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Husain, Saima; Molesworth, Mike; Grigore, Georgiana

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# Expanding knowledge of institutional complexity through the hyphen-spaces opened up by participant videography

Saima Husain <sup>a</sup>, Mike Molesworth <sup>b</sup> and Georgiana Grigore <sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Institute of Business Administration, Karachi, Pakistan; <sup>b</sup>Birmingham Business School, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, UK; <sup>c</sup>School of Business, University of Leicester, Leicester, UK

## ABSTRACT

Despite the success of videographic methods, they have not been used to expand the range of contexts where institutional complexity informs marketing theory. In applying participant videography to such a study, however, we can also better understand how both methods and researchers themselves are variously embedded in the institutional complexity being studied. We explore this through the idea of hyphen-spaces amongst researchers, between researcher and participants, and involving the technologies used in research. We show how video helps researchers to understand institutional complexity in contexts where consumption practices may be difficult for participants to reflect on and articulate. We then further explain how interpreting video data opens up hyphen-spaces in which the research team can reflect on their own institutional embeddedness and implicit political aims.

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Videography; institutional complexity; hyphen-spaces; tweens; Pakistan

## Introduction

The study of institutional complexity has gained considerable traction amongst scholars (Greenwood et al., 2011; Thornton et al., 2012), expanding from organisational contexts to include consumer research (Dolbec & Fischer, 2015; Ertimur & Coskuner-Balli, 2015; Husain et al., 2019; Scaraboto & Fischer, 2013). Its value lies in its ability to capture both the structuring of behaviour by social institutions and how practices within such institutions challenge institutional orders, i.e. it bridges micro- and macro-level analysis of market dynamics through tensions between logics carried by different actors (Giesler & Fischer, 2017).

In-depth interviews and more recently, netnographies are the ‘go-to’ methods for such research, yet these have limitations when generating data beyond the dominant focus on organisational actors and adult consumers in developed countries. The result is a risk that those contexts that are *inconsistent* with the logics contained within research methods themselves, and are hard to research, are excluded and become invisible in marketing theory.

**CONTACT** Georgiana Grigore  [gg186@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:gg186@leicester.ac.uk)  School of Business, University of Leicester, Brookfield Campus, 266 London Road, Leicester LE2 1RQ, UK

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Such methodological limitations, we argue, can be partly addressed using participant-generated videography. Despite the success of videography elsewhere, and its facilitation by easier access to video technologies (Hietanen & Rokka, 2018; Whiting et al., 2018), it has not been used to expand the study of institutional complexity. In applying videography to such a study, however, we may also further understand how methods and researchers are inevitably embedded in the institutional complexities they are studying, revealing the political nature of research as it imposes institutional priorities on what is researched. We might see this as something of a paradox. Although it may be desirable to expand the institutional contexts studied to generate theory, doing so risks a sort of institutional entrepreneurship as Western research logics are carried into the new contexts being studied by the researchers themselves. As Gregory (2020) points out, we might otherwise see this as a sort of 'research imperialism' that we should be sensitive to.

We report on a study of institutional tensions that combines videography and phenomenological interviews in a context where: (1) there is a culture (Pakistan) that is unfamiliar with and suspicious of qualitative research methods, and where tacit, situated and embodied responses to institutional complexity may be hard to articulate; and (2) the research participants (children) are also known to be difficult to research. We argue that videography has specific benefits when studying institutional tensions in such contexts, but also that it invites reflection on the institutionally embedded nature of research methods themselves. Building on prior reflections on the value of videography (Gregory, 2020; Hietanen & Rokka, 2018; Jarrett & Liu, 2018; Whiting et al., 2018), we therefore consider how videographic procedures highlight both participants' and researchers' institutional embeddedness through the idea of hyphen-spaces (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013) amongst researchers, between researcher and participants, and involving the technologies used in research. Like the liminal spaces identified by Enosh and Ben-Ari (2016) in the researcher-participant interview interaction, the recognition of such hyphen-space invites reflexivity, including on the politics of institutional research projects.

We begin by reviewing video-based research, followed by a discussion of the methods commonly used to study institutional complexity. Next, we present details of our research project, and then discuss how this expands the possibilities for exploring institutional complexity, including through reflection on hyphen-spaces.

## **Video-based methodologies**

Videography has been used by social scientists (Pink, 2004), organisational researchers (Hietanen & Rokka, 2018; Toraldo et al., 2018) and consumer researchers (Hietanen et al., 2022; Rokka et al., 2018; Schembri & Boyle, 2013) for some time. Described as 'a space of visible and audible dynamic activity' (Lemke, 2007, p. 40), videos' multimodality (images and sounds) facilitates an understanding of meanings and feelings through a rich source of material and is especially useful in studying micro-behaviours as they happen (Jarrett & Liu, 2018). Video also provides access to the otherwise inaccessible, tacit, situated and elusive knowledge that guides behaviour (Toraldo et al., 2018).

This is particularly significant for studies of organisation as it represents what is internalised, or beneath the conscious, and so hard to articulate even when it is reflected in practice and routine (Hietanen & Rokka, 2018). Although there is debate over the extent to which such tacit knowledge can ever become explicit (Donaldson, 2001), videos can

capture facial expressions, social interaction, context and locations, actions, speech and sound that connect practice with discourse (Toraldó et al., 2018), all of which may inform how practices are enacted without recalled, narrated explanations of them. Lemke (2007) further asserts that when reviewed with a different intent, one can see more than what was originally perceived in a recorded video. And in a similar vein, Giorza (2019) suggests that by forwarding, rewinding and stopping moments in the film, researchers can recognise new or different stories about the captured events.

Consumer researchers have similarly considered visual data useful (Belk et al., 2005; Rokka et al., 2018), especially when working in challenging research contexts (Wilson et al., 2013). Grounded in the philosophies of anthropology, sociology, visual culture, art and aesthetics, videography therefore allows researchers to become immersed in consumer practices in ways that other qualitative approaches do not. In addition, whereas interviews and observations are explicitly 'controlled' by the researcher – emphasising power relations between researcher and participant – *participant-generated* video may be directed by participants themselves, allowing them to be at least somewhat in control of what is recorded (Belk et al., 2018; Schembri & Boyle, 2013). Video can therefore capture details of everyday life through direct representation of participants' experiences (Belk et al., 2018).

Although the range and scope of video techniques used in research has expanded to include both researcher and participant production and expressive and comprehension intent (Hietanen & Rokka, 2018), video may also be combined with interview techniques. For example, Toraldó et al. (2018) recommend videos as 'mnemonic devices' that aid participants' recall and allow exploration of intentions, thereby eliciting the participants' help in making sense of their recorded experience. Yet, Toraldó et al. (2018) also caution against using videos to seek justification or verification of actions or routines, in turn advising researchers to use videos to explore practices and subsequently to discuss experiences. Jarrett and Liu (2018) expand this idea through a process of 'zooming with' participants in ways that invite their reflexivity.

As Gibson (2005, p. 34) notes, however, videos remain 'socially located constructions [...] produced in response to a specific research context', and so the researcher remains a significant part of the research irrespective of whether they are present when participants record things, and then reflect on them. Video is therefore never neutral. It invites the production of spectacle (Jarrett & Liu, 2018), and the camera itself has agency in the generation and interpretation of data (Whiting et al., 2018). An implication is that video data is not necessarily more objective or authentic than other methods (Gregory, 2020) and cannot assumed to be so. Its use therefore requires further reflection on the relations that it produces.

Such reflections raise further issues of researcher–participant relationships in video methods. Whiting et al. (2018), for example, highlight a three-way relationship between participant, videocam, and researcher, noting how participant video-makers adopt new subject positions as observer of others, rather than an observed research subject. In their study, this highlighted how methods are inseparable from what is studied, and then how that study is theorised, consistent with Law's (2004) position that methods assemble the realities they claim to study. However, on a practical level, Whiting et al. (2018) recognise that the use of video can reveal tensions that may otherwise be explained away or ignored in verbal accounts. Further, they highlight how video data invite a consideration of the

*decisions* about what is filmed, how it is filmed (for example, filming self or others), and then how the results are edited in a participant-generated video. Similarly, Gregory (2020) notes that performative behaviours suggest a distance between participants' representational and real self that again demands joint reflexivity in the researcher–participant interaction.

## Studying institutional complexity

How then might video methods specifically help in neo-institutional studies? A large body of marketing research has focused on institutional complexity, or the ways in which actors respond to and resolve tensions between alternative legitimising logics from the organising structures in which they are embedded (Greenwood et al., 2011; Thornton et al., 2012). Empirical work has progressed mainly via traditional ethnography and interviews. For example, McPherson & Sauder (2013) undertook a 15-month-long ethnography of drug courts to explain how actors invoked available and competing logics. Shams (2019) alternatively used interviews to investigate how Canadian university professors negotiated incompatible managerial and professional logics. In these studies, however, institutional tensions were assumed to be articulatable, with adult participants further assumed to be able to provide accurate and detailed accounts. In addition, ethnographies are viable in contexts where research participants are open to including a stranger in their daily routine. As we shall demonstrate, this is not always the case.

Institutional theory has more recently been deployed to understand markets and consumption contexts via netnography. For example, Scaraboto (2015) used ethnographic and netnographic methods to theorise how hybrid economies are sustained through consumer-producer collaborations despite tension between competing market and non-market logics; Ertimur and Coskuner-Balli (2015) theorised the evolution of the US yoga market, based on netnography, ethnography and archival techniques to examine institutional entrepreneurship and legitimisation strategies; and Dolbec and Fischer (2015) used netnography, interviews, magazine articles and website posts to theorise tensions within marketplace dynamics. Again, the visible and/or articulable nature of experiences means that netnography, interviews and published texts can be relied on. Netnographies require observable digital conversations around the phenomenon of interest, and archival studies of newspaper or magazine articles involve public discourse analyses. Hence, the methodological choices used in neo-institutional studies rely on visible phenomenon, a culture open to researcher enquiry, and participants who can articulate their experience. They further assume that the researchers involved can unproblematically interpret how logics structure observed behaviours, despite their own institutional embeddedness.

This may not be an issue where the methods used to study complexity are themselves embedded in the same institutions as both participants and researchers. However, even if we accept that in these cases institutional complexity can be articulated and observed objectively, there are contexts where such assumptions are problematic, with the risk that such contexts are excluded from study. Specifically, contexts where participants are sensitive to sharing their experiences, and/or may find it difficult to articulate their experience and/or where institutional complexity is either not immediately obvious, or consciously felt (Greenwood et al., 2011), raise methodological issues. So, while the expansion of neo-institutionalism into consumer research has nudged researchers into

new methods, there remain contexts that require further methodological innovation. Specifically, for us, there are known issues of access to consumers' daily lives and practices in conservative cultures such as Pakistan (Anwar & Viqar, 2017), and further difficulties in researching children (Skånfors, 2009). Together, these test how to explore institutional embeddedness beyond existing, visible, accessible contexts with articulate participants.

We draw on the concept of 'hyphen-spaces' to understand 'the agentic and political nature' of the researcher-participant relationships, as such intellectual tool offers 'a way of recognising their complexity, making choices about how to position ourselves and work within them, and understanding the implications for research identities and practice' (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013, p. 364). Hyphen-spaces can therefore reveal 'not the boundaries, but the spaces of possibility, between researchers and respondents' (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013, p. 365). Hyphen-spaces are 'fluid' and 'agentic' as researchers and participants shape each other's identities, and so they act upon research-participant relationships and are useful to explore tensions, bridges, or nuances in these relationships, including related to issues such as power, representation, or objectivity in research. Understanding these hyphens can therefore lead to reflexivity on the positionality within researcher-participant relationships, and reflection on how our research influences participants, and in turn, how participants' lives impact our identity and research practice.

In addition, the implicit assumptions of objectivity in the data used to explore institutional complexity may also be questioned more generally, and such reflection is invited when methods are adapted. Specifically, Fine (1994) suggests that researchers work between hyphens of self/researcher and other/respondent, with an asymmetrical power relationship that is potentially manipulative. Researchers may therefore effectively 'colonise' the lives of participants when they represent them by both constructing what they may talk about, then emphasising their own perspectives in subsequent narratives (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013). The result is that they intentionally or unconsciously shape respondents' identities and vice versa (Fine, 1994). This can be understood as the result of institutional embeddedness. Academic research, for example, has its own logics that may differ from those researched in addition to the culturally specific institutions in which researchers are embedded. Methods are also a product of those institutional logics. This issue, and its potentially catastrophic implications for research, are noted in Gregory's (2020) inability, as a US citizen undertaking a videography through what might be described as an imperialistic gaze, to effectively tell the story of Muslim adults in the Netherlands. Researcher reflection then should include how the study itself negotiates institutional complexity, if indeed it can, and so the potential for researchers to act as institutional entrepreneurs, carrying new logics into the contexts they aim to study.

As Denzin (2001) and Grigore et al. (2021a, 2021b) highlights, qualitative research is never objective and is always a negotiation between researcher and researched where the researcher 'takes sides'. Unpacking this may be aided by the idea of liminal, hyphen-spaces. Enosh and Ben-Ari (2016) capture the idea of liminal spaces in research by highlighting that participant reflexivity is under-considered in research (in favour of the researcher reflexivity only). They note the reflective process within the research encounter itself, especially the recognition of incongruity between data and taken-for-granted knowledge of the world involving both participant and researcher. This highlights that knowledge is constructed through participant-researcher interactions *and* reflections. We can further consider this in the context of earlier work on hyphen-spaces (Fine, 1994).



Cunliffe and Karunanayake (2013) describe four hyphen-spaces: (1) *insiderness-outsider-ness*, where insiders are acknowledged by participants as being one of them and have an active role in generating knowledge of practical use, while outsiders are external to the context and so aim for generalisable knowledge; (2) *sameness-difference*, where sameness refers to social categorisations (i.e. race, gender and age), while difference related to culture, language, or 'values, personality and ways of speaking' (p. 375); (3) *engagement-distance*, as ways in which researchers 'get involved epistemologically, physically, and emotionally' (p. 377) and (4) *political activism – active neutrality*, which refers to how researchers form opinions or judgements about respondents based on their own cultural or ideological beliefs. Unlike the ideal of liminal spaces (Enosh & Ben-Ari, 2016), hyphen-spaces can emphasise the specific relations within such a space. Cunliffe and Karunanayake's (2013) ideas therefore allow us to consider how tensions between institutional logics carried by different actors (human and non-human) contribute to the construction of knowledge.

### Studying institutional complexity in Pakistani tween consumption

The study we reflect on is part of the lead author's doctoral thesis. Being an insider, with her own children, she suspected that consuming in this context involved culturally specific practices that negotiated institutional complexity. She reflected in her initial notes:

Although a practicing Muslim myself, I never used Islamic principles to consciously deliberate over calls to consume. I did, however, note that the Market and Islam prescribed different behavioural scripts and associated values. On one hand, the market logic transmitted through a soft drink advertisement suggested living for now, while the Islamic logic was based on living for the hereafter. There was a similar tension between the Islamic and the Market logic transmitted through detergent advertisements, where the Market logic invited children to enjoy themselves freely without worrying about stains, while the Religious logic reminded its young audience about the Islamic logic of always staying clean. As a mother of two tween boys, I wondered about this complexity . . . . On one end, the seemingly harmless global taglines of the marketers socialised children into the role of individualised, identity seeking and pleasure-seeking consumers, actively encouraging agentic behaviour through consumer choice and experience. On the other end, Religious rituals challenged these marketers' moves and attempted to socialise young minds into understanding Islam's jurisdiction over all aspects of daily life, reminding them about conditional agency, where their main goal was to be a true Muslim, one who stands for modesty, halal living and upholds his or her Muslim identity. Muslim children's consumption practices and associated consumptionscape are therefore unique and authored by the interplay of two institutions: the Religion Islam and the Market.

Right from the start, institutional logics determined how the researcher's embedded agency acted on academic knowledge, while the academic research process as carrier of Western ideas imposed new logics on the context to construct a particular form of study. Dealing with the pragmatic aspects of data generation with children in Pakistan therefore invites questions about how the research team works the hyphen-spaces to acknowledge and reflect on institutional complexity. Following a review of methods, the lead researcher further recognised that ethnographic studies in Pakistan were challenging (Anwar & Viqar, 2017), and that children are a difficult group to research (Skånfors, 2009),



and so deployed participant videography followed by phenomenological interviews in an attempt to overcome methodological problems.

Publication of the work involved a collaboration between the lead author and two European researchers, one male from the UK (who supervised the PhD), and one female who was brought up in an Eastern European country, but now works in the UK. We now present an account of the project and methodology, starting with the specific challenges of the context, before discussing the methods themselves. Our purpose is to show how the use of video enabled a new study on institutional logics, but in doing so, raised substantial issues related to how researchers and methods are themselves always embedded in logics that structure how knowledge is constructed.

### ***Challenge 1: Pakistan as difficult research context***

With a growing middle class, and predicted to become the world's fourth largest nation by 2050 (Mussadaq, 2011), Pakistan is a significant Asia Pacific market. Although Muslims make up 96.5% of the Pakistani population and Islam is recognised as a way of life (Ministry of Information, 2013), Pakistan might be understood as having two potentially contradictory structuring aspects of its culture: the predominant philosophy grounded in Islamic values and an emerging consumer culture that draws inspiration from the West (Qadeer, 2011). Although the parents of today's young Pakistani consumers grew up at a time of Islamic institutionalisation post-1978 (Anwar & Viqar, 2017), young Pakistani consumers' practices are also influenced by Western trends, especially new digital technologies and media.

While Wong (2007, p. 451) argues that 'in Islamic societies, consumer culture is often portrayed as a threat, harmful to Religion as it privileges hedonism, pleasure, individualism and an expressive lifestyle', Wilson et al. (2013) caution against assuming Muslim contexts to be detached from marketplace temptations. Rather, Muslim consumers legitimise their consumption by strategising 'what', 'how' and 'where' to consume (Husain et al., 2019; Karatas & Sandikci, 2013). Pakistan therefore presents a complex institutional context when it comes to consumer culture.

However, Anwar and Viqar (2017) note the challenge in accessing and gaining the trust of Pakistani research participants. Indeed, Pakistanis may reject the need for new knowledge creation, treating participation in it with suspicion. Cultural characteristics such as conformity with tradition, parental authority, and emotional and physical attachment with family (Basu & Sondhi, 2014), means that any deviation from established religious norms is not openly discussed, especially with strangers. To research such settings, methods must therefore afford access to private behaviours and allow articulation of tacit knowledge that is not usually acknowledged or expressed. As we have suggested, video presents itself as a suitable approach.

### ***Challenge II: Gaining insight from children***

Children are underrepresented in consumer research, despite their economic significance and potential to reveal consumption practices that may differ from adults and from those normalised in established theory. Growing incomes, consumption influence, and exposure to global media additionally make them important subjects for research (Basu & Sondhi, 2014; Qadeer, 2011).

Yet researching children is difficult (Skånfors, 2009) and they are acknowledged as vulnerable (Alderson & Morrow, 2011), complicating *consent* (Balén et al., 2006), as they may not understand the meaning of participation (Bruzzeese & Fisher, 2003). To counter this, Backe-Hansen (2003) has proposed both parental and child consent, allowing young participants to withdraw or refuse participation even when parents agree but implicating parents' participation in research involving children. Methods that are sensitive to children's language and that invite ownership of the process (even with parental oversight) are therefore needed (Banister & Booth, 2005) and this further highlights the complexity of hyphen-spaces between such participants and researchers. Nevertheless, Hurley and Underwood (2002, p. 141) argue that 'school aged children are capable of understanding many of their research rights' and in assuming otherwise we may deny them a voice in research, and so miss opportunities to theorise their viewpoint (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). Breaking down the social identity of children into different age groups therefore facilitates the selection of participants that can counter the challenges inherent in research involving children (McNeal, 2007). In particular, pre-teens are known to appreciate others' viewpoints, and make *independent* decisions (Basu & Sondhi, 2014), making them viable research participants (McNeal, 2007).

Sandwiched between more dependent children, and more independent teenagers, tweenagers (or tweens) are a neglected age group for marketing study, despite being a segment influencing parents' decisions (Basu & Sondhi, 2014). Yet despite an assumption of a global youth culture, the environments within which tweens are embedded are vastly different (Basu & Sondhi, 2014; Kjeldgaard & Askegaard, 2006). Children's consumption behaviour is therefore contextual (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). Given the variance in research contexts, the importance of tweenagers as a consumer group and the concerns around research involving young participants, especially in our specific context, methods must therefore enable them to express what is meaningful within their lives.

### **Participant recruitment**

Twelve Muslim tweens (8–12-years-old children) were purposefully recruited from Karachi-based families who pursued their religious education via a madrasa or a private tutor, and who went to a private English medium school. The six boys and six girls represented the growing Pakistani middle class who both practice religion and engage in Western consumption practices. Debates around research with children (Balén et al., 2006; Hurley & Underwood, 2002; Skånfors, 2009) guided the development of a detailed ethics form, risk assessment form, information sheets, consent forms, and debriefing sheets. Since the study was considered sensitive, ethical protocols were scrutinised by a UK university's research governance office over 6 months.

Gaining trust to introduce camera in a research relationship is critical (Pink, 2004). Verbal consent from the mother of participants was first sought as it is mothers who are typically more involved in the day-to-day activities of their children in Pakistan (Shafiq, 2016). Mothers also engaged in the research process (see below). Once participants also confirmed their understanding of the meaning of their participation, videography protocols and interview procedures, parents and participants were both asked to sign consent forms. Participants were also requested to seek permission and record approval of anyone who was going to be in their video. To respect the privacy of the public and to conform to

the norms of schools, places of worship and other public spaces, participants were requested to avoid making videos in such environments.

A video camera accompanied by an instruction sheet was loaned to each participant, functionalities were explained, and participants were familiarised with it. With the only guiding request 'to make a video of anything you want to share', participants were 'free' to make videos of any length, making decisions about filming and editing around their interests and experiences. To encourage ongoing participation and to troubleshoot any problems, a telephone contact was established with the participant and their parents during the videography. All participants showed excitement about making videos and none expressed concerns about using the camera during the study (although two potential participants declined early in the process due to privacy concerns).

### ***Stage 1: Participant-generated videographies***

The first stage of the study adopted a descriptive videographic methodology (Belk et al., 2018). Participants produced self-directed videos of their daily life for about 1 week, ranging between 46 and 571 min, and aggregating to 38 h. Although they varied in quality, all videos captured participants' and their family, friends and helpers, various consumption practices, and spaces such as bedrooms, the TV lounge, dining rooms and outdoor areas.

Participants chose what to record and edited out material they did not wish to share. In addition to getting an inside view of the participating tweens' lives, the videos provided visual evidence of daily practices for members of the research team who were not familiar with the research culture. This included both familiar Western consumer goods (technology, clothes, or toys) and the less familiar consumption-spaces and objects occupied by Pakistani tweens such as traditional dress, or domestic settings.

Gaining access in Pakistan also required cultural sensitivity (Shah & Khurshid, 2018), likely missed by researchers who are unfamiliar with the culture even where sensitivity to child participants is acknowledged. The lead researcher reflected in her notes:

When I shared the process involving videography and interviews, many showed concern for their privacy and refused participation ... dealing with the peculiarities of research context was possible only because I was an insider to the culture – aware of the fears and reservations of a typical Pakistani Muslim family.

Perceiving the discomfort in sharing daily life, the Pakistani researcher suggested that mothers review the video content generated by their children and sit through the interviews if they so wished. Moreover, repeated assurance of anonymity was given. Pseudonyms have been used throughout the paper. Mothers often joined the discussions during interviews, sometimes enabling the articulation of their child, and at other times 'correcting' their response. In one instance, a mother left her own recorder to capture video of the interview conversation in her absence. The field researcher observed this and again discussed the mother's concern. Subsequent fieldwork notes were then regarded as part of the data. For example, this instance revealed the tension between allowing participation and suspicion of what the process might reveal. Although the absence of researcher influence is noted as advantageous in participant videography (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002), we recognised this as a problematic claim. Tweens were asked to capture

their lives by an adult known to be studying them, under the supervision of their mother, and through a device (a video camera) typical of Western culture. We therefore need to recognise the role of different actors implicated in the methods, and particularly the tension between using a camera to capture complex institutional tensions, and the way that the presence of the camera itself creates tensions as a carrier of Western logics (Gregory, 2020).

When considering video, we therefore recognise not only that paradoxically it is both empowering and intrusive (Whiting et al., 2018), but that it is therefore both facilitator of data generation and object of study. Hence, institutional complexity acts on methods themselves, and is revealed both in what can and cannot be filmed, and by participant interactions with parent as 'guardian' of the video content and carrier of religion's institutional jurisdiction over consumption. For example, video games can be filmed, but video filming has no place during prayers or meals, and so what is and is not included, and especially the moments of transition, reveal which logics dominate, how tensions are experienced and resolved at particular times and places, and who carries those logics.

### ***Stage 2: Phenomenological interviews in tandem with videographies***

Collaborative videography – where participants do some or all of the filming – has been presented as a way to authentically capture a research context, eliminating power relations between researcher and participants in the assumption that control can be surrendered to participants who can then represent their experience (Schembri & Boyle, 2013). We note, however, the recent calling into question of representational videographies that unproblematically construct knowledge through video itself in favour of a view of videography as a relational assemblage that includes researcher, participants and the practices of creating video itself (Hietanen & Rokka, 2018). Even if, as Hietanen and Rokka (2018) demonstrate, we might allow the resulting video to act as a form of affective expression of the research; however, this was not an option for us given the sensitivity of the context and participants. Just as the methods assemble the object being studied, the context also assembles how knowledge may be constructed and presented, and in this case we cannot ethically show the video. In any case, we further recognise that there was more to the context than what was recorded. We therefore added to the research assemblage by interviewing participants.

The second stage of data generation therefore consisted of video recorded phenomenological interviews (Belk et al., 2005) with each participant being interviewed at least twice. These aggregated to 27 h, each starting with a discussion about participants' videography experience, then their lives at home, and then consumption practices. Participant videos had a can-opener effect serving as a focal point that allowed participants to discuss their experience without complex narratives. Videotaping interviews further helped capture the non-verbal in data (Belk et al., 2005). Although phenomenological interviews have been used to study consumption behaviour, and in-depth interviews have been used with young research participants (Kerrane et al., 2012), for reasons already noted, it was unwise to expect young participants to rely on either their memories, or their ability to articulate complex experiences. Although participants were comfortable in expressing themselves in English, they also used *Urdu* when articulating

specific aspects of local culture. Again, this required a local researcher who was able to understand *Urdu* and why it was used (Banister & Booth, 2005).

Muslim tween participants were epistemologically believed to have bounded agency embedded in the social institutions that provide organising logics (Thornton et al., 2012) and so could shape their consumption practices only under the structuring influences of both market and religion. Since the logics of market and religion (Islam) are not necessarily in agreement, the methodology afforded an exploration of tensions felt by the Muslim tweens themselves. Videos were therefore useful in managing the issues of 'positionality', specifically, the power distance between the researcher and participants that might otherwise have prevented any exploration of Pakistani's lived experiences. Participants' attention focused on *their* videos, allowing them to share consumption practices.

However, nonverbal cues indicating discomfort were picked up, and they were allowed to decline to answer and instead moved on to another part of the interview, avoiding awkward silences in discussion where natural conversation needed to be re-established. To stay sensitive to the demands of the research process placed on participating tweens, interviews were also short, and when participants showed signs of boredom, or fatigue, they were terminated, and a further interview was offered. Here, the video served as continuity between interviews. The lead researcher reflected:

Since I could sense the awkwardness building up in the video before it was abruptly switched off, I knew I had a discussion point for the subsequent interview. I asked about such instances in the interviews but did not push the participants if they showed inhibition in sharing. I had to strike a tricky balance between being intrusive and not letting go of rich data generation opportunity.

As the participants were interviewed, the recordings themselves revealed institutional tensions. Typically, when prompted by someone in their environment, or when they became conscious of recording a time of prayers, or family members, participants quickly stopped recording. The result was videos with many cuts and edits, revealing when and why the camera was turned off. Participants were therefore mindful of the camera's eye as an alien presence that was not always legitimate, and the recorded activity was informed through knowledge of appropriate behaviours in certain times and spaces, participants' interests, the implicit researcher framing, and the affordances of the videocam (Whiting et al., 2018). As noted by Gregory (2020), participants were filming their representational selves and protecting their private life that could not be shared on camera.

For example, videos showed where participants switched-off the camera, or cut a recording as they sensed the build-up of an argument with or disciplining from an elder. Interviews allowed these occurrences to be explored. We were therefore 'zooming' with the participants, including their interpretation of videos (Jarrett & Liu, 2018). In this sense, both what was, and then what was not recorded, invited participants to articulate their lived experience under complex institutional jurisdictions. For example, Basil's recording showed his enthusiasm for playing a basketball video game, but the recordings seemed incomplete. In one section, Basil filmed himself playing video games in his room when his mother interrupted him. He could be seen explaining something to her before switching off the recording. When interviewed, Basil shared that his mother often reminds him about prayers while he is playing: *'My mom would tell me to, like, pause it [referring to the game], then she would like force [smiles] ... force me to pause it then I would have to*

*pause it. Like, I know that I won't do it myself if I was playing a game, I won't stop the game myself.* He explained his mother's intervention was intended to instil a need to prioritise religious activities over his wish to play video games. We could therefore explore the structuring environmental forces that limit Muslim tweens' consumption by discussing when the video was stopped or edited. As Hietanen and Rokka (2018) explain, videos invite imagination of what goes before a recorded scene or event, and what comes after.

Following the advice of Toraldo et al. (2018), attention was also paid to gaze, sounds, gestures, movements, actors and actions to interpret the material context captured in the videos. For example, a video clip showing a participant covering his legs with a towel to prepare for prayers, afforded a point to discuss. When the participant explained the inappropriateness of shorts as a dress for prayers, it produced an explanation of how the movement between institutional jurisdictions was resolved. Interviews therefore explored how participants' practices were under the jurisdiction of either market or religious logics at any time, the actors that represent these logics, and the strategies used to maintain the legitimacy of action. Market and religion (Islam) were taken to be the focused discourses in practice, while tweens' consumption practices were studied as discursive practices. Taking guidance from Jorgensen and Phillips's (2002, p. 26) assertion about discourse as 'the fixation of meanings within a particular domain', Muslim tweens' consumption practices were interpreted to know more about the internalisation of meanings suggested by either market, Islam, or both. However, the lead researcher later reflected:

The Religious institution structures the process of reviewing culture and deems a critical account of culture to be problematic. In other words, the Religious logics are not open to debate and, hence, even academics may be prone to reproducing Religious logics through their work [...] Since the participants belonged to familiar families, they often assumed that I would automatically understand the Religious logics and their meanings.

The very characteristics of the lead researcher that allowed access also risked narratives framed through specific institutional logics; for example, recorded and narrated experience that seemed so obvious that it did not need to be explored further. This was revealed in discussions within the wider research team, when the lead researcher would be challenged over an interpretation beyond what both video and interview suggested, and also in claims such as 'this is how things are in Pakistan', especially when used to account for breaks or omissions in text and video. Institutional tensions were therefore not only apparent through participant accounts and through methods but also through discussions within the research team.

### **Data interpretation**

Following the advice of Phillips et al. (2004, p. 647), who argue that discourse analysis allows for a thorough understanding of the processes behind institutionalisation, our study adopted Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory as an analytical lens. Our assumption was therefore that consumption practices are a result of meanings or discourse, and so we focused on analysing the discursive legitimisation of Pakistani Muslim tweens' consumption as they leveraged their embedded agency and deployed Market and/or Islamic discourses. In this manner, we located their responses within institutional complexity. Consumption

practices indicating discursive work within participants' narratives produced videography, and video recorded interviews were viewed and cross-analysed to identify themes.

Interview transcriptions served as interpretable text such that meanings emerging from the social interactions were empirically analysed. Similarly, images and conversations recorded in videos acted as interpretable material, especially verbal and physical interactions with others and the switching on and off of recording. Yet, as we undertook this process, we became further aware of how all actors – participants (and their parents), researchers and material methods (video cameras and recordings) – were variously located within and needed to negotiate the very institutional complexities under investigation. Knoblauch and Schnettler (2012) call for researchers to use contextual knowledge to make sense of video data, and the local researcher not only explained this contextual knowledge – without which the Western researchers would have missed the peculiar nuances – but represented it in their engagement with both methods and the data. Similarly, the Western researchers carried logics into the process through their understanding – including advice of methods and data interpretation – and those parts of the data that they felt required contextual explanation. Reflections on this process form the basis of the discussion.

## Discussion

According to Arnould et al. (2006), by exploring challenging cultural contexts, researchers are stimulated to generate alternative theoretical perspectives that can feedback into mainstream knowledge. Through our methodological innovations, an understanding of how tweens negotiate conflicting logics (market and religion) through interactions with their carriers (family members or goods and services) is identified, inviting further consideration of how the presence of multiple logic structures new consumption practices. The embeddedness of the research team in different institutions, and to different degrees, also played a further role in bringing new voices into marketing theory.

Our first contribution then, is a useful, practical articulation of methodological innovation. Participant-generated videos followed by phenomenological interviews address the challenges identified in expanding the study of institutional complexity to new contexts and participants. Videographic methods allowed us to explore a difficult context where hard-to-articulate insights can be captured from tween participants. We specifically explain how children's institutional embeddedness can be explored, giving voice to an under-represented group in consumer research.

However, methodological innovations also challenge normative assumptions about methods, resulting in reflections on those assumptions and the theory they reproduce. In addressing methodological challenges, we therefore further reveal how institutional complexity also operates *within* methods and the idea of hyphen-spaces enables us to explore how this impacts the generation of knowledge of institutional complexity. The second contribution is therefore to show how the negotiation of hyphen-spaces is necessary in studies of institutional complexity.

Western normative theories of consumption risk othering the nuances unique to Eastern, Muslim contexts such as Pakistan, silencing diversity in theory. We found one solution in an international research team and novel methods. Although phenomenology aims for a 'merging of horizons' between researcher and participant which can never fully



be achieved, in our case, we instead explored how the research team were embedded in different institutions and subject to different logics, leveraging those differences to produce reflexivity. Recognising our own bounded agency, we debated and questioned each other's interpretations. The local researcher provided contextual knowledge needed for interpretation of video data (Knoblauch & Schnettler, 2012), while the Western researchers challenged taken-for-granted assumptions and theorising from within their own institutionally embedded positions. Although the use of video is novel in studies of institutional complexity, it therefore reveals more than just a methodological solution to contexts where research may be treated with suspicion, and participants may find it hard to recognise and/or articulate the complexity of their institutional embeddedness.

Methodology is inseparable from the context it studies and the knowledge it creates. In our case, differences in how video data is interpreted prompted us to note how researchers are embedded in the institutional logics they aim to reveal and understand, and how methods themselves represent part of the institutional complexity that is researched. Lived experiences captured on videos made discussions of embedding tensions possible, but the presence of video cameras also directly represents the tensions under investigation. Videography was enjoyable for participants and empowered them to be in control of the process as a Western, market-based activity, i.e. any apparent empowerment related to the legitimising of such behaviour in the methodological process itself. While being aware of parental instructions, their supervision and assigned research task, they took pleasure in the creativity it afforded, playing the role of director and presenter (Whiting et al., 2018), within the institutional complexity studied. Although participants may not be necessarily adhering to the practices they described when explaining the videos and that those videos may be exaggerated, as any performance was under institutional jurisdiction, it remained a meaningful way to explore logics and the tensions between different institutions. This included the abrupt cuts and edits that revealed where the video had no legitimacy. Therefore, video did not just capture institutional tensions, but actively created them within the context being studied. Similarly, the various authorities that were commanding and enquiring about children's practices – the lead researcher and parents – carried the logics that structured the agency of young consumers in Pakistan, revealed in the creative endeavours and efforts to explain and justify them. Hence, data was socially constructed by the lead researcher, parents, participants and methods (especially the video cameras), all within the institutions under investigation.

As the fieldwork unfolded, complex and overlapping hyphen-spaces therefore emerged in the relationships between the different actors involved with the study (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013), including the non-human actor of the video camera (Whiting et al., 2018). These are summarised in Table 1, and we now discuss them in detail. Our argument is that the theory emerges not directly through the interpretation of the data, but through reflections created in the negotiation of these hyphen-spaces, i.e. that it is the construction of such spaces that best reveals institutional tensions.

### ***Insiderness-outsiderness***

From a neo-institutional perspective, insiderness-outsiderness can be interpreted as how actors in the research process act under different or familiar institutional jurisdictions, and

**Table 1.** Hyphen-spaces and related tensions in institutional jurisdictions.

<i>Hyphen-spaces</i>	Role of participant videography	Institutional tensions revealed to research team
Insiderness- outsiderness	<p>[1] <i>Being an insider allowed lead researcher access, and enabled generation of video content. Data then reveals outsiderness of other members of research team.</i></p> <p>[2] <i>This is then reversed in the writing up for Western journal, where lead researcher becomes outsider, challenging Western readings of the data.</i></p>	<p>➔ Data demanded that the research team discuss their institutional embeddedness as outsider interpretations differed from assumptions made by the researcher who is embedded in the institutional complexity being investigated. This is reversed when writing for Western journals where the lead researcher questions the theoretical assumptions made by Western academics.</p>
Sameness- difference	<p>[3] <i>Differences between adult researchers and child participants revealed by video open hyphen-space as tweens record and narrate their experiences as different from those expected by research team.</i></p> <p>[4] <i>Participant videography is different from everyday life, requiring participants to adopt a different subject position as video producer separate from the experiences being recorded.</i></p> <p>[5] <i>Data interpretation further reveals differences in understanding of tweens between members of research team.</i></p>	<p>➔ Asking Pakistani tweens to produce videos reveals otherwise hidden aspects of tweens' life worlds as they move between institutional jurisdictions with practices and explanations that are unexpected by the research team and potentially new to participants themselves. Data interpretation also reveals the culturally-bound assumptions of what constitutes legitimate tween behaviors by different research team members</p>
Engagement- distance	<p>[6] <i>Although the lead researcher may be viewed as engaged, while the other members of the research team were distant, participant videography also produces a distance between data and the whole research team, opening a hyphen-space as it is reviewed.</i></p>	<p>➔ Movement between engagement and distance produced through participant videography result in the research team experiencing the institutions being studied, revealing embedded logics in tween practices that made sense, or otherwise. Non-engaged members of team in particular questioned assumptions made by local, engaged researcher.</p>
Political activism- active neutrality	<p>[7] <i>Research team discussions reveal different political views on both the values associated with Western consumption and a desire to reduce it, or 'protect' participants from it, but all such normative views among the research team are challenged by the participants in the video data and the space between their concerns and the process of constructing Western academic articles</i></p>	<p>➔ Attempts to theorise the data using existing frames reveal researchers' desire to see institutional complexity as involving logics in tension, and in need of either resolution, or reporting, when participants do not show this in videos or discussion, challenging existing theoretical assumptions and revealing differences in the purpose of Western academic publishing and the desires of research participants.</p>

in the case of our research, how some actors move between the institutions represented by the research context.

The lead researcher, participants, and mothers are *insiders* to the Pakistani Muslim culture, enabling the sensitive generation and interpretation of culturally bound data. However, an *insider-outsider* space was present amongst the research team. While being an *insider* was useful (Alderson & Morrow, 2011), the *outsider* view of the non-Pakistani research team members played a key role in guiding the lead researcher to question her institutionally bound assumptions in both generation and interpretation of data. What could have been potentially overlooked by the *insider* researcher intrigued the *outsider* researchers, triggering new interpretations. Video further sensitised *outsider* research team members to Pakistani Muslim culture.

A second insider-outsider hyphenated-space emerged when the team entered the manuscript development stage for a Western journal. Roles were reversed with the non-Pakistani researchers as insiders while the Pakistani researcher was an outsider. The team discussions then highlighted the limitations of imposing Western theoretical categories onto non-Western contexts, especially when led by Western research publication insiders whose narratives risked colonising the voices of participants (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013). International academic collaborations therefore open up hyphen-spaces for new theory development that can increase the diversity in theory through new outsider voices (we retained the original language and expression of participants, for example). Theorisation was a result of active questioning of each other's sensemaking. The outsider members learnt about Western approaches to knowledge construction, while the UK researchers learnt more about how research and theory generation and knowledge representation can and might be done in conservative contexts like Pakistan.

### ***Sameness-difference***

The lead researcher was a mother of tweens at the time of the project and part of similar familial structures as the participants, representing a *sameness* with participants' parents as she 'sensed' their discomfort or inhibition, comforting them by giving examples of her own children. However, even within a single culture, individuals and groups are bound by different institutions that legitimise actions and so imperfectly reproduce them. As we did not share any *sameness* in age with our participants, there was a risk of imposing adult interpretation, i.e. our own view of what constitutes legitimate action.

There is therefore an obvious hyphen-space in the differences between adult *researchers* and children, despite the lead researcher's apparent knowledge of tweens' interests, gendered practices and ethnic peculiarities that seemed to minimise the feeling of *difference*. However, research is also different from everyday life, carrying its own logics, and participants engagement with video revealed aspects of *difference* in tweens' own understanding of institutional tensions and how they may be resolved as they negotiated video production and editing. Indeed, it became clear that although the research team viewed religion and market in tension, participants themselves did not, and instead recorded how they unproblematically moved between them, until they reflected on the video itself. Participant videography therefore positioned the tween participants as *outsiders*.

The resulting data then further allowed for collaborative interpretation based on *differences* within the research team. One UK researcher is also a parent and could sometimes relate to participants' accounts, but on other occasions pointed out apparent *differences* that required further interpretation. Repeated questions such as 'why did they say that?', 'what does that mean?', or 'this is different from what happens here', demanded reflexivity that ensured theorisation captured differences between Pakistani consumption practices and assumptions based on beliefs about Western tweens.

### ***Engagement-distance***

Studies of institutional complexity require engagement that is explicit in interview and ethnographic approaches and may require local researchers, but these risk structuring effects that go unnoticed as the researcher is embedded in the studied logics. However,

the alternative of using an outsider risks a potentially catastrophic imposition of external logics (Gregory, 2020). Although the lead researcher remained physically *engaged* in the field, the use of participant-video opened two *engagement-distance* hyphen-spaces.

As participants produced their own video, this created a distance from the data that needed to be resolved through interviews. Yet the same video facilitated *engagement* of the research team – especially the UK-based collaborators – with private aspects of Pakistani Muslim tweens' lives which they would otherwise remain very distant from. Discussions and co-interpretation in the interviews enabled an understanding of the interplaying effects of market and religious logics carried through both consumer goods and family members, causing complexity that resulted in the strategically managed agency of the embedded Muslim tweens. Conversations with the UK team members therefore created an *engagement-distance* space, disassociated from the lead researcher's own institutional embeddedness. This space required discussions about objectivity, bias in interpretation, and suitability of observations for publication. The role of UK researchers was to question and draw attention to those practices that seemed unfamiliar and to interrogate the associated logics. Overall, this movement enabled data interpretation and theorisation.

### ***Political activism–active neutrality***

Insiderness-outsiderness, sameness-difference, and engagement-distance hyphen-spaces opened up through participant videography, subsequent interviews, and discussions between members of an international research team all reveal tensions in institutional jurisdictions that participants and researchers must reflect on. When it comes to the *political activism-active neutrality*; however, those same tensions may be more problematic.

Denzin (2001) calls for a qualitative enquiry to take a critical position. For example, we claim that our approach finds a way to give voice to people who are not (fully) embedded in Western consumer culture or its research methods. Hence, in understanding Pakistani tween consumption practices we must also understand the way our own consumption is constructed, including through the very forms of knowledge we are trying to produce. We cannot just interview tweens, nor can we simply give them a camera, nor can we represent knowledge through video directly, so we must retreat from calls to use video itself as an expression of knowledge (Hietanen & Rokka, 2018). This highlights that the very use of video and the desire to construct knowledge is political. Despite our intentions, the project represents a form of institutional entrepreneurship, inviting first the researcher, then the participants and their families to accept Western methodologies, and need for knowledge-creation. Indeed, although there is a specific project to recognise the need for 'Islamic Marketing' as separate from mainstream Western theory (Sandıkçı, 2011), the 'need' for knowledge in a particular form (the peer-reviewed academic journal is itself a Western logic) risks negating that project (Gregory, 2020). Whether representational or expressive (Hietanen & Andéhn, 2018), the use of video is political, favouring a Western spectacle of consumption that reveals it to others.

This debate shows how researchers are always carriers of logics that structure their normative assumptions about the world. We may not be able to escape this, but we can ensure that it is reflected on. For example, a typical Western interpretation may view Islam as a restrictive and even problematic structure that prevents the pleasures of the market, yet a critical marketing view may be sympathetic to religious logics that curb Western-

style over-consumption with its emphasis on market-based identity. When reflected on further, both risk a view of Muslim tweens as exotic 'others' in need of Western goods and service, or in need of protection from them, argued about in Western marketing journals. Alternatively, a local researcher may be both sympathetic to Western consumption as a signal of economic development and improved standards of living, while also viewing Pakistani children as 'corrupted' by Western markets.

Indeed, reflexive discussions amongst team members brought to the fore a privileging of Islamic guidelines over Market prescriptions. Yet the data also suggested Pakistani tweens' skilful negotiation of competing logics. Here, the activism of participants – demonstrated through their production and editing of video – captured their own desire to consume Western goods through their Muslim identities. Although we may have wanted to see struggle, or resistance to either or both logics, it was not how participants presented their experience. The point then is to reflect in such a way that any final political position is assembled through the research process, including participants themselves.

## Conclusion

Van de Ven et al. (2018, p. 124) assert that 'instead of homogenising management research by trying to adapt and apply foreign theories and methods that are not sensitive to local contexts, we should encourage its heterogeneity by developing indigenous management theories, methods, and institutions'. In doing so, we can achieve more than just the development of methods that 'work' in new contexts and in our case the agency of video (Whiting et al., 2018) opened up a series of contradictory positions, or hyphen-spaces that required negotiation to shape knowledge.

Such hyphen-spaces invite reflection that recognises the structuring of action by institutional logics. These remain implicit in studies yet offer an opportunity to explore how institutional complexity comes to be understood in research, including new opportunities based on the conscious production of and reflection on such spaces, i.e. a negotiation between the insider, sameness, engagement and activism necessary to generate a specific type of knowledge (an academic publication). Indeed, it is often the movement between positions in a hyphen-space that generate reflection.

We identify such hyphen-spaces through a study that aimed to capture the institutional complexity of Pakistani tweens using participant-generated videos (Table 1). Here, methodological 'solutions' show how hyphen-spaces are opened, and then how such space produces reflection that can lead to insights into institutional complexity. This adds to the scope of contexts in which institutional complexity can be studied, but also invites reflection on how research teams can use the resulting hyphen-spaces to identify the institutional logics that create that complexity, and how they are resolved or negotiated by the actors bound by them.

We conclude by highlighting the two key aspects of the study related to hyphen-spaces. Firstly, we recognise video cameras as actors that carry the logics of Western consumption. In creating videos, participants were therefore implicitly required to negotiate the institutional complexity under investigation. Their distance from the influencing effects of researchers' own institutional embeddedness, and their decisions about what to record, and when to stop, including the inevitable abrupt breaks in recording and editing, opened up hyphen-spaces in which both participants and the research team needed to

understand the logics involved and their carriers. Secondly, in reviewing the data for publication, the research team itself also came to recognise the way they carried different logics from the institutions in which they are embedded, including the structuring of academic knowledge despite projects such as critical marketing and Islamic marketing.

In this way, the use of videography represents an approach to marketing research that is sensitive to diversity, and inclusive of a wider range of voices, but for researchers it further invites reflection on their own identities as they are constructed by institutions, and challenged by the hyphen-spaces opened up by the engagement in new methods.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Notes on contributors

**Saima Husain** is an Assistant Professor in Marketing. She is interested in studying under-represented consumers such as Muslims, differently abled and marginalised women. Her recent work has been in the areas of consumption and entrepreneurship. She adopts a cultural view in her studies to explore how different cultures produce new insights in consumer research and entrepreneurship.

**Mike Molesworth** is an Associate Professor in Marketing. His current research interests include the consumption of digital goods and engagement with online platforms, and aspects of business ethics and responsibilities in the use of digital media. His research uses qualitative approaches, including psychoanalytic interpretations of manager and consumer behaviours.

**Georgiana Grigore** is Associate Professor in Marketing. Georgiana's research has focused on the intersections between corporate social responsibility and marketing, including changes that result from digital media. She has also examined the experiences of those working in responsibility roles in different European cultures, noting how their lived experiences impact on how corporate social responsibility gets done.

## ORCID

Saima Husain  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6533-611X>

Mike Molesworth  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6028-3431>

Georgiana Grigore  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5626-4609>

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