

Aim of the lecture



- To think back to your previous experiences on methods and fieldwork before entering the field
- Where do qualitative research strategies locate on the landscape of different research methods in urban and regional planning?
- What might be the landscape of learning from local stakeholders and people before you enter the field?

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My own research background



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- individual-level longitudinal data, various surveys analyses, qualitative interviews with residents, expert interviews, focus groups, documentary analysis, quantitative & qualitative observation, ethnographic approaches, action research, etc.
- 'Triangulation' in social sciences = taking different perspectives to understand the field
- Teaching methods for human geographers = understanding what methods can be used to get valid information and how to interpret it



Local landscape of doing research before you enter the field

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Some examples of the basic analyzes in Estonian municipalities

Räpina valla üldplaneeringu alusuuringud

- Tiheasustusalade alusuuring Võhandu jõe arengukoridori uuring väärtuste kaardistamine, ettevõtluskeskkonna analüüs

Kambja valla üldplaneeringu alusuuringud Kambia valla elanike liikuvusuurina

Kambja valla üldplaneeringu alusanalüüs

Tallinna kesklinna linnaosa üldplaneeringu

- Avaliku ruumi mõju inimese käitumisele Linnakeskuse ettevõtlus ja vabaaja veetmise aktiivsuste uuring metaLINN
- Kesklinna finnaosa üldplaneeringus Kesklinna finnaosa üldplaneeringus väärtuslike üksikobjektide(-hoonete) määramine. Ideekorje Maptionnaire (avalikkuse kaasamise platvorm) keskkonnas

The municipalities may have a considerable amount of recent research reports.

Saaremaa valla üldplaneeringu alusuuringud

- Saaremaa valla mürakaardi ja müra vähendamise tegevuskava koostamine
- 2021 Saaremaa valla üleujutusalade uuring 19.12.2019 Väikese väina ühenduse modelleerimine ja tulemuste

analüüs 19.12.2019 Ülevaade modelleerimisest ja üleujutusalad 2015 Väärtuslike põllumajandusmaade määramise aruanne

Example of Tartu: **Register of Studies**

rgustiku osas nna üldplaneeringu transpordivõrgustiku rimine ja analüüs audiee koridori uuringu linnaehituslikud

tiku- ja elamuprognoos 2040

<u>ahvastike is</u> non liikusikeem ikir, reo- ja sademeveekanalisatsioon nin_{si} arandus Tartis ^{Eartis}, jalgatturite ja tõukeratturite loendamine Tartu arandus <u>Arantus keskinnas</u>

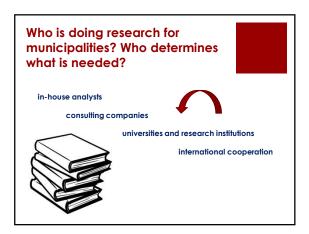
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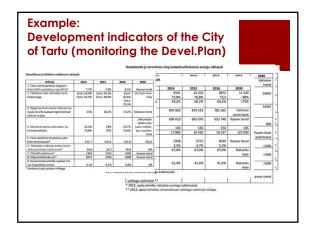
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<u>Tartu linna üldhariduskoolide õpilaste ja lastevanemal</u>
jalgraftateemaline küitlusuuring 20
<u>Kliimamuutustega kaasneva üleujutusoh</u>
<u>prognoosimine Emajõe vesikonna</u> Parem mobilisuse korraldus ja ligipääs avali hoone

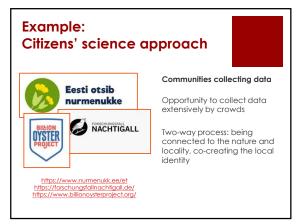
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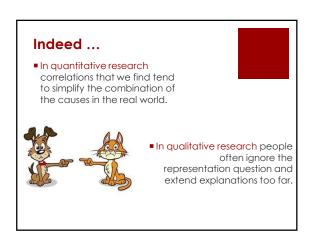


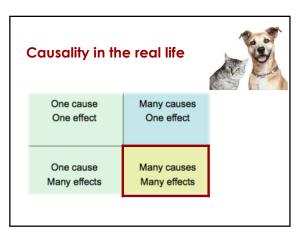
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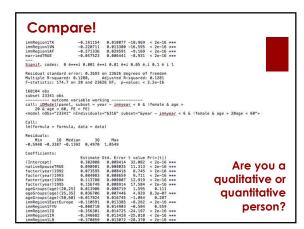


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Reasons to decide for qualitative approach?



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Reasons to decide for a qualitative approach

 Opportunity to create an understanding of the phenomenon relatively quickly

Opportunity to design the research project from the beginning to the end

Opportunity to be an expert of your own data

Cheaper research costs

 Lack of former clear hypothesis, need to explore

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.. or

- ... lack of good quality quantitative data
- ... lack of quantitative research skills
- A unique opportunity to use all your senses.
- Qualitative research attitude !!!

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Which qualitative methods we know?

- Interviews
- Focus group interviews
- Observation, participant observation
- Documentary and textual analyses
- Critical discourse analysis

• ...

In fact,..., it is possible to use seemingly qualitative methods but not to make qualitative research

Qualitative research attitude rather than data collection methods

Which are our assumptions? ! COMPARE!

- Reality exists. With gathering empirical data we can experience it.
- Scientist is objective.
- Knowledge is value-free.
- Our task is to discover universal laws.
- People create reality also with their thoughts, feelings and irrationality.
- Scientist is never objective, instead he/she should reflect his/her subjectivity.
- Making science is a social activity. Scientists have responsibility.
- Also rare events are causal.

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Qualitative research strategies & data collection methods

Strategies and attitudes

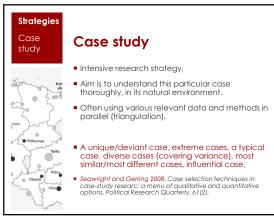
- case study
- ethnographic study
- grounded theory approach
- action research

• ...

How to collect and organize data?

- observation
- in-depth interviews
- group interviews
- content analysis
- ...

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Strategies
Ethnography

Ethnography

Describing the "culture" and understanding the life-style as it is conceptualized by the "locals".

Gathering meanings and categories.

Need to participate in order to understand.

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Action research

• Knowledge and common understanding created during a typical planning process (meetings, group discussions).

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Reasons for in-depth interviews

Additional knowledge to other methods (e.g., statistics)

To encourage people to argue and reason (compare: observation techniques)

To understand the complicated network of causes.

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Structured, semi-structured and unstructured INTERVIEWS

Methods Interviews

- Structured
- Formulated questions, fixed
- Formulated options for answers
- Enables quantitative analysis
- Direct contact with person (compared with a survey research)
- Semi-structured
- Main topics and questions are formulated
- Possibility to change order of topics, to add new questions
- Open-ended questions, answers not known
- Unstructured
- Only main topics are decided, but new topics may arise.
- Aim is to explore, former hypotheses and knowledge do not exist.

Interview is truly qualitative if...

- ... the interviewer is interested in the interpretations of the participants; aim is to understand how the daily routine has been constructed and what are its drivers.
- **Subjective theories** are accepted, and they influence the final conclusions made by the researcher.

"When a person defines a situation as a real, then the situation is real and brings along certain consequences ..." Flick 1998

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Informant vs. expert interview

Interview with an informant (e.g., resident of a district)

Interview with an expert



Sampling for interviews

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Purposive sampling

- **Theory-driven sampling** (analytical groups, sampling ahead of the research)
- Theoretical sampling (grounded theory approach, sampling as the study develops)
- Which cases (persons) you should study to understand the phenomenon under study (extreme, covers the variance, certain groups, gatekeepers, those who are able to reflect different views)?

Group interviews

Number of interviewers and interviewees



- Individual interview:
 one-to-one
- (trust between two persons, feeling equal)
- Double interviewees or small group
- (if the interviewee does not speak)
- Two or more interviewers
- (with stronger expert group, combining the knowledge of the interviewers)
- Group interview with one interviewer and assistant(s)
- (focus group, group processes)



Main reasons to choose for a focus group interview

6-8 persons Moderator (Observant-assistant)

Group processes as the aim

(cheaper? less time consuming?)

domination, being shy, being active, being passive, agreeing always, discussing, getting angry, being winner in a discussion, being a leader, being a follower, ...

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How to create a good group?

- Homogeneous group, equal members
- Comfortable environment
- People are interested, wish to change the issue, believe that something will be changed



Classical problems

- Established relations of domination
- Discussion have been held long before the interviewer arrived
- Topics that do not create discussion
- Over-exploited topic, controlling
- Opposition of personalities
- Discussion deviates to the topic that also inspires



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To ensure the successful focus group interview



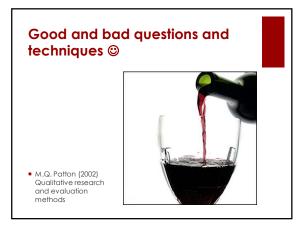
- Clear roles between the moderator(s) and assistant(s)
- Good and prepared "setting"
- Successful and inspirational intro (aim, ideas)
- Logical interview schedule, order of the topics
- Not too many topics (logical transitions to next sub-topics)
- Logical end

The personality of the interviewer and moderator



- Interview has to be in the hands of moderator.
- Interviewer should not dominate, creating co-operative environment
- Interviewer is also a personality and he/she participate in the communication and group processes.

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