositions based on culture or theory that could be investigated are fair game in preparing for a post-structural interview. We hasten to stress that the goal of a post-structural interview is *not* to be directive in the interview or to explore *a priori* hypotheses. Rather, it is to anticipate the breadth of topics that might be covered in the interview and to avoid leaving the interview without having touched on topics that will later be of interest.

[4] A cautionary note on scoping research projects based on contexts is warranted. As much as different contexts are worthwhile to study and can justify some scholar pursuits, the ultimate quality of an academic enterprise depends on the extent to which the investigation can provide new insights that advance a particular theoretical conversation. For example, what makes Arnould and Price's (1993) paper important is not that they studied river rafting in Colorado (a particular context), but rather that studying and analyzing data in this context enabled them to inform the theory on service encounters. Likewise, what gives relevance to Luedicke and colleagues (2010) paper is not their analysis of conflict between Hummer owners and eco-activists, but their ability to inform the theoretical conversations on identity projects by shedding light to the role of ideological meanings and mythological structures on processes of market mediated identity construction. As stated by Arnould, Price, and Moisio (2007), the importance of context lies in its ability to foreground or background particular theoretical arguments. Thus even projects anchored in a particular context must ultimately move toward identifying a (theoretical) research question that can be answered by investigating that context.

Box 1 | Scoping the research project – examples from a project on domestic dinner

Phenomenological approach
- General interest of research: to explore the lived experience of family domestic dinners.
- Possible research question: what are the meanings of domestic dinners (to a particular group)?
- Theoretical conversation: family identity projects, highlighting the particularities of its transitory states.

Post-structuralist approach
- General interest of research: to understand how dinner practices are shaped by changing cultural representations of family and gender prescriptions.
- Possible research question: how do dinner practices reflect and impact the evolution of gender roles and family structures?
- Cultural categories and contextualization: consolidation of the "professional woman", increasing number of double income no children couples, emergence of alternative family models (gay family, at-home husband, no children, etc.)
- Theoretical conversation: Sociohistorical patterning of consumption, highlighting dynamics of gendered consumption.

Step 2: Identifying Interviewees

Regardless of whether a phenomenological or post-structural interview is planned, the next step in the interview process is selecting interviewees. Having scoped the research project, it should be possible to define the profile of participants who are the right interviewees for that project. For some research purposes, such as developing an understanding the lived experience of hope for instance, it may well be that any individual could qualify as an appropriate interviewee. In other cases, suitable interviewees will be restricted to those who have relevant characteristics, such as being part of a group that is of interest, such as "at-home Dads" (cf Coskuner-Bali and Thompson 2013). In still others, interviewees will be those knowledgeable about a phenomenon of interest, such as the history or key actors within a marketplace (for an example, see Martin and Schouten 2013).

A consideration often raised in identifying appropriate interviews for qualitative interviews is that of "theoretical sampling" (cf Glaser & Strauss, 1967) which refers to picking informants who contrast with one another in some theoretically relevant way. For example, in the study of the experience of desire done by Belk, Ger and Askegaard (2003), informants were selected from countries that varied in terms of the prevailing consumer cultures, which shaped differences in how informants experienced desire. While in principle, theoretical sampling is a good practice to pursue whether one is planning on doing phenomenological or poststructural interviews, in practice is often difficult if not impossible to know a priori what contrasting informant characteristics are theoretically relevant. These characteristics typically do not become apparent until analysis (often extensive analysis!) of initial interviews is undertaken. For this reason, those conducting interview-based studies are advised to pursue theoretical sampling through the course of their project, and not to assume that the bases of theoretical sampling can be determined before initial data is collected and analyzed.

Researchers conducting qualitative interviews also need to give consideration to the size of their sample. Again, while this consideration is relevant at the planning stages of a research project, the desirable or sufficient number of interviews is impossible to determine before some interviews are conducted and analyzed. While it is generally safe to assume that a minimum of 8 to10 interviews will be required (see McCracken1988), it is wisest not to make assumptions about how large a sample will suffice. The principle of "theoretical saturation" (e.g. Glaser and Strauss 1967) is often invoked to determine when a sufficient sample has been obtained. This phrase refers to the idea that all concepts in a theory are well developed and no new theoretical insight about relationships between them is being obtained with the analysis of additional interviews.

Box 2 | Identifying interviewees – examples from a project on domestic dinner:

Both approaches

- Informants` profile: Couples constituted (living together) in the last 5 years, double income, no children, young adults (between 25 and 34 years-old)*.
- Initial sample size: 5 couples, then snowballing until reach theoretical saturation.

* It may be useful to differentiate informants` different cultural capital endowments and other kinds of social background if in the post-structuralist approach.

Step 3: Constructing the Interview Guide

The interview guide that is prepared in advance of interviews will vary considerably depending on which tradition is being followed. Researchers working in a phenomenological tradition have been encouraged to prepare a "single opening question," to formulate no other "a priori questions concerning the topic," and to encourage a "conversation, not a question and answer session" (Thompson et al, 1989, p. 138). For instance, Thompson and colleagues` (1990) single question was "can you think of a product that you have bought that you would like to talk about?" (p. 348), while Russel and Levy`s (2012) opened their interviews with a question such as "Please tell me about a recent experience of rereading a particular book" (p. 346). In such interviews, the "role of the interviewer is to provide a context in which respondents freely describe their experiences in detail," for which reason "the questions and probes used by the interviewer follow the course of the dialogue and are aimed at bringing about descriptions of experiences" (Thompson et al, 1989, p. 138).

For post-structuralist interviews, a more detailed interview guide is strongly encouraged. McCracken (1988) suggests developing the interview guide as a series of "grand tour" questions that cover the important topic areas that have surfaced as the researcher has undertaken the process of scoping the research project. Under each of these "grand tour" questions, McCracken advises developing a series of prompts that will encourage specific answers from the interviewees who do not touch upon facets of a topic area in response to the grand tour question. Some tips that may help novice interviewers prepare their interview guides include the following:

- Begin your interview with a very general description, in terms that are accessible to a lay audience.
- Make your first interview question one that invites the interviewee to tell you about themselves, especially directing them to elaborate on experiences, expertise, or relevant background information that will help you understand where they are coming from.
- Develop questions that encourage interviewees to describe specific experiences relevant to the topic of interest; avoid interview questions that are overly abstract or philosophical
- Develop questions that invite interviewees to compare and contrast experiences they have had.
- Avoid questions that can be answered with a yes or no, and avoid "to what extent…" questions that can be answered with responses such as "a lot" or "somewhat" or "not at all."
- Throughout the interview, use language that would be part of the interviewee's everyday vocabulary; avoid using terms drawn from scholarly theories or concepts.
- For certain types of topics, researchers may want to consider techniques such as using relevant photos or other props to elicit additional responses from interviewees.

Regardless of the tradition in which they are working, researchers working in university setting will normally require some type of ethical approval from their institution before they can proceed to the next steps of this interview process. As part of obtaining institutional approval, it is typically required that a statement be devised that informs the interviewee of the nature of the research project, and of their rights as an interviewee. Even if not required by a university or other institution, it is important that researchers obtain interviewee's informed consent, and that they do so prior to conducting the interview. So at this stage in the process, researchers should develop their informed consent protocol if they have not already done so.

Box 3 | Constructing an interview guide – examples from a project on domestic dinner:

Phenomenological approach

- Please tell me how dinner time looks like in your home. (Then encouraging conversation through following up and probing questions).

Post-structuralist approach

- Grand tour: Can you think of your daily dinners today in relation to those in your parent`s home? (Prompts: what are the main differences? What is better? What is worst? Etc.).
- Grand tour: Please, tell me how the typical dinner unfolds at your house? (Prompts: How is it different from your parents? How is task division? How do you rely on home appliances? Etc.).

Grand tour: How do you feel about cooking for your husband/wife? (Prompts: Do you have any sense of obligation to do so, or guilty not doing so? How you two manage task divisions? Etc.).

Step 4: Conducting the interview

There are similarities and differences between the ways an interviewer working in a phenomenological versus a post-structural tradition will proceed when conducting the actual interview. We begin by looking at differences. As indicated in the section above, the phenomenological researcher will enter the interview with a much more minimal guide, and have much less of a goal of covering most of the same topics in most interviews. Further, the phenomenological interviewer will refrain from asking "why" questions. The rationale for avoiding "why?" (or equivalent questions such as "what caused that?") when conducting an interview of this kind is as follows:

> Why questions can be perceived as requests for rationalizations and can engender feelings of prejudgment and defensive responses [...]. Such questions may also put the respondent in the position of a 'naïve scientist' seeking to find a plausible explanation for his or her actions [which] isolates both the interviewer and the respondent from the experience as lived. (Thompson, Locander and Pollio 1989, p. 138).

In contrast, it is well within the realm of possibility that a researcher conducting a post-structural interview will include "why" type questions as part of either prompts or follow-ups to statements made by interviewers. Although it would be rare that a grand tour question that covers a major topic within the interview would be a "why" question, it is entirely possible that the answer provided might mean that the interviewer asks the informant why he or she believes, for example, that an event or a reaction occurred, or that a situation of interest arose. The reason a post-structural interview need not avoid asking why questions is that they are seeking to understand informants' understandings, as these may be indicators of cultural discourses, myths or logics that are relevant to the theory that will be developed based on the analysis of the interviews. Moisander colleagues offer the following contrast between the phenomenological and the post-structural interview:

> while existential-phenomenology tends to emphasize the need to minimize interviewer intrusion, post-structuralism directs its efforts to identifying the frames and discourses that are at work in the interview encounter, so as to elaborate on, be sensitive to and even make use of the effects that these frames may have. … [I]nteraction and dialogue between participants can be a powerful creative force or engine for stimulating thought, and for producing cultural talk. (Moisander et al., 2009, 75).

Having highlighted a major difference between the conduct of phenomenological and post-structural interviews, we acknowledge the similarities. In both types of interviews, the interviewer is seeking to create a dialogue that situates the interviewee as the expert on the topic at hand and the interviewer as the person with something to learn. This means that in a preamble to the interview, the interviewer will convey to the interviewee the wish to learn from the her/him. It also means that, even in a post-structural interview, there is no strict adherence to any particular sequence of questions. The interviewer follows up on topics introduced by the interviewee, and is flexible in regards to the order in which and the depth in which any particular topic is covered. Further, the interviewer in either kind of interview is always listening for unanticipated topics that are meaningful to the interviewee and worthy of pursuing during the interview. Thus, even for a post-structural interview, the ideal is to have the flow as a dialogue, allowing interviewees the space to talk at length (Rapley, 2007).

Another commonality between the two types of interviews is that, in both cases, the interviewer should seek permission to audio-record the interview, and should take notes during the interview to capture interpersonal dynamics that might help with interpreting responses. It is always preferable to have

an interview recorded. This allows the researcher to interact with the interviewee without losing time taking too many notes and ensures that a full transcript can be made later and be available for analysis. On occasions when audio recording is impossible, it is essential that the interviewee take extensive notes during the interview and work to flesh them out immediately afterwards as any delay is likely to result in forgetting aspects of the interview.

Box 4 | Conducting the interview – examples from a project on domestic dinner:

Phenomenological approach: Exemplar answer to the opening question (box 3):

Interviewee: "I can't imagine our dinner time different than this: we are all together around the table. I can't conceive it differently… one of us eating alone in a corner. This would be totally sad; I think this is sad, it makes you feel really alone in the world. I don't know why, but in my house we always ate together. I have grown up like this, and this is part of being a family. To me, this is the moment to share, to ask if everything is well. Dinner time is the time to talk about life, it's when we make plans, we arrange things, we share our feelings.

Researcher: Uhum [agreeing with a head shake and keeping silence]

I: Yes, and it used to be always like that. I think it came from my home.

R: Home?

I: Yes, it comes from home. I mean, my parent's home. My dead wouldn't allow anyone to stand up before everyone has finished eating. This used to be the moment to get together. So maybe that's why this is important to me since I was a child. To eat is eating together. I don't know why, in my home it used to be always like that. To me, this is part of being a family"

Post-structuralist approach: Exemplar answer to the first grand tour question (box 3):

Interviewee: "I come from the countryside. At home it was like this: the table set, on Sundays that long backyard barbecue. Those things from the countryside that here in town you cannot live. No time, no space; people do not cultivate it. It's on dinners when I recover it. My husband is very high-tech, he is always on the computer. So dinner is when I can bring him to my values, to my tradition. We sit, we share things, play with the dog. I prepare a cute plate for him, a special food just like my grandmother used to make for my grandfather when I lived with them.

Researcher: But what are the main differences between the two places?

I: Well, here everyone takes part of dinner, here we all help each other. We are together preparing it, chatting, and helping each other. Otherwise it is the cook on one side working and the people to be served on the other. Then it stops being funny!

Researcher: And why is that?

I: You know, here at home everyone works late. We all arrive home tired. There is no such a thing as the `big mama` to do everything. I`m not anyone`s maid and I`m not like my grandma who only kept the house. The world has changed, you know, now men should do as much as we do.

Step 5: Preliminary Analysis of Interview Data

For both types of interviews, the first step in preparing for analysis is to have the full audio recording transcribed. If the interviewer him or herself does the transcription, it can help to ensure that the transcript is accurate; however, since it takes somewhere between six to nine hours to transcribe a one hour interview, it may be infeasible for the interviewer to do all the transcription. If a transcriber is used, the next step will be to read through the transcription to correct errors and fill in gaps.

Once transcripts of initial interviews are available, the task of preliminary coding begins. This coding will be guided in part by the approach the

interviewer has adopted (phenomenological or post-structural). In the case of phenomenological research, it is likely that the focus in the analysis will be primarily upon identifying "emic" themes that recur through the interview. If the approach is post-structural, the researcher will be identifying both emic themes and more abstract etic concepts that characterize the interviewee's responses. To clarify, an *emic* analysis entail a systematization of informants' first-person accounts to grasp the individual's view of their experience (Geertz, 1978), while the *etic* one entail researcher's interpretations of the structural and cultural meanings underlying such experience (Denzin, 2001).

In post-structural analysis, research questions that have been pre-specified are also likely to guide the coding. That is, the researcher will look for patterns in the data that help to address the research questions. And the research is likely to find, early on in the research process, as initial interviews are being coded, that those questions need to be reframed or revised. This may also lead to rethinking which types of interviewees are appropriate, and to identifying theoretical bases appropriate for theoretical sampling, as discussed above. Not infrequently, initial analysis of data also leads to revising and/or augmenting the interview guide. As this paragraph implies, any research process that relies on qualitative interviews is likely to be more circular than linear, with repeated rounds of cycling between scoping the project, identifying interviewees, refining the interview guide, conducting interviews, and analysing interview data. Only through such a process can "theoretical saturation" be achieved.

Box 5 | Preliminary analysis of interview data – examples from a project on domestic dinner:

Phenomenological approach: Key emic terms (see box 4)

- Dinner time as family time: "… I can't imagine our dinner time different than this: we are all together around the table. I can't conceive it differently… one of us eating alone in a corner. This would be totally sad…"
- Dinner time as couple sharing: "…To me, this is the moment to share, to ask if everything is well. Dinner time is the time to talk about life, it's when we make plans, we arrange things, we share our feelings..."
- Dinner time as re-enactment of family: "Yes, it comes from home. I mean, my parent's home. My dead wouldn't allow anyone to stand up before everyone has finished eating. This used to be the moment to get together."

Post-structuralist approach: key emic terms and etic interpretations

- Tradition and nostalgia: "…At home it was like this: the table set, on Sundays that long backyard barbecue. Those things from the countryside that here in town you cannot live…"
- Re-enacting traditional gender roles: "…I prepare a cute plate for him, a special food just like my grandmother used to make for my grandfather when I lived with them...."
- Contemporary task division: "…here everyone takes part of dinner, here we all help each other. We are together preparing it, chatting, and helping each other. Otherwise it is the cook on one side working and the people to be served on the other. Then it stops being funny!..."
- Modern gender roles: "…I`m not anyone`s maid and I`m not like my grandma who only kept the house. The world has changed, you know, now men should do as much as we do…"
- Etic interpretation: Dinner as a moment where contradictory gender ideals of tradition and modernity are selectively enacted to create a sense of "contemporary (modern) family (tradition)".

4 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This paper provided a general guideline to conducting qualitative interviews that would be part of scholarly consumer and marketing research projects in either phenomenological or post-structural traditions. It should be noted that this guidance does *not* assume that the researcher is doing ethnographic research that entails immersion in a community or organization. Under such circumstance informants might be interviewed informally, multiple times, over the course of a prolonged stay by the researcher in a field setting. In contrast, our advice is premised on the assumption that the researcher will interview most interviewees only once, and will do follow up interviews only to clarify any points that were unclear in the initial interview or to ask questions that emerged later in the research process.

Despite the pervasive use of interviews in qualitative marketing and consumer research, this

technique does not provide answers to all types of questions emerging in a research project. While interviews provide a *perspective of action*, observational techniques are more suited to gain a *perspective in action* (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991) about, for example, how certain consumption practices are carried out. Also, there has been an increasing interest in other types of textual accounts, such as newspaper reports (Humphreys, 2010), historical documents (Karababa & Ger, 2011), and blog entries (Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013), among others, which can provide interesting means to produce alternative types of primary data that support developing an understanding of various marketing and consumption phenomena.

As a final thought, we highlight that interviews are part of a broad understanding of the nature and goals of the qualitative research as an emergent and extensive process in which the researcher deliberately recognizes her/himself as part of the production of a scientific piece (see Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Prasad, 2005). So, as much as this guideline is designed to be a useful toolkit to researchers with initial and intermediate degrees of intimacy with qualitative methods, there is much to be learned from being in the field, conducting interviews, and relating to the informants. As Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) point out, "the intonation of questions, the stretching of pauses, sensitive listening, and the establishing of good rapport in the interview situation rest largely on tacit knowing acquired through practice and by working with experienced interviewers" (p. 89). Happy journey!

REFERENCES

Alvesson, M. (2003). Beyond neopositivists, romantics, and localists: a reflexive approach to interviews in organizational research. Academy of Management Review, 28(1), 13–33.

Arnould, E. J. (1989). Toward a broadened theory of preference formation and the diffusion of innovations: Cases from Zinder Province, Niger Republic. Journal of Consumer Research, 16(3), 239–267.

Arnould, E. J., & Price, L. L. (1993). River Magic: Extraordinary Experience and Extended Service Encounter. Journal of Consumer Research, 20(1), 24–45.

Arnould, E. J.; Price, L.; Moiso, R. (2007). Making context matters: selecting research contexts for theoretical insights. In R. Belk (Ed.), Handbook of qualitative research methods in marketing (pp.106–125). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Askegaard, S., & Linnet, J. T. (2011). Towards an epistemology of consumer culture theory: Phenomenology and the context of context. Marketing Theory, 11(4), 381–404.

Belk, R., Ger, G., & Askegaard, S. (2003). The Fire of Desire : A Multisited Inquiry into Consumer Passion. Journal of Consumer Research, 30(3), 327–351.

Belk, R. W. (2014). The Labors of the Odysseans and the Legacy of the Odyssey. Journal of Historical Research in Marketing, 6(3), forthcoming.

Belk, R. W., Fischer, E., & Kozinets, R. V. (2013). Qualitative Consumer and Marketing Research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Belk, R. W., Sherry, J. F., & Wallendorf, M. (1988). A naturalistic inquiry into buyer and seller behavior at a swap meet. Journal of Consumer Research, 14(4), Journal of Consumer Research.

Bourdieu, P. (1979). La distinction: critique sociale du jugement. Paris: Éditions de Minuit.

Coskuner-Balli, G., & Thompson, C. J. (2013). The Status Costs of Subordinate Cultural Capital: At-Home Fathers' Collective Pursuit of Cultural Legitimacy through Capitalizing Consumption Practices. Journal of Consumer Research, 40(1), 19–41.

Denzin, N. K. (2001). Interpretive interactionism (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2000). The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In Handbook of qualitative research. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.

Fischer, E., Otnes, C. C., & Tuncay, L. (2007). Pursuing Parenthood : Integrating Cultural and Striving. Journal of Consumer Research, 34(4), 425–440.

Geertz, C. (1978). A interpretação de culturas. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory. Weidenfield & Nicolson, London. London: Weidenfield & Nicolson.

Holbrook, M. B., & Hirchman, E. C. (1982). The experiential aspects of consumption: Consumer fantasies, feelings, and fun. Journal of Consumer Research, 9(2), 132.

Holt, D. B., & Thompson, C. J. (2004). Man of Action Heroes: The Pursuit of Heroic Masculinity in Everyday Consumption. Journal of Consumer Research, 31(2), 425–440.

Humphreys, A. (2010). Semiotic Structure and the Legitimation of Consumption Practices: The Case of Casino Gambling. Journal of Consumer Research, 37(3), 490–510.

Karababa, E., & Ger, G. (2011). Early Modern Ottoman Coffeehouse Culture and the Formation of the Consumer Subject. Journal of Consumer Research, 37(5), 737–760.

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing. Los Angeles: Sage.

Luedicke, M. K., Thompson, C. J., & Giesler, M. (2010). Consumer Identity Work as Moral Protagonism: How Myth and Ideology Animate a Brand Mediated Moral Conflict. Journal of Consumer Research, 36(April), 1016–1032.

Martin, D. M., & Schouten, J. W. (2013). Consumption-Driven Market Emergence. Journal of Consumer Research, 40(5), 855–870.

McCracken, G. (1988). The long interview. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Moisander, J., & Anu Valtonen. (2006). Qualitative Marketing Research: A Cultural Approach. London: SAGE Publications.

Moisander, J., Valtonen, A., & Hirsto, H. (2009). Personal Interviews in Cultural Consumer Research – post-structuralist challenges. Consumption Markets & Culture, 12(4), 37–41.

Moisio, R., Arnould, E. J., & Gentry, J. W. (2013). Productive Consumption in the Class-Mediated Construction of Domestic Masculinity: Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Home Improvement in Men's Identity Work. Journal of Consumer Research, 40(2), 298–316.

Prasad, P. (2005). Crafting qualitative research: Working in the postpositivist traditions. Armonk, NY: Sharpe.

Rapley, T. (2007). Interviews. In C. Seale, G. Gobo, J. Gubrium, & D. Silverman (Eds.), Qualitative Research Practice (pp. 15–33). London: Sage.

Russell, C. A., & Levy, S. J. (2012). The Temporal and Focal Dynamics of Volitional Reconsumption: A Phenomenological Investigation of Repeated Hedonic Experiences. Journal of Consumer Research, 39(2), 341–359.

Scaraboto, D., & Fischer, E. (2013). Frustrated Fatshionistas: An Institutional Theory Perspective on Consumer Quests for Greater Choice in Mainstream Markets. Journal of Consumer Research, 39(5), 1234–1257.

Thompson, C. J., Arnould, E., & Giesler, M. (2013). Discursivity, difference, and disruption: Genealogical reflections on the consumer culture theory heteroglossia. Marketing Theory, 13(2), 1–27.

Thompson, C. J., Locander, W. B., & Pollio, H. R. (1989). Putting Consumer Experience Back into Consumer Research: The Philosophy and Method of Existential-Phenomenology. Journal of Consumer Research, 16(2), 133–146.

Thompson, C. J., Locander, W. B., & Pollio, H. R. (1990). The Lived Meaning of Free Choice: An Existential-Phenomenological Description of Everyday Consumer Experiences Women Contemporary Married Women. Journal of Consumer Research, 17(3), 346–361.

Üstüner, T., & Holt, D. B. (2010). Toward a Theory of Status Consumption in Less Industrialized Countries. Journal of Consumer Research, 37(1), 37–56.

Üstüner, T., & Thompson, C. J. (2012). How Marketplace Performances Produce Interdependent Status Games and Contested Forms of Symbolic Capital. Journal of Consumer Research, 38(February), 796–815.

Wallendorf, M., & Arnould, E. J. (1988). "My Favorite Things": A Cross-Cultural Inquiry in Object Attachment, Possessiveness, and Social Linkage. Journal of Consumer Research, 14(4), 531–547.

Wallendorf, M., & Arnould, E. J. (1991). "We gather together": Consumption rituals of thanksgiving day. Journal of Consumer Research, 18(1), 13–31.

Workman, J. (1993). Marketing's Limited Role in New Product Development in One Computer Systems Firm. Journal of Marketing Research, 30(4), 405–421.