

Chapter 17

Foucauldian Genealogy as Qualitative Research Method

Tiwari Pavan Kumar

Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra, India

Bimal Chandra Roy

Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra, India

ABSTRACT

Foucauldian genealogy, with its potential to inspire critical and creative thinking, provides a framework to expose power-knowledge constellations, often inherent in techno-scientific discourses perceived as apolitical and ahistorical. By invoking the question of whether Foucauldian genealogy is a method or methodology, this study unearths existing literature on Foucauldian genealogy to bring forth its epistemological postures. It argues that Foucauldian genealogy could not be binarized into the exclusivity of method or methodology. While it possesses methodological rhythms, it also allows for utilising theoretical tools available in genealogy and could also act as a method. For instance, in the field of history, genealogy can be used to trace the evolution of power structures, while in the field of sociology, it can be used to understand the formation of social norms. In the spirit of methodological pragmatism employed by Foucault, genealogy could be strategically employed by scholars of various disciplines, empowering them to think critically and creatively in their research.

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3693-3069-2.ch017

INTRODUCTION

Etymologically, the term methodology combines two nouns, Method and Ology. Ology is defined as “a subject of study or a branch of knowledge” meaning that methodology could be seen as a study of methods or a branch of knowledge dealing with the methods (Oxford Dictionaries, 2023c). Therefore, before discussing the methodology further, it is prudent to discuss the method first. The Method is defined as a procedure for accomplishing or approaching something, particularly in a systematic or established manner (Oxford Dictionaries, 2023a). In research, the method can also be used to facilitate a systematic evidence-gathering exercise (Harding, 1987; King, 1994). Methods are various tools, techniques, and processes (like interviews, observation, focus group discussions, etc.) that the researchers actively use during their study, and researchers from various academic backgrounds may use different methods to fulfill their research objectives (Campbell, 2016).

On the other hand, methodology is defined as a set of methods followed in a certain field of study or research endeavour (Oxford Dictionaries, 2023b). This definition means that methodology can contain various methods and has a purpose in terms of study or activity to achieve well-defined goals. Concurrently, taking it as a branch of knowledge dealing with the methods can also extend the existing limits of knowledge about utilizing methods for various studies. While the methodology is a study of methods, it is prudent to highlight that methodology is not limited to an isolated study of methods in itself; rather, it utilizes methods such as “general principles or axioms” for generating new knowledge. It includes conjectures of logic, epistemological assumptions, and values to produce reliable knowledge that could inform the research (McGregor & Murnane, 2010, p. 3). In this spirit, methodology can combine methods, formulate procedures, and outline the guiding principle to facilitate the research process. Thus, in research, a method isolated from a methodology does not hold much relevance; rather, the methodology provides purpose to the methods. Methods are the means of scientific investigation into a research context, and the methodology determines their strategic usage and interpretation (Campbell, 2016). In contrast to methods, methodology always has embedded theoretical perspectives and epistemological positions under which it is formulated and exercised (Crotty, 1998).

The above discussion outlines the characteristic commonalities and distinctions between method and methodology. Researchers rely on a method to adopt a systematic and established procedure of scientific investigation in research activities like research hypothesis formulation, study boundary identification, evidence collection, analysis of collected evidence, and deriving research findings. Researchers may use several research methods to fulfill research objectives at various research stages. However, in one research, there can be only one methodology combining a

10 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/foucauldian-genealogy-as-qualitative-research-method/364417

Related Content

Faculty Videos of Resilience Narratives at Two Institutions: Residency Resilience Skills Program Innovation

Hedy S. Waldand Brenda Bursch (2020). *International Journal of Innovative Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* (pp. 16-24).

www.irma-international.org/article/faculty-videos-of-resilience-narratives-at-two-institutions/245770

Digital Badge Use in Specific Learner Groups

Jacob H. Askerothand Timothy J. Newby (2020). *International Journal of Innovative Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* (pp. 1-15).

www.irma-international.org/article/digital-badge-use-in-specific-learner-groups/245769

Using Experiential Learning to Improve Student Attitude and Learning Quality in Software Engineering Education

Ferdinand Ndifor Che, Kenneth David Strangand Narasimha Rao Vajjhala (2021). *International Journal of Innovative Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* (pp. 1-22).

www.irma-international.org/article/using-experiential-learning-to-improve-student-attitude-and-learning-quality-in-software-engineering-education/273133

Noncognitive Skills and Student Success: Relevance, Assessment, and Strategies

Ross Markleand Samuel H. Rikoon (2018). *Critical Assessment and Strategies for Increased Student Retention* (pp. 1-19).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/noncognitive-skills-and-student-success/191931

How Can a Cybersecurity Student Become a Cybersecurity Professional and Succeed in a Cybersecurity Career?

Sandra Blanke, Paul Christian Nielsenand Brian Wrozek (2022). *Research Anthology on Advancements in Cybersecurity Education* (pp. 74-92).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/how-can-a-cybersecurity-student-become-a-cybersecurity-professional-and-succeed-in-a-cybersecurity-career/292105