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# Politics and the Bricolage: How do we make sense of recent events?<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

When I presenting my work at the University of Essen, I did so in the context of research, bricolage, social consciousness, and writing. As a film and television cultural analyst, I usually situate my research in the media. However, I did not expect that media would be so central to what I propose to discuss. In light of the 2016 American elections, and continuing changes in the EU political landscape, I want to employ the bricolage to the global news. As critical qualitative researchers, I believe our work must be fluid, in process, in keeping with this notion, we will create new research questions together based on the enormity of the current global political situation. When our work is in process, we do not look to an end, rather we look to adding more questions. Just when we get to “the point,” there should be another point to move to, and that’s very much part of critical qualitative research.

I take the word critical from the Frankfurt School of Social Theory, and adopt critical theory as a lynchpin for understanding research. Using critical theory, in a phrase, requires the acknowledgement and articulation of power. Power is at the center of our observations, how power works, where it works from, and questioning what forces support that power. In this chapter, power is apparent in all observations and questions.

As a critical researcher, I must acknowledge my own positionality, as this affects my ability to create research. In this case, it would be difficult to not preface it with a bit of an apology as an American to this audience, a somewhat narcissistic desire to analyze the impact of the recent election in the USA. My reaction about the American election, first, is another apology, still based on the arrogance of the American notion that the United States believes that it is the greatest country on earth. This embarrasses me, and it’s unpleasant for me to have to talk about Americans in this construct, but this is serious, and unfortunately the American elections of 2016 will affect all of us, because of trade, because of global relationships, because of concerns for world peace.