

Workshop

Interviewing Experts and Elites in an International Context

Organizational details

Instructor: *Dr. Vera Axyonova*
Date: January 29, 2016, from 10:00 to 18:00
Location: Room 001, Licher Str. 68, 35390 Giessen
ECTS: –

Objective

The course is aimed at participants with little or no experience in interviewing experts and those who are planning to interview elites as part of their research project. The participants will be provided with a solid understanding of opportunities and challenges of using expert and elite interviews as a method of qualitative data generation. They will further familiarize themselves with the main principles of structuring interview guidelines, getting access to relevant interviewees, interviewing strategies and techniques, and immediate ‘post-preparation’ of interviews. The seminar would thus serve to equip the participants with the necessary knowledge and skills for starting and conducting their fieldwork.

Content

The seminar covers the main questions related to planning, preparing and conducting interviews with experts and elites in different cultural environments. It consists of two parts (two double-sessions) addressing various aspects of expert and elite interviews as a method of qualitative data generation.

Part I

The first part starts with a theory-guided discussion on different forms of interviews and the distinction between interviewing experts and elites. It covers the typology of qualitative interviews, including exploratory, systematising and theory-generating interviews, and their implications for data generation. This part further includes a methodological discussion of interview design, foremost sampling strategies, structuring an interview guide, and framing interview questions. Different qualitative sampling strategies are covered: convenience sampling, purposive sampling, theoretical sampling, and snowball sampling (the most common strategy in conducting expert and elite interviews). Further, concrete suggestions for formulating interview questions and designing guides for semi-structured interviews are discussed in detail. A practical exercise allows the participants to exchange their ideas and train skills in elaborating interview guidelines.

Part II

The second part of the seminar covers the practical questions of gaining access to interviewees, conducting interviews, and handling generated data, including advice in contacting potential respondents, analysing interviewer-interviewee interaction in face-to-face and telephone interviews, using technical devices (audio-recording), dealing with difficult interview situations, and managing information gained via interviews. This part also provides examples of possible interviewing strategies, drawing on the instructor's experience of fieldwork in Germany, Brussels, and several Eastern European and Central Asian countries. The seminar concludes by discussing ethical aspects and dilemmas emerging from interview research.

Target group

Students, Doctoral and Postdoctoral students at the GGS

Course language

English