Today

- Presentation
  - Focus groups (quickly)
  - Why use interviews and research rigour
  - Interview design
  - Conducting interviews
  - Analysing and writing up interview data
  - Interview techniques
  - Coding interview data
About me...


About you...
FOCUS GROUPS (VERY QUICKLY)

Focus Groups

• Involves a small group of people discussing a topic or issue defined by a researcher. A group of between 6 and 10 people sit facing each other around a table, the researcher introduces the topic for discussion and then invites and moderates discussion from group members. A session normally lasts between one and two hours.

Group interviews—Focus groups—In-depth groups
Great Reference for Focus Groups


Planning and conducting Focus Groups

- Selecting participants
- Same or different?
- People who know each other?
- Dealing with sensitive information
- Size and number of groups
- Questions and topics
Conducting focus groups

- Setting
- Facilitator/moderator characteristics
- Recording focus groups
- How to start
- Role of facilitator
- At the end

INTERVIEWS
Why use interviews?

• Investigate complex behaviour
• Gains access to information about events, opinions and experiences.
• Own opinions and tentative conclusions can be checked, verified and scrutinised

Interviewing and research rigour

• Sample size: n=1
• Importance of rigour
  – Coherence of approach-topic-interview
  – Sampling
  – Preparation
  – Subjectivity and inter-subjectivity
  – Critical reflexivity
Theoretical Frameworks

• Ethnographic methods
  – Interview, fieldnotes, participant observation
  – Thick description
• Phenomenological method
  – Study of phenomenon from the perspective of the informant
  – Lived experiences
• Feminist methodology
  – Aims to capture women’s lived experiences in a respectful manner that legitimates women’s voices as the sources of knowledge.
  – Critique of positivist science—claims of objectivity hide power structures that marginalise the experiences of the less powerful.

Structured-------------------Unstructured
Interview Design

- Interview schedules and Interview guides
- Start with a literature review and archival research
- Formulating good interview questions
- Use easily understood language that is appropriate to your informant.
  - Use non-offensive language.
  - Use words with commonly and uniformly accepted meanings.
  - Avoid ambiguity
  - Phrase each question carefully
  - Avoid leading questions as much as possible
  - Try to use open-ended questions
- Starts with easiest to answer questions—get people talking.
  - eg duties, responsibilities, involvement in an issue.
- Then move to abstract questions, then sensitive issues.
- TEST YOUR QUESTIONS ON SOMEONE.
- Begin with demographic information (age, where living, job, family, etc).

Interview Design—Types of Questions

Primary Questions
- Descriptive—Details on events, places, people and experiences.
- Storytelling—Identifies a series of players, an ordering of events, or causative links.
- Opinion—Impressions, feelings, assertions, and guesses.
- Structural—Taps into people ideology and assumptions.
- Contrast—Comparison of experience by place, time, gender, and so forth.
- Devil’s advocate—controversial/sensitive issues broached without associating the researcher with people who are not prepared to make their opinions public.

Secondary Questions
- Clarification—used when an answer is vague or incomplete.
- Nudging—Used to continue a line of conversation.
- Summary—Outlines in-progress findings for verification.
- Receptive cues—can be verbal or non-verbal, encourages an informant to continue speaking.
Structured Interview

• Everybody asked the same questions in the same order.
• Uses an interview schedule that typically comprises a list of carefully worded and ordered questions

Semi-structured interviews

• Still employs interview schedule or guide
• Researcher does not have to strictly adhere to the schedule.
• Role of the researcher more intervening than unstructured.
Unstructured interviews—oral histories

• Oral history, life history, some types of group interviewing and in-depth interviewing.
• Focusses on personal perceptions and histories
• Informant focussed
• Preliminary meeting—is it going to work?
• Multiple interviews
• Importance of open questions
• Interviews are structured—orientation, common, specific questions
• Technical issues
• Preservation of data

Problem questions

• When do you get to the bus stop and what do you do while you wait?
• Double barrel
Problem questions

• How do you think verticalisation has affected your food supply?

• Jargon.

Exercise—let’s look at some of your questions.

• Thank you to Larry and Dunsin.
Ethics and Interviewing

• Confidentiality
  – Protecting privacy
  – Anonymity
• Informed consent
  – What do you intend to do with the research?
  – What is in the interview?
• Risk of harm
  – Physical or social
  – Economic
• Reciprocity
  – How are you giving back your research?

Steps to getting a good interview

The goal: rapport
Steps to getting a good interview

1. Contact
   – Choose your informants well
   – Negotiate permission
     • Do you need consent?
   – Introduction and establish credentials
   – State how you found out about the informant
   – Outline why you want to conduct an interview
   – Indicate how long the interview will take
   – Run through the information sheet

Steps to getting a good interview

2. Interview relationship
   – Professional vs creative or empathetic interviewing
   – The importance of small talk
   – Accept hospitality
   – Be an active listener
Steps to getting a good interview

3. Closing the interview
   – Don’t just leave.
   – State what happens next
   – Make sure you say thanks for the informants time AND that you value their insights and experiences
   – Good last questions

Recording the interview

- Audio recording vs notetaking
- Audio recording
  - Most complete record
- Transcribing the data
  - Do it that night!
  - How to transcribe
- Return the transcript
- Participant checking
- Fieldnotes
- Personal log and analytical log
Analysing Interview Data

• Coding: a process of identifying and organising themes in qualitative data.
• Descriptive coding—manifest content analysis
• Analytic coding—latent content analysis
• Start with:
  – List of what you think are most important themes
  – Conditions, interactions, strategies and tactics and
  – Descriptive, analytic from literature review.
• Start coding—review after approx. 10%
  – Themes need to be split or are discarded or amalgamated.

Getting started with coding

• Conditions
  – geographical context (social and physical), life situation, circumstances.
• Interactions among actors:
  – encounters, conflicts, accords, other types of interactions.
• Strategies and tactics
  – requires a deeper understand of the things you observe and how they relate to broader phenomena.
  – How strategies link to broader social, economic or political processes.
• Consequences
  – also more complicated.
  – Look for words (due to, as a result of).
  – Results of actions over time. Can be large, or subtle and personal.
Reference for coding


The Breathing Spaces Project

• Background
• Idea and funding
• Approaching people
• Developing coding ideas
  – Exercise: You will be given an interview on the Dawesville Foreshore with an informant responding to questions about why she values the space.
  – Write down a list of themes that you think will be relevant to your coding. Make sure that you number them.
  – Check your list against the list of the person next to you.
Exercise: Dawesville Foreshore

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Exercise: Dawesville Foreshore

Software for qualitative analysis

NVIVO DEMONSTRATION