

Criminology 321 Sampling & Recruitment

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Sampling

- We decide on a research site or phenomenon we want to investigate. But what next?
- A sampling question:
 - What do we look at?
 - Who do we talk to?

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Identifying your Population

- Populations are less “defined” and more “constructed” (e.g., abuse, sex work, violence)
 - “How much ____ is there?”
- Identifying population *deductively* works for theory but can create conceptual blinders (e.g., heroin addicts)
- Identifying population *inductively* allows you to “refine” sample conceptually as you gather data and ask who/what’s missing

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Purposive Sampling

- You purposefully select/target participants with characteristics important to your research question and the study’s objectives
- Participants should be ‘information-rich’
- Flexible, iterative approach allows sample to evolve as the study progresses
- Goal is a sample diverse enough to include variety of experiences/perspectives

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Purposive Sampling

- Most important group, issue, or research site to sample is the one that has the greatest potential for providing new information and/or changing your thinking
- An iterative process; always wonder who/what is missing

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Purposive Sampling: Examples

- **Stakeholder Sampling**
 - e.g., MRDS study that evaluated the effects of a new communications system for VPD. Talked to admin, patrol officers, dispatchers, IT folks.
- **Extreme or Deviant Case**
 - e.g., Boston College/Belfast Project study. Interesting precisely because it was such a complete disaster

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Purposive Sampling: Examples

- **Typical Case**

- e.g., Becker’s “crocks” study, part of a larger project looking at the way that budding doctors are socialized into the medical profession. U of Kansas picked because just another med school

- **Representative**

- e.g., a study I did looking at Indigenous Justice programs in BC: strengths, challenges, aspirations, relations with CJS

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Purposive Sampling: Examples

- **Criterion**

- We seek people who have had a specific experience or fit a particular demographic or cultural group. For example,
 - Zena Rossouw and I looking at police officers who had taken part in serial murder investigations
 - Ryan Sandrin and I looking at visible minority people playing hockey
 - Cristina Pastia and I talked to people who were surviving family members of murder victims

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Purposive Sampling: Examples

- **Negative Case**

- e.g., annie ross of INDG along with me, Steff King and Gail Anderson put together a tool to assess the adequacy of police and coroner investigations in response to three suspicious deaths in Prince Rupert
- the Boston College study could be put in here as well
- so, too, could the study by Palys & Lowman regarding SFU and Russel Ogden

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Purposive Sampling: Examples

- **Critical Case**

- e.g., David MacAlister and I looked at the Bruckert & Parent case in Quebec Superior Court because it was the first real court case in Canada regarding research confidentiality where privilege was put to the test

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Build diversity into your sample(s)

- Can theorize dimensions of variation and/or be guided by the literature or by gaps in the literature
- Literature on prostitution/sex work provides an excellent example
 - What is “sex work”?
 - Is prostitution an inherently violent occupation?
 - Implications for Bedford
- Can also build in diversity methodologically by triangulating sources

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Can results be generalized from a small or non-random sample?

- It depends
- The thing to do is not simply dismiss generalizability, but to think it through
- Ultimately an empirical question that will involve you contextualizing your results in the literature
- To whom do you think it will *not* generalize? That’s where you should go next

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Table 6.2 Benefits and challenges of select recruitment strategies

Recruitment strategy	How it works	Benefits	Challenges
Gatekeepers	Utilize trusted community leaders who know the local population to assist with recruiting eligible participants	Respects social hierarchy and protocol Identify eligible community members Advise on cultural appropriateness Trusted advocate for study	Potential selection bias Potential coercion of participants
Registers	Select participants from a register of people who meet the inclusion criteria	Enables recruitment of a diverse sample	Requires permission to access registers

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Gatekeepers

- Benefits:
 - respecting local protocols
 - helpful in identifying participants
 - advocate for the study
- But look out for these:
 - may select only those they *want* you to talk to
 - sometimes *too* helpful, don't want coercive
- Example: Hollis in Ireland with the IRA

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Registers

- Basically sampling frames
- They often include more than simply names, which can help with target sampling
 - e.g., ethics policy study, SSHRC/CIHR lists
- Registers can help put sample in context
 - e.g., for VPD study with computer terminals in cars, survey of non-random 200
 - registers gave rank structure and position
 - responses also triangulated with other data sources

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Table 6.2 Benefits and challenges of select recruitment strategies

Recruitment strategy	How it works	Benefits	Challenges
Formal and informal networks	Recruit participants from formal or informal networks that represent a concentration of the study population	Concentration of eligible participants Provides a forum for recruitment Enables endorsement for study	Requires permission to access networks Sampling limited to network members
Snowballing	Utilize social networks to recruit eligible participants	Trusted referrals to study Identify hard-to-reach participants	Potential lack of diversity in sample Manage disclosure of private information Time consuming

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Network & Snowball Sampling

- Networks -- groupings that can give you concentrated access to a sample
 - Formal – organizations, associations, agencies
 - Less formal – chat groups, message boards, clubs. Be careful with netiquette
- Snowball (or chain) sampling
 - Excellent for hidden populations; trust implied
 - e.g., Edna Salaman and “Kept Women”
 - Be careful of homogeneous niches

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Table 6.2 Benefits and challenges of select recruitment strategies

Recruitment strategy	How it works	Benefits	Challenges
Advertisements	Advertise the study to invite eligible participants to contact the researchers	Participants self-identify Motivated participants Meet challenging sample criteria	Self-selecting sample Requires strong incentive Potential for low response
Mixed method recruitment	Recruit existing participants in another part of the study (e.g. survey or focus group participants)	Established rapport with study Utilize data on participants to recruit for diversity Additional data about participants	Prior involvement may prime participants on study issues Increased participant burden

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Advertisements & Mixed Methods

- Ads allow people to self-identify, and can target by locale (e.g., Atchison), but social distance means low participation rates
- Mixed methods opens door to more
 - e.g., cascading design from ethics policy study
 - brief structured section coupled with open-ended items supplemented by interview opportunity

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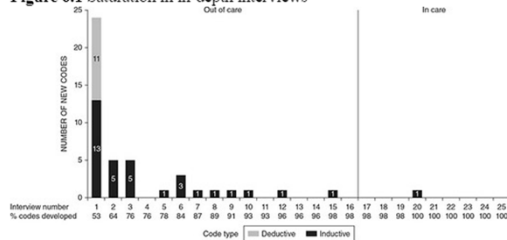
How Many is Enough?

- Sampling in Qualitative approaches less focused on numbers, more on richness, depth of data/information
- **Saturation** an important criterion
- Your text defines this as
 - “the point in data collection when no more new issues are identified, data begin to repeat with no added understanding of the issues, and so further data collection (with this sample) becomes redundant

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Can take surprisingly few people to reach saturation

Figure 6.1 Saturation in in-depth interviews



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Table 6.3 Parameters influencing saturation and sample sizes

Influences on saturation	How it affects sample size
Study purpose	A study aiming to identify broad thematic issues (e.g. issues to include on survey instrument) will likely reach saturation quickly thus require a smaller sample size; while a study aiming to understand complex phenomena or develop theory will likely need more data to reach saturation so require a larger sample size.
Study population	A homogeneous or narrowly defined study population will likely reach saturation quickly so require a smaller sample size; while a heterogeneous study population or having several study populations will likely need more data to capture the diversity of issues in each and thus require a larger sample size.
Sampling strategy	A study using an inductive process of sampling to gain depth and diversity will likely reach saturation quickly and need a smaller sample size than a study not using an inductive process; alternatively an inductive process may uncover new data sources that increase the sample size.
Data quality	A study generating 'thick' data with detailed insights on the study issues (which may result from experienced qualitative researchers) will likely reach saturation quickly and require a smaller sample size; while a study generating 'thin' data with little contextual depth (which may result from less experienced qualitative researchers) will likely require more data to capture the issues and reach saturation so a larger sample size is needed.
Study focus	A study focusing on explicit, concrete issues will likely reach saturation sooner and need a smaller sample size than a study focusing on more conceptual or complex issues which likely requires more data thus a larger sample size.
Saturation goal	A study with the goal of seeking saturation in only core issues will likely reach saturation sooner and require a smaller sample than a study with the goal of seeking saturation more broadly across all issues in the data.

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Today and Next Week

- Remember your oral history proposals and TCPS Certificates are due this week, although you cannot proceed without these, so I will continue receiving them however long it takes
- Next class we start looking at particular methods. We begin with Oral History.

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