Marginalized Groups: Research Challenges, Dilemmas and Possibilities:
Annotated Bibliography

In this brief annotated bibliography, we explore the question: *what are some of the research challenges, methodological dilemmas, and possibilities for research with marginalized groups?* Recognizing that the research process often sustains historical structures of violence and myriad asymmetries and inequalities, this bibliography focuses on how working with marginalized groups requires more situated sensibilities and critical considerations of questions of power, expert knowledge, and moving beyond 'doing no harm.' While in no way exhaustive of all the literature available, this bibliography highlights as many considerations across the north-south/global-local nexus. It captures a diverse range of challenges and maps out many possibilities for ethical research.

Dauphinee, E. (2010) "The Ethics of Autoethnography." *Review of International Studies* 36 (3): 799–818.

Reflecting on her research journey and fieldwork in Bosnia, Dauphinee particularly focuses on the challenges she encountered as she established a research partnership with Stojan Sokolovic – the man whose life and loss shaped and built her career. Shifting between academic prose, and autoethnographic reflections, Dauphinee explores challenges and questions of/on the dangers of standpoint epistemologies, the privileging of expert vs. local knowledge, academic gaze, researcher guilt, research uncertainty and transitional justice in research settings.

Gabel, C., & Goodman, N. (2021). "Methodological and academic challenges in Canadian political science: the value of a socially engaged approach for Indigenous research." *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 9(2), 319-328

In their analysis, Gabel and Goodman (2021) problematize research *on* (as opposed to research *with*) indigenous communities arguing that the former is unlikely to contribute meaningfully to the community. Instead, they recommend that Canadian political science turn to "socially engaged" research (321). They also assert that it is important to recognize that indigenous communities are "research partners," and not "subjects" (325). As they evaluate the congruency of socially engaged scholarship with the sub-field, they identify some of the methodological challenges that scholars might encounter as they work with indigenous communities. Some of these challenges include research fatigue, over-burdening/researching of indigenous communities while simultaneously sustaining their erasure, ethical misconduct, and knowledge gaps between research and policy. Finally, they posit that publish or perish academic culture often compromises insider and outsider researchers' methodological commitments and the time available to build and sustain meaningful relationships with indigenous research partners.

Krystalli, R. C. (2021). Narrating victimhood: Dilemmas and (in) dignities. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 23(1), 125-146.

Selected as the runner-up for the 2019 Enloe award, Krystalli's (2021) article explores some of the pathways through which researchers can navigate 'victimhood.' Reflecting on her experience and challenges while completing fieldwork in Colombia, Krystalli explores dilemmas of research gaze, politics of 'no harm,' silences, and community loyalties. She sheds light on the dangers of further marginalizing or hurting the 'victim' during the research process. She also highlights the process through which 'war stories' become performative when marginalized communities are

over-burdened/researched. This, she asserts, alienates the 'victims' from their victimhood and suffering as they recount, distantly, what happened to them in a scripted performance to the researcher. To navigate this, Krystalli suggests that researchers pay attention to (historical) systems and structures of violence and recognize that the research process can, by definition, be un-dignifying. Parallel to that, she asks researchers to reckon with instead of silence textured narratives (moving beyond good vs. bad victims; amongst other categories underscored by deservingness).

Singal, N. (2010). "[Doing disability research in a Southern context: Challenges and possibilities.](#)" *Disability & Society*, *25*(4), 415-426

Reflecting on her experience in designing the Disability, Education and Poverty Project (DEPP)[1] which ran from 2006–2010 in Ghana, India, Kenya, and Pakistan, Singal (2010) focuses on the methodological challenges she encountered while working with young people with disabilities in India. Signal recognizes that marginalization, in this case, is critical, multilayered, and stratified across disability, youth, poverty, and north-south historical and structural asymmetries. Some of the challenges that her study reveals include sampling, identification of disability, and the confidentiality and accessibility of the spaces in which the research was conducted. Other challenges include the questions: *how does research with disabled youth in the Global South contribute to knowledge building? How does DEPP change/add to existing policies? How can participatory and emancipatory approaches help researchers listen more effectively to the participants?* Singal concludes that while these questions were not easy to navigate, they helped the members of her research team identify changes in their perception and framing of disability, and it compelled them to work further towards partnered research.

Thomson, S., Ansoms, A., & Murison, J. (Eds.). (2013). *[Emotional and ethical challenges for field research in Africa: The story behind the findings](#)*. **Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan. http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/9781137263759**

Situating the research process within a larger socio-political context, Thomson et al. (2013) reflect on the myriad challenges they encountered while completing their fieldwork in post-genocide Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Their edited volume, consisting of 11 chapters, covers methodological questions about local/global nexus, interlocutor trust, over-researched marginalized communities, research fatigue, distancing standardized methods, researcher-researched relationships, and community-based research. Specifically, they investigate how the research journey is underscored by emotional and intimate methodological challenges that require the researcher to think critically about their approach to the "African experience" or (over-researched) marginalized knowledge. They develop a short list of 'recommendations' premised on "rolling with it" (3). The latter entails a commitment to adaptability, flexibility, and patience.

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[1]This project was part of the larger project of Research Consortium on Educational Outcomes and Poverty (RECOUP)

Further Readings:

Adler, G. (1992). The politics of research during a liberation struggle: Interviewing black workers in South Africa. In R. J. Grele (Ed.), *International annual of oral history, 1990. Subjectivity and multiculturalism in oral history* (pp. 229–245). New York, NY: Greenwood Press.

Ahenakew, C. (2016). Grafting Indigenous Ways of Knowing onto Non-Indigenous Ways of Being: The (Underestimated) Challenges of a Decolonial Imagination. *International Review of Qualitative Research, 9(3), 323-340. https://doi.org/10.1525/irqr.2016.9.3.323*

Calvey, D. (2008). The art and politics of covert research: Doing 'situated ethics' in the field. *Sociology, 42,* 905–918.

Dauphinee, E. (2016). *The ethics of researching war*. Manchester University Press

Fujii, L. A. (2012). Research ethics 101: Dilemmas and responsibilities. *PS: Political Science & Politics,* 45(4), 717-723.

Guillemin, M., & Gillam, L. (2004). Ethics, reflexivity, and "ethically important moments" in research. *Qualitative inquiry,* 10(2), 261-280.

Hermann, T. (2001). The impermeable identity wall: The study of violent conflict by "insiders" and "outsiders". In M. Smyth & G. Robinson (Eds.), *Researching violently divided societies: Ethical and methodological issues* (pp. 77–91). London, UK: Pluto Press.

Kostelny, K., & Ondoro, K. (2016). Structural violence and the everyday stresses of internally displaced children in Somaliland and Puntland. *Peace and Conflict, 22,* 226–235. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pac0000171

Smith, L. T. (2021). *Decolonizing methodologies : research and Indigenous peoples* (Third edition.). Zed Books. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350225282

Sriram C. L., J. C. King, J. A. Mertus, O. Martin-Ortega, & J. Herman (Eds.) (2009) *Surviving field research. Working in violent and difficult situations.* London, UK: Routledge.

Voloder, L. (2014). Introduction: Insiderness in migration and mobility research: Conceptual considerations. In L. Voloder & L. Kirpitchenko (Eds.), *Insider research on migration and mobility: International perspectives on researcher positioning* (pp. 1–20). Farnham, UK: Ashgate.

Wood, E. J. (2006). The ethical challenges of field research in conflict zones. *Qualitative Sociology, 29,* 373–386. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11133-006-9027-8