

we spent time studying together and bouncing ideas off one another, we spent a lot more time talking through personal problems and joking around. We may have acted more like adolescents at a sleep-over party than serious graduate students, but the light-heartedness kept our spirits up.

I don't think Kendra was afraid of anything. In our first co-authoring experience, James Mahoney asked us to present the paper that we had written with him to a special breakout session at the Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research (IQMR). Though early in our graduate careers, we had both experienced presenting at conferences, so an informal presentation should not have been a big deal. However, when we got up in front of some of the biggest names in qualitative research, I froze. Kendra had given an eloquent introduction, but when she turned to me, I just stared dumbly back at her. In quintessential Kendra fashion, however, she saw what was happening, gave me a quick smile and took over my part of the presentation without missing a beat. Afterwards, many co-presenters would probably have been annoyed with their partner for this. Kendra was not. She simply made a joke about how intimidating this audience was, solidifying our partnership and brushing off my apologies and gratitude. This was Kendra to a tee: graceful, unfailingly kind, and fiercely intelligent with a quick wit.

Towards the end of her life, Kendra was sometimes confused by all of the praise she was receiving for her scholarly work. She didn't think she deserved it, but she could not have been more wrong. Her ability to think through the logic of a methodological problem was expansive. She was comfortable debating theory and techniques in an abstract sense, but extraordinary at seeing how these techniques should be applied to substantive projects. Her work on organized crime was thus exciting not just for its contributions to scholarly literatures on state building, but also for its clean and well-identified use of within-case analysis and comparative methods. Kendra was also willing to extend herself to understand perspectives and tools that she herself did not use. When we wrote "Qualitative Variations," she took on the

section about interpretive methods. Though neither of us operated from this ontology, nor had much training in its epistemological grounding, she worked her way through the literature and ably found the parallels and differences to our other qualitative schools of thought.

Kendra was also exceptional at helping others think through their projects systematically. It was as if she could see a project from beginning to end, and help craft everything from the question to the research design. I can only imagine what an excellent dissertation advisor and teacher this made her.

As a single parent trying to make it through grad school, Kendra had a lot more challenges in her life than I did and faced some serious discrimination (both structural and individual), but she never gave up. When I had children later during the dissertation stage, I got through it mostly by thinking about Kendra. I remembered watching her balance single parenting while earning her degree, and being amazed by her simple acceptance of all the added pressure and time. I honestly don't know if I would have finished writing my dissertation without her example of perseverance to turn to. Indeed, though I never shared this with her because I'm pretty sure it would have embarrassed her, thinking about Kendra's tenacious spirit continues to motivate me. After she became an assistant professor, she had a second baby, faced cancer, and still got tenure. When I think a current project is hard or feel less than motivated, I often think, how would Kendra have handled this?

After Kendra passed, I was deeply, deeply sad. I still am. I never truly accepted that her diagnosis was terminal. Even when sitting beside her in her last weeks of life, I kept feeling that she would somehow beat this. Her indomitable spirit had bested so many other challenges in life that it seemed like cancer couldn't possibly take her from us. Nothing about losing her so young was okay, and this world is less bright without her. She left behind an amazing legacy of two beautiful and talented children, a host of well-trained students, and many, many friends and colleagues that will miss her spirit and intelligence. Once again, in trying to manage my own grief at her loss, I am left thinking, how would Kendra have handled this?

Kendra Koivu: One of My Favorite People

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Kendra Koivu was one of my closest friends and most influential intellectual playmates. We met in 2006 at Northwestern University. I was an incoming graduate student in political science, and she was a more seasoned veteran in her third year.

From the beginning, Kendra and I became fast friends, both members of the "Will Reno Mafia," that shared love and respect for our mentor while exploiting the vast material which he regularly provided us with to roast him. Will made the crucial mistake of letting us use his

office in the Political Science Department, where Kendra put up an old photo of Cheech & Chong and labeled it “Will and Georgi [Derlugian]: The Early Years.” Our crowning achievement of sophisticated-yet-immature hilarity was when I acquired a giant cardboard cutout of the Incredible Hulk from Blockbuster Video. Kendra printed out a life size page of Will’s face and taped it where the Hulk’s head was with a word bubble asking, “Where’s the gym?” (Will was known for his workout regimen and use of gyms worldwide.) We got zero work done in those months. But we laughed constantly and bonded permanently, with humor compensating for our debilitating impostor syndromes.

We were also among the only political science graduate students at Northwestern with small children. Her daughter Cosette and my son Sam became friends via this shared identity, and I get the sense that even now, not having seen one another for years, they continue to view one another as extended family—as they should. But where I might have seemed an innocuous oddity as a student parent in the department, as a single mother at Northwestern, Kendra faced a bizarre form of discrimination from graduate students and political science faculty alike. How I wish that this experience was something that did not haunt her to the end, but it did. It was a hard thing to witness and an even harder thing to forgive. But she finished a PhD while raising a daughter, went through a divorce and other forms of life upheaval, got an interview at bloody Harvard Business School, ended up with an amazing job at the University of New Mexico, and settled into a life as a well-respected scholar, well-loved human being, and a new mother again. So... fuck those people.

If I leaned on Kendra personally, so did I come to depend on her intellectually. Our research agendas overlapped—organized crime and rebel groups, respectively—so we found common cause in our scholarly pursuits. But Kendra was always way smarter than me and had a natural fluency in methodological language that I struggled to master. But she was no intellectual bully—she was kind and self-deprecating and explained things effortlessly. As we both left Northwestern and got jobs, she found her place within the professional community of qualitative methodologists, no doubt mentored along by the good and great Jim Mahoney, who identified and supported Kendra’s abilities in a field that I still only pretend to fully understand. Kendra was the real deal and on the cusp of becoming a total rock star in qualitative and mixed methods.

I am so damn proud of the article we wrote together, “Finding the Question: A Puzzle Based Approach to the Logic of Discovery” (Day and Koivu 2019). The piece grew out of a series of chats where we shared our struggles with teaching undergraduates how to ask research questions (we talked about a lot of other essential things too like what ever happened to Miranda Cosgrove). While the intent of the paper is pedagogical (how we both cringed at that word), the intellectual bones of the paper—the logic of discovery—that’s 100% Kendra. Theoretical and methodological puzzles? All her. When we presented an early version of the article together at APSA we surprisingly got all sorts of love from a room of uber-nerdy qualitative methodologists, where she was right at home, although easily the coolest among them. We then took a well-earned victory lap around the conference hotel district of San Francisco and planned world domination.

Even today when I hit an intellectual obstacle, my first reflex is to reach out to her to help me work through whatever incomplete thought I’m struggling to develop or embryonic idea I’m trying to waken. She was really good at doing that, having a natural gift for looking at a phenomenon and putting things into creative categories with cool labels. So, while I miss her for a million personal reasons, my heart breaks that we won’t be able to collaborate again.

I cannot say for certain that I was as good a friend to Kendra as she was to me. The years after her initial diagnosis flew past, full of false starts, setbacks, temporary reprieves, and eventual decline. I fell into a sort of complacent denial and figured she would outlive us all. And I was a pain in her ass for sure, foisting my drama and bullshit on her even when she was suffering from cancer. Of course, she let me know it, and often. But probably not all the time. Maybe that’s why I did it, because I knew I could and because she was the truest of friends.

When Kendra came to APSA last year, it was after a terminal diagnosis, and it was clear that she had come to say goodbye to her professional life. I am full of love and gratitude that I got to be her playmate for those few days. We had a lot of heavy conversations about what mark she was leaving on the world and what her final thoughts might be. A short time later, right towards the end, I was lucky enough to spend time with Kendra at her home in Albuquerque. With Jami Nuñez and Erin Damman—stalwart members of Team Kendra—among others, we shared a few precious moments of hilarity even as she

suffered from a horrible cocktail of toxic medication and the looming reality of hospice care. We said a beautiful goodbye and stayed in touch via texting until it likely just exhausted her and she just sort of faded and vanished.

I am still waiting for her to text me back. I miss her every day.

References

Day, Christopher, and Kendra Koivu. 2019. "Finding Question: A Puzzle-Based Approach to the Logic of Discovery." *Journal of Political Science Education* 15, no. 3: 377–86.

Kendra Koivu: Remembering a Qualitative Methodologist

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“I think fuzzy-set analysis is really useful.” Those are the words that I remember Kendra Koivu saying as she began to make a comment during an APSA meeting in which some leaders from the qualitative methods section were chatting with graduate students. Kendra was still a graduate student herself, and the context of the meeting was a brown bag lunch for students participating in the qualitative methods working group sponsored by APSA. I blushed as she began talking because she learned about fuzzy-set analysis from me, and I wanted to keep anything related to set-theoretic analysis out of the discussion. As she continued to speak, however, my emotion shifted from a twinge of discomfort to a sweeping feeling of admiration and pride. She spoke about the value of set-theoretic methods with authenticity, conviction, and intelligence. I thought her remarks were courageous. I never told Kendra that her comment was inspiring for me, but it was. I returned to that memory many times over the years.

Another memory: Kendra Koivu and Erin Kimball (now Damman) come knocking at my office door to visit me to discuss methodology. Kendra gets right to the point, “You said not enough women are working in methodology in political science. We are here to try to change that.” Kendra was referring to my complaining about gender bias in the field of methodology that generations of Northwestern students have had to endure. Kendra and Erin wanted to work in this area, and they proactively reached out to me seeking collaboration. I was working on an article related to set-theoretic causality and historical sequences, and I was pretty stuck on several fronts. We soon began a collaboration that led to one of my all-time favorite articles for which I am an author. In that article, we coined the term SUIN

condition, which is now often used in the QCA field.

Kendra was fascinated with set diagrams illustrating the set-membership relations between categories, and she did much to move forward the visualization of set-theoretic analysis. Along with her, I became fascinated with set diagrams. I trace our fascination back to Charles Ragin, who suggested a solution to a problem we were having with our article on historical sequences. We were trying to figure out how we could help people understand why certain causal conditions were necessarily more important than others in causal chain arguments. Ragin suggested that we illustrate the idea with diagrams, and Kendra and Erin carried out the task of working out our argument in diagram form.

For Kendra and me, this work led to a subsequent interest—some might say obsession—with using diagrams to explore and understand the logic of social science arguments. Kendra and I never discussed academic matters without drawing pictures and creating set-theoretic figures to illustrate our ideas. Whereas some scholars communicate using the language of statistics, algebra, or calculus, we communicated using the language of logic and its set-theoretic expression.

Kendra had a talent for thinking spatially and relating set-theoretic logic to social science matters. This way of thinking came naturally to her, and I know she loved to think abstractly in this manner. The logic of methodology no doubt gave her that sublime worldly escape that comes with totally engrossed intellectual thinking. Kendra and I could discuss issues that built on an enormous shared foundation. This shared foundation allowed us to achieve the kind of intersubjective understanding that makes you feel as if you are on a special intellectual wavelength with another person. We were right there together appreciating