Qualitative Research for PhD Students
Een interuniversitair vormingsaanbod voor doctoraatsstudenten

Initiatiefnemers
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APPENDIX B: Korte abstract van de seminaries

1. Theory Construction in Qualitative Research
Gert Verschraegen, University of Antwerp
a) Organized by UGent Doctoral School – Thursday May 3 + Tuesday May 22, 2018 afternoon sessions, from 14:00-17:00 at UGent
b) ECTS points to be gained through participation: 1ECTS point (6 hours)

Aims and content
This workshop aims to teach elementary knowledge and practical skills for theorizing qualitative social science inquiry. By a mix of lecturing and practical exercises in theorizing, it wants to make students familiar with the basic theoretical and epistemological choices implied when conducting qualitative research, while providing them with some skills for independently theorizing qualitative research observations.

Balancing theory and observations in qualitative research is a difficult and not always well understood problem. Some researchers focus all attention on methods and gathering data and only start thinking about theory after the empirical research has been done. Others conduct research to confirm a theory they consider highly plausible, or squeeze their findings into some existing theory. Still others patch together pieces of theory without providing clear links to their empirical data. In this workshop we want to think more systematically about the relationship between qualitative data, and theory and analyse some of the problems that are involved when trying to theorize your research observations, so that researchers get more skilled in constructing a theoretically informed research problem.

In the first part of the course we will introduce some basic philosophical and epistemological approaches to qualitative research and highlight which role theory plays in each of these approaches.
We will shortly discuss the limits of different philosophical and epistemological paradigms underlying qualitative research (e.g. naturalism, interpretivism, postmodernism), deal with both inductive, deductive and abductive approaches to qualitative research and emphasize the role of ‘heuristics’ for nurturing theory formation. In this way we also want to discuss some problems that plague qualitative researchers across the social sciences, like how to select cases, how to think about causality and explanation and how to manage the variation of observations.

In the second part of the course we will deal with some essential aspects of the research process, such as description, concept formation, operationalization of theoretical concepts, and explanation. We will provide practical exercises that enable participants to learn through doing. Participants will also be stimulated to provide examples from their own research and look for ways to theorize it.
Practical

The language of instruction and communication in this workshop is English. Participants must register for this workshop with their doctoral school. A maximum of 20 students can participate in the workshop. Participants will be provided in advance with accompanying literature.

Literature


2. Developing interview questions and basic interview skills

Peter A. J. Stevens, Ghent University

a) Organized by Hasselt University Doctoral School – **Thursday April 26, 2018 from 9:30-17:30 at UHasselt campus Diepenbeek**

b) ECTS points to be gained through participation: 1ECTS point (6 hours)

This seminar is intended for researchers who seek a general introduction in developing interview questions, and conducting qualitative interviews. Through lecturing, practical exercises in small groups and discussion of specific examples of qualitative interviews, participants will be stimulated to critically reflect on and develop a deeper understanding of the qualitative interview process. While this session focuses particularly on the process of developing interview questions and the practice of conducting interviews with respondents in a face-to-face situation, it will discuss broader issues related to the process of conducting qualitative interviews, such as: characteristics of different types of qualitative interviews (face-to-face interviews, group-interviews, focus-groups, elite-interviews), (theoretical) sampling in qualitative interviews, initial analysis of qualitative interview data and ethical issues in conducting interviews. In the morning participants will be given a thorough introduction in the process of qualitative interviewing through a discussion of real examples of qualitative research by the lecturer. In the afternoon, participants will be asked to make exercises individually and in group to obtain more hands-on experience in developing and conducting qualitative interviews. Finally, through classroom discussions, students will be given time to ask questions and/or discuss issues related to their own experience in developing and conducting qualitative interviews for their research.

The language of instruction and communication in this seminar is English, unless all participants understand Dutch. Participants have to register for this seminar with their doctoral school. Maximum 30 students can participate with this seminar.
3. Focus group interviews for advanced users
Dorien Brosens, VUB

a) Organized by UGent Doctoral School – Tuesday April 24, 2018 from 9:00-17:00 at VUB
b) ECTS points to be gained through participation: 1ECTS point (6 hours)

This highly interactive seminar reviews the theory and practice of focus group methods, and demonstrates how researchers can use focus groups to understand the issues, needs and ideas of particular groups (community groups, audiences, stakeholders, residents, users, customers, etc.). Participants will learn more about the history and theory of focus groups. Practical approaches to determining the appropriate use of focus group studies, design options, developing interview questions, recruiting participants, and moderating skills will be emphasized. This workshop will focus on the skills and knowledge needed to plan, implement, conduct and moderate focus groups.

Seminar format:

- **Morning session**: The morning session will focus on theoretical aspects of conducting focus groups and will include practical tips on how to design and conduct focus group studies (e.g. Questions of how to develop workable questions, how to recruit participants, how to plan a focus group study will be emphasized)

- **Afternoon session**: The afternoon session will focus on the practical aspects of conducting and moderating focus groups. Participants will be able to practice their skills in terms of designing interview questions and moderating a focus group. They will also give each other feedback afterwards.

After attending the seminar, participants are able to:

- Understand and explain the potential and limitations of focus groups as data collection methods
- Develop workable and useful research questions for focus group studies
- Describe the process and procedures for planning, designing and implementing successful focus group studies
- Demonstrate the ability to moderate focus groups
4. Ethnography in challenging contexts: observing and responding to deviance and conflict

Tom Decorte, Ghent University

a) Organized by VUB doctoral school – Friday March 30, 2018 from 9:30-16:00 at VUB

b) ECTS points to be gained through participation: 1ECTS point (6 hours)

This seminar is intended for doctoral students and other researchers who want to develop their knowledge and abilities concerning ethnography in challenging contexts in particular. According to ethnography, the social researcher immerses himself in the social setting under study. The aim is to experience events in the manner in which the subjects under study also experience these events and to discover the nature of social reality by understanding the actor's perception, understanding and interpretation of that social world.

In this seminar, students receive a brief description of the characteristics of ethnography, and we discuss different ethnographic studies (among hidden, hard-to-reach populations). In particular, the method of participant observation is extensively discussed during the first part of the course. When is participant observation recommended? Why is this method suitable for social science research? Also the advantages and disadvantages of participant observation and a number of issues concerning the choice of research object or place ('setting') for participant observation are discussed. Other important aspects of this qualitative method are also addressed: the different roles that a researcher can apply (overt versus covert), how to get access to the setting and how to stay in the setting and finally how to leave the field. In the afternoon, participants will be given (individual and collective) exercises in order to obtain (advanced) proficiency in the various ethnographic techniques. Students will learn how to be reflexive about the conduct of ethnographic studies, how to assess critically other pieces of research carried out in this tradition, and how to be aware of the main ethical issues raised by this particular research method. Participants will also be invited to ask questions and/or to discuss any concerns related to their own experiences, and will receive feedback from the trainer and other trainees.

The language of instruction and communication in this seminar is English, unless all participants understand Dutch. Participants have to register for this seminar with their doctoral school.
5. Critical Discourse Analysis

Stijn Joye, Ghent University

a) Organized by VUB Doctoral School –**Tuesday May 8, 2018 from 09:45-17:00 at VUB**

b) ECTS points to be gained through participation: 2ECTS points (2x6 hours)

Textbook definitions of discourse analysis generally characterize the field as heterogeneous and constituted of a wide range of assumptions, approaches and methodologies. Reflecting the rising popularity of discourse analysis within social sciences, definitions of ‘discourse’ itself are abundant. The same goes for methodological perspectives.

In the morning session of this workshop, students will get an introduction to social constructionist approaches to discourse and discourse analysis, in particular critical discourse analysis (CDA) as defined by Fairclough (1992; 1995). CDA emerged in the late 1980s as an interdisciplinary European school of discourse studies and ‘[s]ince then, it has become one of the most influential and visible branches of discourse analysis’ (Blommaert & Bulcaen 2000, p.447).

In the afternoon session, participants will be asked to make exercises individually and/or in small groups to obtain more hands-on experience in conducting CDA. Finally, through classroom discussions, students will be given time to ask questions and/or discuss issues related to their own research projects. For this purpose, participants are invited to submit questions related to their project prior to the workshop.

The language of instruction and communication in this seminar is English, unless all participants understand Dutch. Participants have to register for this seminar with their doctoral school. The number of participants is limited to 15.
6. Narrative Analysis

Carol Gilligan, NYU (USA)

a) Organized by VUB Doctoral School – **Wednesday April 18 + Thursday April 19, 2018 from 10:00-17:00 at VUB**

b) ECTS points to be gained through participation: 1ECTS point (6 hours)

This seminar is intended for doctoral students and other researchers who are working with narratives and asking a psychological question (a question about the experiences or inner worlds of others). The focus will be on listening. How do we listen to people’s narratives? What voices do we hear and also not hear? How can we bring ourselves into relationship with the inner worlds of others? What are the challenges of doing research that leads to discovery?

The Listening Guide Method is designed specifically for discovery research. It begins with four questions about voice: Who is speaking and to whom? In what body or physical space? Telling what stories about which relationships? In what societal and cultural frameworks? It specifies a series of listenings as a way of gaining entry into the inner world of another person: Listening for the plot; listening for the I, listening for contrapuntal voices (meaning for voices in the narrative that speak to the researcher’s question and the interplay between them). The evidence gathered through these listenings provides an empirical basis for composing an analysis or interpretation.

In the morning session (10u-13u), the Listening Guide Method will be presented and demonstrated on a common text. In the afternoon (14u-17u), participants will be guided through a listening guide analysis using their own narrative materials (transcripts of interviews or therapy sessions, letters, diaries, trial transcripts, etc) or working in small groups. This will be a working seminar and by the end of the day, everyone should have an initial grasp of how to do a listening guide analysis as well as an understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of this approach to narrative analysis.

The seminar will be conducted in English and is limited to 20 participants. Participants who have interview transcripts or other narrative texts are invited to bring one to work on in the seminar. For those who don’t, materials will be provided.
7. Strategies in qualitative data-analysis from a grounded Theory perspective: from coding transcripts to writing output

Dimitri Mortelmans, University of Antwerp

a) Organized by Ghent University Doctoral School – **Friday February 16, 2018 from 9:00 - 17:00 at UGent**

b) ECTS points to be gained through participation: 1ECTS point (6 hours)

*Making sense of qualitative data* is the title of a handbook by Goffey and Atkinson. But is probably one of the most important tasks a researcher has while doing a qualitative study. At the same time, it is one of the most difficult tasks because 'meaning' is a precious stone that is daunting difficult to mine for. In this seminar, we will use the Grounded Theory methodology to show starting researchers how they can analyse their data in a systematic way. The following topics are discussed in the seminar. (1) The transcript process: how do you transcribe ? What is necessary for a good transcript ? (2) Coding: what is open coding ? How do you choose your codes ? (3) Axial coding: what is axial coding ? How do concepts arise from your data ? (4) Selective coding: how to build your theoretical framework ? How to use graphical representations and storytelling effectively in your journal articles ? This seminar uses no software (see the seminars on Nvivo) and works with paper and pencil. All participants are invited to bring their own material (if already collected).

The language of instruction and communication in this seminar is English, unless all participants understand Dutch. In order to facilitate discussions between participants, only 10 participants can take part in this seminar.
8. Using NVivo for qualitative data analysis

Dimitri Mortelmans, University of Antwerp

a) Organized by Ghent University Doctoral School – June 21 + 22, 2018 from 9:00 - 17:00 at UGent

b) ECTS points to be gained through participation: 1ECTS point (6 hours)

NVivo is by far the most widely used qualitative software program in the Low countries. Unlike its popularity, many users have difficulties implementing the software in their daily research practices. This seminar gives researchers a first insight in the use of NVivo. The first day focuses on two basic tasks. (1) Project management: how to start an NVivo project and organize you material? (2) Coding: how to code your transcripts and visual material? Special attention will be attributed in gaining efficiency while coding. We also show how Memos are used and integrated in your qualitative analysis.

The second day, we continue with more advanced tools in the package. (1) Node and source classifications. These are badly understood concepts in NVivo while they give the qualitative researcher a powerful tool to make complex comparisons in their data. (2) Queries: how to build coding queries and text search queries? How to adapt queries to search for coding, grounded in its context? How to use queries in your coding work? We will also show how Classifications are used to explore your data with the Coding Matrix Query. This query is the most powerful query in NVivo and we show the different possibilities of this query in qualitative research projects. (2) Working in team: how to integrate NVivo in larger projects? (3) Other topics like the use of Maps, the use of NVivo in Focus Groups (if time).

Exercise material will be provided but if students have digitalized research material (transcripts, photos) they can make exercises on their own material. The language of instruction and communication in this seminar is English. Participants have to register for this seminar with their doctoral school. Due to the limited number of computers in the class room, only 25 participants can take part in this seminar.
9. An introduction to writing qualitative research papers for publication in academic journals

Peter Stevens, Ghent University

a) Organized by VUB Doctoral School – **Tuesday May 17, 2018 from 10:00-18:00 at VUB**

b) ECTS points to be gained through participation: 1ECTS point (6 hours)

This seminar is intended for doctoral students and other researchers who are on the verge of or recently started writing qualitative research papers for publication in academic journals. Hence, researchers who have published academic papers successfully might find (parts of) this seminar less relevant. Through lecturing, practical exercises in small groups and group discussions, students will be stimulated to critically reflect on and develop a deeper understanding of the process of writing qualitative research papers for publication in academic journals. The seminar focuses first on the context and process of publishing in a general sense, focusing on issues like the importance of publishing, authorship, planning of the publishing process, selecting topics and journals and the type of feedback you can receive from reviewers and how you could respond to this. In a second part, the seminar focuses on the structure and content of qualitative research manuscripts, with a particular focus on the qualitative-data analysis part of an article (which involves issues like the use of citations, use of quantifications in analysis, developing a structure, unpacking of relationships and developing rich descriptions). The lecturer will use examples of qualitative research papers in progress to critically discuss the process of writing qualitative research for publication purposes. The lecturer will send reading material to all registered participants a week before the start of the seminar. Participants are expected to read this material before the start of the seminar.

The language of instruction and communication in this seminar is English, unless all participants understand Dutch. Participants have to register for this seminar with their doctoral school. Maximum 30 students can participate with this seminar.
10. The bumpy territory of qualitative evidence synthesis: systematically approaching complex literature reviews
Karin Hannes, KU Leuven

a) Organized by UGent, Tuesday June 5, 2018 from 9:30-17:00 at UGent
b) ECTS points to be gained through participation: 1ECTS point (6 hours)

Arts based research (ABR) is a methodology in which the expressive qualities of form are used to convey meaning. ABR has successfully been used in a variety of different disciplines. In many cases the art is considered the ‘data’ (e.g. images instead of transcripts) or the vehicle for dissemination of findings (a creation or installation to communicate with a broader public instead of a written report). Artistically inspired research formats may present themselves as a drama or dance performance, an exhibition, an installation or a visual representation. These forms represent a considerable challenge for researchers not trained in the aesthetics of using forms. This is why most of us use artistically inspired data as a supporting tool rather than an end-product in itself. In this workshop we will present examples of how we have used artistic methods (visual data, (upcycling) materials,...) in the context of our research investigating challenges of international students and studying the relation between people and their living environment. We will share and discuss ethical pitfalls and challenges involved in working on the thin line between art and science. We will also apply some of these methods in practice.

“...there is a kind of passivity, willingness to let experiences accumulate and sink in and ripen, which is an essential of development. Results (external answers of solutions) may be hurried; processes may not be forced. They take their own time to mature. Were all instructors to realize that the quality of mental process, not the production of correct answers, is the measure of educative growth, something hardly less than a revolution in teaching would be worked” (John Dewey 1916; 1959, 50–1).


The language of instruction and communication in this seminar is English. Twenty-five students can take part in this seminar. Students are required to read two primary qualitative research articles in advance:
1. Daniel Kelly

2. Sally L. Maliski, Steve Rivera, Sarah Connor, Griselda Lopez, and Mark S. Litwin
   Renegotiating Masculine Identity After Prostate Cancer Treatment. *Qual Health Res* December 2008 18: 1609-1620, first published on October 27, 2008
doi:10.1177/1049732308326813
Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) is an analytical technique that allows for a systematic comparison of an intermediate to large number of cases on three to eight causal conditions. Hereby, it aims to identify the specific (combinations of) conditions under which the phenomenon under investigation (or outcome) occurs. In the thirty years since it was introduced by Charles Ragin, QCA has developed into a widely-used method in the social sciences. It has inter alia been applied to examine why democracy survived in some countries during the interbellum and broke down in others; under which conditions states participate in military operations; and why some governments are willing to engage in unpopular reform, whereas others shy away from this risk.

In the morning session of this workshop, we concisely discuss the type of research questions that can be tackled with QCA. Subsequently, students get a short introduction to the basic concepts that are used in QCA: the central notions of necessity and sufficiency, multiple conjunctural causation, truth tables and Boolean algebra. Next, we go over the basic steps of the original crisp set version of QCA using a “real-life” example of a QCA-application. Lastly, the more sophisticated fuzzy set version of QCA is briefly introduced.

In the afternoon session, participants will learn how to perform a QCA using the relevant R software packages. After these packages are introduced, students will be asked to make exercises individually and/or in small groups to obtain more hands-on experience in conducting QCA with the software.

The language of instruction and communication in this seminar is English, unless all participants understand Dutch. Participants have to register for this seminar with their doctoral school. The number of participants is limited to 20.