

Criminology 321
Qualitative Case Study
Analysis cont'd

How I Learned
What a 'Crock' Was

- But what does this look like in the research world?
- Step 1 is to locate "the body"
- Finding a focus
- A great example can be seen in Becker's *How I learned what a 'crock' was*.

How I Learned
What a 'Crock' Was

- Starts off open-minded, perhaps even naively, gets lay of the land, basic story (people, activities)
 - "With no problem to orient myself to, no theoretically defined puzzle I was trying to solve, I concentrated on finding out what the hell was going on, who all these people were, what they were doing, what they were talking about, finding my way around and, most of all, getting to know the six students with whom I was going to spend the next six weeks."

How I Learned
What a 'Crock' Was

- Listening to the vocabularies people use:
 - "One morning, as we made rounds, we saw a very talkative patient, who had multiple complaints to tell the doctor about, all sorts of aches, pains and unusual events. I could see no one was taking her very seriously and, on the way out, one of the students said, "Boy, she's really a crock!". I understood this, in part, as shorthand for "crock of shit." It was obviously invidious. But what was he talking about?"

- **Other examples?**

- Police officers: Who are “scrots”?
- Students: What makes “A good course”? “A good prof”?
- Video Gamers: What makes “a good game”?
- Employees: What makes “a good job”?
- Sex Workers: Who is “a good trick”?
- The trick is to listen to how people *use* the term. What does it tell you about *them*? George Kelley and “that lazy kid.”

How I Learned What a ‘Crock’ Was

- But ... so what? If the concept is so important, what difference does it make in the lives of participants, i.e., how is it used, and how is it reflective of interests/action?
 - “...My problem was only half solved. I still had to find out why students thought crocks were bad. What interests of theirs was compromised by a patient with many complaints and no pathology?”

How I Learned What a ‘Crock’ Was

- Becker then outlines how the concept of ‘crock’ relates to the interests and aspirations of the medical students, their views of medicine, their relationships with patients, and with each other.
 - “Intuitions are great but they don’t do much for us unless we follow them up with the detailed work that shows us what they really mean, what they can really account for.”

How I Learned What a ‘Crock’ Was

- It’s only after completing the case study that you might ask about generalizability
- Two such considerations:
 - sampling generalizability (other persons/places/times, i.e., concept of external validity), or
 - theoretical generalizability (i.e., applicability of the concepts to other milieux)

Logic of Qualitative Inquiry

- We follow an **iterative** process
 - we are in the field over time, and we always go back and forth between theory and data and theory and data..., i.e., between induction and deduction.
 - same is also true regarding sampling
- We make a distinction between “**tight**” and “**loose**” qualitative designs
 - start “loose,” and get progressively “tighter”

Logic of Qualitative Inquiry

- Stay attuned to **negative cases**.
 - goal is to create an explanation that covers all instances of the phenomenon (e.g., crocks) or explains all the data (e.g., murder; commissions of inquiry).
- We enter the field with notebook and/or tape recorder in hand, and gather data -- *lots* of data -- that we know are relevant, or that *may* be relevant.
 - Triangulation of sources.

Logic of Qualitative Inquiry

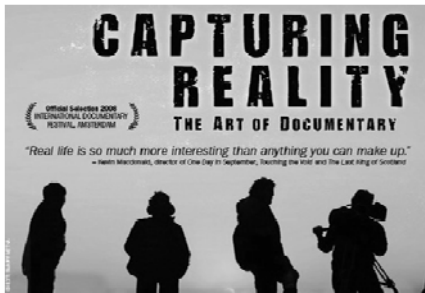
- But who do we talk to?
- Are there any special considerations to keep in mind when we talk to people in the context of a research project?

These are the questions we consider next ...

Criminology 321

Ethical Principles in Social Research

Ethics in Documentary Film



Ethics Principles

- Two fundamental principles that you undoubtedly will have to deal with are:
 - Free and informed consent
 - Confidentiality
- Another common one is:
 - Conflicts of roles/duties/interests, or what your text refers to as “Divided Loyalties”

Free

- If consent is sought, it must first be “free”
 - Absence of coercion
 - Big concern when there is a power differential and potential conflict of roles, e.g., teacher/student, warden/inmate, therapist/client
 - Participants reminded that they are volunteering and need not answer all questions

and Informed

- It must next be “informed”
 - who you are; what participation involves, and
 - any “reasonably foreseeable” risks or complications associated with these
 - what would you want to know if you or a family member were the one participating?
 - the exception? psychologists and their love of *misinformed* consent, i.e., deception

Consent

May be obtained/inferred in different ways:

1. **Expressed:** person **opts-in** in some overt way, e.g., written, oral or by overt conduct (e.g., returning a questionnaire);
2. **Implied: opt-out** possibilities are provided and person does not do so (e.g., does not leave research site);
3. **Oral:** okay where signed consent culturally inappropriate, or where there are good reasons for not recording opt-in or opt-out in writing

Consent

- In qualitative research, consent is typically **oral**
 - The ideal relationship is one based on **rappport**, mutual **trust** and **respect**, not contract law
 - Written consent creates paper trails which can undermine ability to maintain confidentiality
- Current Issues
 - Secondary data; linking diverse data sets beyond anticipated consent
 - Public/private on the world wide web

Consent

- In most cases, research requires consent
- Do you *always* need consent? Not ...
 - when risk is minimal and obtaining consent impractical
 - when engaged in some forms of critical research
 - in public settings when data is anonymous and people are unaware of being observed for research purposes.

Confidentiality

- A fundamental obligation. Probably the most important for social sciences, criminology
- We must be able to talk to people, and not just those who have been convicted
- Criminology's approach exemplified by ASC and ACJS *Codes of Ethics*:
 - “Confidential information provided by research participants must be treated as such by criminologists, even when this information enjoys no legal protection, and legal force is applied.” (Section 19)

Confidentiality: Subpoena

- Commitment to confidentiality most directly challenged through subpoena
- In the U.S., subpoenas have arisen in two main contexts:
 - Legal authorities (esp. grand juries) looking for information useful in criminal prosecution
 - Civil litigation
- In Canada, up to 9 cases now

Confidentiality: Subpoena

- Statute-based protections exist in the U.S.
 - Confidentiality Certificates for health (NIH)
 - Privacy Certificates for criminology (NIJ)
- In Canada, privilege is left to common law
 - Two kinds of privilege: class and case-by-case
 - Researchers should use the “Wigmore test” as a guide for designing research on sensitive topics

Confidentiality

- Don’t get hysterical: subpoenas are rare events, and the court record is a good one
- More routinely, the biggest thing to remember is how to manage confidentiality in your research:
 - Confidentiality is the participant’s right
 - Don’t be a blabbermouth; don’t leave data around
 - Anonymize/encrypt wherever possible and as soon as possible
 - Don’t be as careless as our provincial government

THE VANCOUVER SUN
 WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2009

Government computers, data tapes and other equipment can contain sensitive personal information about British Columbians. We show you where it's leaking out.

PRIVACY NIGHTMARE

Sensitive files on stolen computers
 BY GUY BROWN
 The provincial government has a serious problem. It has a cache of sensitive information on its computers, and it's leaking out. The information includes names, addresses, phone numbers, and other personal details of British Columbians. The information is being leaked out by a group of hackers who have broken into the government's computer system.

Hackers got into province's system
 BY MICHAEL ZITVO
 A group of hackers has broken into the province's computer system, and they've stolen a cache of sensitive information. The information includes names, addresses, phone numbers, and other personal details of British Columbians. The hackers have been able to access the information because of a security flaw in the province's system.

Personal data sold with BlackBerries
 BY MICHAEL ZITVO
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A VANCOUVER SUN EXCLUSIVE
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Confidentiality

- The researcher-participant relationship is unique -- *volunteer* participants entrust the details of their lives to us. Treat them with utmost care.
- Regarding confidentiality, be honest.
- If *not* prepared to offer unlimited confidentiality when the participant could be harmed, *do not do the research*, or alter its focus, because otherwise you put participants at risk. Only ask what you are prepared to defend.

Conflict of Roles/Divided Loyalties

- Professionalization/proliferation of research skills/interests opens possibility for conflicts of interest
- Conflicting roles
 - What happens after the research is over?
 - Power dynamics of teacher/researcher, police officer/researcher, social worker/researcher, etc
 - Conflicting allegiances; conflicting standards (e.g., regarding confidentiality/disclosure/reporting)

Conflict of Roles/Divided Loyalties

- Conflicting duties: TCPS is clear you must distinguish roles when professional/research standards may create a conflict:
 - “To preserve and not abuse the trust on which many professional relations reside, researchers should separate their role as researcher from their roles as therapists, caregivers, teachers, advisors, consultants, supervisors, students, employers and the like.” (p.2.4)

Conflict of Roles

- Zinger was a PhD student at Carleton University while a CSC employee
- Did his dissertation (2001) on the effects of “administrative segregation” (i.e., solitary confinement)
- Limited confidentiality
- Results – self-serving; invalid

Ethics Regulation

Ethics Regulation

- Research ethics in criminology regulated by
 - disciplinary standards in Criminology such as those articulated by the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences and American Society of Criminology;
 - assorted SFU policies: primarily the SFU Research Ethics Policy (R20.01) and those concerning academic freedom, integrity
 - the *Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS)* on ethics in research involving humans
 - your personal ethical standards

The Regulation of Ethics

- Biggest thing to happen in Canada is development of the *Tri-Council Policy Statement* (1998, 2010, 2018)



REBs and Qualitative Research

- Can't predict everything that will happen; we *hope* to be surprised
- Can't state all procedures ahead of time; collaborative designs (and qualitative ethics) require participant involvement
- Can't always identify sample ahead of time
- No rigid boundaries between "research" and other activities

Ethics Review

- At SFU, all research with human participants must undergo ethics review and be approved before *formal* data gathering can begin
- I've been delegated review in Crim321
- Your proposals need to identify relevant issues *and* state how they are/will be resolved

Proposal Reminder

- No more than 2 pages long
- Send one file using the filename format: crim321_proposal_lastname_firstname
- Send it to palys@sfu.ca
- Never too late to send; projects cannot officially begin until approval has been received

Proposal Reminder

- Who? Topic/types of questions?
- Informed consent
 - What will you tell your participant?
- Confidentiality
 - How will you protect their information?
- Conflict of Roles
 - If relevant, how will you manage it?
- Anything else?