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## **CAN I HAVE SOME (MORE) PLEASE? TIPS ON WRITING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR QUANTITATIVE RESEARCHERS IN POPULATION HEALTH.**



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## To do list

- What a qualitative health reviewer would look for:
- The role of the researcher
- Observations on reviewers
- Overview of what needs to be included and explained
- Qualitative and mixed methods research
- Basic dos and don'ts



## Thoughts on reviewers

From range of disciplines:

- ARC - psychologists, anthropologists, health promotion, sociologists, economists, educationalists, nutritionists
- NHMRC – epis, psychologists,
- Some from the social sciences will have their own disciplinary perspective



All reviewers want to be convinced that:

- qualitative research approach is the best suited for the topic
- methods are the most appropriate
- research is achievable
- evidence that the researcher is skilled and experienced

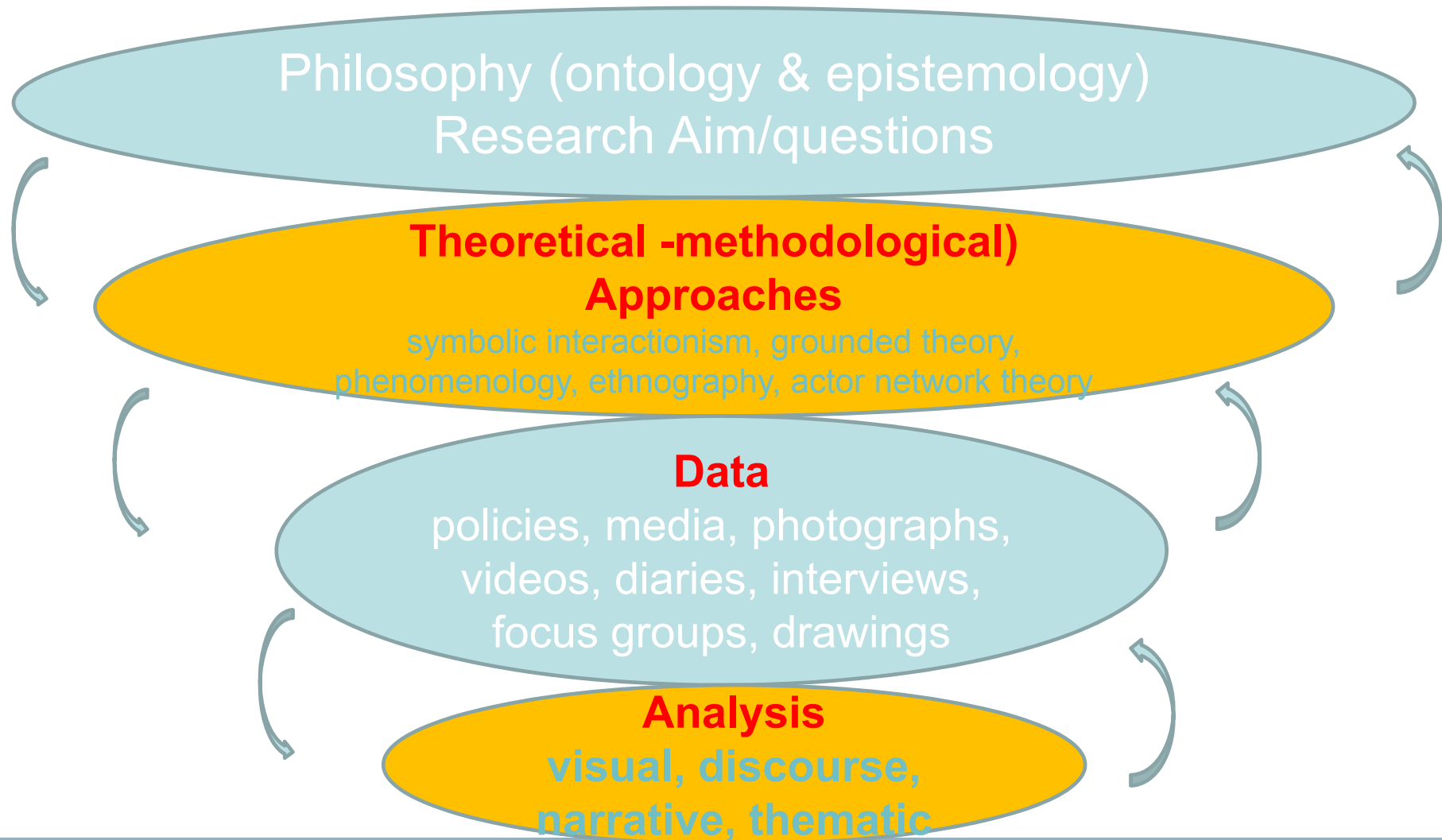


## What a qualitative reviewer would expect to see in a qualitative grant application

- Theoretical approach (paradigm, perspective, conceptual framework)
- Research aims, questions, objectives
- Methods - justification of
  - Research site and study group of interest
  - Recruitment strategies
  - Research tools, data collected
  - Analysis
  - Strengths & limitations
  - Impact
  - Experience of the researcher(s) - the researcher is the tool.



## Qualitative Research





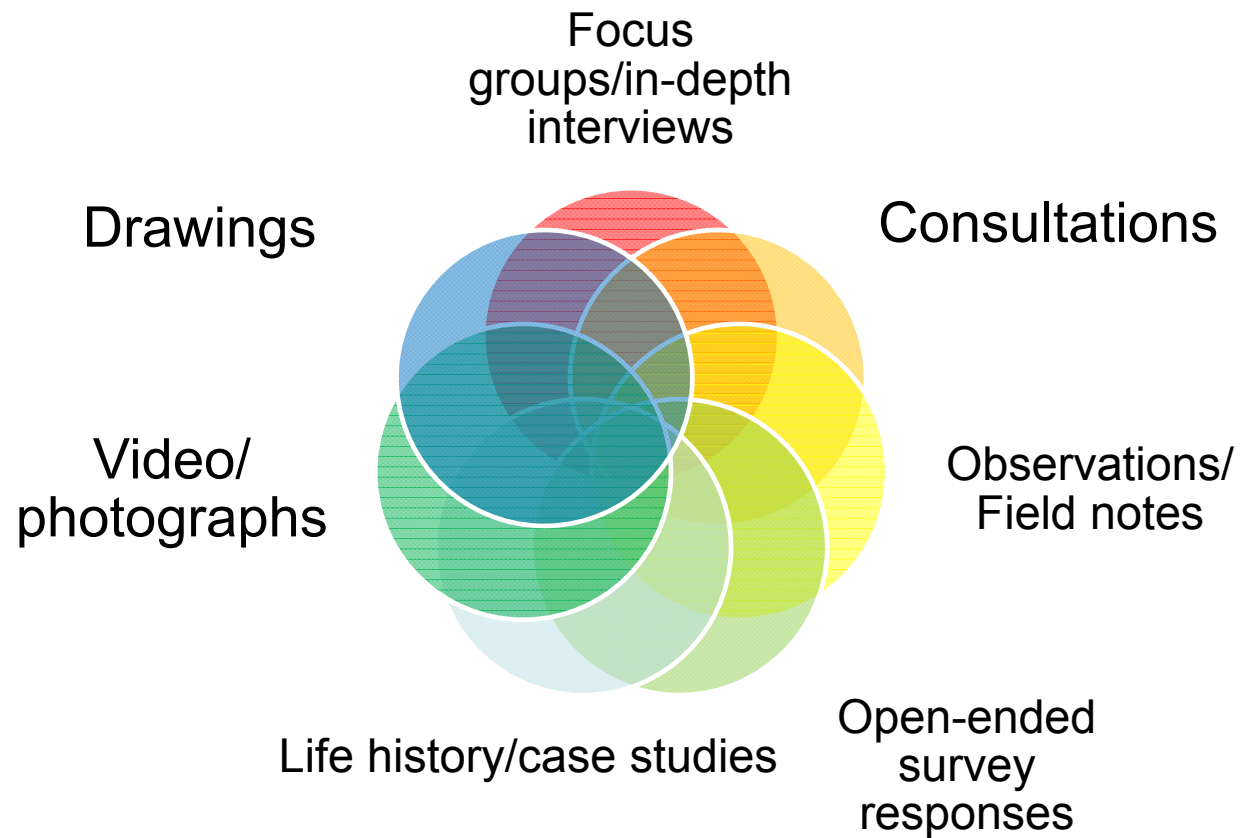
## Theoretical approach or framework for qualitative proposal

- Name and reference one/several approaches/frameworks – can range from pragmatic, realist, to constructivist, interpretivist
- Practice theory, phenomenology, grounded theory, symbolic interactionism, feminist theory, critical medical anthropology, ethnography, health promotion, participatory research
- Link this to research aims and questions – they must be qualitative - appropriate.
- Reasons - understanding, perceptions of participants, exploratory, explanatory, processes, explanations



# Qualitative research data

**Justify your  
choice of  
data  
collection**







## Methods

- Research sites (often place based)
- Purposive sample - Identify why this group has specific experience, knowledge related to the topic. (key informants, specialists?)
- Research group recruitment strategies – by location, by workplace, by health condition or risk, what are the difficulties and how to overcome them



## Sample size

No sample size calculation BUT

- Justify numbers of participants – small, non-generalizable
- Very difficult to estimate in applications because the budget requires a specific number ( for transcription) – but perhaps provide a range.
- Refer to texts on saturation – explain what this is, and how it relates to the intended number of participants, adequate data



## Data collection

- Data collection –often a mix of qual methods–provide details, what each tool/ method does and doesn't do
- Balance between showing that you are well prepared & that you are taking an inductive, reflexive, flexible, approach.
- Analysis – what approach (name it), what tools used (computer program), who is involved.
- Strengths & limitations - discussion about what the research can and can't do.



## Mixed methods are great – *right?*

But reviewers:

- often focus on the area that they are familiar with and ignore the rest
- expect several proposals in the space allotted for one (difficult to write in 10 pages)
- question how to synthesise data from different methods?
- Use a team to cover the areas of expertise, evidence of previous team work?

## CHEAT SHEET – METHODOLOGY DOs AND DON'Ts

DO	DON'T
<b>Do</b> describe your project in <b>clear and simple</b> terms and in a <b>logical order</b> .	<b>Don't</b> try to impress (or bamboozle) the reviewer with excessive complexity and jargon – you need a bit but not too much.
<b>Do</b> commit to research questions.	<b>Don't</b> ignore issues of flexibility
<b>Do</b> have propositions or theories to develop or explore and be open to any possible conclusion from your data.	<b>Don't</b> say anything about testable hypotheses or anything that “pre-empts your conclusion”
<b>Do</b> discuss (if appropriate) how causation or explanation is understood in social sciences	<b>Don't</b> imply that you can find statistical associations or causality.
<b>Do</b> use appropriate qualitative language.	<b>Don't</b> use quantitative language that leads reviewers to think in a quantitative way or implies that this study is quant.



## Appropriate language

Quantitative	Qualitative
Hypotheses	Research questions –(propositions)
Experiment	Study/project
Subjects (Respondents)	Participants
Found results	Identified themes, patterns,
Findings/results	Analyses/findings
Significant	Noteworthy/Key/Important
Passive tense	Active tense
Researcher invisible	Researcher visible.



## From quantitative team members - I need HELP with....

- As qual research does not need a sample size, how do I determine number of participants? Do I need random sampling or just select groups/individuals whom I think are relevant to my research focus?
- Lots of my projects have a longitudinal/prospective component to the research – how can I design the qualitative aspects of my project to incorporate this?
- Due to non-generalized nature, how do I convince reviewers (policymakers/stakeholders/sponsors) that our findings/analyses are relevant to policy (recommendation)
- How can I talk about the ‘impact/translation’ side of my qualitative research project? Given it seems more ‘small-scale’ can I still talk about the implications for policy intervention and informing population-level interventions?
- How do I estimate budget for a qual research proposal? What are key factors to be considered?
- In a mixed methods proposal - how can I demonstrate that the quantitative and qualitative projects are well integrated?
- No of interview questions: small and qualitative – how do I check internal consistency of the responses?



# Questions?



Thanks - SCH