**Challenges in recruiting vulnerable populations as a source of knowledge in qualitative research: The case of immigrants caring for a family member with mental illness**

*Evgeny Knaifel*

This lecture focuses on the challenges in recruiting research participants as potential sources of knowledge when investigating vulnerable populations in qualitative research. The research case that will be presented focuses on immigrants, specifically from the former Soviet Union (FSU), within Israel, caring for a family member with a severe mental illness. These caregivers represent a “hard-to-reach” group due to the intersectionality of their immigrant status, their ethno-cultural otherness/background, and mental health stigma. Therefore, an attempt was made to recruit the participants via two different methods: purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Despite this strategy, many difficulties were encountered during the recruitment process and data collection was delayed considerably. However, I propose that the critical analysis of challenges during the recruitment process paves the way for acquiring interactional and political knowledge regarding the study population. This knowledge is illustrated by examples of FSU caregivers who agreed to participate in the study and those who did not, as well as by a reflexive view of the researcher’s position and his interaction with the participants. The insight elicited through the recruitment process could be viewed as independent/sole data and as a possible source for triangulation with the knowledge obtained through the research interviews.

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