

Criminology 321 Sampling & Recruitment

Sampling

- Sampling: using part of something to make inferences about or generalizations to a larger thing of which it is a part
- Your research questions and approach will influence your sampling strategy
- Becker distinguishes between two different kinds of sampling “problem”
 1. From whole to part
 2. From part to whole

Problem 1: From Whole to Part

- You have the whole; you need a part that will allow you to go back to the whole again
- The classic deductive/quantitative problem
- You have a well-defined population and want to draw a representative sample (+/- *e*) that will allow you to generalize to the population again
- This is a job for random sampling or one of the other probabilistic procedures

Problem 2: From Part to Whole

- You have a part (a jaw; a latrine; a bldg; a crock), and need to figure out what whole this piece is a part of (e.g., the person; the culture; social relations)
- The classic inductive/qualitative problem
- We study a particular case, and then try and figure out what category or class this is a case of
- More theoretically- than statistically-driven process

1. Random/Representative sampling is not the be-all and end-all of research

- It depends, but generally false
- A classic example of assuming that all sampling problems are Problem 1 problems
- Not true except for Problem 1 problems; *much* of the time it's useless and waste of time
- When necessary? E.g., opinion polling; asking questions about what univariate distributions look like. "How do people feel about...?"

2. Generalizability is more than simply an empirical/statistical/procedural issue

- Sometimes it is (Problem 1), but in qualitative research, "the population of interest" is something that is often/typically defined theoretically, and that grows inductively
- One first observes a process, then links it theoretically with other processes (e.g., Becker on priests, psychiatrists, and prostitutes; Kidder going from marijuana smokers to hypnosis subjects)

Identifying your Population

- Populations are less "defined" and more "constructed" (e.g., abuse, sex work, violence)
- 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

3. Purposive sampling is your most powerful theoretical tool

- 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

3. Purposive sampling is your most powerful theoretical tool

- Most important group, issue, or research site to sample is the one that has the greatest potential for blowing your theories away and/or changing your thinking
- Always wonder who/what is missing
- If you *don't* think the results are generalizable, say to whom you *don't* think it generalizes, and do that study next

3. Some purposive sampling strategies

- Stakeholder sampling
- Extreme or deviant case
- Typical case
- Paradigmatic case
- Criterion
- Critical case
- Representative
- Diversity or maximum variation
- Negative case
- Expert
- Intensity
- Snowball or chain

Some Purposive Sampling Strategies¹

Strategy	Process
Extreme or deviant case	Selecting cases that have unusual manifestations of the phenomenon of interest
Intensity	Selecting information-rich cases that manifest the phenomenon intensely, but not extremely
Maximum variation	Selecting cases that are considerably different on the dimensions of interest
Homogeneous	Selecting cases that are similar to each other
Typical case	Selecting cases that are typical, normal, average
Stratified	Selecting cases from different subgroups
Critical case	Selecting cases that have potential for logical generalizations and maximum application of information to other cases
Snowball or chain	Selecting cases from referrals by participants
Criterion	Selecting cases based on meeting some criterion of interest (e.g., having had a particular experience, showing a certain symptom)
Theory-based	Selecting cases that manifest theoretical constructs of interest
Confirming and disconfirming	Selecting cases that have potential for supporting or refuting the initial analysis
Opportunistic	Selecting cases that are unexpectedly available
Random	Selecting a relatively small number of cases using a probability sampling procedure
Political	Selecting or avoiding politically sensitive cases
Convenience	Selecting cases that require little effort or forethought
Combination	Selecting cases by mixing purposful sampling with probability sampling

¹ From Carol A. Bailey (2007). *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research* (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, p. 85.

4. A good idea to 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

5. A small or non-random sample does not necessarily mean your results cannot be generalized

- Can take surprisingly few people to reach saturation

Figure 6.1 Saturation in in-depth interviews

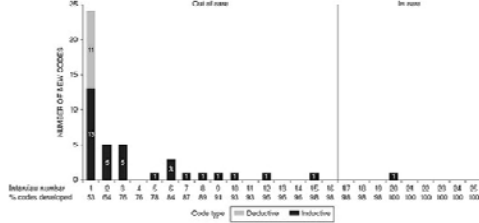


Table 6.3 Parameters influencing saturation and sample sizes

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.

5. A small or non-random sample does not necessarily mean your results cannot be generalized

- It depends; must think it through
- Some processes are common to everyone
- 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

6. Sampling *across* unique samples/ situations can be a very powerful approach.

- Because explanations and connections are built theoretically on the basis of conceptual connections
- Gets back to the role of theory, part of which is to show similarities in underlying processes across apparently disparate phenomena, and the obverse

Recruitment

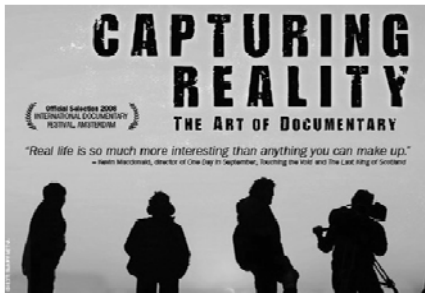


Table 6.2 Benefits and challenges of select recruitment strategies

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

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

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 also help you put your 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

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 Message disclosure of private information Time consuming

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; 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

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

Advertisements & Mixed Methods

- Ads allow people to self-identify, and can target by locale (e.g., Atch), 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 supplemented by interview opportunity