

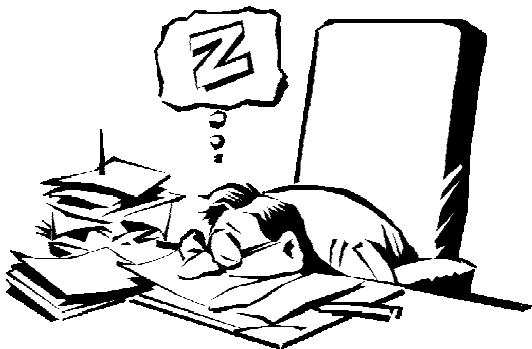
**SKI 2085**

**Ethnography and**  
**Qualitative Interviewing I**



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# **Ethnography and Qualitative Interviewing I**

## **Course Description**

Qualitative Research is an overarching term for a diverse range of approaches and methods within different research disciplines. Qualitative researchers essentially “study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Ritchie 2003: 3). Ethnography is one form of qualitative research and means literally “writing culture” (Hesse-Biber 2006: 230). Often called “participant observation”, ethnography is based on the simple idea, that in order to understand what people are up to, it is best to observe them by interacting with them up close and personal within their everyday lives. Ethnographers provide detailed accounts of the everyday practices of a culture, subculture, organisation or group by “hanging out”, observing and recording the ongoing social life by taking fieldnotes and/or by providing “thick descriptions” (Hesse-Biber 2006: 230).

This is part one of an overall sequence of three skills trainings within which students design and implement their own study, analyze the data collected, and report on their research findings. In this first module students will learn about various research tools, such as participant observation and qualitative interviewing. Students will learn how to take fieldnotes and will be introduced to various forms of interviewing such as the structured interview, the in-depth interview and focus groups. Taking fieldnotes and interviewing will be practiced in and outside of the classroom. Moreover, students will be guided through the process of crafting a feasible research question and the appropriate design for the study which they will pursue in the follow up modules of this course. The research questions will provide the basis for student’s investigations. What is to be investigated is entirely up to the student(s). However they will be provided with guidance in the formulation of their topics.

Note: Students will have to implement at least one interview. If you do not have access to a tape recorder and/or video camera, you can check out a recording device at the UCM secretariat.

## **Course Objectives**

The course is designed such that, by the end of this module, you will understand the difference between qualitative and quantitative research. You will understand how to set up a feasible research question for a qualitative research design. Further, you will have gained expertise in conducting interviews and participant observation and have learned about different methods of interviewing. By the end of the three course module you will have been introduced to the “art of writing culture.” If you are willing to put the necessary work into it, you will have produced a fine piece of qualitative and/or ethnographic research.

## **Instructional Format**

The course is based on a learning-by-doing approach. In addition to discussing the course readings, we will, among other things, conduct interviews during course sessions and then critically evaluate them. Please be aware of the fact, that, since you will implement your own study within the course of the three modules, most of the work for this course will happen outside of class. In other words, this is a labor intensive (but very fun :-) skills training in which you will be engaged in collecting your data, analyzing it and then writing a report.

## **Literature:**

Recommended book available at the university bookstore:

Nagy Hesse-Biber, Sharlene and Patricia Leavy. (2006) *The Practice of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage. (available at UCM reading room)

or new edition at Selexyz:

Nagy Hesse-Biber, Sharlene and Patricia Leavy. (2011) *The Practice of Qualitative Research*. Second Edition. London: Sage.

E-Reader (see Appendix)

Non-Mandatory Literature (all available at UCM reading room):

Burawoy, M. (2000). *Global Ethnography*. University of California Press.

Mitchell, Claudia. (2011). *Doing Visual Research*. Sage Publications.

Rubin, H. (2005). *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. Sage Publications.

Ritchie, J. (2003). *Qualitative Research Practice*. Sage Publications.

Silverman, D. (2005). *Doing Qualitative Research*. Sage Publications.

Silverman, D. (2010). *Doing Qualitative Research*. Sage Publications.

## Assessment

**You will in this course: conduct one interview outside of class time and produce a 500 word transcript of this interview, do one hour of participant observation and produce one set of field notes, present on two empirical studies, present on another team's research proposal, and write a qualitative research proposal.**

There will be two moments of graded assessment in this course:

**30% Presentation** (approximately 30 minutes long) on two studies of your choice (unless you choose to present a book, then you only have to present the book). This is a group assignment. Groups consist of 2 students per group. The presentations will be between 20 – 30 minutes long (depending on the amount of time we have available). The main purpose of this assignment is to compare and contrast two articles with regards to content as well as methodology. You may choose one qualitative and one quantitative study on a similar topic and then present on the different type of information you gain from one versus the other. You may also choose two qualitative studies and compare them to each other. Please consider some of the questions on p.5 when preparing your presentation. All presentations will be given in week 5 and 7.

Please submit your presentation slides as well as a copy of your articles to safe assignment. Author, title, publication date and the Journal in which the article was published in should all be on your presentation slides.

Furthermore, please make an *informed* choice of your articles, i.e. don't just take the first articles you can find. You should be able to tell us why you have chosen these articles and not some other ones. The articles should fit together nicely. One way of doing this is to choose a special issue on one topic from the Journals *Ethnography*, *Contemporary Ethnography* or *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*.

In your presentation, please, critically assess the studies by focusing on methodology as well as the content of the articles. This is what you will be graded on. Although this is a matter of your own choice, I think it is a good idea to match the topic of your presentation with your research project.

**Note: The presentations need to be held the day they are scheduled. If you are sick or have problems with your team partner, please let the coordinator know at least 48 hrs before the presentation, otherwise you will receive a fail.**

**60 % Research Proposal** in a team of two on one research topic of your choice. Research projects are conducted in teams of two students, i.e. you will write the proposal with your research partner. **Please be aware of the fact that you will work on this topic together with your research partner for the entire semester!** It may be someone from the other groups. **The length of the final version of the proposal should not exceed 1500 words.** A draft of the proposal will be due in week 6 for the purpose of peer evaluation. You will exchange drafts with one other research team in the last session of this module, so please bring two copies of your proposal to class in

week 6. Instructions on how to give feedback to your class mates can be found in Appendix 3 (p. 30) of this course manual. **The final draft of the research proposal is due Friday, October 20 at 17:00 hrs. Please turn in a digital copy (via safe assignment) as well as a hard copy. If I do not get a hard copy your proposal will not be graded.**

(see p.8 of this course manual for further instructions.)

**10%** During this course you will have to conduct one qualitative interview, do **one hour of participant observation, and produce one set of *extensive* field notes (3 – 5 pages).**

**INTERVIEW** Most of the interviews will be conducted outside of class. During class, one demonstration interview will take place. It is an option to use the demonstration interview in class as the outside of class interview every student has to do--- this way the student who volunteers for this can save time. As an interviewer you have to prepare the interview beforehand and bring an interview guide to the interview. Also the interview needs to be recorded. **In order to pass the interview task, please hand in a 500 word verbatim transcription of your interview by the end of week 6.**

**Attendance** According to UCM rules and regulations you are allowed to miss one meeting for this course. If you miss two meetings, you may apply for an additional assignment. Depending on the reasons why you missed additional tutorials, it is then up to the course coordinator to decide whether or not you qualify for an additional assignment.

**Resit** In case a student fails the course, he or she is allowed to do a resit if, and only if, the first attempt, can be considered a serious try. If the work you hand in is not considered a *serious attempt* by your tutor you will not qualify for the resit.

**Laptops** Please leave your laptops closed during tutorial sessions. Thanks.

## Presentations

### **Instructions for presentations on a qualitative study:**

Please take the following questions into consideration:

Why are you choosing to compare these two studies? What is your reasoning behind your choice of these two articles?

Comparing the two studies with each other, what are their strength and weaknesses?

What is the content of the studies? How is this related to the methodology of the study?

What kind of knowledge do we gain from these articles?

What particular theoretical questions are these studies answering? What kind of social issues are being addressed?

What type of knowledge do you gain by conducting a qualitative study/quantitative study?

Are the chosen methods appropriate?

How would you evaluate the study? How do you perceive the credibility of the researcher and the research? What about the validity of the research (see Hesse-Biber, 2006, p.62, validity as craftsmanship)?

How would you evaluate the reliability of the studies (see Hesse-Biber, 2006, p. 68)?

What about the significance of the studies? Is this research socially relevant?

If you were a member of a selection committee, would you fund this research? Why or why not?

What did you learn from each study and from which study did you learn more?

Describe what you have learned from each study and how this differs or how is it the same?

You are invited to be critical, but be clear on what your criticism is based on. Please avoiding just claiming things without telling us why you are making this claim.

You can find following Journals that contain qualitative studies at the UM library, articles can be obtained electronically:

*Culture, Society and Praxis*

*Cultural Studies*

*Cultural Sociology*

***Ethnography***

***Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power***

***Journal of Contemporary Ethnography***

***Journal for Undergraduate Ethnography* (<http://undergraduateethnography.org/>)**

*Ethnography and Education*

*Psychology & Developing Societies*

*Psychology of men & masculinity*

*Psychology of Women Quarterly*

*Sociology*

*Qualitative Health Research*

*Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*

*Qualitative Social Work*  
*Qualitative Sociological Review*  
*Qualitative Sociology*  
*The Sociological Review*

Note: This list is not exhaustive, it only entails suggestions. You can go into the list of e-journals available at the UM library and type in keywords in order to find more journals focusing on your area of interest.

This is a group assignment. Groups consist of 2 students per group. The presentations will be between 20 – 30 minutes long. For your power point presentations, please make sure to not use too many slides and have plenty of text/material to support the slides. You should not be reading of the slides, but rather the slides should be supporting your presentation. See below for suggested books.



**Books on qualitative studies are available at the UCM reading room:**

**Becker, Howard S. et al. (2005) *Boys in White: Student Culture in Medical School*. New Brunswick: University of Chicago Press.**

Classic study of student medical culture conducted in the 1960s by now very well known ethnographer and sociologist Howard Becker. (participant observation)

**Burawoy, Michael et al. (2000) *Global Ethnography: Forces, Connections, and Imaginations in a Postmodern World*. Berkeley: University of California Press.**

This is a collection of ethnographic studies within the context of globalization. The book represents nine studies ranging from homeless men in the San Francisco Bay area to immigrant communities in the US and India. (participant observation and interviews)

**Frankenberg, Ruth. (1993) *The Social Construction of Whiteness: White Women Race Matters*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press. (UM library)**

US study of how white women are affected by racism. (life history interviews)

**Robben C.G.M. and Jefferey A. Sluka. (Eds.) (2007) *Ethnographic Fieldwork: An Anthropological Reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.**

Collection of essays on different aspects of ethnographic fieldwork.

**Twine, France Winddance. (1998). *Racism in a Racial Democracy: the maintenance of white supremacy in Brazil*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.**

Fascinating study of how racism is reproduced in a seemingly colorblind society.

**Venkatesh, Sudhir. (2008) *Gang Leader for a Day: A Rogue Sociologist Takes to the Streets*. New York: Penguin Press.**

**Wieviorka, Michael. (2004) *The Making of Terrorism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.**

Interesting study by French sociologist Michel Wieviorka with a strong focus on radical Western European left-wing terrorism; in the latter part of the book he includes a more international perspective with a special focus on accounts of Palestinian and Lebanese terrorist organizations.

**Willis, Paul. (1977) *Learning to Labor: how working class kids get working class jobs*. Farnborough, Hants: Saxon House.**

This is a classic ethnography conducted in the 1970's. It is considered a standard in the field. In this study of working class boys in Britain, Willis investigates how these boys remain working-class.

(UM library)

Further recommendations (available online):

**Rabinow, Paul. (1999) *French DNA: Trouble in Purgatory*.** Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

<http://books.google.nl/books?id=hSpORobXqjQC&printsec=frontcover&dq=rabinow+french+dna&cd=1#v=onepage&q&f=false>

**Lowenhaupt-Tsing, Anna. (2005) *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*.** Princeton: Princeton University Press.

<http://books.google.nl/books?id=0w32dvoW0aEC&printsec=frontcover&dq=lowenhaupt+tsing&cd=3#v=onepage&q&f=false>

**Bijker, Wiebe et al. (2009) *The Paradox of Scientific Authority: The role of Scientific Advice in Democracy*.** Boston: MIT Press,

<http://books.google.nl/books?id=1RSozQMLWagC&printsec=frontcover&dq=bijker+authority&cd=1#v=onepage&q&f=false>

## Research Proposal Guidelines

Your research proposal should be persuasive, i.e. you need to think about the audience who is going to read it and “speak into their listening”. In other words, “a good proposal is an argument .... for the researcher’s project.” Your proposal should also be clear, practical and you need to situate your research into a larger societal context. You can do that by showing specific ways in which your research can address a social problem. You might find following questions useful in developing your proposal: How is your research question connected to larger processes and forces? Who might find this research useful? Why should anyone be interested in my research? Is the research design credible, achievable and carefully explained? Is the researcher capable of doing the research?

When preparing a research proposal, try to find answers to three questions suggested by Keith Punch (2006:20):

- 1 *What?* What is the purpose of my research? What am I trying to find out?
- 2 *How?* How will the proposed research answer these questions?
- 3 *Why?* Why is the research worth doing (and/or funding)? What will we learn and why is it worth knowing?

You can answer these questions better by following five principles:

- Aim for crystal clarity.
- Plan before you write
- Be persuasive.
- Be practical
- Make broader links.

(Silverman, David. 2010. *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*. Third Edition. London: Sage Publications, pp. 179 - 185)

A note for ethnographers:

When they enter the field, participant observers face a deluge of information. Without some guiding lens they quickly drown. ***The purpose of the proposal, is to provide that initial lens. The proposal should describe the site you want to study, why you are interested in that site and what you expect to find when you get there.*** The more precise and detailed your expectations are, the more likely you will be wrong and, therefore, the more quickly your site will become interesting. You will be forced to confront your own prejudices, erroneous assumptions, and ask how it was that you were so off the mark. You will already have a puzzle and a rationale for continuing the study. You may change your mind about what is interesting but at least the proposal will give you a point of departure. In short, with the proposal you will have the first draft of your final paper. In choosing a site I encourage you to adopt one that is unfamiliar since you will be more easily surprised by what you find. In a place you already "know," you will have the advantage of understanding its hidden norms, its latent discourses but you will also take a great deal for granted. The familiar is more difficult to problematize, to

turn the normal into the abnormal and surprising. Also, if you are a known figure in your chosen site, you may have less room to manoeuvre since your allegiances will be already cemented. If you do choose a familiar site then you have to rely more on outside perspectives to problematize what you take for granted. For all of us, the seminar will be an important place to highlight the "extraordinary" in what appears to the observer become participant as natural and inevitable. In this connection you might want to read Merton's famous essay, "The Perspectives of Insiders and Outsiders."

(from a sociology course on Participant Observation taught at the University of California at Berkeley by Michael Burawoy

**<http://burawoy.berkeley.edu/syllabus/272E.pdf>**)

**Course Coordinator & Tutor:**

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**SKI2085 Ethnography and Qualitative Interviewing I****The Course at a Glance**

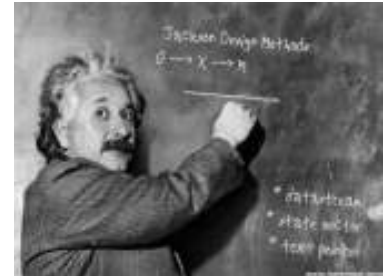
<b>Week 1</b> Sept 4 – Sept 8	<b>Lecture by</b> <b>Uli Müller</b>	<b>Introduction to Qualitative</b> <b>Methods</b>
	<b>Tutorial</b>	<b>Research Process</b>
<b>Week 2</b> Sept 11 – 15	<b>Tutorial</b>	<b>The in-depth and oral</b> <b>history interview</b>
<b>Week 3</b> Sept 18 - 22	<b>Tutorial</b>	<b>The focus group interview</b>
<b>Week 4</b> Sept 25 - 29	<b>Tutorial</b>	<b>Participant Observation</b> <b>Interview transcript due</b> <b>Fieldnotes due</b>
<b>Week 5</b> Oct 2 – Oct 6	<b>Tutorial</b>	<b>Presentations</b>
<b>Week 6</b> Oct 9 - 13	<b>Tutorial</b>	<b>Feedback on drafts of</b> <b>proposals</b>
<b>Week 7</b> Oct 16 - 20	<b>Tutorial</b>	<b>Presentations</b>  <b>Proposals due</b>

## Schedule of Readings and Weekly Tasks

### **Week 1: Mandatory Introductory Lecture**

**Mandatory lecture:** What is knowable? Who is a knower? How do we come to know? Two major approaches to knowledge construction

The lecture includes an introduction to the structure and content of the course, a synopsis of what qualitative research is and an explanation of the fundamental differences in the epistemological approaches of qualitative and quantitative research.



### **Homework assignment for this week's tutorial:**

Bring one qualitative research question to class. Be ready to write it on the board, so that we can discuss whether or not this is a “good” research question.

### **Week 1: Tutorial: The Research Process**

First hour: Post – discussion of the reading.

Second hour: What is a good qualitative research question?

Every student has brought one qualitative research question to class. The research question should be type written in large font size on a piece of paper. The research questions will be taped on the blackboard and then discussed.

### **Required Reading for today's tutorial:**

Coursebook: Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2006), *The Practice of Qualitative Research*, Chapter 2, “The Research Process,” pp. 45 – 82.  
(Second Edition, 2011) Chapter 3, pp. 31 - 57.

### **Recommended Reading:**

Coursebook: Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2006), *The Practice of Qualitative Research*, Chapter 1 and 3.  
and

(Second Edition, 2011) Chapter 2, pp. 15 - 30.

**E-Reader:**

Giddens, Anthony. (2001) *Sociology*. “Asking and Answering Sociological Questions.” Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 74 – 99.

Silverman, David. (2005). Chapter 6: Selecting a Topic. *Doing Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications., pp. 77 – 94.

Silverman, David. (2001). Generating a Research Problem. In *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction*. London: Sage Publications, pp. 5 – 22.



***Toolkit for Post-discussion: Suggested Questions***

Hesse-Biber, Chapter 2\*:

Concerning the research question, what is the difference between a qualitative and a quantitative research question?

What is a good research question?

How do researchers come up with research questions? How do they formulate them?

How do qualitative researchers think about issues of validity, reliability and generalizability? What is negative case analysis?

Explain how triangulation is used as a validity tool.

Explain sampling in qualitative research.

What does it mean to say that qualitative researchers use a “dance” model of inquiry rather than a step model?

What is a positivist approach to doing research? Who employs it?

What is an interpretive or hermeneutic approach to doing research? Who employs it?

Are the two approaches mutually exclusive? Can they be combined?

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\* The coursebook (Hesse-Biber) includes discussion questions in the back of each chapter, a large junk of these discussion questions here are taken from these sections.



Explain the qualitative versus quantitative “stance on reality”? How do they see reality? How does a worldview impact the research process?

How is research design impacted by philosophical and practical considerations?

**Silverman, “Generating a Research Problem” in *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text, and Interaction* and “Selecting a Topic” in *Doing Qualitative Research* (p. 77 – 94):**

What are the most common errors that are made when coming up with a research problem?

What is a workable research question?

Explain the three types of sensitivity.

What are the 4 major methods of qualitative method?

**Anthony Giddens in *Sociology*:**

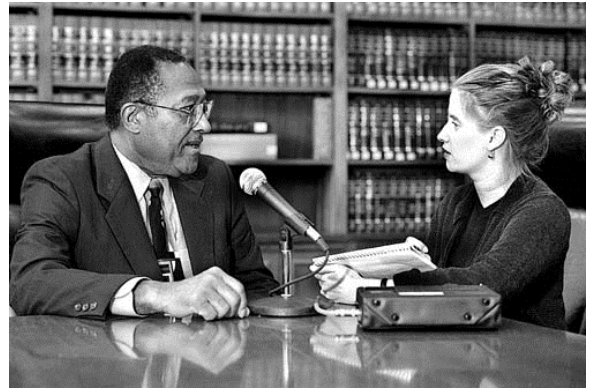
What is a sociological question? What is the purpose of a sociological question? Discuss the different types of sociological questions Anthony Giddens lays out in this chapter.

What is the purpose of theory in sociological research? Is theory necessary?

## **Week 2: The In-depth interview**

We will do two demonstrations of in-depth interviews. The interviewers need to think of a topic beforehand and need to bring an interview guide to class. The interviewees are just going to be interviewed and need to tell the class afterwards what it was like to be interviewed.

After the interviews the group will discuss the interview process. What worked, what did not work?



The readings will be discussed on the basis of the demonstrations.



At the end of class find a partner with whom you will do your presentation in week 6.

### **Required reading for today's tutorial:**

Coursebook: Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2006), *The Practice of Qualitative Research*, Chapter 4, "In-Depth Interview," pp. 119 – 148.  
(Second Edition, 2011) Chapter 5, pp. 93 - 129.

**E-Reader:** Lofland, John and Lyn H. Lofland. (1984) *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, pp. 53 – 61.

**Recommended Reading (the first two chapters provide practical and detailed guidelines for interviewing; the third chapter tells you something about oral history interviewing, a method similar to the in-depth interview, but more profound):**

**E-Reader:** Ritchie, Jane and Jane Lewis. (2003) *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students*. London: Sage Publications. Chapter 6, p. 144 – 168

Rubin, Herbert J. and Irene S. Rubin. (2005) *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications. Chapter 8, pp. 152 – 172. ("Designing Main Questions and Probes")

Coursebook: Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2006), *The Practice of Qualitative Research*, Chapter 5, pp. 149 – 194  
(Second Edition, 2011) Chapter 6, pp. 131 - 162.

## **Toolkit for Post-discussion: Suggested Discussion Questions**

Hesse-Biber, Chapter 4, “In-Depth Interview”:

What is meant by “thick description”?

Hesse-Biber uses the terms “subjugated voices and subjugated knowledge”. What does she mean by that? Why would one want to do research in that area? Why or why not is that significant?

What do they say about interview guides?

What does David Karp say about interview guides? How do you start getting people to talk about stuff? What can happen if you have an “agenda”?

Hesse-Biber and Leavy tell you to be aware of your own “positionality”? What do they mean by this? Why is this important? How can you be aware of it? How do you “control” for it?

Explain the terms: insider status, outsider status and reflexivity. What are the benefits and drawbacks of these statuses and how do they exist on a flowing continuum in actual research practice.

When is the in-depth interview appropriate? What kind of questions is this method suited to answer and when should it be used instead of ethnography?

What kind of dialogue occurs in the in-depth interview situation?

Explain the different degrees of structure an interviewer can impose and when it is appropriate to use a more or less structured approach. How do qualitative interviews differ from quantitative interviews?

What is an interview guide? How does one construct an interview guide and how, ideally, should a guide be used?

Explain the importance of building rapport in the interview situation. In this vein, what does it mean to say that qualitative interviews rely on the co-construction of meaning?

Lofland and Lofland, “Data Logging in Intensive Interviewing”, pp. 53 – 61:

What is an interview guide? How do you prepare an interview guide?

Explain a “probe”.

What is a post-interview comment sheet? Is it useful?

What do Lofland and Lofland say about “writing up the interview”? What is the purpose of that?

What is the significance/importance of building rapport with your research participant? How does the establishment of a good relationship between the researcher and research participant contribute to a successful oral history?

Do you believe the collaborative process that shapes data collection should continue on during the analysis and representation phases of the research project?

In what ways can society impact the ways in which a person tells his or her story, and why is it critical for the researcher to cue into this?

### **Homework Assignment for week 3:**

Begin to work on your presentation of two research articles. Finding two appropriate articles takes some time.

Start thinking about your research project. With whom will you do it? What will be your topic? Begin to assemble a research question.

### **Week 3: Focus Groups**



By now you should have conducted one interview.

In today's tutorial we will practice two focus group interviews with one interviewer and 4 – 8 participants. The interviewer needs to think of a topic and prepare questions beforehand. The participants just participate and join in the discussion afterwards. What worked, what did not work?



The readings will be discussed on the basis of the demonstration.



By today you should have found either a research partner for your research project or decided that you will do the project on your own. If you have not done so already, please find a research partner by the end of class today.

#### **Required Reading for today's tutorial:**

Coursebook: Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2006), *The Practice of Qualitative Research*, Chapter 6, "Focus Group Interviews," pp. 195 – 228.  
(Second Edition, 2011) Chapter 7, pp. 163 - 192.

#### **Recommended Reading:**

Ritchie, Jane and Jane Lewis. (2003) *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students*. London: Sage Publications. Chapter 7, pp. 171 – 199. **(book available at UCM reading room)**



#### ***Toolkit for Post-discussion: Suggested Discussion Questions***

Hesse-Biber, Chapter 6:

How does data produced within focus groups differ from that which is produced in in-depth interviews?

In what ways do focus groups conducted for market research purposes differ from those conducted for sociological purposes?

How do group members influence each other in focus groups? How does this impact data produced by focus groups? What is the group “dynamic”?

In what ways can focus groups be disempowering for some members? How can focus groups be used to empower participants? What is the link between participant empowerment and the theoretical tradition that guides the research?

What is the role of the researcher in focus groups? What issues of control come up for the researcher and how are these issues informed by epistemological beliefs and research goals?

In what ways can survey research serve as a guide for structuring focus groups? How can focus groups and surveys be combined?

Discuss the strength and weaknesses of conducting a less-structured focus group.

How does one sample for a focus group? Discuss the benefits of homogenous versus heterogenous focus groups. Discuss segmentation.



#### **Homework assignment for week 4:**

##### **One hour participant observation assignment:**

In this fieldwork assignment, you have to do one hour of participant observation of a social situation/setting of your own choice. You can choose a site that is very “foreign” to you, like for instance, a wheelchair basketball match or you can choose a site that is very familiar to you, such as a PBL session. Record your observations. Be as specific and “objective” as you can by just describing what you see without interpretation. Suggestions for what to observe: verbal behavior, body language, structural features of environments. Jot down notes during your observation. After the observation, you sit down and write out a set of extended fieldnotes to be handed in during class next time. The field notes should be extensive, detailed and they should reflect a one hour observation (= 3 – 5 pages, type written). In other words, please provide a good example of a “thick description.”

For our next tutorial, please be ready to talk about your reflections on your fieldwork experience. Please be prepared to answer the following questions: How did the experience go? How did you handle your role as a researcher? Did it change your relationship with your group? How did the group respond to you? Did you come up with a “thick description”? Why or why not?

**Think further about your research project and be prepared to talk about your ideas in the next tutorial.**

## **Week 4: Participant Observation**

First hour: Discussion of participant observation exercise. We will discuss your fieldnotes as well as your reflections on the participant observation exercise. Everyone will bring their fieldnotes to class. You will exchange fieldnotes with one other student. Read the notes, then explain to the class what the observer observed. Did you come up with a “thick description”? Why or why not?

Second hour: Today we will begin to discuss your research projects. What will you do your research on? With whom? How will you go about doing it? What will you include in your research proposal?



**One set of extensive fieldnotes (3-5 pages) is due today!**

### **Required Reading for today's tutorial:**

Coursebook: Hesse-Biber & Leavy, *The Practice of Qualitative Research*. Chapter 7, “Ethnography,” pp. 229 – 278.  
(Second Edition, 2011) Chapter 8, pp. 193 - 226.

Note: There is an example of a set of fieldnotes in the course book (2006 edition, p. 260).

### **OR**

**E-Reader:** Delamont, Sara. 2004. Ethnography and Participant Observation. In *Qualitative Research Practice*, ed. Clive Seale et al. 205 – 217. (Chapter 13)

### **OR**

**E-Reader:** Anderson, Elijah. Jelly's Place: An Ethnographic Memoir. *Symbolic Interaction*. Vol.26, No, 2 (2003), pp. 217 - 237.

### **Further Reading:**

Blumer, Herbert. 2002. Symbolic Interactionism. In *Contemporary Sociological Theory*, ed. Craig Calhoun et al, Blackwell Publishing. (book at UCM reading room)

Emerson, Robert M. et al. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 2. (book at UCM reading room)

Sharrock, Wes W. and John A. Hughes et al. *Understanding Modern Sociology*.

London: Sage Publications. Chapter 5, pp. 165 – 173. (gives you some theoretical background to ethnographies). (book at UCM reading room).

### **Toolkit for Post-discussion: Suggested Questions**

Hesse-Biber, Chapter 7, “Ethnography”:

Discuss the meaning of “ethnography” and when it is appropriate to use as a method of social research.

What is the importance of adopting an interpretive (as opposed to positivist) model when conducting ethnographic fieldwork?

In ethnographic fieldwork, the researcher’s understanding comes from the members of the social setting being researched. How can that fact, therefore, serve as an empowering experience for the researched (i.e., aid in social activism efforts)?

What is the importance of field notes in ethnographic fieldwork?

How does gaining entry into a specific social setting impact data collection?

How does your role in the social setting shape what types of data you will or will not be able to collect?

What are the different types of fieldnotes one can write?

If you were interested in studying a religious cult, discuss the factors that would influence how you went about conducting your research project (i.e. discuss the considerations brought up in the book chapter, as well as other considerations not brought up by Hesse-Biber). Most importantly discuss the factors that are going to influence *why*, *where* and *how* you conduct your research project.

When studying members of a certain social setting, a researcher may be introduced to unfamiliar rituals and customs (perhaps rituals/customs they do not agree with). Discuss how these factors would impact your research project.

Although it is important for the researcher to gain access to a social setting through a gatekeeper (of some sort), the authors warn that it is important that a researcher not be too reliant on one member of the setting. Why is that?

How do constraints on gaining access to private settings impact the extent to which you, as the researcher, can understand the members of the social setting you wish to study?

This chapter discussed the role that you, as a researcher, should have when carrying out your research process. Discuss the factors that influence what role/identity you should adopt when conducting your research. What role will you take in the setting? There is often a tension between wanting to get close to those in the setting while at the same



time maintaining the role of researcher, which involves a degree of detachment. The important thing is to find a balance between the two and let the *circumstances* of your research project determine what role(s) you will play.

In this chapter, Emerson (2001) notes “fieldworkers cannot necessarily stand back and watch social interaction with absolutely no involvement with those engaged in that interaction. Nor can the fieldworker simply declare a detached position by fiat\*” (p. 17). Therefore, researchers should not completely detach themselves (nor completely immerse themselves) in the social setting. Do you agree with this statement? Why? Why not?

\* An act of will that creates something without or as if without effort.

### **Home work assignment for week 5:**

Continue to prepare your presentation of two research articles. Further think about your research project and develop your research proposal.



**Week 5: Presentations**

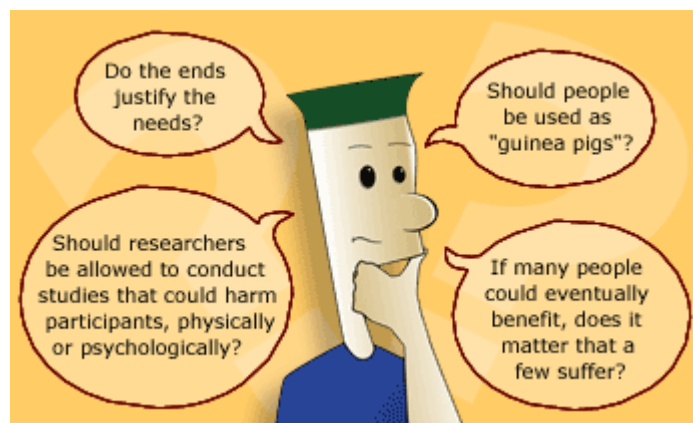
Student presentations on qualitative studies and/or ethnographies. See p. 5 for detailed instructions!

**Home work assignment for week 6:**

Please write a first draft of your research proposal and bring two copies to class next time.

## **Week 6: Research Proposals**

I have organized this session as follows: You will exchange drafts with one other research team, read their proposal and give the other team feedback according to the “discovery mode” (see Appendix 3, p.30). The goal is not to give feedback in an “authoritarian style,” but the aim of this exercise is to employ a probing and collaborative style of giving feedback. In other words, your intention here is to help the other team to develop and deepen their research proposal. The instructions in Appendix 3 will show you how this can be done.



Your proposal should cover the following three questions (see this course manual, p. 6):

- 1 *What?* What is the purpose of my research? What am I trying to find out?
- 2 *How?* How will the proposed research answer these questions?
- 3 *Why?* Why is the research worth doing (and/or funding)? What will we learn and why is it worth knowing?

Please craft your proposal according to what Silverman (2010, chapter 11, e-reader) has to say about proposal writing.

**Transcription of your interview (500 words) is due by the end of this week!**

### **Required Reading for today's tutorial:**

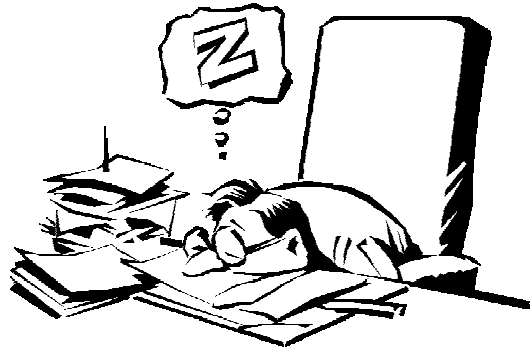
Silverman, David. 2010. *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*. Third Edition. London: Sage Publications, Chapter 11, pp. 179 – 185. **(e-reader, book also at UCM reading room)**

or

Silverman, David. 2005. *Doing Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications. Chapter 10, “Writing a Research Proposal,” pp. 139 – 147. **(book at UCM reading room)**

**Week 7: Presentations**

**This week we will have another round of presentations. For the rest of the week you will be working on the final assignment. Due Friday, October 20, 17:00 hrs.**



## APPENDIX

### *Appendix 1*

#### **E-Reader: Table of Contents**

Anderson, Elijah. Jelly's Place: An Ethnographic Memoir. *Symbolic Interaction*. Vol.26, No, 2 (2003), pp. 217 - 237.

Delamont, Sara. 2004. Ethnography and Participant Observation. In *Qualitative Research Practice*, ed. Clive Seale et al. 205 – 217. (Chapter 13)

Giddens, Anthony. (2001) *Sociology*. “Asking and Answering Sociological Questions.” Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hermanowicz, Joseph C. (2002) “The Great Interview: 25 Strategies for Studying People in Bed”. *Qualitative Sociology*, Vol. 25, No. 4, pp. 479 – 500.

Interview Guide Sample. Taken from *Racism in a Racial Democracy: The Maintenance of White Supremacy in Brazil* (1997).

Katz, Jack. 1983. “A Theory of Qualitative Methodology: The Social System of Analytic Work”. In *Contemporary Field Research: a collection of readings*. Ed. Robert M. Emerson. Los Angeles: Waveland Press.

Lofland, John and Lyn H. Lofland. (1984) *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, pp. 53 – 61.

Ritchie, Jane and Jane Lewis. (2003) *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students*. London: Sage Publications. Chapter 6, p. 144 - 168

Rubin, Herbert J. and Irene S. Rubin. (2005) *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications. Chapter 8, pp. 152 – 172. (“Designing Main Questions and Probes”)

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. (2006) “Kidney Kin: Inside the Transatlantic Transplant Trade”. *Harvard International Review*. Winter 2006, pp. 62 – 64.

Silverman, David. (2001) *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction*. London: Sage Publications, pp. 5 – 22.

Silverman, David. (2005) *Doing Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications. Chapter 6, pp. 77 – 94.

Silverman, David. 2010. *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*. Third Edition. London: Sage Publications, Chapter 11, pp. 179 – 185.

Strauss, Anselm L. (1987) "Memos and memo writing." *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 109 – 129.

**Ethnographic Work published by UCM students who took this course:**

Alphen van, Nienke. 2012. Speaking with Students in Sororities: How female student association members perceive the influence of injunctive norms on their health and academic performance. *Maastricht Journal of Liberal Arts*, Volume 4, pp. 55 – 72.

Hartmann, Henrik. 2009. Outsiders Within: Critically Analyzing Everyday Racism in Germany. *Maastricht Journal of Liberal Arts*, Volume One, pp. 15 – 30.

Hartmann, Henrik. 2011. Perceptions of Everyday Interpersonal Discrimination among Young Men of Turkish Background in Cologne. *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*. Vol. (1), pp. 224 – 233.

Raderschall, Lisanne and Janina Zander. 2011. Negotiating Gender Roles – Experiences of female Said-Arabian Students at Maastricht University. *Maastricht Journal of Liberal Arts*, Volume Three, pp.59 – 80.

Spira Felix. 2012. Sowing Sprouts to Engender Greener Universities: a qualitative study exploring the projects, challenges and strategies of sustainability student groups. *Maastricht Journal of Liberal Arts*, Volume 4, pp. 41 – 54.

(all to be found in e-reader)

## Appendix 2

### **Ethnographic Capstones and Final Ethnography Projects available online** (on eleum, under course material):

#### Capstones:

Askamp, Tessa. 2010. *Lesbian Life: Sexuality, Stereotypes and the Social Stigma*. Capstone, University College Maastricht.

Perkoswki, Nina. 2010. *Geographically Separated, Cognitively Distanced Students' Perspectives on Social Injustices and Marginalized Groups*. Capstone, University College Maastricht.

Spira Felix. 2012. Sowing Sprouts to Engender Greener Universities: a qualitative study exploring the projects, challenges and strategies of sustainability student groups. *Maastricht Journal of Liberal Arts*, Volume 4, pp. 41 – 54. **(E-Reader)**

Wennekes, Lisa. 2008. *Civilateral 'Partnerships': Beyond the 'North-South' Dichotomy. An Ethnographic study of a 'Twinning Project.'* Capstone, University College Maastricht.

#### Final Ethnography Projects:

Alphen van, Nienke. 2012. Speaking with Students in Sororities: How female student association members perceive the influence of injunctive norms on their health and academic performance. *Maastricht Journal of Liberal Arts*, Volume 4, pp. 55 – 72. **(E-Reader)**

Dupuy, Lisa and Anouk Goossens. 2011. *Live Action Role-Playing Games: How to Understand the Interrelation between Player and Character*.

Ripley, Claire and Felix Spira. 2011. *Researching Motivations and Barriers for Participation in the 'Voko' Food Cooperative Maastricht*.

*Appendix 3***Peer Assessing a Research Proposal in the Discovery Mode****Guidelines for oral feedback:**

What is the discovery mode of giving feedback?

Rather than giving feedback in an authoritarian style where the person who assesses the text points out deficiencies, shortcomings and mistakes in the text, the discovery mode allows the assessor to give probing and collaborative feedback. The person who assesses the text takes into consideration the writer's intention and helps the writer to clarify the text. The goal is to make the text correspond more to what the writer wants to communicate. Together with the writer the assessor is in search of ways to enrich and deepen the text. This mode of giving feedback is more conducive to learning, because the person who is assessed communicates about her product and the intentions she wants to realize.

(Lockhart, C. & Ng, P. 1995. Analyzing talk in ESL Peer response groups: stances, functions and content, *Language Learning*, 45, 605 – 655.)

**Instructions for the assessor:**

- 1) Ask the writer of the proposal the following questions. The goal here is to get at the researcher's intention:
  - ▶ How did the researchers come up with this topic? What inspired the researchers?
  - ▶ What is the purpose of this research? What are the researcher's intentions?
  - ▶ Why do the researchers find this topic important? Why is the research worth doing?
  - ▶ What is the author trying to find out? What will we learn and why is it worth knowing?
  - ▶ What are the author's hunches with regards to results?
- 2) Clarifying the text:
  - ▶ The proposal should contain the following ten sections: a) Title, b) abstract, c) background or introduction, d) significance of research, e) research question, f) review of literature or theoretical



framework, g) methodology, h) ethical issues, i) timetable, j) references (see Silverman, 2010, p. 180 in e-reader).

- ▶ Read the different sections of the proposal and present them back to the writer. This way the author has a chance to learn from your summary what sections are still unclear in their proposal.

3) Ask the author of the proposal the following questions. A dialogue between the assessor and the author about the text should ensue. The goal here is to help the author to enrich and deepen the text:

- ▶ What knowledge did you gain from the literature?
- ▶ How did this knowledge influence your research design?
- ▶ How is this literature relevant to the research topic? How current is the literature?
- ▶ What is the larger social context into which this research is embedded?
- ▶ What is the relationship between this social context and the research problem?

*Appendix 4****Racism in the Netherlands***

“Dutch racism is a complex, paradoxical, and contested phenomenon,” writes Philomena Essed who has been doing research on racism in the Netherlands since the 1980s. Within Dutch, and more generally European, understandings of racism, racism is frequently equated with right-wing extremism; it is seen as an ugly word that is associated with conscious, deliberate and often physical violence against people of color. Denial and ignorance are, therefore, two components of Dutch racism that make it resilient, unchallenged and somewhat taken for granted. What is in part responsible for this evasion is the conviction that “we don’t do race in the Netherlands.” Dienke Hondius (2014) describes this as a “passive, more or less silent consensus about not mentioning skin color, not naming racial issues.” It is a conviction that is intricately interwoven with the Dutch narrative of tolerance and openness. Any accusation of racism within this context, then, constitutes a blow to Dutch national identity.

In this project we will examine how racism is articulated, reproduced and maintained within the context of the *zwarte Piet* controversy. As is generally known, the opinions on this issue are divided, whereas a significant portion of Dutch people defend the tradition as a benign and well-intended practice, a tradition that is kept alive for the sake of the kids. The opposition argues that Black Pete is a caricature of a black slave and thus ridicules people of color. This, in turn, is condoning the fact that the Dutch colonial legacy is taken too lightly. The charge is that “Black Pete is Racism.”

The project aims at situating the annual *Zwarte Piet* controversy within larger discussions of Dutch colonialism, collective memory and Dutch national identity. Particularly interesting is how each side seeks to position themselves around the highly interlinked concepts of race and racism, Dutch culture and tolerance, tradition and history. We will explore the controversy and the tradition from multiple angles. Students can compose their own research project within this theme; possible venues for research are facebook discussions, literature and songs on the *Sinterklaas* tradition, newspaper articles on the controversy. The main undertaking, however, will be the use of mainly – but not exclusively - qualitative research methods, such as participant observation and interviewing, with which we will explore the *Sinterklaas* festivities in the area of Maastricht and beyond as well as people’s relationships to these festivities.

Knowledge of Dutch is highly recommended for this project.