

Writing methodology for the social sciences

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**Capacity Building and Professional Development of Water
Governance and Regional Development Practitioners in the
Mekong, Salween and Red river basins (MK31, 32 and 33)**

**Workshop for Research Finding Analysis and Conference
Paper Writing**

1st-3rd April 2016

Methodology is a way to get data



Should realize...THAT

Readers/reviewers need to know how the data was obtained? (Kallet 2004)

1. reasons why you chose a particular procedure or technique.
2. consistent with accepted practice in the field of study
3. fulfilling the overall aims of the study

Should realize...THAT

4. Problems that were anticipated and the steps you took to prevent them from occurring
5. Sufficient information to allow other researchers to adopt or replicate your methodology
6. Readers possess a basic understanding of how to investigate the research problem on their own
7. The focus should be on how you *apply a method*

Writing methodology section (1)

1. Introduce the overall methodological approach for investigating your research problem
 - Qualitative or quantitative or combined?
2. Indicate how the approach fits the overall research design
 - make sure that your methods will actually address the research problem

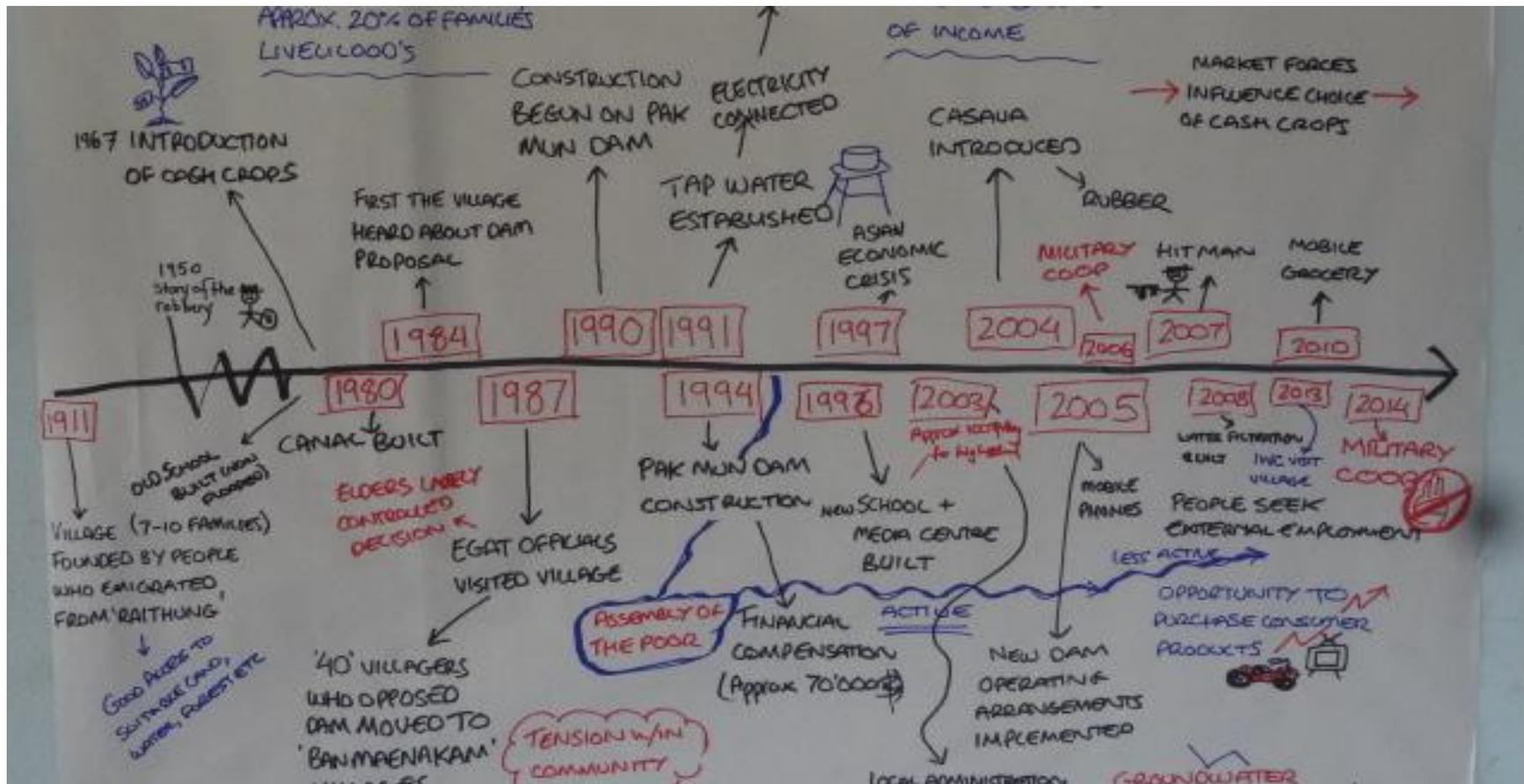
Writing methodology section (2)

3. Describe the specific methods of data collection you are going to use

- surveys, interviews, historical timeline, questionnaires, observation,
- If you are analyzing existing data, describe how it was originally created or gathered and by whom
- If gender is incorporated in interviews, questionnaires, observation?

Ex. Historical timeline

to understand rural change related to boarder issue of water management and development in Thailand



Source: IWC student, 2014

Writing methodology section (3)

4. Explain how you intend to analyze your results
 - Will you use statistical analysis?
 - Will you use specific theoretical perspectives to help you analyze a text or explain observed behaviors?
 - Describe how you plan to obtain an accurate assessment of relationships, patterns, trends, distributions, and possible contradictions found in the data.

Writing methodology section (4)

5. Provide a justification for subject selection and sampling procedure
 - if you propose to conduct interviews, how do you intend to select the sample population?
 - If you are analyzing texts, which texts have you chosen, and why?
 - If you are using statistics, why is this set of statistics being used?
 - If other data sources exist, explain why the data you chose is most appropriate to addressing the research problem.

Writing methodology section (5)

6. Describe potential limitations/challenges you have encountered while in the field

- Are there any practical limitations that could affect your data collection?
- How will you attempt to control for potential confounding variables and errors?
- If your methodology may lead to problems you can anticipate, state this openly

Example of writing research method

The first

A framework for analysing transboundary water
governance complexes, illustrated in the
Mekong Region

by John Dore, Louis Lebel and Francois Molle

The aim of the project was to contribute to water allocation policy and practice that results in more optimal and equitable use of water by society. This aim was pursued by research across the Mekong Region and active engagement with policymakers. We examined the use of a wide range of decision-support tools, in many decision-making arenas. In doing so, the research team sought to understand decision contexts and drivers, and also build capacity to undertake governance research.

Continue (2)

The team explored how tools have been used in different places and political arenas in the Mekong Region to govern water. The tools examined included: multi-stakeholder platforms, scenario building, cumulative impact assessment, strategic environmental assessment, environmental flows, hydrological modelling, and lobbying campaigns.

Continue...(3)

This paper is drawn largely from the project but only covers part of the research findings in the 26 working papers, most of which are proceeding through to formal publication (including: Dore, 2010; Dore and Lebel, 2010; Floch and Blake, 2011; Johnston and Kummu, 2012; Keskinen, 2012; Keskinen et al., 2012; Lazarus et al., 2012; Suhardiman et al., 2012). The project involved 52 researchers from 15 countries, including five Mekong countries.

The second example

The World Bank's Failed New Model for Hydropower
Development:

Nam Theun 2 and the Xe Bang Fai River Revisited

By Ian Baird, Bruce Shoemaker and Kanokwan Manorom

This study follows up on research conducted in February-March 2001, the basis for which was the publication of a book, *The People and Their River: A Survey of River-based Livelihoods in the Xe Bang Fai River Basin in Central Lao PDR*, by the Lao PDR-Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (Shoemaker et al., 2001).

The authors, who all speak Lao, conducted fieldwork for this study between December 30, 2013 and January 18, 2014. In total, 26 villages in seven districts and two provinces in the XBF Basin were visited and people from a number of other communities in the basin were also interviewed (see Figure 1 and 2). In all, hundreds of people were interviewed, but for varying degrees of time, and on various aspects of the issue.

The research methodology was based on an understanding of the current Lao political and cultural context. Hydropower in general and NT2 in particular have been controversial in Laos. Conducting an official study, if approved, would have meant that Government of Laos (GoL) and project officials would have joined the study team for its village visits. Given the GoL's strong support for NT2 and the lack of tolerance for dissent or opposing views in the country, it would have been highly unlikely that villagers would have been willing to speak openly, engage in frank discussions or have felt comfortable making criticisms of the project

- Therefore, we chose a more informal approach, visiting villages on our own. Rather than organizing formal village meetings we spoke with small groups and individuals—at their homes, in their rice fields, along their river banks, and elsewhere. Necessarily taking a qualitative approach, we observed the circumstances in the many locations we traveled by boat, foot, truck or public transportation.

We did not associate ourselves with the project developers but informed people that we had previously lived and worked in Laos, had conducted a study on the XBF thirteen years ago and were interested in learning how the river and people's livelihoods had changed since then. We spoke with those better off and those poorer, women and men, younger and older people. We heard a variety of perspectives, which would have been more difficult had we been part of an official study.

We conducted an extensive literature review and had a number of pre-trip and follow-up interviews with people familiar with the project. We have also considered our findings in relation to the NT2 Panel of Experts ongoing reports on the project. This article focuses on aspects of NT2 directly related to the Xe Bang Fai, not the project as a whole.

Double check if your writing methodology is clearly addressed the given guidelines