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Abstract

This case study describes and reflects on an original research process on Economic and Social Human Rights in Guinea-Bissau between 2014 and 2024. Human rights research is multidisciplinary, with sociology and political science bearing the greatest weight, as they are closely connected due to their focus on social structures, political institutions, and processes of governance and government, but law, history, psychology, social psychology, economics, and anthropology also must be considered when defining a research methodology on this topic. The challenge of this case study is to show what has been done over 10 years in the research for a methodology to articulate these disciplines, with the definition of different samples, with data collection through face-to-face surveys, presentations of results, debates, interviews, and publications, with the considering of analyses of other collateral themes, to produce a consistent and well-founded analysis.

What we hope to be able to share are, above all, two aspects of research in general: first, designing a methodology is an activity that is built on a more artisanal logic. In other words, it must be thought out and carried out with patience, persistence, and great care regarding "ready-made" stereotypes methods. Second, the larger and more complex the problem to be investigated and its social context, the more time is needed for research that coherently and satisfactorily answers the hypotheses put forward.

It is the answers to these methodological questions that we have tried to find over the years that we hope to summarize and present in this chapter.



Learning Outcomes

Having read this case study, readers should be able to . . .

1. Define which scientific areas to include in multidisciplinary research project;
2. Choose the appropriate research methods;
3. Evaluate the context and actual conditions of the areas or countries where fieldwork is to be carried out;
4. Distinguish the type of knowledge (whether essential or secondary) needed for the re-

search to be successful.

Project Overview and Context

Overview

The general method this chapter describes and reflects on was designed with a perspective we call a Social Sciences Research Laboratory (Laboratory). In other words, various investigations were carried out or monitored in different disciplinary areas, which contributed to their results and to understanding the existence and evolution of this type of HR in the country. The idea of a laboratory as a method calls for a mix of research to deepen our knowledge of a subject and confirm or disprove hypothesis. The basic hypothesis is that between 40 and 50 years after independence from Portuguese colonialism the country was able to evolve in terms of access to HR at a low and irregular but constant pace, always accompanied by a very unstable evolution of Civil and Political HR, far from the expectations of the population. HR research is multidisciplinary, with sociology and political science playing the most important role, as they are closely linked, due to their focus on social structures, political institutions, and processes of governance and government. The more complex the methodology, the more appropriate it must be to the context in which it is to be carried out. The chapter begins with a first part contextualizing the country, which is essential to have unity when analyzing the results using the chosen methodology. It continues with a second part in which methodological issues are explored in greater depth (specifically comparing Observatories and Laboratories) and a third part in which some specific research that has already been carried out or is underway is exemplified. It ends with five conclusions that summarize the main lessons that this chapter aims to highlight.

Context

Guinea-Bissau is a small state, located between Senegal and Guinea-Conakry. It has been independent since 1973–1974, after a 10-year war against the Portuguese colonial regime. It began by adopting a centralized political regime with a single party till 1991. It hasn't managed to organize its economy, with industry failing

to take hold and despite producing enough basic foodstuffs (rice, fruit, fish, livestock, vegetables) for a population of between 1.6 and 1.8 million. Exports are mono products with 80%–90% of raw cashew nuts. Due to foreign debt the country was forced to accept multiparty rule with free elections and a structural adjustment program that led to the World Bank and the IMF defining its monetary (it joined the FCFA), economic, and social policies until 2014 when it drew up an autonomous development program (*Terra Ranka*) ([Governo, 2014](#)). The state budget depends more than 80% on international aid. Its institutions, education, health, roads, means of transport, and security systems are fragile, and the population has a high level of poverty. This fragility has given rise to a very active civil society in different areas of governance, including the defense of HR, with a strong Guinean Human Rights League that produces reports with a very reliable methodology ([Turé et al., 2023](#)). The country has become one of the transit points for cocaine to Europe, with complicity at all civil and military levels ([Green, 2016](#); [UNODC, 2024](#)). The political regime, even with elections, has become increasingly authoritarian, with HR violations, such as a President who appoints and dismisses the government or dissolves parliament at will, systematically violating the Constitution. It is an adapted dictatorship ([Guriev, 2022](#)).



Section Summary

- The research presented in this chapter is multidisciplinary, on Economic and Social HR in a fragile African country, Guinea-Bissau.
- The fragility has to do with the weakness of public institutions, including the education and health systems, the difficult balance between sovereign bodies, the interference of the military in politics, the impact of cocaine trafficking and a weak economic fabric, and is not related to armed conflicts or disasters.
- This fragility of the state in general and of the administration in particular has led to the emergence of civil society organizations in various areas, particularly the defense of HR.
- This is the complex context that needs to be understood to be able to conceive and design a successful research project.

Research Design

According to [Herbert Blumer \(1986\)](#), methodology refers to "the entire scientific endeavor" that must adapt to the "obstinate character of the social world under study." Thus, methodology is not a superordinate set of logical procedures that can be applied at random to any empirical problem. Rather, it is the set of decisions on how to obtain and articulate quantitative and qualitative data that allows us to investigate a topic in each social context. In this sense, we call the Social Science Laboratory an interdisciplinary methodology made up of a range of strategies and procedures that include: choosing a narrative of an empirical world; posing questions about that world, turning them into investigable problems and finding the best means of doing so—which involves choices about the methods and data to be sought, the articulation between the choices and the development and use of concepts and the interpretation of the results.

The concept of an Observatory to guarantee access to information and knowledge in a reliable and timely manner, especially in the context of social phenomena, is an effective strategy, with the aim of investigating, informing, monitoring problematic situations, analyzing issues of public interest, using information systems, and developing pedagogical spaces to promote reflection and disseminate knowledge ([Rodríguez et al., 2017](#); [Torres, 2019](#)), but the one that exists in Guinea-Bissau as the Observatory of Rights focused on Civic and Political Rights (<https://observatoriodireitos-guinebissau.blogspot.com/>) has more functions as an instrument of civic intervention than research. The Universitat [Politécnica de Catalunya \(2008\)](#) also emphasizes that analyzing the information generated is necessary as a monitoring tool to systematically assess the progress of actions and guide intervention policies. Herrera (2006) shares this view, emphasizing that observatories do not see observation as an end, but as a means.

By the concept of a Social Science Research Laboratory with the creation of interdisciplinary spaces that investigate different subobjects of study, we mean the set of activities and methodological procedures aimed at identifying, analyzing, and evaluating hypotheses on complex themes that are far from being confirmed or disproved in a temporal and thematic space limited to short periods or a single discipline. The existing Observatory, with its documentation center and physical and virtual library, is an important space for information, exchange and collaboration for the Laboratory, but it does not exhaust its research functions, with multidisciplinary teams of professors, postgraduate students and researchers associated with various organizations that have research in their statutes, although it is not their main activity. A laboratory can also be linked to third cycle teaching programs (master's and doctoral) to provide students who want to research topics on

Guinea-Bissau with an environment of scientific support, help to publish articles and book chapters and, as far as possible, financial support.

Like observatories ([Enjunto, 2010](#)), laboratory work must adhere to a stringent methodological framework that incorporates both quantitative and qualitative tools. The core function of a laboratory is to conduct research that involves the systematic collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, ensuring that the information gathered is both comparable and coherent with respect to the primary focus of the research. Additionally, the methodology employed can be conceptualized as a case study with reference to a specific country, since the research takes a holistic approach, striving to encompass and understand the case in its full scope and distinctiveness. For this reason, [Punch \(1998\)](#) and [Gomez et al \(1996\)](#) favor the term "strategy" over "research methodology." The case study is not considered a distinct methodology but rather a means of structuring data in a manner that maintains the distinctive nature of the social phenomenon being investigated ([Goode & Hatt, 1952](#)). Dependability, which encompasses the accuracy and consistency of a scientific study, is a key concern in both quantitative and qualitative research, as it refers to the ability to replicate the study's conclusions, demonstrated when different researchers, using the same instruments, achieve consistent results when investigating the same phenomenon ([Vieira, 1999](#); [Yin, 1994](#)). Reliability involves ensuring that the data collected remains stable over time, exhibits internal consistency, particularly when drawn from multiple sources ([Punch, 1998](#); [Stake, 1995](#)). The case study, though often associated with qualitative research, can also be utilized in positivist or critical paradigms, making it a versatile mixed-method research approach ([Ponte, 1994](#); [Punch, 1998](#); [Gomez et al., 1996](#)). Ensuring reliability in case studies poses distinct challenges, as the researcher often acts as the primary "instrument," and the uniqueness of the "case" makes it difficult to fully replicate or reconstruct ([Vieira, 1999](#); [Yin, 1994](#)).

The laboratory methodology can be viewed as a longitudinal study, but without using the same random sample at each point of data collection. Instead, different samples are drawn, all of which are similar and representative of the same population. These are referred to as reference longitudinal studies ([Bailey, 2008](#)). The concept of a Social Science Research Laboratory makes it possible to consider the various methodological options mentioned, integrating them into a single process of searching for knowledge focused on a complex and wide-ranging theme.



Section Summary

- Research methodology adapts to the social context under study.
- The concept of the Social Science Laboratory as an interdisciplinary approach articulates strategies and methods to analyze social issues, especially when compared to the Observatory of Rights, which is more geared towards intervention than research.
- Reliability in research is incredibly important, as well as the use of case studies as a methodological strategy.
- Laboratories can adopt longitudinal studies to broaden their understanding of wide-ranging and dynamic issues.

Research Practicalities

Ethics and Practices

We believe that the ethical choices that determine research practices were made in this Laboratory at three points: first, in the design and implementation of questionnaires and interview scripts; seconding the use of another research and third in dissemination. Our research practices complied with the more specific ethical standards of:

- a. Not causing physical, mental, individual, or social discomfort to the participants.
- b. Ensure that participants understand the objectives of the questions they are asked, without doubt, whether or not they sign a formal document.
- c. Respect privacy in health centers, hospitals, prisons, housing, or other situations in which participants find themselves.
- d. Respect the uses and customs (cultural heritage) of the participants, whatever their individual, social, ethnic, or religious origin.

This principle and these standards have materialized over the last 10 years as described in the following sections.

Designing and Carrying Out Questionnaires and Interview Scripts

The main issue is the design of the sample and the organization of the interview. While the sample was complied with the international statistical rules of random representativeness, the choices we made when organizing the survey were (1) not to use students who wanted to take part just to earn some money at the time, and (2) always hire experienced surveyors and controllers. The strategy for socially sensitive issues involved being creative; our methods were different if the survey was carried out in someone's home or in a market. The women were surveyed in markets to make sure that there were no male elements present. Another survey on daily resilience asked whether, in the event of desperation to obtain food for the family, the respondent would think about committing crimes of robbery, transporting drugs, or working for someone outside the law. The question was asked at the end of the survey and the interviewers were told not to ask it if the interview was proving difficult and to accept it without insistence if the respondent didn't answer.

It should be noted that in a sample where one dwelling per street is surveyed, the problem is not that families don't respond, but that all the neighbors want to respond too.

In designing the questions details, several challenges were solved:

- **Ethnicity:** The question about ethnicity can be asked without any problems, but it raises problems in interpretation because the children of fathers and mothers of different ethnicities are defined by customary norms and do not answer that they are mixed. The answer "mixed" means that they are the children of a father/mother of a different race and not of a different ethnicity.
- **Level of education:** The question about the level of education they have completed is socially sensitive. While 30 years ago the response of society was indifferent, it has gradually become socially negative to say that you can't read, write, or count. It's better to ask the last level of education attended.
- **Activity:** The answer to a question about what you do is rarely "I don't do anything," as this is not socially acceptable. In general, the answer for people in this situation, is "student." The solution is to plan a second question to control that one.
- **Cohabitation/Uses and customs (cultural heritage):** There are several terms that are used in everyday life that are different from Portuguese. One of them is "cohabitation," which is translated as "together by uses and customs."
- **Photographs:** You should always ask permission to take photographs. In general, this is easy to

obtain, even from prisoners in a police station (who see photography as a way of letting the outside world know that they are under arrest). The interviewer must be aware.

- **The language of the interview:** Portuguese is the official language of the country, but Guinean Creole is the most widely spoken language and the poor urban population can only speak everyday Portuguese and can't read Portuguese or Creole. Very rarely should this group be asked to sign their own name. About 20 years ago, people asked what language the interview had been conducted in, because it was normal for local ethnic languages to appear, since there were areas where little Creole was spoken and even less Portuguese. Gradually, all interviews were conducted in Creole. Therefore, they should not be given a written document that the respondent cannot read to sign, as informed consent is required to take part in the research. They should be told that it's voluntary and if they don't want to answer, the interviewer shouldn't insist. In debates, signed attendance sheets serve as informed consent.

When Another Research Is Used

Using data from other research often leads to conclusions and analyses obtained from unreliable data or unrepresentative samples. For example, in a survey on immunization in several African countries, the promoters thought that they could have the same number of respondents in the capital as in all the other regions. In other words, they represented by the same number of cases a population that differed 100 times in number and urban/rural typology. We had to look and always must look for the best methodology. And if it was not described, or it was one simple paragraph, we didn't use the source. For international organizations we often came across data based on the reality of other neighboring countries or those with characteristics that were similar to the subject under analysis. Whenever this happened, we included this finding in the analysis. If it was not explicit, we didn't use the data.

Timing of the Dissemination of Results

The actions carried out obeyed the principle that the main stakeholders were the people and authorities of Guinea-Bissau. Three methodologies were favored:

First, the results were always presented in Bissau and in some other region of the country in open meetings.

We always kept in mind that those who took part in these debates were a minority with more education and availability of resources beyond daily survival. Second, results panels were designed in a transportable and resistant format (plastic-lined Kline A3 panels) with photographs, creative graphics, and summarized data tables. These exhibitions went to all the regions where the surveyors lived and where they held sessions in schools, administrative centers, and the headquarters of local nongovernmental organizations, always with the collaboration of the local authorities. Third, the results were always published in Portuguese, as Creole is a language that is still not very suitable for technical texts. They were also published in international journals, but this was not a priority. These dissemination practices are in clear contrast to organizations that fund studies and research that never disseminate or publish only in their own language (World Bank on Health facilities in English online report or SWISSAID on two researches on women in vegetable production—one methodology qualitative the other quantitative—French edition).



Section Summary

- The ethic norms must be considered, and the research should be able to move from the highest level of abstraction to realization on the ground.
- The researcher has to be vigilant and resolve situations that can distort the response to interviews, such as white Europeans professors asking questions to Black African peasants or men asking women about private matters.
- The researcher must look for methods that avoid deviations in the answers but that allow him to control unforeseen flaws, which always arise in interviews with randomly selected representative samples.

Method in Action

Methodology in Practice

As written in the previous sections, over the past 10 years (2014–2024), the authors have endeavored to contribute to increasing and deepening research on Guinea-Bissau, the most fascinating African country for

research of all those that were Portuguese colonies, due to its unpredictability and collective imagination. Ten years ago, the methodology was not expressed as it is today. In fact, the author with the most experience in research in Guinea-Bissau considered that it was enough to know a set of sectoral investigations to have a satisfactory knowledge of the country. We can consider the beginning of this process to be the study for the UNDP on the quality of justice, in 2014, with face-to-face interviews carried out by one of the authors, a Guinean and a Portuguese jurist, with judges at all levels in Bissau, from the first instance courts to the Supreme Court, and with members of the Bar Association. These interviews were analyzed with documentary research of the texts of two dozen judgments handed down by Guinean courts, already in the public domain. Elements from a variety of research were used in the analysis, and the study on the articulation between customary law and formal law ([Bastos, 2015](#)) should be emphasized. This sectoral analysis methodology contributed to understanding but was not sufficient to investigate access to justice in the country ([Sangreman et al., 2019](#)), and Conference Paper ([Sangreman, Faria, & Turé, 2023](#)).

The question remained of which area would serve to agglutinate the sectoral studies. At first, the area of politics was the "hat" for the holistic reading we wanted. There was plenty of data on political life, but not from the perspective of the citizens (the users in this area). To this end, a survey was carried out with a representative sample of the population on the perception of democracy in all regions. This survey served as the groundwork for a doctoral thesis ([Pereira, 2021](#)). Another type of methodology, documentary research, led to a book chapter ([Sangreman et al., 2019](#)) and a paper ([Sangreman & Semedo, 2022](#)). But the conclusion of this line of research was that the population was moving away from the quarrels and games played by politicians (and the military for that matter) in their daily lives, so this "hat" didn't serve as a methodology either. It should be noted that the voting rate in elections remains very high. So, the distance referred to is relative, although it is clearly expressed in the surveys. A new general research question was then formulated: *The basic hypothesis is that between 40 and 50 years after independence from Portuguese colonialism, the country was able to evolve in terms of access to Economic and Social Human Rights at a low and irregular, but constant rate, always accompanied by a very unstable evolution of civil and political rights, far from the population's expectations*, based on the idea that the population's access to human rights could be the axis we were looking for analytical support. To answer this question, a Social Science Research Laboratory methodology was defined with the aim of being able to get to know the real context, with its weaknesses and potential, and to have publications with national authors, technicians, activists, and researchers from Guinea-Bissau.

Studies have thus been carried out on the HR of access to justice, education, health, and housing, using a

methodology defined as face-to-face surveys of users or families, with paper forms, analyzed using free software, and the results discussed at specific open and publicized meetings. In order to create practical methodological continuity, a team of surveyors was organized who lived in the areas they were going to survey, mostly social activists, and who had another means of subsistence apart from the surveys. With these criteria, a National Association of Inquirers of Guinea-Bissau was organized, which today carries out all types of data collection. This is an important point of methodology due to the stability, training, and social status of these surveyors in their regions of residence. Little by little, this national team began to carry out and compile surveys in Excel and to incorporate the use of mobile phones to communicate results to coordination whenever necessary. The results of these projects on access to HR, which took place between 2015 and 2021, have been published in three books, and traveling exhibitions have been held, so that respondents can see the results in their regions. It was learned that the methodology—favoring Portuguese editions and accessible dissemination such as exhibitions—had to always bear in mind that the people collecting the information had to have sufficient social status in the regions where they live to obtain the answers, eliminating processes where outsiders do the surveys, be they students from the Guinean capital or European researchers.

We also learned, from carrying out surveys, debates, and disseminating information on HR that gender differences, about the presence of the military in society. The information was confused and, above all, always spoken of in secret, but also was a constant. Observing the daily resilience of the population was an unavoidable reality for anyone who wanted to understand the evolution of HR in the country. It was not possible to interview military personnel, despite having tried with the Division of Guinean Military Women, and only one article by Pedro Rosa Mendes was published, with reflections on the legitimacy of the interventions of military personnel coming from the struggle for independence ([Mendes, 2019](#)). But gender differences/inequalities were the subject of an enquiry into the social status of women, which led to a book, supported chapters in other books, articles on identity and applications for projects with more funding. Resilience was the subject of a survey for the European Union's Joint Research Centre, which is being used as the factual basis for a PhD dissertation, a study on the population's behavior in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic with a survey of families, market vendors, and companies; a published book; debates in Bissau; and an article in a scientific journal ([Sangreman & Turé, 2022](#)).

These investigations brought up references to *guinendade/i* (pride in being Guinean) and social identity as an area that could contribute to a holistic analysis of the country. An exploratory online survey was carried out using the methodology of J. Cheek, S. Briggs, S. Smith, and L. Tropp of phrases, with a choice on a

Likert scale. The acceptance of this methodology was very positive (102 invitations were sent out in a convenience sample and 183 responses were received) and it was learned that we need to deepen this line of research. The results were publicized, but they weren't very enlightening ([Sangreman, Faria, & Magalhães, 2023](#)). There was a feeling that many elements of identity were missing, either because of our own mistakes or because the methodology was inadequate.

This whole process also taught us that the evolution of civil and political rights is always present, conditioning economic and social rights, no matter how much the population tries to distance itself from party and personal rivalries and political instability. So, we followed the League of Human Rights in Guinea-Bissau (<http://www.lgdh.org/p/a-lgdh.html>) and published readings of the evolution of HR in Guinean society, always taking the organization's reports as an integral part of the bibliography. Some civil and political rights have been the subject of their own enquiries, such as freedom of the press, with a book published.



Section Summary

- The researcher must accept that reality is very elusive in such an unpredictable country. In other words, a hypothesis is as likely to be true as false. And it is the reality, not the narratives we can have about it, that drives the research.
- Researchers who have the opportunity to test methodologies must do so rigorously, rejecting those that are not satisfactory for the objectives, as the authors have done.
- Theories are tested by comparing them with reality. This very obvious truth should lead researchers to accept that there may be no theories that can satisfactorily analyze a country's reality, and that is not a problem.

Practical Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned from Practice

We learned that the construction of a research process on a complex subject with many variables cannot be

constrained by time. In other words, we have to plan the research by adapting the survey teams, analyzing and interpreting the results to the social time in which the subject of our work is taking place.

The key is to design a methodology that is both capable of responding to the difficulties of the process and flexible enough to be altered if the application, interpretation, and production of knowledge in the field, considering the whole context, leads to the conclusion that it needs to be changed. This is what we have endeavored to do over time without fear of making mistakes.

When we look for other research or studies, we find a great lack of data collected with tested and coherent methodologies explained and published. Even international organizations don't include detailed methodological chapters in the studies they fund in the country. For example, UNICEF, which has collected significant social data on women and children from 1996 to 2018–2019 (Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey) (Ministério da Economia e Finanças, Direção Geral do Plano/Instituto Nacional de Estatística [INE], 2020), still publishes only part of the methodology followed in each of the six editions. This is an obstacle to defining a universe that allows the sample to be defined using more elaborate criteria. The solution was to have samples that were not statistically significant, but within the minimum sampling standards defined for research that does not require many variables to be crossed, as is the case with a study focused on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The statistical knowledge and rigor of the team of surveyors, although limited due to the poor quality of education in Guinea-Bissau, which makes it difficult to understand, interpret, and measure the data, was compensated for by training and monitoring throughout the process.

We learned that we have to change the gender composition of the field teams according to the theme of the survey, because the gender of the questioner continues to influence the quality of the answers. A male surveyor in an inland region with a majority Muslim population took a long time to get data on antenatal consultations, because he was afraid of what people would say about him if they saw him asking such questions. It had to be done by a female enquirer.

What we would have done differently in these 10 years could be centered on a change of strategy: to include a Guinean research institution from the outset. Either the National Institute for Studies and Research (<http://www.inep-bissau.org/>) or a university, however incipient and unstable. This change should make it possible to constantly debate methodologies and results, acting as a center for researchers, even if most of

them have not completed PhD degrees. A link between these institutions and the Centre for African and Development Studies at the University of Lisbon, where two of the authors do research, should ensure the continuity of the research even if there are changes in researchers. The link with Casa dos Direitos (House of Rights: <https://casadosdireitos-guinebissau.blogspot.com/>) where an author is director of the main NGO (LGDH) based in Bissau, was very important because of the access to different research and some debates, but the function of the nongovernmental organizations that promote this institution has not been investigated beyond the promotion and defense of HR.

We believe that the methodological practice of seeking information from families, schools and health centers (as the nuclear society organizations) with representative samples of the whole population and face-to-face collection by national surveyors is fundamental and should be followed by other researchers. The alternative of carrying out fieldwork on small urban population groups, defined using criteria with little content (e.g., the inhabitants of a neighborhood in the capital) due to a lack of research budget, should only be followed if the case to be studied is equally limited and focused (e.g., the impact of building a rubbish dump in a neighborhood). And the conclusions must be equally focused. The use of small sample groups as if they fulfill the criteria of representativeness is a tendency that is accentuated by the lack of budget facing research but is dangerous because of the erroneous conclusions it leads to.

We can also consider that there are three areas that need specific research to contribute to the holistic vision we are looking for. These areas are the economy, culture, and biodiversity. In fact, we haven't done any research into the economic fabric of the supply side. We've done only some research into family livelihoods. That is, on the demand side. And today we think that was a mistake.

Biodiversity in Guinea is very rich and is the subject of several studies with a variety of sources, as there are several NGOs campaigning for its preservation. And also, a public institute with a good level of financial funds from external partners ([Janeiro et al., 2008](#)). In this case, it is difficult to define a methodology that allows us to use these sources but to distinguish between those that are based on aspirations, desires, and militant imagination and those that seek to understand reality as it is presented in a social context with contradictory attitudes and behaviors towards natural resources. We haven't managed to construct such a methodology.

Culture—access to Cultural Rights—is a much bigger problem. First, the historic independence leader Amílcar Cabral defined the liberation struggle as an act of culture, giving the concept a new dimension. Secondly, the cultural policy of the various governments is limited to propagating the most folkloric aspects without be-

ing able to think about or finance other initiatives. The largest NGO in the country—Tiniguena—is the main backbone of a cultural agenda that seeks to inform about the activities that different organizations are carrying out with funds from international cooperation (see further readings). Conducting research into culture in the country implies a methodology to understand how the current paradigm of the monetization model for welfare goods and services relates to these activities. This was not done by the team.



Section Summary

- Methodology must be designed to obtain answers from existing reality and not on what the researcher imagines.
- It is important to use other research or information gathered for nonacademic purposes, always taking care to check the methodology and not wanting to obtain more from this data than what is actually there.
- The lack of funds for research must not lead to poor quality work. If I include in the methodology that I want to base it on interviews with mayors from a country with eight regions and I get only one interview, that research is not of good quality.

Conclusion

The main conclusion to be drawn from the methodology of this research process in the social sciences is that the interpretation of information on any topic must take into account knowledge about the context in which it develops, which cannot be obtained only from sources outside academia, nor can we fall into the illusion of linearity. In other words, each evolutionary process in a society has several readings, and we must make a well-founded choice as to which one we want to use to frame our research topic.

The second conclusion is that routine in methodology is a virtue. In other words, the data has to be collected in the same way, with similar methods, so that it can be used over time. Having a team of researchers, publishing the methodology followed, articulating the interpretation with research that has already been done, is a routine that makes it possible to raise the quality of each individual process. And mixing the results of a workshop on the subject with information from a survey of a representative population must be done with great

care and attention.

The third conclusion is that if a researcher is looking for answers to a particular topic, in a master's or PhD process for example, they should spend some time analyzing other research, even if it has little to do with their topic, before defining the methodology they want to follow. You shouldn't simply use the stereotypical methods in the literature, as this only shows that you're not capable of thinking about reality.

The fourth conclusion is that research only makes sense when it satisfies the researcher and those who participate as respondents and enquirers. Research that doesn't care who answers the questions asked is a trial that leads directly to top-down decision-making processes about people's lives, coming from national or international actors/stakeholders.

The fifth conclusion is that if we have a research topic that affects people from poor and poorly educated social groups, we can't base the information-gathering work on nonpoor and better educated groups simply because they are much more accessible. The students don't represent the poor population at all.



Discussion Questions

1. To increase knowledge about a country, is it justified to use a comprehensive methodology or is it preferable to investigate topics within the same country without aiming for a holistic analysis?
2. If you had to choose a single synthesis theme to guide your analysis of a country, which area of knowledge would you look at? (For example, one of the following: economics, politics, the environment, access to human rights, social identity, inequality, poverty, gender, the structure of social groups, ethnicity, traditions governing family and community power, etc.)
3. To get to know the culture of a people, pressured by the paradigm that generalizes the use of the monetary and measurable value of each good or service as a criterion of usefulness, what methodology can we adopt?



Multiple Choice Quiz Questions

1. In a state with weak institutions, what methodology should be used to define the standard of well-being?

- a. Organize a data collection on consumption with a sample of families.

Correct Answer

Feedback: Well done, correct answer

- b. Analyze the population and housing censuses because only these data cover the entire statistical universe.

Incorrect Answer

Feedback: This is not the correct answer. The correct answer is A.

- c. There is no need for research as the standard of well-being is universal.

Incorrect Answer

Feedback: This is not the correct answer. The correct answer is A.

2. What methodology should be used for socially sensitive issues of women's access to human rights, such as domestic violence or female genital mutilation?

a. Collecting information on reports, complaints, and arrests from the police.

Incorrect Answer

Feedback: This is not the correct answer. The correct answer is B.

b. Collect information with direct and indirect questions from different samples of women, without the presence of men.

Correct Answer**Feedback:** Well done, correct answer

- c. Collect information in secret from women with a representative sample of the population.

Incorrect Answer**Feedback:** This is not the correct answer. The correct answer is B.

3. What are the two main characteristics of Human Rights inquirers?

- a. They should be well-dressed and polite, and they should show that they know the subject of the survey well.

Incorrect Answer

Feedback: This is not the correct answer. The correct answer is C.

- b. They should be recognized as social activists and know how to empathize with the people surveyed.

Incorrect Answer

Feedback: This is not the correct answer. The correct answer is C.

- c. They should be known and respected by the population they are going to survey, and knowledgeable about the subject and other problems of the population.

Correct Answer

Feedback: Well done, correct answer

4. What is the difference between laboratory methodology and observatory methodology in social science research?

a. There is no difference.

Incorrect Answer

Feedback: This is not the correct answer. The correct answer is C.

b. The Laboratory allows us to test hypotheses that the Observatory does not.

Incorrect Answer

Feedback: This is not the correct answer. The correct answer is C.

c. The Laboratory is more focused on analysis and the Observatory more on social intervention, although they also carry out common activities.

Correct Answer

Feedback: Well done, correct answer

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