Masterclass
The practice of qualitative research: interviewing and writing.

Thaddeus Müller
Lancaster University, UK
Riga, 27 April, 12:45–15:45
format

* 1. interactive (academic community; exercises)
* 2. your experience
* 3. short introduction on
* Qualitative Research
* Interviewing
* Writing


The Craft of Qualitative Research A Handbook

Edited by Steven W. Kleinknecht, Lisa-Jo K. van den Scott, Carrie B. Sanders Toronto: Canadian Scholars
Qualitative Research
Qualitative Research Cycle

- Differs from classic positivistic structure

- Hypotheses testing

- Linear:
  - Problem Hypotheses Operationalization Testing Hypotheses Yes/No
    - No hypotheses, but proposition or sensitizing concept
    - Not testing, but exploring
    - Deductive versus inductive
    - Learning from process: constant reflection
- Cyclical
- Iterative
- Back and forth
- Loop

- Method of constant comparison (Grounded Theory, Glaser & Strauss)
- Constant dialogue with data: analytical doubt
The Qualitative model

Problem (general)

Research questions (specific)

First exploration

research unit: location, situation, group, etc.

Data-collecting (method)

Data-registration

Data-analysis

Relating to literature/theory/definitive problem

Final text
What is your research problem?

Describe it in half A4 and indicate why this is qualitative research?
Main characteristics
Sampling

- Theoretical Sampling
- Theoretical Sensitivity

- Saturation: no new significant information
* Micro-(meso)level:  
  * human lived experience  

* Ajax Amsterdam Hooligans
Ethnography: participating in the social world (observing - participating)
Intro: F-side:
Intro: F-side
Qualitative research as a sensory, embodied experience

* Experience
* Eyes
* Ears
* Mouth
* Skin
* Feeling and thoughts

* Critical reflection on one’s own role
Thick description of meaning and behaviour

- Hooliganism
- Stapel
- Academic
- Fraud
By describing a phenomenon in **sufficient detail** one can begin to evaluate the extent to which the **conclusions drawn are transferable to other times, settings, situations, and people.**
Context: biography and career: over ten hours interview
Explorative: Submerging in vastness, complexity of social world one studies
Sensitizing concept

- Open approach:
- Sensitizing concept
- Intuitive / Aha-moment

- What is Wrong with Social Theory?
- Herbert Blumer
- American Sociological Review
- Vol. 19, No. 1 (Feb., 1954), pp. 3-10
Can you give me an example of a sensitizing concept in your own research?
Emic

* Emic-perspective versus etic-perspective

Litter for teenagers?
Hooliganism?
Families at riks?
Triangulation
Not a strict testing of hypothesis; method of constant comparison/triangulation

Constant comparison
Inductive

* Inductive versus deductive:
* grounded theory
* Is inductive and deductive
Obtrusive

*Obtrusive-unobtrusive*
Primary/secondary data
Can you give me an example of thick description from your study/research experience?
Interview (1)

Crim 201, lecture 6
Monday 13-11
Thaddeus Müller
Intro: interview-society

* Interview-society
  * Phone-interviews (safety)
  * Street-interview
  * Job-interview
  * Medical-interview
  * Journalistic interview

* TV-interview
  * Short duration
  * Angle
  * Opinion and TV-personality
  * Media-topic: sensational
  * Confirms the dominant societal perspective: etic-perspective
tv-interview
Qualitative interview
qualitative interview

* The qualitative / semi-structured interview?

* Thick description – thin description
* Emic-perspective – etic-perspective
* Context – one-liners
* Trust (rapport) – debate
* Deep – shallow (lifestyle interviews)
* No hidden agenda - agenda/ staged

* [http://www.buzzfeed.com/andrewkaczynski/is-this-the-most-embarrassing-interview-fox-news-has-ever-do](http://www.buzzfeed.com/andrewkaczynski/is-this-the-most-embarrassing-interview-fox-news-has-ever-do)
qualitative interview

* The perspective of the respondent is crucial
* The interviewer wants to gain access to the social world of the respondents
* Listening and follow up question are crucial
  * Can you explain this?
  * What do you mean with that?
  * Can you give an example?
  * No interruption
Three main strategies
The qualitative interview

1. interview as detective-work

2. interview as mining

3. interview as exploration
As detective work

* Jack Douglas, Investigative Social Research

* Persons with power
  * Front stage

* ‘Distrust’, something is hidden, wrong
  * Be strategic
  * Be informed
  * Counter their narratives
Diederik Stapel
Interview as mining

* Getting the facts right
* Example: Controlling coffeeshops
* How many times are the shops being controlled?
* What happens during these controls?
* How many incidents/rule breaking takes place?
Active interview

The interview is a co-production

Reciprocity

Listening and show that one listens through posing the ‘right’ questions, follow up questions.
Interview as exploration

* Integration of all models, but the emphasis depends on the research question and the respondent.

* During the interview the approach can change
  * Standard introduction: data as mining (personal data)
  * Then building up rapport
  * Final part: possible detective work and confrontation
* Example: Lance Armstrong versus Oprah Winfrey

* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2jtDH-10m2s

* 1. *interview as detective-work?*

* 2. *interview as mining?*

* 3. *interview as exploration?*
Four forms
Categories of semi-open Interviews

- The semi-structured interview
- The fleeting informal conversation/interview
- The focus group
- The elite- or expert-interview
The fleeting informal conversation/interview

* Part of being in the field:
* Goal directed:
  * Being approached, sharing information
  * Approaching, asking for information

* Non initially goal directed
* Example: inviting people for focus group, being at a meeting and a topic arises (be a reason to interview someone)
* Conversation that start casually and continue in an interview
* Example: Manager of community house: small talk and than he would say something interesting (do you mind if I right this down)

* Fleeting Conversation (open ended)
focus group

- Homogeneous/heterogeneous group
- One common focus
- a small set of questions
- Interviewer and moderator
- Everybody gets equal attention
- Follow up
- Discussion
- Differentiation of examples and patterns
- Ideal: orderly group conversation
The elite- and expert-interview

- Respondent ➔ Very knowledgeable, key-informant: policy-maker
- desired organizational/institutional image
- Agenda-issue
- More preparation: documents
- Main issue how to get behind the front stage
Challenges
Goal: a wealth of respondent narratives

No relevant information

- Sampling issue: wrong respondents
  Did not dare to say no/ did not understand you/lonely

- Emotional issue:
  Sensitive subject, shame towards you,
  Trust/distrust

- Social skills: not a verbal person

- Physical issues

- Social acceptable answers (‘fear’ of conflict/rejection)
Challenge: culture

* Questioning as interrogation

* Not able to reflect on one’s feelings, thought and actions

* Presentation of self
Skills
Topiclijst

Derived from central question/sub-question.

1. Intro (creating rapport)
2. Standard data on person (face sheet)
3. opening questions (general warming up questions, grand tour questions)
4. key-questions (specific questions targeting your themes)
5. Closing-questions (sensitive topics, summarizing checking questing, did I forget something, do you want to add something)
6. Ending

Always Pilot-testing and changes in the first interviews.
listening and directing

- Be open, listen and direct the interview
- The interviewer is the director (boss), but does not show it.

- Two styles: empathetic versus critical
listening and directing

- counterintuitive:
  - timing,
  - no direct reaction
  - taking notes,
  - reflecting on the process of the interview
  - Reflecting on the data of the interview,
  - comparing with other interviews

- Relation between interviewer and respondent is of great importance;
  - Power, age, gender, race, ethnicity

- Trust > Impression-management
* Goal: thick description
* Detailed info
  * Examples
  * Stimulate (continue please, ok, yes, I understand)
  * Probing (clarification, additional details, parroting)
  * Summary (checking, conformation)
  * Discussion (?)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?annotation_id=annotation_554130&feature=iv&src_vid=FGH2tYuXf0s&v=9t-_hYjAKww
**skills**

- Conducting Qualitative In-depth-interviews of Dr. William Marsiglio (conducting.qual.interviews.PDF)


Interview exercise

- What is your experience with qualitative research?

- How do you experience the conference?

- What is your experience of Riga?
Writing: Creating the narrative
Writing

* Writing is reflecting
* Writing is a analysis tool
* Writing is part of the academic dialogue
* Writing is rewriting: integrating new data / insights
* Writing is rewriting is restructuring the narrative
* Writing is being able to structure your data in a good argumentation
* Writing should result in a good compelling argumentation with a clear transparent coherent order
Writing

- Emphasizing relations (explicit)
- Between introduction and conclusion
  - Not all is answered and/or the wrong questions are answered (consistency)
- Between question and the structure of the data description
  - Each question has to be answered in new chapter/paragraph (argumentation)
The Qualitative model

- Problem (general)
- Research questions (specific)
- First exploration
  - research unit: location, situation, group, etc.
  - Data-collecting (method)
    - Data-registration
    - Data-analysis
  - Relating to literature/theory/definitive problem
  - Final text
creating the narrative

* **The big picture:** focus on the essential, create an abstract, use 300 words to describe the results of four research

* **Writing and presenting:** PPT

* **Data matrix, diagram and model**
creating the narrative

- **Process/pathway:** how does the theme develop, step by step (shoplifting)

**Most common academic narrative is:**

the theoretical extension/refinement: how does my data connect to the existing literature
Final remarks

* Sensitizing concept: transforms as a result of research
* Process, development: constant dialogue with oneself: what is the value of my data
* Theoretical sensitivity: balancing Induction and deduction, theory and data,
* stay in touch with literature
  • Saturation is closure: the case is fully researched and result in answering your question, resulting in the creation of (new) concepts and nice article
Final remarks

- Do not become a ‘grounded theory’ accountant
- Create space for creativity
  - Emergence via deep involvement with the field
  - Analytical doubt
  - Be open for new data/perspectives
  - The hunch, intuition
  - Comparison literature and data (or personal observations)
  - Create your narrative as early as possible and keep on writing, keep on writing, keep on writing........