

Reproductive Justice: A Literature Review of the Discussions in Qualitative Research

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ABSTRACT

This literature review seeks to offer a robust understanding on how Reproductive Justice is conceptualized and applied in qualitative studies. The review examines qualitative research articles published since 2013 and found on the following databases: SAGE Journals, Science Direct, Wiley, and Taylor & Francis. 'Reproductive Justice' is a search term for this literature review in addition to "reproductive" and "justice." The findings of this literature review aim to further qualitative research understanding and application of Reproductive Justice as an intersectional framework and find gaps in published research.

INTRODUCTION

Reproductive Justice is an intersectional framework used by community organizers and grassroots networks to advocate for and provide reproductive and sexual healthcare. According to Ross and Solinger (2017), Reproductive Justice "goes beyond the pro-choice/pro-life debate" (p. 10) with three principles:

1. the right not to have a child
2. the right to have a child
3. the right to parent children in a sustainable environment

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to review the discussions of Reproductive Justice in qualitative research and to identify the gaps within the literature for future studies.

Research Questions: What are the discussions about Reproductive Justice in qualitative research? How is Reproductive Justice applied as a framework within qualitative research?

METHODS

Databases: Science Direct, Wiley, SAGE Journals, and Taylor & Francis

Search Terms: "Reproductive Justice"; "Reproductive" AND "Justice"; "Reproductive Justice" AND "Qualitative"

Selection Criteria: The search criteria restricted the timeline of articles to the last 10 years (January 2013 to February 2023) and geographically restricted to the United States to examine the recent application of Reproductive Justice within qualitative research.

Search Results: 43 articles compiled for the literature reviewed based on the selection criteria. Articles selected for the review were found on Science Direct, SAGE Journals, and Taylor & Francis.

FINDINGS

Research included on one or more of the three principles while focusing on the following subjects:

- Reproductive decision-making and autonomy
- Access to abortion Post-Roe (Kulczycki, 2022)
- Access to abortion before the Dobbs' (2022) decision (Leyser-Whalen et al., 2021)
- Analyzed birthing experiences of marginalized women (Mehra et al., 2020; Dickey et al., 2022)
- Youth sexual health programs and experiences (Barcelos, 2018)
- Access to contraception (Winters & McLaughlin, 2020) and birthing experiences (Cavanagh et al., 2022)
- Centers marginalized voices and experiences in examining barriers to reproductive health care (i.e., abortion and contraception):
 - Native American/Indigenous (Lethabo King, 2021; Liddell et al., 2021; Liddell & Doria, 2022; Liddell, 2023; McKenzie et al., 2023)
 - Black (Luna, 2016; Brown et al., 2022)
 - Latina/Latinx (Guerra-Reyes et al., 2021; Leyser-Whalen et al., 2021)
 - Refugees (Kirkendall & Dutt, 2023)
- Normalizes abortion narratives and experiences to counter abortion stigma
- Challenges racism in reproductive and sexual healthcare
- Stressed the importance of equitable access to reproductive and sexual health care resources and education

SIGNIFICANCE

Though the studies engage in the three principles of Reproductive Justice and apply an intersectional framework, there are unexplored areas that qualitative research should examine.

The following are the identified gaps within the research:

- Gender representation: sex/gender binary is reinforced by centering cisgender experiences
- Frames reproductive healthcare as a "women's" issue and erases trans experiences
- Reproductive Justice not applied as theoretical lens and methodological framework



SELECTED REFERENCES

- Liddell, J. L., & Doria, C. M. (2022). Barriers to achieving reproductive justice for an Indigenous Gulf Coast tribe. *Affilia - Journal of Women and Social Work, 37*(3), 396–413. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08861099221083029>
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