Qualitative research is, to its core, about sharing and respecting other voices. Yet the scholarship around qualitative methods inherently involves processes and barriers which render particular perspectives to be shared more or less than others. For example, journals and conference programs rightly showcase the contributions of many established “stars” of methods. This allows other researchers to increase their knowledge, skills, and connections with these eminent scholars’ work. At conferences, this can:

...enable us to “put faces” to those names, those people who are forming our discipline. We can hear them speak, speak to them, and even get to know them. Suddenly, these icons are accessible, real people. Students and former students can now ask questions, discuss issues with them, thank them for their contributions, stand in awe, and listen to their jokes. (Morse, 2008, p. 1160)

Yet the very processes that lead to an individual becoming prominent or influential can also contribute to other voices being cast as more peripheral, less “expert,” or even less valid. The inevitably selective process of peer review or the identification of a keynote speaker by a conference committee thus has intended consequences: It shapes and constitutes what people, perspectives, and even groups are more overtly represented in knowledge spaces (Dolby, 1996). This not only constitutes discourse and debate but also channels this debate too—creating boundaries and parameters based on what is considered to be legitimate or normalized. Consequently, diversity suffers.

By contrast, social media—for good and sometimes ill—does not have such a selective process. Anyone with online access can come in and contribute. As such, social media platforms tend to democratize perspectives. This point was reiterated by Beyoncé, whose Vogue interview of 2018 was recounted recently by Brown (2018):

If people in powerful positions continue to hire and cast only people who look like them, sound like them, come from the same neighbourhoods they grew up in, they will never have a great understanding of experiences different from their own... The beauty of social media it’s completely democratic. Everyone has a say. Everyone’s voice counts, and everyone has a chance to paint the world from their own perspective. (p. 144)

Indeed, social media (notably Twitter) is an inclusive space for discussion of the nature and challenges of academic life (especially those of writing, productivity, and mental health), the sharing of research itself, and discussion about this research, including qualitative research.

Social media, therefore, presents enticing challenges to traditional knowledge sharing platforms, such as journals and conferences, to consider new and different ways to more formally share diverse perspectives. This has led us to consider how and why “platforms” like those offered by the International Institute for Qualitative Methodology (IIQM) including the International Journal of Qualitative Methods (IJQM), can better contribute to the sharing of diverse voices and perspectives around qualitative methods.

Why Value Diversity?

Reasons for such sharing are compelling. Firstly, it’s important to represent and promote understanding of the challenges of doing qualitative research, particularly for students, emerging researchers, researchers from developing countries, or those from nontraditional backgrounds. This is important not only ethically, but because journals are also different than social media platforms. Journals remain the formal location of academic knowledge in our society. Contributions to journals become part of the formal canon of scholarship—having a place and a permanence that transcends the temporality and trends of social media. Hence, bringing more diversity to journals represents an essential step in bringing more diversity to knowledge itself.

More practically, mental health challenges are present in up to 50% of early career researchers and students (Guthrie et al., 2017). Risks may be even higher for those doing qualitative research (Clark & Sousa, 2018). Understanding the perspectives and needs of researchers is vital to providing effective
support and mentorship for work and health (West et al., 2018). Bringing the voices of more diverse researchers to our formal spaces is important ethically and practically—raising awareness and insight can help communities, institutions, and individuals understand and address work and mental health challenges better.

The presence of diverse voices in our scholarly spaces is important not only to hear and listen to these perspectives but also actively to promote diversity. Otherwise, cultural cloning and unconscious bias will continue to be common within the academy (Smith, Gamarro, & Toor, 2017). Remarkably, this is despite generations of data to show the value of diversity as it pertains to organizations, productivity, creativity, and innovation. Diversity is not only then for idealists but for pragmatists too.

**What Have We Done? What More Can We Do?**

*IIQM* continues to showcase some of the world’s most established qualitative researchers but has attempted for some years to bring greater diversity into its conference programming. We have sought to showcase diverse scholars via new formats such as our micro keynotes and Q-talks—in which conference delegates have the opportunity to address the whole conference in a keynote-type format. We have introduced new platforms using cutting-edge technology such as our webinar series and the Qual-World Virtual Conference, to better ensure that scholars internationally can access community, support, and education in qualitative methods without being compromised by financial, geographical, mobility, or other constraints. We not only believe this is ethically important but has epistemological value highly congruent with the values qualitative research should espouse. As Brown (2018) concludes, “...its only when diverse perspectives are included, respected, and valued that we can start to get a full picture of the world, who we serve, what they need, and how to successfully meet people where they are” (p. 144).

We want to do more. You can now expect to see regular *IJQM* editorials in our new invited editorial series “Diverse Voices,” which shares new ideas or the perspectives of groups or individuals, including emerging researchers, who traditionally have not been as present or as prevalent in the journal space. Inevitably, this means that these voices are different. Contributions may not readily chime with the tone and content conventions of the sanitized professional journal space. But we see this avowedly as an asset not a weakness—a vital part of embracing and celebrating diversity. With this in mind, if you want to contribute an article or suggest a topic, please e-mail us. *IJQM* is here to support everyone, in all our diversity, now and into the future.

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