

P5 Reflection

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In my foreword I have written that this graduation process has been a great joy as well as a great struggle. This graduation lab has allowed me to explore different fields; more specifically economics, philosophy and psychology. This holistic approach has made the research more complete, but also more confusing for myself and perhaps also of lower academic quality than I had aimed for. This is because it is impossible to specialise in all of the aforementioned fields within a year; not only in its content but especially in the research paradigms predominant in this field. Even in the academic world there is no one truth, and making mistakes is inevitable, especially when synthesising different fields. The most important thing is to be reflexive, and that is especially true for critical research in which the aim is not only to observe but also to change.

If I were given the chance to conduct a research in the future, I would be much more transparent in the research process. I would do this by keeping a structured research log, and describe in detail the steps that guide me in a certain direction, or that provide me with certain insights. This would greatly improve the quality of the research, in terms of credibility, transferability and consistency. This research is mainly the result of abduction, and even though I was not always sure how exactly I got an idea, the most important thing is to describe the steps taken prior to the “discovery”. Furthermore, I was aware of the different methods of data collection, but not of the different means for data analysis and data interpretation. This is now something that I can think about more critically beforehand, and actually describe in the methodology section.

From the beginning of the research until after the P4, I could not make choices. This was because I did not really know exactly what the most important themes and concepts were. As I proceeded, I gained more knowledge and repetitively shifted the focus towards something that I thought was more important. Even if you are new on a certain topic, it is never too early to conduct unstructured interviews and pilot cases (and this process should be described in the research as well). These will give more guidance than an ever-continuing search for literature and will help in further interviews to ask more directed questions. An exploratory research should be demarcated too, especially if it is conducted within a limited amount of time; and it is important to define the point of saturation.

Furthermore, the findings of the search should only be based on what was actually found in the research. I tended to come up with different theories that were not necessarily backed up by my data collection and analysis; rather than best guesses (the process of abduction) they were wild guesses.

Thinking about the methodology of a research is something that many students find dull and obligatory; but it is exactly what I have gotten to appreciate in the past year. I am (painfully) aware of the fact that the methodology section of my graduation research is not the best, but I now I know how I could make it better; and that is part of the learning process. In my opinion, the design of the study is actually the most challenging and interesting part of conducting a research. There is no one correct design; each design has its benefits and shortcomings, but as long as you are aware of these shortcomings, any design can work.