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Before entering the field ...

**... REFLECTIONS ON RESEARCH METHODS
for urban and regional planners**

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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



- 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**

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Local landscape of doing research before you enter the field

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Some examples of the basic analyzes in Estonian municipalities

<p>Räpina valla üldplaneeringu alusuuringud</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tihedustalade alusuuring 2. Vähandu jõe arengukoridori uuring 3. väärtuste kaardistamine, ettevõtluskeskkonna analüüs 	<p>Tallinna kesklinna linnaosa üldplaneeringu alusuuringud</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Avaliku ruumi mõju inimese käitumisele 2. Linnakeskuse ettevõtlus ja vabaaja veetmise aktiivsuste uuring – metaLINN 3. Kesklinna linnaosa üldplaneeringus väärtuslike üksikobjektide(-hoonete) määramine. 4. Ideekarje Maptionnaire (avaldikuse kaasamise platvorm) keskkonnas
<p>Kambja valla üldplaneeringu alusuuringud</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kambja valla elanike liikuvusuuring 2. Kambja valla üldplaneeringu alusanalüüs 	<p>Saaremaa valla üldplaneeringu alusuuringud</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Saaremaa valla mürakaardi ja müra vähendamise tegevuskava koostamine 2. 2021 Saaremaa valla ülejuhtusalaade uuring 3. 19.12.2019 Väikese väina ühenduse modelleerimine ja tulemuste analüüs 4. 19.12.2019 Ülevaade modelleerimisest ja ülejuhtusalaad 5. 2015 Väärtuslike põllumajandusmaade määramise aruanne

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

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Example of Tartu: Register of Studies

<p>Tartu jalgsi ja rattaga liikumise võrgustikud I,osa. Võrgustik Tartu jalgsi ja rattaga liikumise võrgustikud II,osa. Rattastikud</p> <p>Sadamaraudtee koridori uuringu põhimõtted</p> <p>rahevõrgustiku osas</p> <p>Tartu linna üldplaneeringu transpordivõrgustiku modelleerimine ja analüüs</p> <p>Sadamaraudtee koridori uuringu linnaahtustikud põhimõtted</p> <p>Tartu rahvatähtsuse ja elamusprognos 2040</p> <p>Tartu linna liikuskeem</p> <p>Veevõrk, reo- ja sademeveekanaliseerimine ning maaparandus Tartu</p> <p>Jalakäijate, jalgratturite ja tõukeratturite loendamine Tartus 2020. a kevadel</p> <p>Liikuvuuring ja liikumise modelleerimine Tartu kesklinnas</p> <p>Tartu linna, Ravila ja Voruse vahelise piirkonna vee- sademevee ja reoveekanaliseerimise eelprojekt</p> <p>Peipsi, Pihva ja Lämmiäärne, Emajõe ning seotud jõgede kaldade ja veetalade kasutamise uuring</p> <p>Tartu linna kergrööbastansipordi teede määramine ning teostatavus- ja tasuvusanalüüs</p>	<p>Tartu jalgsi ja rattaga liikumise võrgustikud II,osa</p> <p>Meeskõne Tartus</p> <p>Tartu linna toimeala ja Tartu linna maagistraliitõnavaale liituseaeg</p> <p>Arengustrateegia "Tartu 2030" mõjuanalüüs</p> <p>Miljöövõrdluslike alade ja üksikobjektide ning kultuuripärandiga seotud objektide võrdleva analüüs</p> <p>endise Lõhvere valla territooriumi</p> <p>Liiklus- ja raudteemuuta mõõtmine Vaksali 3 ja 11. Hurdas</p> <p>38. Tammsaare 8</p> <p>Tartu linna avaliku tasulise parkimise ja tänavuse vutru</p> <p>2018</p> <p>Jalakäijate ja jalgratturite loendus Tartus 2018. a sügisel</p> <p>Tartu linna ja lähikümbruse liikuvusuuring</p> <p>Tartu ja Tartilased 2018</p> <p>Jalakäijate ja jalgratturite loendus Tartus 2018. a kevadel</p> <p>Tartu linna üldhariduskoolide õpilaste ja lastevanemate jalgrattateemaline küsitlusuuring 2017</p> <p>klimevahetusega kaasneva ülevõtteuuringu</p> <p>prognoosimine Emajõe vesikonnas</p> <p>Parem mobiilsuse korraldus ja liigipõis avalikele hoonetele</p>
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Who is doing research for municipalities? Who determines what is needed?

in-house analysts
consulting companies
universities and research institutions
international cooperation

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Today, Estonian municipalities are mostly good clients of applied research

FRIZON (FREE ZONE) December 2016

COMPARE

Example of the City of Umeå
Topic: gender equality in the city

- analyzes
- monitoring
- developing innovative methods
- combining research and inclusion

Freezone Park – cocreation example together with girls and young women

URBACT good practice city:
urbact.eu/gendereandscape

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Example: Development indicators of the City of Tartu (monitoring the Devel.Plan)

Indikator	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
1. Tartu elanikkondade koguarv	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
2. Tööhõive määr	62,2%	63,3%	64,4%	65,5%	66,6%	67,7%	68,8%
3. Registreeritud võõralaste arv	21%	18,2%	15,4%	12,6%	9,8%	7,0%	4,2%
4. Hõivatute järelevalv	21,3%	20,9%	20,5%	20,1%	19,7%	19,3%	18,9%
5. Tartu keskmise brutoaluste tulu	101,7	101,6	101,5	101,4	101,3	101,2	101,1
6. Tööhõive määr	62,2%	63,3%	64,4%	65,5%	66,6%	67,7%	68,8%
7. Elanikkondade arv	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
8. Keskmise elaniku sissetulek	11,1%	11,1%	11,1%	11,1%	11,1%	11,1%	11,1%

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Is 'more' or 'less' better? Example: City Dashboards

Dublin City Dashboard
<https://www.dublincity.ie/city-dashboard/>

Recommended: City Dashboard webinar (54 min):
<https://youtu.be/KQHC1dEgA>

Urban dashboards – functions

- To monitor the performance of the place and key targets
- Governance technology
- Giving/getting feedback from residents

Mappiness
Giving feedback in different places and situation about satisfaction and happiness

London City Dashboard
<https://citydashboard.org/london/>

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Example: Citizens' science approach

Communities collecting data

Opportunity to collect data extensively by crowds

Two-way process: being connected to the nature and locality, co-creating the local identity

<https://www.nurmennukke.ee/et>
<https://forschungsfaltnachtgall.de/>
<https://www.billionoysterproject.org/>

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Try to clarify first ...

What kind of research has been made already?

The key persons in the municipality who have an overview of it?

Are there some reports or open data that could be useful for you as well? Are any monitoring processes running?

Who have been already researched (sometimes overresearched)?

What it is that you need to add?

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Quantitative & qualitative explaining vs understanding measuring vs interpreting etc.

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Classical opposition

- You are positivist !!!
- How can you presume that such "simplified" categories exist. (read for example Gill Valentine 2007: Theorizing and Researching Intersectionality)
- But so many other explanations exist !!! Causality issues.





- How can you make such conclusions based on only six interviews?
- Who do your interviewees represent?

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Indeed ...


- In quantitative research correlations that we find tend to simplify the combination of the causes in the real world.



- In qualitative research people often ignore the representation question and extend explanations too far.

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Causality in the real life



One cause One effect	Many causes One effect
One cause Many effects	Many causes Many effects

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Reasons to decide for qualitative approach?

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Compare!



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Compare!

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lmRegionLTK      -0.191154  0.018077 -18.969 < 2e-16 ***
lmRegionLW      -0.228711  0.013380 -16.595 < 2e-16 ***
lmRegionLAF     -0.272326  0.020591  -9.169 < 2e-16 ***
marriedTRUE     -0.057523  0.006441  -8.931 < 2e-16 ***
-----
Signif. codes:  0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 0.3693 on 23626 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared:  0.1288,    Adjusted R-squared:  0.1281
F-statistic: 174.7 on 28 and 23626 Df,    p-value < 2.2e-16

168104 obs
subset 23341 obs
----- outcome variable working -----
call: lmModel(panelsubset = year ~ lmyear, < 6 & ifemale & age >
  28 & age < 60, FE = FE)
model: nObs="23341" nIndividuals="6316" subset="year ~ lmyear, < 6 & ifemale & age > 28age < 60"
Call:
lm(formula = formula, data = data)

Residuals:
    Min       1Q   Median       3Q      Max
-0.5948 -0.3387 -0.1392  0.4970  1.8549

Coefficients:
              Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)    0.392888    0.009514   32.082 < 2e-16 ***
nativeSpouseTRUE  0.090901    0.008035   11.313 < 2e-16 ***
factor(year)1992  0.073555    0.008516    8.745 < 2e-16 ***
factor(year)1993  0.084883    0.008659    9.711 < 2e-16 ***
factor(year)1994  0.127388    0.008887   12.919 < 2e-16 ***
factor(year)1995  0.156749    0.008914   17.584 < 2e-16 ***
ageGroupsage(18,23]  0.013986    0.008719    1.595  0.111
ageGroupsage(25,35]  0.036786    0.007446    4.929  8.1e-07 ***
ageGroupsage(50,60]  0.017854    0.016745   -1.064  0.287
lmRegionEastEurope -0.148951    0.013395   -8.262 < 2e-16 ***
lmRegionFYU       -0.088718    0.014983   -5.941  0.559
lmRegionIQ        -0.356391    0.014725  -24.197 < 2e-16 ***
lmRegionLIR      -0.346682    0.013428  -25.818 < 2e-16 ***
lmRegionLWB      -0.278859    0.013072  -28.378 < 2e-16 ***
  
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Are you a qualitative or quantitative person?

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Reasons to decide for a qualitative approach

- Opportunity to create an understanding of the phenomenon relatively quickly
- ... or
- ... lack of good quality quantitative data
- ... lack of quantitative research skills
- A unique opportunity to use all your senses.
- Qualitative research attitude !!!
- 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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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

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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

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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
Case study

Case study

- Intensive research strategy.
- Aim is to understand this particular case thoroughly, in its natural environment.
- Often using various relevant data and methods in parallel (triangulation).
- A unique/deviant case, extreme cases, a typical case, diverse cases (covering variance), most similar/most different cases, influential case,
- Seawright and Gerring 2008. Case selection techniques in case-study research: a menu of qualitative and quantitative options. *Political Research Quarterly*, 61(2).



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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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Strategies
Action research


Action research

- Take off your white gloves !!!
- Both participants and researcher have responsibility to change the things better, if needed to intervene.



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Action research



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

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Interviews

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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

<p>Structured</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formulated questions, fixed order ▪ Formulated options for answers ▪ Enables quantitative analysis ▪ Direct contact with person (compared with a survey research) 	<p>Semi-structured</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Main topics and questions are formulated ▪ Possibility to change order of topics, to add new questions ▪ Open-ended questions, answers not known 	<p>Unstructured</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Only main topics are decided, but new topics may arise. ▪ Aim is to explore, former hypotheses and knowledges do not exist.
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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)

- Interviewer should not be an expert !!!

Interview with an expert

- Interviewer should not be an expert !!!





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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)?

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Group interviews

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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)



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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



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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


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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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Good and bad questions and techniques 😊



- M.Q. Patton (2002)
Qualitative research
and evaluation
methods

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Enjoy being on the field !!!



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Thank you!

Questions !?!

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