

MY410 Week 5 Seminar

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What we have done so far

- ▶ How to formulate research question(s).
- ▶ How theory and data (both quantitative and qualitative) speak to each other. For instance,
 - You can use your observations to *evaluate* a theory (i.e., generate empirical implications based on the theory and test them with your observations).
 - You can use your observations to *challenge* a theory.
 - You can use your observations to *develop* a theory.
- ▶ How to ensure rigor in research: Question-theory-empirics alignment and bias management (etc).

Aims for this week

- ▶ Develop your ideas for your topic, literature and research question for your formative assignment (and eventually your summative assignments perhaps) through discussion and feedback from your peers.
- ▶ Develop your skills in articulating a good literature review and research question by providing feedback on your peers' plans.
- ▶ Develop your skills in identifying and articulating methodological critiques (identifying limitations) of different research designs.

The formative assignment

- ▶ Main task: Building a research question from a literature review.
- ▶ Format: 1 page (max 500 words), incorporating:
 - References for 3 related, **empirical** articles
 - 1 paragraph introducing the topic
 - 1 paragraph outlining and critiquing the research designs, setting the background for:
 - A research question
- ▶ Due: 4pm Thursday 4 November 2021 (MT week 6)
- ▶ Full instructions on Moodle (<https://moodle.lse.ac.uk/>)

Feedback will be provided based on

- ▶ The scope of the topic – is it too broad, or just about right?
- ▶ The selection of articles – are they appropriate for the annotated bibliography?
- ▶ Your preliminary assessment/critique of the pieces and their research designs
- ▶ Your research question
- ▶ General style, prose

From articles to question(s)

As you scope the literature, you may notice that a particular research design may have one or more of the following elements:

- ▶ Theoretical/empirical tensions or contradictions between the papers;
- ▶ Different or alternative theoretical perspectives;
- ▶ Different methodological approach (e.g., build on more inductive work to propose some hypothesis-testing deductive approach);
- ▶ Extension to new context (e.g., different region, time period);
- ▶ Something left unexplored (e.g., critical element not engaged with, need to consider other conditions);
- ▶ Something left untested;
- ▶ ... and more.

Peer feedback activity

- ▶ Phase 1: Discuss your drafts in pairs
 - Exchange your written plans with your neighbor(s).
 - Read over your peers' plans, note questions/ constructive feedback.
 - Verbally explain your plan to your peer; peer asks questions and gives feedback.
 - Switch!
- ▶ Phase 2: Join groups
 - Briefly introduce your draft.
 - Discuss how the feedback changes your original plan.
 - Come up with a list of common issues and how to address them.
- ▶ Phase 3: Plenary discussion – discuss the topic, the research question, the most useful feedback, and any lingering uncertainties, etc.

Things you should consider

- ▶ The topic
 - Is it clear what common topic is being addressed?
 - Is there a specific focus – or is the topic very broad or vaguely defined?
- ▶ Research design(s)
 - Are the research designs identified?
 - Are limitations of the approach appropriately identified?
 - Is there methodological diversity or not? (and what are the implications?)
- ▶ Research question(s)
 - Does the question identify a specific setting/case/location/group?
 - Does the question speak to a social science concern?
 - Is the question sufficiently clear to be feasible and tractable?

Additional references

- ▶ *They Say/I Say* by Cathy Birkenstein and Gerald Graff – consult it to learn more about literature view.
- ▶ *Annual Reviews* (<https://www.annualreviews.org/>) – consult it to learn more about
 - the current literature with respect to your topic/subject;
 - questions that remain unsolved with respect to your topic/subject;
 - examples of good literature reviews.