ETH zürich

TdLab, D-USYS
GHE, D-MAVT

FAIR Data Practices for Qualitative Research in Transdisciplinarity

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FAIRqual project


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FAIR data principles

Wilkinson et al. 2016;
www.go-fair.org

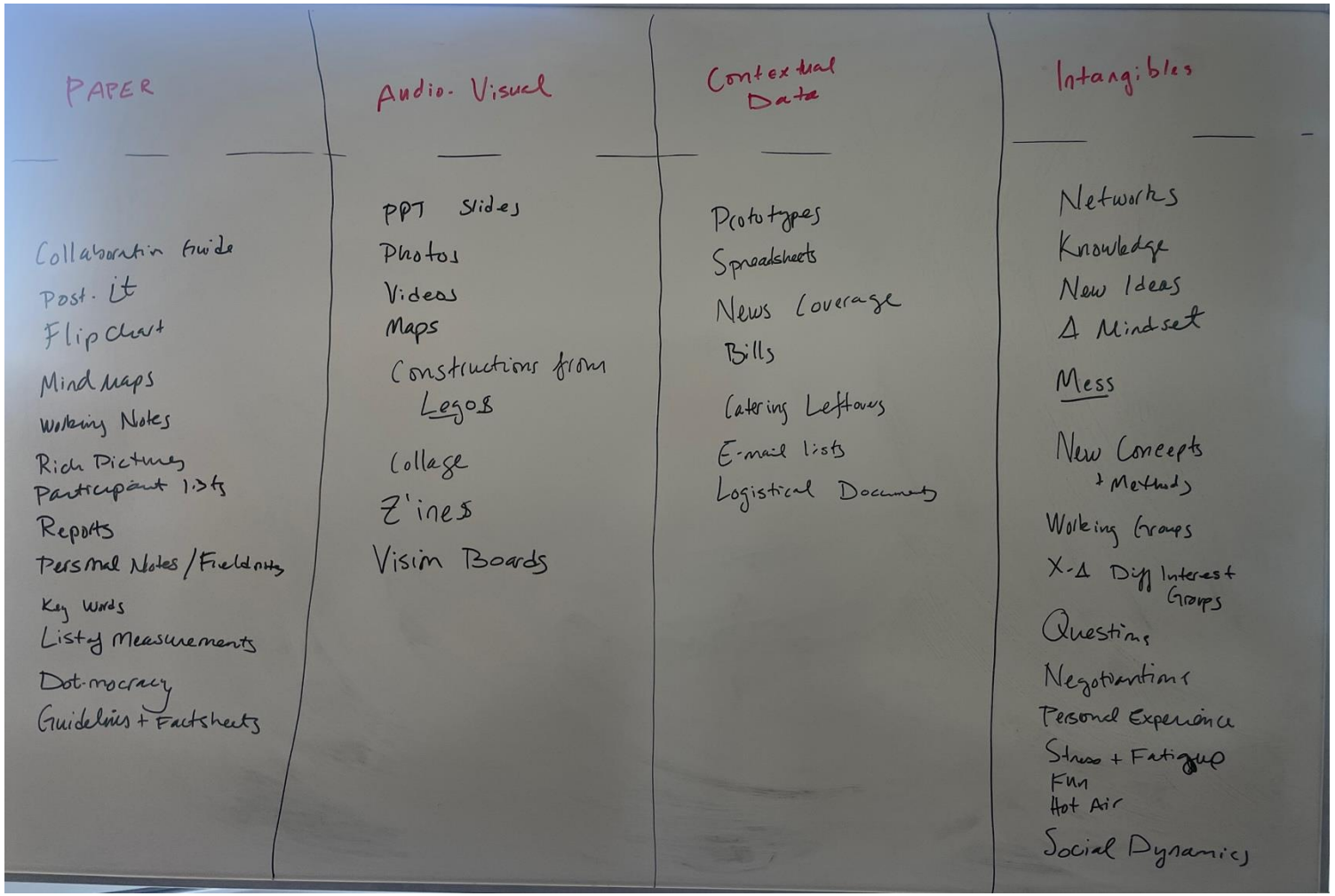
Aim:

Guide to capture essential characteristics of data objects to make data reusable for humans and machines

- **F**indable
  - I.e. (Meta)data have a persistent identifier
- **A**ccessible
  - I.e. (Meta)data are retrievable (open or authentication / authorization procedure where necessary)
- **I**nteroperable
  - (Meta)data use a formal, broadly applicable language for knowledge representation to integrate them with other data
- **R**eusable
  - I.e. (Meta)data are well-described with accurate and relevant attributes

Challenges of sharing qualitative and Td data

1. Practical issues
2. Ethical commitments
3. Epistemological traditions
4. Origin of open science



Brainstorming data types, TdLab Brown Bags Lunch March 18, 2025

Challenges of sharing qualitative data: Practical issues

1. Interviews
    1. Many hundreds of pages of transcripts that require often detailed reading to fully anonymize
    2. Removing names is not enough
    3. Audio recordings are highly personal (local storage only, no use of cloud services)
2. Other kinds of data are heterogenous, e.g.,
    1. Workshop outputs (flip charts, post-it notes, manual summaries)
    2. Audiovisual (photos or videos)
    3. Focus groups
    4. Participant observation and fieldnotes
    5. Mapping
    6. Artistic outputs

Challenges of sharing qualitative data: Ethical commitments

1. Standard research ethics require confidentiality
    1. To protect participants
    2. To create an atmosphere of trust
2. Sharing fears
    1. Misuse of shared data
    2. Politization of data
    3. Loss of context

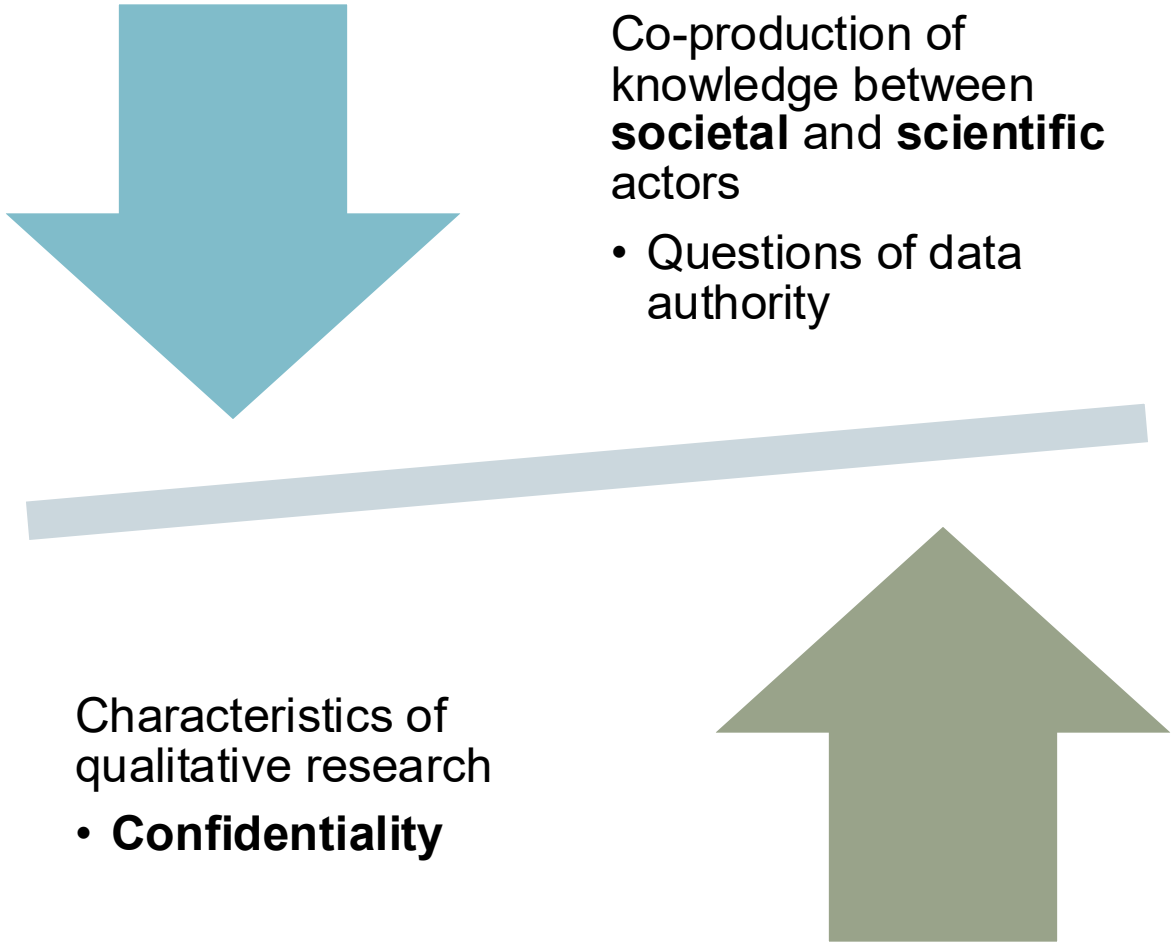
Challenges of sharing qualitative data: Epistemological traditions

1. “you had to be there”
    1. Importance of embodied research (being in the place, feeling what happened)
    2. Integration of emotion, experience, context
2. Need to immerse yourself in the data to analyze it properly

Challenges of sharing qualitative data: Origin of Open Science practices

1. Current movement mostly based in quantitative tradition means not always suited to qualitative or Td data and traditions

Sharing qualitative data in Transdisciplinary (Td) research



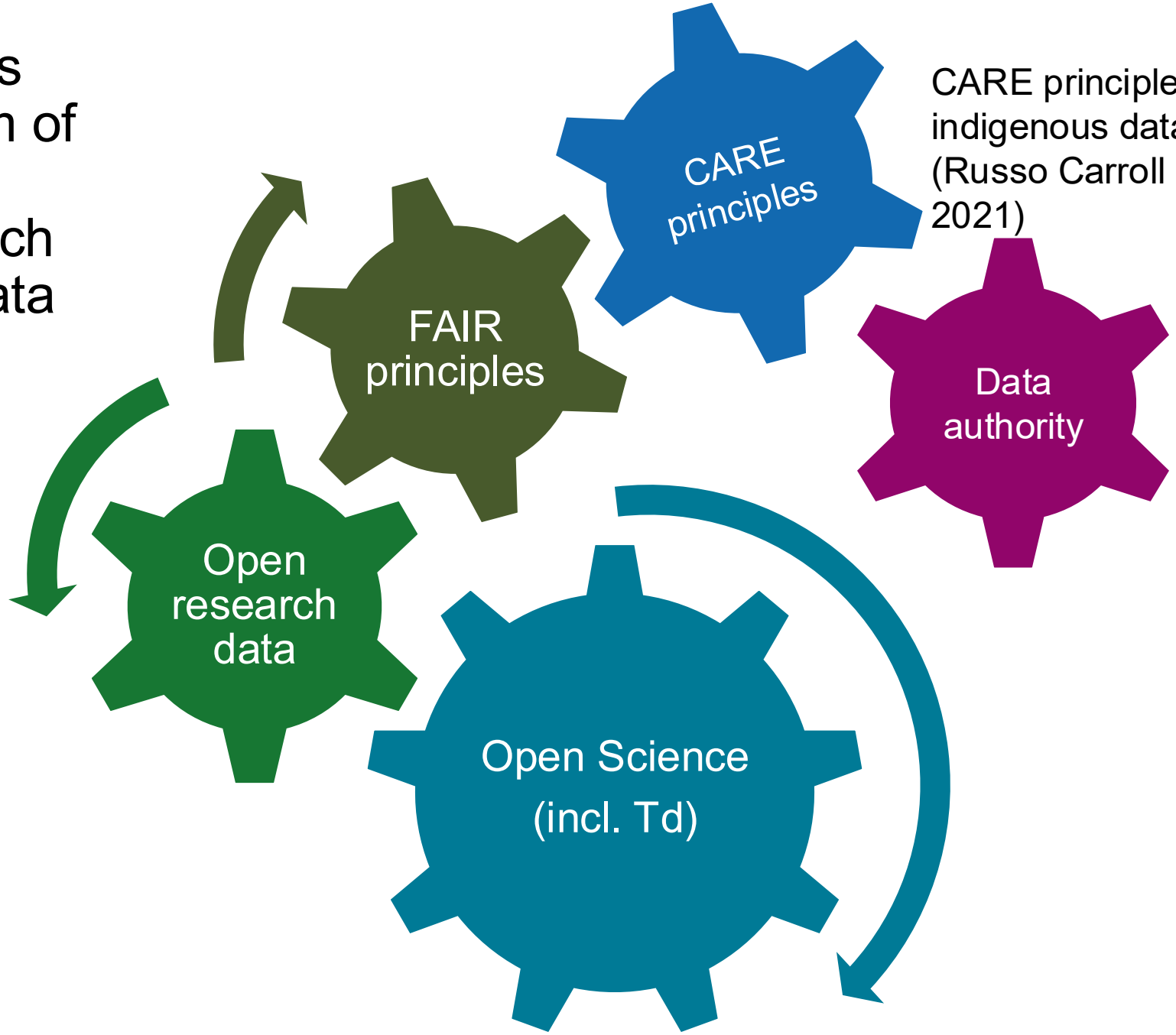
Co-production of knowledge between **societal** and **scientific** actors

- Questions of data authority

Characteristics of qualitative research

- **Confidentiality**

FAIR data principles are part of a system of Open Science, including Td research and questions of data authority



CARE principles for indigenous data (Russo Carroll et. al. 2021)

Qualitative data requires variable levels of access

		Level of Access			
		Closed	Controlled	Restricted	Open
Level of processing	Raw data				
	Full data without identifiers				
	Excerpted / partial data				
	Final analysis				

Figure based on table 2, Alexander et al. 2020

FAIRqual project

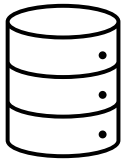
- Explore how to apply FAIR principles for qualitative data in Td research…
  - … from a conceptual angle
  - … from a technical angle
- Based on what?
  - Workshop at ITD2024 – “feeling the pulse”
  - Expert interviews with Td researchers and open science experts
- Develop guidelines and demonstrate potential practices based on data collected during FAIRqual on case studies of all project parts
  - Workflows that could work for TdLab
  - Wider outreach through publications, community of practice

https://fairqual.org/

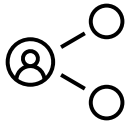
Workshop at ITD24

Workshop at ITD24 – what did we learn?

- Discussion points
- Informed consent
  - Sharing with public
  - Edit rights



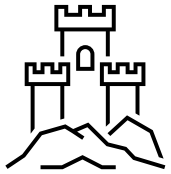
Data types



Data sharing approaches

Fears and direct challenges of sharing

Ways of sharing data

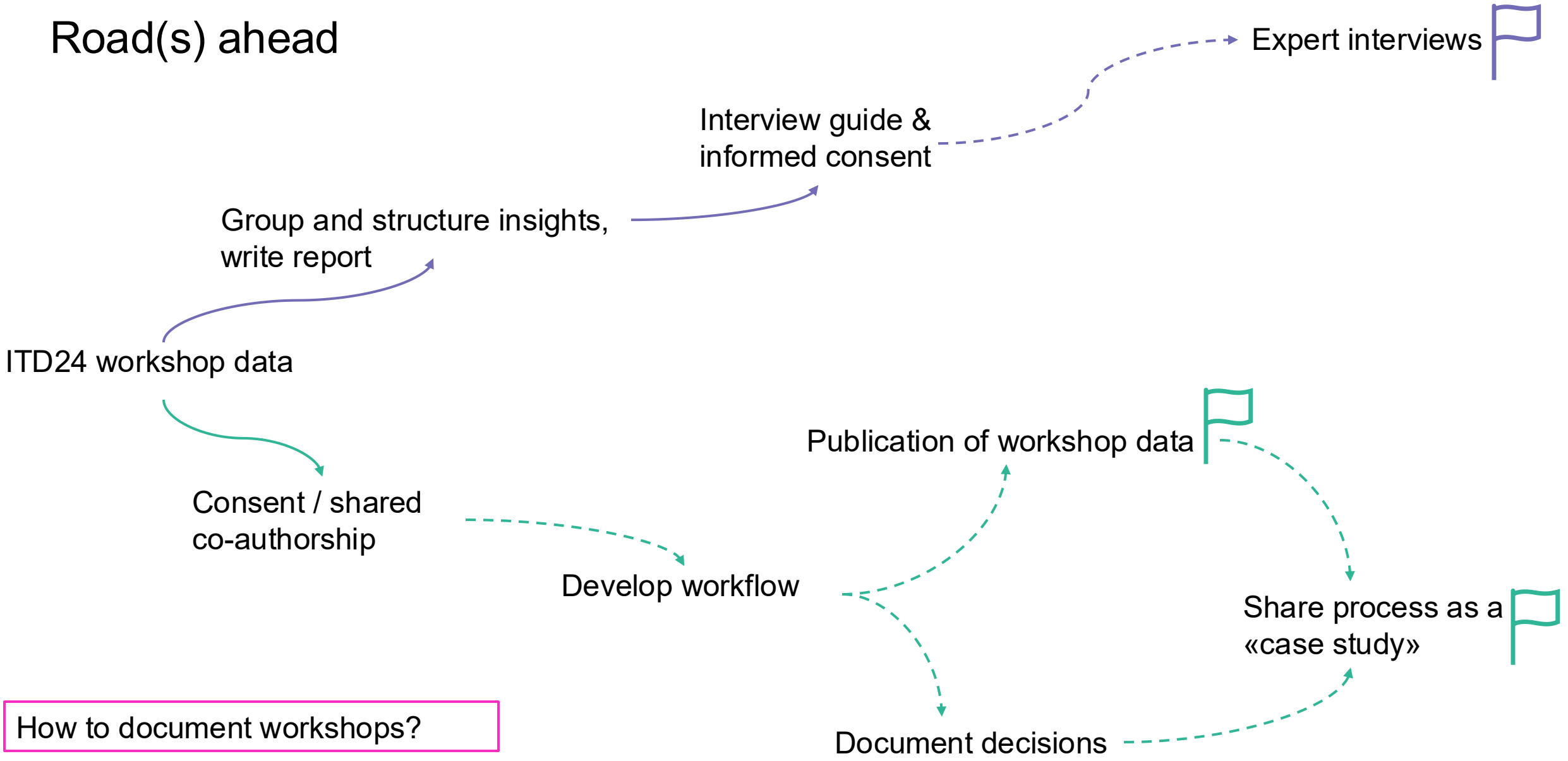


Data sovereignty

Why share? Practical aspects of sharing

How to navigate AI?

Road(s) ahead



How to document workshops?

Literature

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Questions & comments