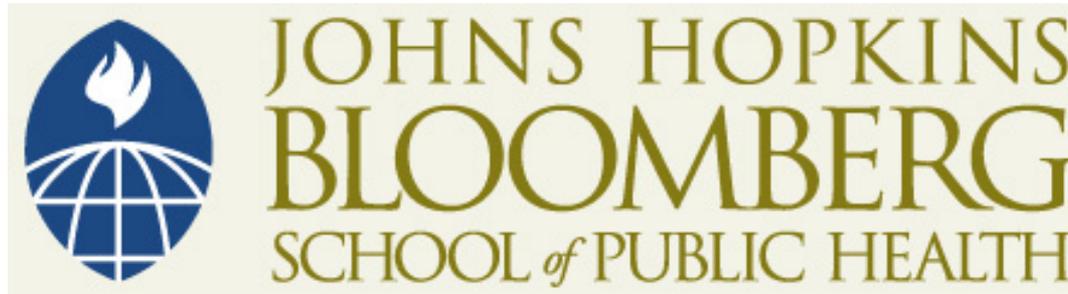


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# Phenomenology & Ethnography

Class Session 5  
Qualitative Data Analysis

# Phenomenology

- What is the essential nature of a lived experience?
  - Examples of “lived experiences” that might be appropriate for phenomenological analysis

# Example: Cognitive Representations of AIDS

“Cognitive representations of illness determine behavior. How persons living with AIDS image their disease might be key to understanding medication adherence and other health behaviors. The authors’ purpose was to describe AIDS patients’ cognitive representations of their illness” (Anderson & Spencer, in Creswell p. 265)

# IDI Questions

- What is your experience with AIDS?
- Do you have a mental image of HIV/AIDS?  
How would you describe HIV/AIDS
- What feelings come to mind?
- What meaning does it have in your life?
- Draw your image of AIDS and tell me what it means

# Identified 11 Themes

- Inescapable death
- Dreaded bodily destruction
- Devouring life
- Hoping for the right drug
- Caring for oneself
- Just a disease
- Holding a wildcat
- Magic of not thinking
- Accepting AIDS
- Turning to a higher power
- Recouping with time

# Steps in Analysis

1. Decide if this approach is appropriate to your research question
  - What was the research question in the article on “good” midwifery and “good” leadership?
  - Was phenomenology the best analysis choice? Why or why not?
2. Researcher “brackets” their own experience
  - What does this mean? Why is it important? Is it more important for this approach than for other approaches? How did the authors accomplish this?
3. Explore how people experience a phenomenon (textural description)
  - What do you think of the IDI questions they asked in term of their ability to illicit participants’ lived experiences?
  - In addition to IDIs, what type of data might have been useful for answering the research questions?
4. Explore how social context shapes that experience (structural description)?
  - How did the authors do this? How might they have done it better?
5. Describe patterns that help us understand the essence of that experience across cases
  - What do you think of the way the author’s extract meaning from the texts/categorize participants’ descriptions?
  - What role does theory play in this phenomenological analysis? At what point does the researcher bring theory into the picture in this type of analysis?
6. What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of phenomenology?

# How might you use phenomenology in your analysis?

- “My research focused on perceptions of parenting among mothers in a homeless shelter. I wanted to understand how these women conceived of what it meant to be a “good” parent—what were the characteristics that they strived for in their role as ‘mother’? I am particularly interested in the notion of social and cultural reproduction, and understanding how parenting practices replicate or shift the direction of a culturally-defined value” (Lauren Kleutsch)

# How might you use phenomenology in your analysis?

- “I am particularly interested in their [HIV positive African-American women’s] experience of inclusion and ostracization and how they actively deal with these issues as well as issues regarding spiritual healing. As a secondary aim, I am interested in these women’s experience of God and how that experience is shaped by their diagnosis of HIV and their experience in their community of faith” (Seth Himelhoch)

# How might you use phenomenology in your analysis?

- “I decided to look at addiction recovery from the perspective of those going through a faith based approach with particular attention to how their beliefs about cause and cure jive with those of their therapeutic regimen and whether relapse is viewed as a failure of some sort, in faith, perhaps, or even in person” (Alex Samuel)

# Ethnography

- Explores shared patterns of behavior, values, beliefs, language in a group of people who interact over time
  - What types of research questions lend themselves to this approach?
  - How can ethnography be incorporated into research on health?
  - Do you have a project that lends itself to ethnographic analysis?

# Steps in Analysis

1. Decide if this approach is appropriate to your research question
  - What is the culture-sharing group in the Bourgois article?
  - What is the research question?
  - What type of data does Bourgois analyze? Is it appropriate for ethnography?
2. Select what cultural themes will be the subject of analysis
  - What themes orient the Bourgois study?
  - How were those themes determined?
3. Decide what form your ethnography will take
  - How would you characterize the form of the Bourgois article?
  - What are the other options for form?
4. Provide a rich description of the group
  - How does Bourgois do this? How is the group described/situated?
  - How could the authors have done this better?
5. Provide a themed analysis of themes or topics shedding light on how the group works and lives
  - How are the themes organized and developed? What process do you think they used to settle on the themes?
  - How do the authors present both emic and etic viewpoints? Is their strategy effective?
  - How do the authors use theory in their presentation? Is it effective?
6. What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of ethnographic analysis?
  - What points to the authors make about the value of ethnography vis-à-vis epidemiology?
  - What epistemological issues are at stake?

# How might you use ethnography in your analysis?

- Lower Hampden, the triangle south of West 36th Street bounded by Wyman Park and I-83, is a rapidly changing neighborhood. In the last five years, my neighbors tell me, dozens of the white, working class multi-generational Hampden families have moved out, with white, professional couples or young groups of roommates moving in. This demographic change has not necessarily been welcome, and tensions show in various domains of neighborhood interaction. Long-time residents of Lower Hampden and newcomers alike perceive that recycling, with its left-leaning yuppie associations, might be an unwelcome embodiment of neighborhood change for some long-time residents. If some people in Hampden do locate conflict about changes in the neighborhood in the domain of recycling, this proclivity may be particularly pronounced now, with recent City policy change raising the profile of the issue. My research question has evolved to this: How has recycling come to represent a site of resistance or a *perceived* site of resistance to neighborhood-level demographic changes in Lower Hampden? (Britt Ehrhardt)

# How might you use ethnography in your analysis?

- My research sought to examine student demand for energy at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. I looked specifically at students who have a stake in 24 hour access to the building (e.g. Master's students who often stay overnight, PhD students in the hard sciences) (Katie Berndtson)

# How might you use ethnography in your analysis?

- I bought my first home at the corner of Westerwald Avenue and Belle Terre in Better Waverly in July 2007. In the spirit of true participant observation, I decided to study a group I interact with quite frequently: the Better Waverly Community Organization (BWCO)...BWCO has gone through a metamorphosis in the past ten years, changing from an “old guard” social justice and rights-driven organization, to a “new guard” group concerned with the neighborhood’s physical appearance...My limited experience in the field has brought up several interesting topics, but I am most interested in the process of gentrification. Specifically, I am looking at how the Healthy Neighborhoods program works in Better Waverly and how the BWCO’s influence on its implementation shapes the neighborhood. How has the BWCO’s approach to community [changed]? How did the “old guard” activist members of the BWCO lose their leadership positions? Is this shift from a focus on community organizing to a focus on the physical appearance a reflection of the weaker social ties in the neighborhood? Do people care less about their neighbors’ lives, but are more concerned with the state of their neighbors’ porches because it affects their property values?