

The Methodology Chapter

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research method: tools we use for gathering data or evidence (survey, interview, participant observation)

methodology: the research process, how will the research proceed? What theory, values, cultural protocols, and ethics inform our methodology?

epistemology: theory of knowledge. What knowledge do you privilege?

Epistemology, method, methodology, and theory converge. They are linked together. Methodology is often viewed as the place epistemology, method, and theory converge. For example, our methodology informs how we view and chose to investigate the social world we live in and our choice of methodology is transmitted into method. Our choice of methodology is also a political action. It shapes the research process (including questions asked and answers received), and it privileges specific ways of knowing. Reminder: Knowledge is power.

Envision the methodology chapter as a place to clarify how you will conduct your research. It is also the framework for your research. Similar to the construction of a house, if the frame is flawed, the house may not stand. Some practical hints: Your methodology chapter could be divided into sections (however, do not limit yourself to the ones below).

1. **Methodology** (What is it?) What knowledges (theory and practice) inform it (don't confine yourself, look outside conventional ways of knowing)? Are you drawing from one methodological perspective or many? For example: Critical feminist methodology, Community based methodology, indigenous methodology, decolonizing methodologies, anti-oppressive methodology.

- Research Aims: create social change, social justice goals, race, class, and gender analysis
- recognize relations that underlie everyday experience, give voice to oppression
- critical, feminist (define), social structural, decolonizing, anti-oppressive, oppositional, resistance, and aboriginal methodologies
- impact of policy and practice
- dig beneath the surface
- nonexploitive
- value subjective experience; critique value free, objective stance
- active participation by those researched
- value nonhierarchal relations and democratic consultation
- liberatory

2. **Method** (Why did you chose it? What theory, values, ethics, or knowledge informs the choice?)

- interview (open, closed)
- survey
- ethnography
- content analysis
- story telling
- case study
- combination of methods

-limits and benefits of method

3. **Ethics Approval**

4. **Research design**

- your background
- planned field work
- journal notes
- definition of topic of inquiry (mental illness, disability, risk, addiction)
- how did you conduct the research?
- place, time, sample (definition, reasons for choice), sample size
- participants (age, gender, etc.),
- survey design, questions,
- pilot project

5. **Ethical considerations and Access**

- anonymity; insider/outsider considerations
- confidentiality
- Whose side are you on?
- do no harm?
- give back to community
- colonial appropriation
- liberatory, social justice goals?
- protecting participants and self
- examine own values and suitability for proposed project
- consent form
- what do other researchers say about access?
 - health and legal issues?
 - risks?
 - honorariums?
 - captured participants

6. **Analysis** (How will you proceed? Who is your audience? Collaborate? Own?)

- what will you do with the data? How will you analyze it?
- themes (draw on grounded theory?)
- let data speak to you
- note consistencies and inconsistencies
- underlying assumptions
- myths and ideologies
- economic imperatives
- value subjects knowledge
- recognize social relations that shape phenomena

7. **Significance of research**: give voice, uncover assumptions, new theory of knowledge

8. **Limitations of research**: limited time, resources, sample

9. **In the field**

What happened?

- joys, risks, concerns, dilemmas, surprises, omissions, mistakes, lessons?