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The Methodological Integrity of Critical Qualitative Research: Principles to Support Design and Research Review

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This article articulates principles and practices that support methodological integrity in relation to critical qualitative research. We begin by describing 2 changes that have occurred in psychological methods over the last 15 years. (a) Building on foundational work advocating for epistemological pluralism, guidelines on how to design, review, and report qualitative and mixed methods have been advanced to support methodological integrity in keeping with a diversity of researchers' aims and approaches. (b) There has been an increased use of critical epistemological perspectives and critical methods. In light of these changes, the current article puts forward principles to support critical qualitative researchers when considering methodological rigor and when formulating rationales to support their methods in the journal article review process. Illustrating the principles with an example of critical research, the article describes common problems and issues in the research design process that can be considered in order to strengthen the returns of critical studies. Recommendations are made for editors and reviewers on how to conduct reviews of critical qualitative research, and pressing concerns for publishing critical qualitative research are detailed.

Public Significance Statement
This article articulates the principles and practices that underlie methodological integrity to demonstrate how they can be applied to support critical qualitative research. It offers recommendations that can strengthen rigor and can support the review and publishing of this research.

Keywords: critical research, qualitative research, methodological integrity, participatory research

Over the last 15 years, there have been substantial changes in both the acceptance and conduct of qualitative research in psychology, including the development of guidelines for the design, reporting, and evaluation of qualitative research, and an upsurge in the use of critical methods. In this article, we describe each in turn, en route to a focused consideration of the methodological integrity of critical qualitative research. There, we identify common dilemmas faced by critical qualitative researchers and present principles to guide evaluations of rigor. The purpose of the article is to provide supports that researchers can turn to when designing studies and when arguing the methodological strengths of critical qualitative research.

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The Rise of Qualitative Research in Psychology and Consolidated Guidelines

Psychology researchers have embraced qualitative research approaches to an extent that was unforeseeable to many even a decade ago. In 2011, the (previously quantitative) methods division of the American Psychological Association (APA) Division 5 established a qualitative section (the Society for Qualitative Inquiry in Psychology; SQIP), leading the division to consequently change its name to "Quantitative and Qualitative Methods." Also, the British Psychological Society's qualitative section (Qualitative Methods in Psychology), only introduced in 2005, now is its largest section. This shift appears to be international (Montali et al., 2019).

This growth also is evident in the development of standards for the design, review, and reporting of qualitative research within psychology. Pioneering recommendations on how to increase rigor in qualitative research (e.g., Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999; Morrow, 2005; Parker, 2004; Stiles, 1993) were foundational for evolving standards that provide guidance across qualitative methods and epistemological perspectives. The *Journal of Counseling Psychology* special issue on qualitative methods in 2005 was another landmark that introduced both specific methods and, importantly, the logic of qualitative research to many psychologists (e.g., Morrow, 2005; Ponterotto, 2005). In 2013, SQIP authorized a task force, informed by a literature review on criteria for rigor in

qualitative research, to develop recommendations for the design and review of qualitative methods (Levitt, Motulsky, Wertz, Morrow, & Ponterotto, 2017). They were shaped in consultation with expert researchers from across a host of approaches to qualitative methods (including a number of critical researchers, such as Michelle Fine, Marco Gemignani, Joseph Gone, and Cynthia Winston). From this task force emerged the concept of *methodological integrity*–an articulation of how methods can be judged to be rigorous across qualitative approaches (detailed description to follow).

Due to rising interest in qualitative methods, APA updated their journal article reporting standards (JARS) to form new modules for qualitative, qualitative meta-analytic, and mixed methods while incorporating the concept of methodological integrity. The article conveying these reporting standards (Levitt et al., 2018) became the most downloaded article of all 89 APA journals in 2018—again substantiating the field's investment in these methods. These standards provided a basis for the JARS chapter in the recent edition of the *Publication Manual of the APA* (APA, 2020), offering transdisciplinary guidance for publishing in the social sciences internationally. This shift signaled the formal acceptance of qualitative methods within the canon of psychological approaches to research—along with the first indication in the history of the manual that methods should fit with researchers' epistemological perspectives.

The Rise of Critical Theory and Methods in Psychology

In addition to the increasing use of qualitative methods over the last decade and a half, there has been a rise in critical qualitative approaches to psychological research. Critical psychology has been evolving over the last half century and has developed a global presence that promotes shared concerns. Although it is beyond the scope of this article to provide a thorough history of the evolution of critical research methods or to describe its many theoretical instantiations (see Fox & Prilleltensky, 1997; Parker, 2015; Teo, 2015), we provide a brief description in order to contextualize the discussion of rigor within critical qualitative inquiry. It is in synchrony with the numerous calls within the field of counseling psychology to pursue a socially transformative agenda (Grzanka, Gonzalez, & Spanierman, 2019; Moradi & Grzanka, 2017; Olle, 2018; Quintana, Chew, & Schell, 2012; Speight & Vera, 2008) and to consider how the framework of methodological integrity supports the conceptualization of critical research.

What Are Critical Theories, Epistemologies, and Methods?

Critical psychological theories are characterized by a view of subjectivity as embedded in society and as intrinsically influenced by cultural, contextual, and historical forces related to social power and oppression. The production of research findings is subject to these forces and so it often is scrutinized by critical psychologists who review the state of knowledge in their field (e.g., Olle, 2018; Suzuki, O'Shaughnessy, Roysircar, Ponterotto, & Carter, 2019). For instance, critical approaches have countered trends in the field to centralize cognition and neurobiological materialism (Kirschner, 2013). They problematize how the profession of psychology engages in activities that locate problems within individuals and de-emphasizes the social, cultural, economic, and political contributions to an issue (Prilleltensky, 2008).

Researchers who conduct research using critical perspectives may engage quantitative and/or qualitative methods as needed to shed light on oppressive dynamics and encourage emancipatory social change (e.g., Fine, 2006). They tend to centralize varied theories of systemic oppression, using perspectives such as critical race theory (e.g., Bowleg et al., 2017), critical queer theory (e.g., Diamond, 2006), disability theory (e.g., Kafer, 2013), postcolonial theory (e.g., Gone, 2019), feminist approaches to sexuality (e.g., Tiefer, 2018), and Marxist theory (e.g., Roberts, 2014) to draw attention to varied and/or intersecting forms of societal power.

These theories undergird critical epistemological perspectives and view consciousness raising and liberation from oppression as goals of scientific study. These epistemological approaches share the recognition that the research process is invariably influenced by the perspectives of the researcher, from the conception of a research question, to the ways data are collected, analyses are conducted, findings are written, and applications of findings are developed (Teo, 2015). Critical epistemological perspectives have been framed both as alternative and adjunctive to postpositivism and constructivist epistemologies (Morrow, 2005; Ponterotto, 2005). For instance, Hoshmand (2005) presented a framing of narrative psychology as located within cultural psychology, viewing narrative research as inherently reflective of moral issues related to the privileging of some cultural texts or stories at the expense of others. In contrast, Kidd and Kral (2005) framed participatory action research (PAR) as both critical and constructivist in nature and as requiring a critical consciousness in researchers. And, Wigginton and Lafrance (2019) categorized critical feminist epistemologies in three categories: postpositivist empiricism (in which rigorous quantitative methods are seen as needed to counter sexism), standpoint theories (in which knowledge production is seen as unavoidably socially situated), and social constructivism (in which science is seen as generating language that shapes reality). Across all these schemas, critical methods are seen as needed to support inquiry, given these varied concerns about scientific practices and knowledge production.

In response, there is a growing body of methodologists' writing (e.g., Fine, 2006; Fox & Prilleltensky, 1997; McVittie, 2006; Parker, 2015) on the procedures used in critical methods. For instance, researchers using critical participatory methods may engage an advisory team from the group under study, may recruit coresearchers from that group, or may engage participants to guide the development of the research question, research design, data collection, analysis, and/or application of findings (e.g., Fine, 2006; Gone, 2019). Many established qualitative methods that were not originally critical in their approach now have explicitly critical versions (e.g., Clarke, 2003; Hoshmand, 2005; Levitt, in press[a]). Although some authors describe a specific set of procedures as defining a form of critical research (e.g., situational analysis; Clarke, 2003; Grzanka, 2021), others' approaches use a wide range of procedures employed within a critical theoretical perspective, such as in Levitt's (in press[a]) approach to critical-constructivist grounded theory. We will consider critical proce-

dures in some detail, but we first describe the uptake in critical methods over the past 15 years.

The Reception of Critical Methods in Psychological Research

Although psychologists have been notably slow in engaging in critical qualitative research (e.g., Gergen, 2001; Teo, 2015), a trend toward critical research can be substantiated by reviews of counseling research. In an omnibus meta-analytic review of the qualitative literature on clients' experiences in psychotherapy (Levitt, Pomerville, & Surace, 2016), no articles focused on client experiences tied to marginalization (related to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class) were identified in the 1990s. However, since the start of the 21st century, these numbers grew from six in the 2000s, to another six identified between 2010 and 2013 (when the data collection stopped for that study). In examining a similar dataset (Levitt, Ipekci, & Morrill, 2020) focused on therapists' experiences during psychotherapy, a similar trend was found indicating growing use of critical qualitative methods: 1990s, one article; 2000s, eight articles; and 2010–2015, 15 articles.

In addition, a search of PsycINFO (on November 27, 2019), for the title terms *critical methods*, *critical research*, or *critical psychology* revealed only 10 articles from 1980–1989; 16 articles from 1990–1999; 49 from 2000–2009; and 82 articles from 2010–2019. Of course, some articles will have used critical methods that did not have these terms in the title and other metrics to identify critical research can be employed, but this examination provides some indication of their increased use. Given these two significant shifts in qualitative methods, the rest of this article is focused upon how researchers can enhance the quality of critical qualitative methods (and the qualitative components of mixed methods). To accomplish this aim, we review the concept of methodological integrity.

Methodological Integrity in Critical Qualitative Methods

Qualitative and critical approaches to inquiry share beliefs about many practices that strengthen research. Both value the formation of findings that are based in contextualized and holistic descriptions of lived experiences, view the process of interpretation within research as demanding attention and explication, and require that researchers reflexively and transparently consider their own assumptive frameworks (Teo, 2008). Indeed, qualitative and mixed methods in psychology have been credited with the advancement of multicultural and critical research practices by enhancing researchers' abilities to work with diverse communities, changing power dynamics within research relationships, and shaping culturally appropriate research questions, ethics, and designs (Suzuki et al., 2019).

Despite the increased interest in qualitative methods, critical qualitative researchers often lament that it remains difficult to publish (e.g., Morrow, 2005); although many reviewers have some basic understanding of qualitative methods, fewer have a depth of knowledge. Attempts to establish rigor have included journals requiring certain procedures to be used for all qualitative articles (Frieze, 2008) or evaluating studies by assessing how well their method matches the procedures used in the original statement of that method (Tracy, 2010). These procedural checklists were similar to those used in quantitative methods (e.g., Schulz, Altman, Moher, & the CONSORT Group, 2010).

In contrast, the SQIP recommendations were intended to consolidate standards for qualitative research in the field by articulating their underlying logic. The concept of methodological integrity (Levitt et al., 2017) was developed to explain the methodological foundations of trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), considering whether research design and procedures support the research goals, respects the researcher's approach to inquiry, and are tailored to the subject matter and the investigators. What was radical about this approach was that it did not situate the criteria for research evaluation in the replication of certain procedures (a trend that led much critical qualitative research to be rejected when it was adapted appropriately to new contexts and so strayed from the procedures initially used by its developers). Rather, the view was that procedures should be adapted to the specific aims, epistemological perspectives, and subject matter/participants (e.g., interviewees, researchers, community members) of a given study. It provided a rationale that authors could use to argue for flexibility in the application of a method (or in the generation of a novel method).

Given the dominance of postpositivist approaches to science in psychology broadly–and of constructivist approaches within qualitative research in counseling psychology (Levitt et al., 2017) — many reviewers still have less familiarity with critical research. The articulation of how and why procedures should be altered to enhance the rigor within these methods therefore may be especially crucial. Education on qualitative methods and epistemological perspectives in psychology is still not required as part of a graduate curriculum (see Rubin, Bell, & McClelland, 2018), so critical methods may be embedded within a philosophy of science that remains foreign to many reviewers (Teo, 2015).

Central to methodological integrity are the two core concepts of fidelity and utility, which guide the selection and evaluation of methods and procedures (Levitt et al., 2017). Using a hypothetical example study of critical research conducted to examine the provision of psychological care to refugee clients in the United States, we elaborate on the concepts of fidelity and utility, illustrating the ways in which principles related to methodological integrity can enhance critical qualitative research. Within our discussion, we tend to refer to data collection as occurring within an interviewing process as this appears to be the most common process in counseling qualitative research (Levitt, Pomerville, Surace, & Grabowski, 2017), but we wish to note the possibility of collecting data using written or other nonverbal data sources, especially given the importance of critical discourse analysis (McVittie, 2006). In the following sections, we describe issues commonly faced by critical qualitative researchers that are associated with each element of methodological integrity (see Table 1 for a glossary of terms).

Fidelity to the Subject Matter

Fidelity refers to the intimate understanding of a topic that can be developed by researchers through prolonged study, personal experiences with a phenomenon, and deliberately seeking out a faithful appreciation of a phenomenon in relation to the contexts

Table 1
Glossary of Commonly Used Terms Related to Methodological Integrity

Key term	Definition
Trustworthiness	The evaluation of worthiness of research and whether its claims are warranted. The degree to which researchers and readers are convinced a research study has captured a significant experience or process related to their topic.
Methodological integrity	The methodological foundation of trustworthiness, established when the research design and procedures support the research goals, respect the researcher's approaches to inquiry, and are tailored for fundamental characteristics of the subject matter and the participants. It is the establishment of fidelity and utility as a functional synergy among these features of a study and with each other.
Fidelity	The ability to represent the phenomenon under study in a manner that reflects an intimate understanding of the complexities and variety of experiences and practices in the phenomenon under study.
• Adequate data	The quality and sufficiency of data to permit the description of the comprehensiveness of and variations in the subject matter as they are relevant to the study goals and epistemological values.
• Perspective management in data collection	The researchers' recognition and transparency about the influence of their perspectives upon data collection and analysis and ability to appropriately limit the influence of their perspective to obtain clearer representations of their phenomenon in data collection.
• Perspective management in data analysis	The researchers' recognition and transparency about the influence of their perspectives upon data analysis and ability to appropriately limit the influence of their perspective to obtain clearer representations of their phenomenon and/or to use it to increase the perspicacity of their analysis.
• Groundedness	The degree to which findings are based within the close analysis of data of good quality that supports understanding and the meanings identified in the analysis.
Utility	The effectiveness of the research design and methods, and their synergistic relationship in achieving the study goals as understood in relation to its epistemological values.
• Contextualization of data	The extent to which a researcher conveys sufficient information about the findings within their appropriate context, allowing readers to better understand features of the context that might influence the findings and permit the appropriate transferability of findings across contexts.
• Catalyst for insight	The ability of data to provide rich grounds for insightful analyses in relation to the study's aims and purpose.
• Meaningful contributions	The development of findings and contributions that are meaningful in relation to the study goals and epistemological values.
• Coherence	The ability to delve into differences within findings and explain how they relate to one another intelligibly, so that the basis and function of contradictions can be understood.

Note. Definitions adapted from Levitt et al. (2017)

and dynamics relevant to a research question. When researchers develop a comprehensive understanding of a research phenomenon in its complexity, the methodological integrity of the study is enhanced—whether the research question is framed as an intrapsychic, interpersonal, systemic, or discursive one or as focused on an entity understood as real, constructed, or otherwise. Across these questions, the adaptation of procedures to support an in-depth knowledge will permit researchers to develop findings that adequately represent the subject matter. From a critical psychology perspective, sociocultural and historical forces are central to fidelity because research topics tied to social power are inevitably shaped by the contexts in which they are embedded. We present here common problems critical researchers face when establishing fidelity and propose principles that can guide the establishment of fidelity for these researchers (augmenting the general principles put forward for methodological integrity in qualitative research; Levitt, Motulsky, et al., 2017). They are presented in relation to the four elements of fidelity: data adequacy, perspective management in data collection and analysis, and groundedness (see Table 2).

Data adequacy. When conducting research on a phenomenon and its variations, researchers consider which sources of data are relevant to the scope and aims of their research question and assess the adequacy of the data under examination. A dilemma, with which critical qualitative researchers often wrestle, is that their epistemological commitments direct them to focus on investigating differences related to social identities (e.g., gender, race, sexual orientation, religion), power (e.g., privilege, social status), and resources (e.g., class, economics), yet it is typically impossible to recruit participants who are located across all these positions—never mind their intersections.

Rather than setting out to interview a set number of participants or to seek participants who reflect the variation in population characteristics (as in quantitative research), qualitative researchers attend to variability as it takes form within their phenomenon. Researchers' confidence in the variations and patterns in their findings develops because the process of qualitative analysis is iterative; that is, continued data analysis gradually refines and corrects researchers' earlier understanding. It is this process of *qualitative generalization* that supports the transferability of findings by readers into their own contexts (for more details on this process see Levitt, in press[b]). Critical qualitative researchers, then, are advised to set the scope of their questions so that they promise a rich understanding of the variation in their findings related to the dynamics of privilege, oppression, and their influence on psychological knowledge and practice. Across the critical methods in use, adequate data that can support this process will enable confidence in the patterns that researchers identify.

For example, critical qualitative researchers interested in studying the ways in which the mental health care field limits or enables access to culturally sensitive care for undocumented refugees will wish to highlight (and avoid reproducing; Habib, 2019) imbalances

Table 2
Principles and Practices Tied to Fidelity for Critical Researchers

Elements of fidelity to the subject matter	Principles to support critical research	Practices that critical researchers may use
Data adequacy	Fidelity is strengthened when researchers use data collection strategies that support the analysis of data that adequately illuminate variations within the critical processes under study.	• Conduct research to note personal, interpersonal, intrapsychic, historical, and systemic (e.g., institutional, political, structural) factors that systematically influence the phenomenon to facilitate disclosure and assist with collecting data to develop a rich understanding of the phenomenon. • Consider the pragmatic limitations of your study (e.g., features of participants and researchers, available time and resources) when determining the scope of your question. • Engage participatory methods to develop a research question with a scope and focus that will enable data adequacy. • Notice what you learn during pilot or initial research about the variations in the phenomenon to guide data collection/recruitment.
Perspective management in data collection	Fidelity is improved by developing caution and being transparent about the influences of both critical assumptions and those associated with internalized stigma as well as the ways these were managed to maximize safety and disclosure.	• Notice how your expectations might differ from your participants' understandings of research and adjust your research processes to support trust and mutual understanding in data collection. • Recognize how your professional and personal assumptions might influence your data collection processes and use caution. • Engage participatory methods to develop awareness of your assumptions and to guide the process of adjusting procedures. • Reflexively notice and report these expectations and assumptions and how they were managed during data collection.
Perspective management in data analysis	Fidelity in critical analysis is enhanced when researchers develop awareness of how their perspectives and assumptions might act to increase sensitivity but also might unduly influence analysis.	• Use the same processes as described in data collection, but applied to the analytic process. • Use theoretical perspectives to sharpen researchers' perspicacity in the analysis (e.g., feminist, queer, multicultural lenses). • Be mindful of how researchers' theories, positionality, and personal perspectives might influence analysis and use caution. • Be mindful of how the systems that researchers are in might influence their attributions in the analytic process. • Reflexively notice and report these expectations and assumptions and how they were managed during the analytic process.
Groundedness	Fidelity is strengthened when critical researchers use theory to heighten their attunement while taking care that their analyses are grounded in iterative cycles of inductive analysis.	• Present findings alongside quotations from data to demonstrate their groundedness. • Assess groundedness of interpretations via seeking participant feedback, or using repeated interviews, or collecting data from multiple perspectives to deepen the understanding of how systems function.

that are characteristic of refugees' experiences of inequity in mental health care, such as those connected to structural and institutional power imbalances (Kirmayer & Jarvis, 2019). Initially, investigators can make these determinations by studying the variations that are revealed in prior literature, in preliminary research on a topic, or in the study of the initial data collected. Or, investigators studying the provision of mental health care for refugees may conduct research on broader contextual factors, such as facilities' geographic location within the United States and their institutional policies. This scope would require them to consider recruitment of participants who might identify the ways in which local political and systemic contexts are likely to influence accessibility and quality of care (potentially narrowing the scope if adequate data could not be obtained to support this broader study). When critical researchers encounter ethical concerns that influence recruitment (e.g., it is not safe for some people to participate in research), describing those concerns overtly will shed light on forces that shape the knowledge in our discipline.

Critical researchers typically will wish to prioritize inquiry related to the lines of power that appear most relevant to the group under study. These might include seeking diversity in the employment setting (e.g., public and private hospitals, universities, and community health centers in which power is structured differently) and location of their settings (e.g., proximity to refugee communities). Generally, diversity in variables that have widespread systemic influence on people's experiences is helpful to obtain as well (e.g., gender, race, class). In contrast, researchers may determine that other demographic features are less central in recruitment because they appear to account for less variation in the phenomenon under study (e.g., the practitioner's sexual orientation may not influence access to therapy) and so recruitment for diversity in those areas may not be prioritized, unless incoming evidence suggests otherwise.

Researchers can augment the empirical process of identifying forms of participant diversity that might be germane to their question by reflexively examining their own lived experiences or consulting with a participant advisory group. Critical researchers often choose to engage in power sharing or participatory designs (Teo, 2015) as they determine their research scope and agenda. The researchers we consider in our example might consult with refugee clients, providers, and program directors to determine which are central sources of variation in relation to refugee mental health care and what forms of diversity in participants should be initially recruited (Ellis, Kia-Keating, Yusuf, Lincoln, & Nur, 2007; Hugman, Pittaway, & Bartolomei, 2011).

Because the data will be subjected to an iterative process of analyses, initial inaccuracies regarding the diversity of data sources should be adjusted as patterns of variability become clearer. Researchers may adjust their beliefs about data adequacy throughout the empirical process as they learn about additional sources of variation (e.g., as in the method of theoretical sampling; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The principle we propose then is: *Fidelity is strengthened when researchers use data collection strategies that support the analysis of data that adequately illuminate variations within the critical processes under study*.

Perspective management in data collection. While researchers may use their theoretical perspectives and knowledge of a field to shape questions and heighten their sensitivity to responses, they also seek an awareness that allows them to be deliberate in their data collection procedures (e.g., recruitment communications, interviewing) and to mitigate undue influence on the responses that participants provide. Perspective management describes the process of researchers developing self-awareness and invoking reflexivity (Burman, 2006; Morawski, 2005) so that they can recognize the hazards that their own expectations and perspectives may pose to data collection. To be clear, the concern is not the development of questions that can detect and focus on critical processes, but the influence of investigators on the answers given to those questions.

An issue that critical qualitative researchers typically face is that they come to data collection with two very different sets of assumptions with which they have to contend. They tend to have assumptions related to the need to subvert systems of power, oppression, and privilege (which drew them to critical research) and yet, at the same time, may still have unconscious assumptions internalized from the larger society. Therefore, it can be especially challenging to notice these seemingly opposing sets of beliefs and consider how they both may impair data collection (as one set may block the recognition of the other). By deliberately seeking to be cautious about assumptions in both directions, researchers may avoid having their own ideas preclude the expression of the ideas of the participants. These two sets of assumptions can exist simultaneously for both researchers with privileged and marginalized identities.

To assist researchers to remain open when identifying their assumptions as the interview process evolves, they might engage in activities to structure reflexive analysis (e.g., memoing, journaling, field notes, or research team processing of the management of expectations). For these reasons, it can be beneficial when researchers examine a community of which they are a part, or with which they have had prolonged contact, because they bring a host of experiences and associations to bear in their research. In addition, participatory methods (e.g., advisory team, coresearchers from a community under study) can bring diverse perspectives into the process of data collection. Being aware of their expectations, researchers can develop an interview protocol and data collection procedure that supports the interviewees to share their perspectives, even when they conflict with researchers' expectations. For instance, instead of asking therapists "How do your hospitals keep refugees from accessing mental health care", they might ask, "Are there systems or processes in hospitals that influence the accessibility of mental health care for refugees?" The latter question being open to both systems that prevent and facilitate safe access.

Learning about the group under study will assist investigators in identifying their assumptions. For instance, researchers studying the refugee counseling experience may learn that communicating Western-centric notions of trauma (i.e., seeing it as a personal event that results in growth; Kira & Tummala-Narra, 2015) can be ill-fitting and discourage help-seeking from mental health providers. Also, from a Western lens, processing emotional experiences may be viewed as impractical when refugees are struggling with economic deprivation, or as incompatible with a sociocentric view of distress where communal healing is more highly valued. Knowing about these cultural differences can enable critical researchers to identify questions that attend to disciplinary barriers and to suggest a culturally appropriate mode of treatment and outreach. When researchers share identities with participants, both convergent (e.g., confidentiality concerns due to being in the same community, assumptions of similarity) and divergent experiences (e.g., education and socioeconomic differences) still can complicate data collection. For instance, it may require careful analysis for researchers with a refugee identity to unpack the ways academic culture shapes their questions, investments, and assumptions (e.g., Zavella, 1993).

To maximize connection and comfortable disclosure about these often sensitive topics, critical researchers will seek to establish trust. In the informed consent process, psychologists should be transparent about their loyalties and limits to confidentiality (e.g., if their notes are subpoenaed in immigration court cases). Generally, strong interview skills can support researchers to probe meaning while maintaining rapport (Josselson, 2013). Also, at the outset of meeting, interviewees can be invited to assume the role of a teacher and the interviewer being a learner, shifting the power dynamic. Developing nonleading protocols in the ways suggested can help to mitigate inadvertent stigma-based assumptions.

In recruitment communications, such as flyers and e-mails, considering linguistic and cultural factors can ensure that the

research project is understood. For instance, when engaging in outreach to refugee clients, mental health centers may be linked with powerful institutions that threaten arrest, deportation, and detention (Johnson, Ali, & Shipp, 2009; Schmidt, 2007). Historically, research has had adverse impacts upon many marginalized groups, and researchers can expect legitimate resistance from participants to research that should be respected and may require developing a critical framework that views participants as collaborators and codirectors of research (Tuck & Yang, 2014). Notably, American Indian communities are developing their own sets of regulations for researchers in order to protect themselves from problem-focused approaches and support these communities in shaping their own futures (see http://www.ncai.org/policy-research-center/research-data/prc-publications). The process of trust building may take an extended period of time and clarifying confidentiality and security procedures may be critical. A principle for critical researchers to consider is: *Fidelity is improved by developing caution and being transparent about the influences of both critical assumptions and those associated with internalized stigma, as well as the ways these were managed to maximize safety and disclosure.*

Perspective management in data analysis. As in data collection, critical researchers also manage their expectations and assumptions during the data analysis process. They typically do this using two distinct processes. The first is the process of becoming aware of their assumptions in order to restrict their undue influence on the analysis. In the second process, however, theoretical perspectives (e.g., critical race theory, feminist theory, queer theory) can be brought to bear as analytic tools to sharpen researchers' discernment within the analysis—sometimes informed by positionality and personal experiences. A challenge that critical researchers often face in the review process, however, is having this theoretical perspective being mistaken as bias or self-confirmation, leading to unwarranted rejections.

There is a great difference, however, between establishing the aims and questions of an inquiry (which is the appropriate purview of all researchers), using knowledge that can strengthen the researchers' ability to identify patterns (which routinely occurs in literature reviews or in developing expertise in an area), and forcing a perspective upon the data under analysis. For example, researchers who understand how economics drive health care, and how implicit racism and ethnocentrism work in that context, may be more likely to ask questions and identify patterns that reveal how prejudicial assumptions work in the process of developing supports for refugees. These patterns may be invisible to a researcher who does not know the phenomenon as intimately. When investigators' theories and their influence on the analysis are described with transparency in the research report, they increase fidelity and demonstrate the acuity that was brought to bear in the analysis.

At the same time, like all researchers, critical qualitative researchers will seek to recognize the ways in which their perspectives might limit insight into the phenomenon under study. They may need to ward against the influence of their expectations or of desires to find neat solutions. Attachment to preexisting ideas may obscure the social and political ecologies of trauma and evidence of refugees' resiliency (Kira & Tummala-Narra, 2015). For instance, data demonstrate that refugees are more likely to receive diagnoses of schizophrenia (Hollander et al., 2016) and experience medical coercion and restrictions of rights in psychiatric settings (Tran, Ryder, & Jarvis, 2019). Indeed, even well-intentioned mental health providers may inadvertently pathologize or attempt to modify or control refugees' behavior at the expense of supporting their healing from distress (Kamens et al., 2018). Academic researchers who are pressured to publish quickly en route to tenure may not have time to develop the relationships and analytic sensitivity that undergird the fidelity of their analysis (Gone, 2019), and avoid epistemological violence in data interpretation—that is, problematizing participants rather than using sociocultural explanations of experiences (Teo, 2008). The principle here is: *Fidelity in critical analysis is enhanced when researchers develop awareness of how their perspectives and assumptions might act to increase sensitivity but also might unduly influence analysis.*

Groundedness. Groundedness describes the degree to which the study's findings are rooted in a thorough analysis of the data under study. Researchers often demonstrate groundedness by providing quotations from interviews or data sources. This process allows readers to view the participants' original accounts of the phenomenon alongside the researchers' descriptions and interpretations to evaluate their analysis. Text exemplars that are rich and complex will more intimately depict the phenomenon and increase the fidelity of the findings (Ponterotto, 2006). Strategies that increase the richness of data available for interpretations can include longitudinal or repeated interviewing (Diamond, 2006), obtaining data from varied sources (e.g., therapists and clients), and checking findings with participants. Disconfirming data can be sought to assess the limits of interpretations. For critical qualitative researchers, a dilemma may be that the theories that they use to increase their perceptiveness may suggest findings (e.g., categories, domains, themes) for their analysis. It can be seductive then to have the analysis become a process of slotting data into these a priori categories of coding.

For instance, researchers studying refugee experiences may begin their analysis with the theoretical understanding that communal approaches to healing are disregarded by psychologists and develop a coding scheme within which they sort their data. This practice would eliminate the ability of the ongoing analysis to refine their initial understandings (and become self-correcting; Rennie, 2012). Although researchers can use theory to strengthen their capacity to perceive dynamics or to identify initial tentative categories, if the findings are not shaped by the empirical analysis then the findings become circular and nothing new can be learned. The principle put forward is: *Fidelity is strengthened when critical researchers use theory to heighten their attunement while taking care that their analyses are grounded in iterative cycles of inductive analysis.*

Utility in Achieving Goals

The second core concept of methodological integrity is the utility of the research, or its effectiveness in producing findings that meet its goals. Utility requires researchers (and reviewers) to identify the aims of the study so that the design, methods, and procedures are evaluated in relation to their ability to advance them. Utility is furthered by intentional reflection on both the goals of the study and the epistemological perspectives of the researchers so that compatible methods are selected. This approach is in contrast to replicating a set of methodological procedures for the

sake of standardization (e.g., automatically duplicating steps in a grounded theory analysis that have been used by others), which may ultimately undermine rather than strengthen the integrity of the study. Although using an established set of procedures may be a helpful starting point, the process of tailoring procedures to project aims is particularly compatible with critical research, which tends to value flexibility in research methods (Teo, 2015). It is also important as critical researchers tend to employ a wide variety of methods that may not have been developed with the aims of consciousness raising, liberatory goals, or systemic change. The following section will outline the four main elements of utility, which describe that data must be contextualized, act as a catalyst for insight, and generate coherent findings that serve as meaning contributions to the field (see Table 3).

Contextualization. The utility of a study can be strengthened when researchers consider the impact of context on the participants, researchers, and phenomena in question. Because critical researchers often seek to clarify the processes of oppression that are based within social dynamics, their findings may be expected to change over time in relation to varied geographic, relational, and systemic factors. A common question then is what types of contextual cues should be reported. Cole (2009) described how psychologists often examine the same few identities (i.e., gender, race, class), fail to attend to variations within identities, and neglect to describe the historical and ongoing relationships that lead to political, economic, and social inequity. Similarly, Moradi and Grzanka (2017) critiqued the tendency to focus on identities as intersectional, to the neglect of the systemic and political structures that lead to marginalization.

It is helpful to keep in mind that the function of contextualization is to guide readers on how (or whether) to transfer findings to their own situations. Because cycles of inductive analyses can identify patterns that are not hypothesized, qualitative analyses are well positioned to identify unexpected dynamics of oppression and resilience. Critical researchers can articulate and deconstruct the ideological assumptions in the structure and practices of mainstream psychology and examine the political forces that are inextricably linked to the research phenomena, questions, process, and framing of results (Parker, 2007). Deliberately noticing and reporting how variations and processes emerge within findings (rather than attending only to specific characteristics or examining identities as uniform rather than as containing variations that influence social power) will allow more fine-tuned representations of the context of findings.

Also, generalization is strengthened when contextual information is provided for quoted material and when authors reveal factors that might have influenced data collection (e.g., geographic location). Researchers can provide a nuanced understanding of the

Table 3
Principles and Practices Tied to Utility for Critical Researchers

Elements of utility in achieving research goals	Principles to support critical research	Practices that critical researchers may use
Contextualization	Utility is enhanced when researchers provide contextual information to situate participants (or data sources), quotations, and systems and to elucidate differences in findings across identities, characteristics and processes.	• Seek clarity on contextual factors during data analysis such as time, place, historical situation, and interpersonal and social conditions. • Describe in reports any contextual features that will help readers understand the situation and process of data collection and the phenomenon under study. • Describe in reports the contextual features that will help readers to understand the meaning of quotations and findings. • Notice and report how contextual features are linked to variations and processes within the findings.
Catalyst for insight	Utility is advanced when researchers collect data that is insightful enough, not just to evaluate or exemplify a critical theory, but to support novel and refined understanding of the phenomenon under analysis and its effects.	• Collect rich, clear descriptions that are emotionally meaningful and can lead to analysis that uncover processes within social systems that are not well recognized and advance your research aims. • Identify participants and questions that will provide the most insight into the problem at hand • Be aware of how your presentation conveys social power and privilege and its influence on encouraging participants to share insightful data. • Obtain cultural training that supports asking questions and engaging in interactions that facilitate feeling safe enough to disclose accurate information.
Meaningful contributions	Utility is enhanced when critical researchers produce findings and engage in processes through the study that meaningfully advance the critical aims.	• Adjust procedures to enhance the meaningfulness of contributions in a field. • Engage participatory methods to identify benefits to the community that might unfold from the research process or the findings. • Develop findings which raise social consciousness, demonstrate the need for social change, further liberation goals, and/or advocate for specific policy changes
Coherence	Utility is strengthened when difference is explored and diversity within the data is coherently represented.	• Examine the underlying conditions that lead to differences in the findings. • Seek more data or interpretive assistance (e.g., participatory methods) to help resolve discrepancies as needed.

phenomena in question when their reports present a historical understanding of how meanings evolve across time in relation to shifting social needs and economic forces, articulating how these meanings are experienced differently across communities with varied identities and backgrounds (e.g., Levitt, 2019 on the processes through which gender develops). This same level of insight often is absent when research presents findings as though they only exist in one moment in time; one community, as though it is uniform; or one process, as though it is static.

In the case of critical research on mental health care provided to refugee populations, researchers might consider and articulate both contextual factors within their data and the limits of their data. More specifically, they might consider the context of individual participants in their study (e.g., Why, how recently, and from where were they displaced?), the social processes that influence the dynamics under study (e.g., When and under what conditions do refugee clients access counseling? How do mental health systems address these conditions?), and cultural factors that may influence the research process (e.g., What are cultural norms around displaying or discussing negative emotions with strangers? How do mental health policies impact the research process?). They might also consider contextual factors external to their study, related to the influence of mainstream psychological and political concepts on the research questions (e.g., individualistic assumptions about the impact of trauma, the potential to apply findings to support mental health) and the ways their participants, systems, and locations do not extend to other situations (e.g., attending to context within the limitations to support the appropriate use of findings). The principle offered is: *Utility is enhanced when researchers provide contextual information to situate participants (or data sources), quotations, and systems and to elucidate differences in findings across identities, characteristics and processes*.

Catalyst for insight. The utility of a study is also improved when the methods of inquiry are able to produce data that can support insightful analysis. A dilemma that critical researchers sometimes face is that beginning with a critical theory in mind may constrain their data collection to examining practices and experiences as laid out therein. However, often insight originates from data that are deeply introspective and reveal internal experiences that were unrecognized, or from wide systemic analysis that uncovers the ways that social power functions in a manner that is unexpected. Data that are detailed and emotionally meaningful will support an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, its process, and its impact (Ponterotto, 2006). Although intellectual theories can increase perspicacity, data that brings to life the lived experience of participants may uncover subtleties tailored to an issue. Questions should be asked to maximize the potential to obtain such data instead of focusing narrowly on a specific theory.

The success of data collection procedures also is gauged in relation to the researchers' ability to produce data that advances the specific research aims. For example, if the goal is to identify the needs of people currently residing in refugee camps, interviews with individuals who reside there are likely to yield the strongest data. However, if the researchers are focused instead on advocating for large-scale policy changes, analyzing interviews of administrators of health care programs may better help them understand how change can occur most effectively. The goal is to identify participants and questions that will provide the most insight into the problem at hand. Researchers, routinely, can check with participants to see if there were important questions missing from interviews or to see if interviews could be improved (e.g., time restrictions, discomfort around sharing, power differences) to avoid limiting participants' comfort and disclosure. Questions can be added or rephrased throughout the data collection to maximize the insight they provide, given that qualitative approaches favor flexibility and reflexive meaning making over rigid adherence to standardized questions (Gergen, 2014).

Critical researchers consider how they themselves might inadvertently influence data collection. For instance, they may consider any visible identities (e.g., gender, race) and their status as a researcher and/or clinician. There may be significant power differentials between refugee participants and therapists or researchers that influence what participants feel comfortable disclosing or that elicit or discourage participation (Ellis et al., 2007). When considering the example of counseling refugees, stating shared values, acknowledging differences in power, and sensitively phrasing questions may support participants to feel comfortable discussing their experiences (Bemak & Chung, 2017). Researchers also can take care to train interviewers and counselors on principles of culturally sensitive counseling skills (e.g., Arczynski, Christensen, & Hoover, 2018; Byars-Winston et al., 2005). This training improves cultural self-awareness and advocacy skills (Castillo, Brossart, Reyes, Conoley, & Phoummarath, 2007; Midgett & Doumas, 2016), which may reduce the likelihood of inadvertently harming participants, and may lead to questions that produce more insightful data. In addition to these strategies for increasing the likelihood of procuring rich, informative data, critical counseling researchers consider the political context of their participants and the possible risks they face by participating. If participants risk social or political backlash for their participation, as may be the case with undocumented individuals, researchers will need to adjust their intellectual curiosity or research goals in order to prioritize participants' safety (Krause, 2017). This is the principle to support insight: *Utility is advanced when researchers collect data that is insightful enough not just to confirm or disconfirm a critical theory, but to support novel and refined understanding of the phenomenon under analysis and its effects*. If the study finds that a theory is supported as is, it should not be because the data was sparse and unilluminating.

Meaningful contributions. In addition to producing data that serves as a catalyst for insight, critical qualitative researchers seek to conduct analyses that produce contributions that meaningfully meet their research aims. For critical researchers, these contributions often involve raising social consciousness, demonstrating the need for social change, furthering liberation goals, and/or advocating for specific policy changes. A specific problem that critical researchers often face is that their work tends to involve adapting methods that were designed originally for noncritical purposes. They may experience a pressure to demonstrate adherence to the procedures used in an initial method or a standard, often by reviewers or editors, which can lead them to de-emphasize or compromise the critical systemic focus of their work.

One example of such an expectation is the requirement of member checking, or the seeking of feedback from participants on the study findings. This procedure is used often to strengthen readers' confidence, either when feedback by participants is found to affirm findings or when feedback contributes to the shaping of the final results of a study. This procedure should not be uniformly

required (which has occurred in critically focused journals; Frieze, 2008), as it can limit the utility of critical research. For instance, refugee participants may not feel safe providing contact information for a follow-up interview, or may not be able to predict where they will be to provide feedback in the future (Schmidt, 2007). If only refugees who felt safe and stable enough to engage in this credibility check were permitted to participate, the study would have little utility as instability and insecurity is a central aspect of this experience for many. Indeed, such a requirement works counter to social justice aims as it could repress any efforts to research extremely impoverished or marginalized groups, resulting in an extant literature that fails to reflect social disparities.

In response to this requirement, there are a number of responses we suggest. (a) Critical researchers can argue that the development of data-driven findings that provide guidance on an understudied and underserved groups is a meaningful contribution and that rigor is most firmly based in the iterative process of qualitative analysis itself (Levitt et al., 2017). (b) Alternatively, researchers may decide to engage another credibility check in place of member checking, such as utilizing auditors with expertise that would allow them to evaluate the meaningfulness of a contribution in light of current knowledge. (c) Researchers may use a participatory action research (PAR) model in which varied stakeholders in a problem (e.g., program administrators, practitioners, refugees) shape the study question, data collection, analytic process, and application of findings together (Parker, 2007). Community-based PAR is a particularly useful methodology as it is conducted with the overt goal of meaningfully benefitting the specific community under study (Ellis et al., 2007; Hugman et al., 2011). (d) Critical researchers have broadened the understanding of the forms of meaningful contributions that can be made through the research process; a central goal may be to support a community's needs while it is participating in a study (and often in an ongoing manner). Work with refugee clients has underscored the importance of sensitively resolving current struggles (ongoing trauma, discrimination, acculturation difficulties) as opposed to focusing exclusively on past traumas (Kira & Tummala-Narra, 2015). Following this process, researchers can support participants, even before the data are analyzed or the findings are disseminated, by taking on a social advocacy role (see Bemak & Chung, 2017 for examples of counseling researchers advocating for refugee clients)—enhancing the congruence between the researchers' epistemologies and study outcomes. The principle put forth for this element is: *Utility is enhanced when critical researchers produce findings and engage in processes through the study that meaningfully advance the critical aims*.

Coherence. Critical researchers enhance the utility of their studies by reconciling discrepancies in the findings to present coherence among findings. The goal is not to erase or flatten differences but to dig deeper into the contextual, social, and personal reasons for differences so that findings that might seem at odds (e.g., x was found to be positive, x was found to be negative) are presented in an intelligible manner. By explaining differences in a coherent manner, researchers increase their utility. Attention to this analytic process is particularly important for critical researchers whose work focuses on articulating the basis for inequities and differences.

If individual findings are contradictory, they may be confusing for readers and have limited impact. Presenting clear and impactful findings is particularly significant in critical research, which tends to have goals such as affecting social change and combatting the oppressive ideologies inherent in dominant sociopolitical and epistemological systems (e.g., under what conditions is x positive vs. negative). It is through identifying the rationale for differences in experiences that social change can be directed. This rationale lends coherence to what might appear otherwise to be discrepant findings that would be challenging to act upon.

One way that researchers can strengthen the clarity of their findings is to resolve discrepancies in their data by articulating their conditions or framing them in a dialectical framework. This process goes beyond identifying differing perspectives in the data to articulating the underlying reasons or contexts that underpin seemingly conflictual information. Critical researchers will wish to consider the varied contextual and systemic factors that shape the varied discourses, needs, and practices evident in their data. For example, refugee participants may have differing opinions on what they want from counseling in relation to their premigration experiences, their stressors in adjusting to a new country, and their conceptualizations of Western counseling (Kira & Tummala-Narra, 2015). Clarifying the conditions underlying conflictual findings can lead to more nuanced descriptions that can guide responses from clinicians, policy formation, and future researchers. If researchers have trouble identifying patterns in their data that allow them to present findings with adequate coherence, they may (a) engage in additional purposive data collection to further explore the reasons for varied experiences (e.g., seeking new or second interviews with focused questions to explicate differences in contexts or dynamics), (b) consider findings from new perspectives (e.g., recruiting collaborators or auditors with diverse perspectives, seeking feedback from participants), or (c) augment their analyses by using diagrams (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), conditional matrices (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) or situational analysis maps (Clarke, 2003). All of these activities can support researchers' conceptualization of contextual factors and allow them to present differences coherently. The principle to support coherence is: *Utility is strengthened when difference is explored and diversity within the data is coherently represented.*

Conclusion: The Utility of This Article and Pressing Concerns for Critical Researchers

In this article we reviewed the framework of methodological integrity, with an eye toward its use for critical methods. Rather than merely providing a list of procedures used by critical researchers (see Tables 1 and 2), we linked these procedures to the concepts of methodological integrity, fidelity, and utility. It is this link that encourages researchers to develop adaptations of procedures for the specific aims in a given study. All critical projects will not be the same. Bowleg (2017) persuasively argued that, when it comes to socially just research, critical epistemologies matter more than qualitative methods. We agree that it is not the application of any fixed sets of procedures that will advance research as much as the consideration of the logic of research in relation to inquiry purposes. The explication and appeal to the logic within methods supports researchers' processes of design as well as the process of journal article review, in which critical methods are not well understood.

How to Use This Article to Respond to Journal Article Reviewers

The framework of methodological integrity has received widespread support, which can support its elaboration in this set of principles to support critical qualitative research. In addition to being incorporated into the APA JARS for qualitative research and the *Publication Manual of the APA* (APA, 2020), it was independently endorsed by the *British Journal of Public Health* (Shaw, Bishop, Horwood, Chilcot, & Arden, 2019) and by social work researchers (White & Súilleabháin, 2019). As such, the principles in this article are rooted in an established framework that can assist authors to explain how processes used by critical researchers (e.g., descriptions of reflexive processes in reporting, use of theoretical perspectives within analyses, participatory methods, historical analyses) act to further the fidelity and utility of their analyses. The article challenges the idea that objectivist rhetoric is either sacred or neutral (Levitt, Surace, et al., 2020) and instead argues that self-reflection and transparency support critical researchers to develop trustworthy findings that can be used by others. Finally, it details procedures that may be used to enhance these research goals, but only in consideration with how they fit with a given study's characteristics.

Pressing Issues Faced by Critical Researchers

It is exciting to see the rise of critical methods in psychology. As key to the continued flourishing of these approaches, we see a need for continued development of an ethics for critical qualitative research, especially to withstand status quo research expectations. The consideration of critical qualitative research in APA's ethical principles and code of conduct will be important for critical research.

First, researchers should take care to understand varied cultural values and expectations about the research process that are held by participants. The Western notion of informed consent is based on principles of autonomy and individualism, which may make consent ambiguous when obtaining consent from participants with a more collective cultural orientation who may put the perceived good of the community before their own well-being (Ellis et al., 2007). Participants who do not fully understand the research process may expect that their participation will immediately improve conditions or result in aid; when this does not occur, participants may feel that their stories were commodified in a way that either makes no difference for them or even puts them in harm's way, depending on how and where study results are disseminated (Hugman et al., 2011). Critical researchers are encouraged to consider these factors when initially designing their study, along with seeking clarification about understandings and desires of the research participants. Doing so can facilitate the goals of critical research, as researchers can affect change in both the long-term (through theoretical advancements from their results) and the short-term (though advocacy for the immediate needs of participants).

A second issue is the scientific movement toward data sharing. It has become an expectation that quantitative researchers share their raw data, either when requested by other researchers for verification or within data repositories (see APA Ethics Code Standard 8.14). Some journals have begun requiring that authors indicate that they will share data in the process of submitting articles for review. A series of concerns and cautions about data sharing for qualitative researchers, however, has been put forward by APA (2020); some of which have particular relevance for critical researchers. These include (a) concerns that data in raw reports may become either identifiable if meaningful details are retained, or meaningless if all possibly identifiable information is stripped from them. This concern about identification may be particularly salient for people in marginalized groups (i.e., there may be only a small number of people from a given group in a certain location). (b) It is problematic when participants may have consented for one research team to analyze their data because of their relationship or trust built with that team (e.g., an LGBTQ-affirmative team) but might not have intended to consent for another team to analyze that same data (e.g., a heterosexist team). (c) Constructivist and critical qualitative researchers would not agree that findings should aspire to be replicable across contexts and time and so the same rationale does not exist to justify the expense and burden of de-identifying qualitative data for sharing purposes. The critical perspective of the researchers is seen as central in the analytic process, and so researchers without those theoretical tools would not be expected to conduct the same analysis. (d) Quoted material is presented within the body of qualitative research reports and so it is typically unnecessary for raw data to be examined to assess the groundedness of findings as it can be seen within the reports. For all these reasons, when they are asked to agree to share data (often occurring as a question in article submission portals), critical researchers may wish to advocate for qualitative methods by educating editors and publishers about these varied ethical concerns and the APA recommendation against requiring sharing of qualitative research data. To be clear, we do see it as in the purview of editors or reviewers to request more evidence from authors in the review process when an analysis seems unconvincing or underdeveloped, or to reject a manuscript.

A final concern in publishing critical research is the trend to require qualitative articles to be a length that was developed for quantitative articles. This length does not typically allow for the inclusion of information required for the appropriate assessment of rigor for qualitative methods. As a result, qualitative researchers are forced to withhold information that is central to the adequate review of their work to meet ill-fitting page lengths, compromising the review process. Such additional information includes detailed method sections that convey processes that are still unfamiliar to many readers, a description of researchers' epistemological perspectives, detail on methods and procedures, quotations from data sources needed to demonstrate groundedness, a description of investigator reflexivity and perspective management, and a consideration of the relationship between the researchers and between them and the participants. In addition, critical methods require descriptions of how they achieved social justice aims and may necessitate portrayal of complex, shifting, and historically embedded social systems. *The Journal of Counseling Psychology* has been a leader in this regard, permitting an extra 10 pages for qualitative articles, which has been lauded by the SQIP task force and APA has made a similar recommendation to other journals (Levitt et al., 2017).

Many established qualitative methods provide valuable steps that can guide researchers to learn research practices (e.g., Fine,

2012), the framework of methodological integrity encourages the field to move away from evaluating research using checklists of procedures, however, and toward considering how methods should be tailored to the aims of the specific project. This approach supports the inclusion of diverse epistemological perspectives and methods in the canon of psychological methods. In this article, we produced principles that can legitimize critical researchers' generation of creative, responsive, and socially just study designs that value community-driven and emancipatory research processes. These principles can be used by authors, editors, and reviewers in their review process. They are intended to extend the reach of critical research to broader audiences by linking critical procedures with common qualitative practices and increasing the appreciation and understanding of these methods.

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