

Personal Bias Statement

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ELPS 871 – Introduction to Qualitative Research

Summer 2019

University of Kansas

Historical Context

Standing above the old town, looking down, you can see the old Shingle Mill where my Dad was raised. Huge log booms once waited in front of cabin-like homes, ready to be transported by tugboat to the mill, kids ran around with no shoes and less food, and everyone worked hard. When I am there, I can imagine the lives lived; the Japanese being rounded up and taken to internment camps, the boys who drowned playing on the log booms, the Dads who lost legs in the machinery, the jokes, the drinking, the humanity of it all. My Dad comes from a large Irish Catholic family of twelve siblings; six girls and six boys. This was his American mother's second marriage. Most of his siblings worked at the local pulp and paper mill or in labouring jobs and formal education ended around grade eight or nine.

My mother is from Ireland and immigrated to Canada in her early twenty's. She comes from a family of six siblings, all of whom attended boarding school, attended post secondary and work as professionals throughout various regions of the world. Her parents both worked as nurses at a psychiatric facility.

I am the middle child from a family of five children. With my Dads 12 siblings, and the strong Catholic roots that tie all of us together, I have well over 300 relatives in our community. I have always been a keen student and a person who enjoys sports.

My identity is firmly rooted in recognizing the value of hard work, education and dedication to the task at hand. My hard working parents have instilled in me a strong work ethic and drive for success.

Current Values/ Perspective

Those core values are still central to who I am. My parents have worked hard, struggled and remained happy and committed to one another, and to our family. They have built a life together and, as a result, many of us have achieved post secondary degrees, professional employment and have families of our own. All of us work hard and we remain supportive of one another.

Impact on what is studied

My values impact what I study for three reasons. I enjoy setting myself a goal and working towards it. I enjoy the challenge of exploring gender roles and I am interested in pursuing knowledge on social and cultural mobility.

Impact on Observation

My biases will impact my observations because I hold certain firm beliefs and these may impact how I interpret my observations. During observations, I notice gender, ethnicity, physical appearance, voice and interpersonal interactions. In school-based interactions, I focus on how students and teachers interact with one another and place value on kind and caring interactions.

Impact on Interpretation

I recognize that I have biases; I prefer quieter places to busy ones, I prefer being around complex systems and I prefer to be physically safe. The term bias has negative connotations, but I don't think of the term this way. My biases have helped me work, live, study and travel all over the world, and by staying true to the core of who I am, and by truly listening, I have had some modicum of success. I have a positive outlook on life and people. Being cognizant of my biases is important at every stage of the research process.

