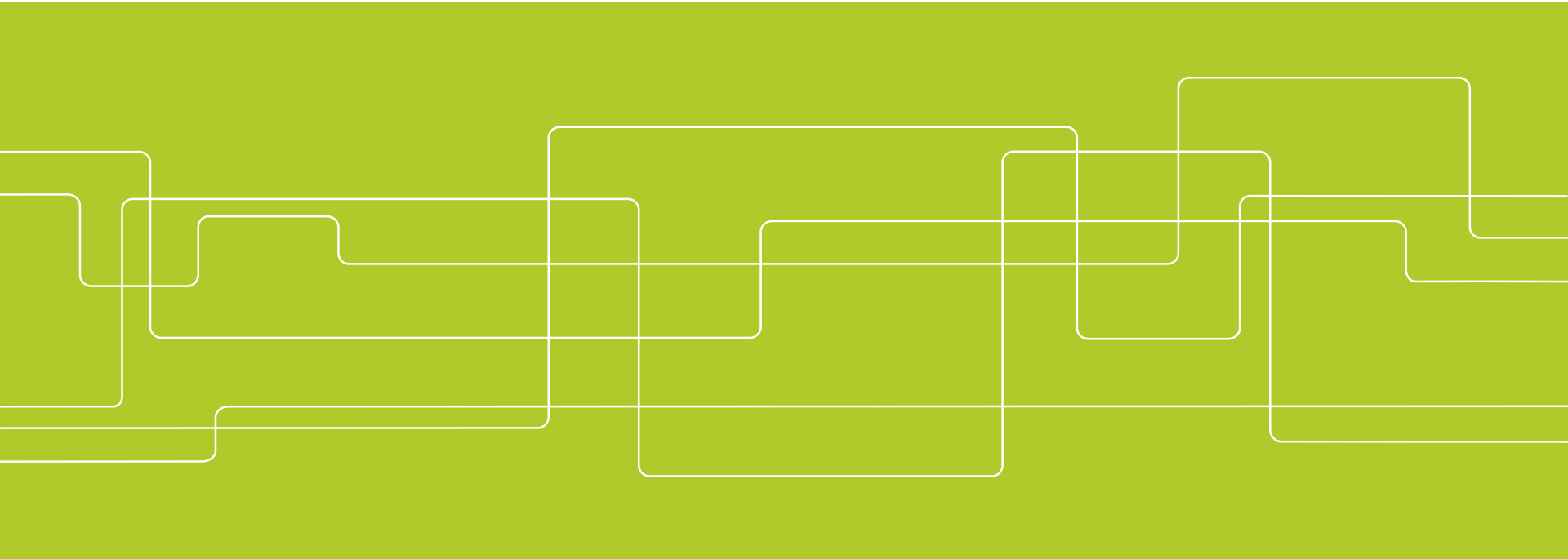




# Research Methods

Emrah Karakaya, 24-2-2021





Emrah Karakaya

Assistant professor (biträdande lektor) of industrial dynamics and sustainable business models at KTH since 2017

PhD in Industrial Management (2015, Spain & Sweden)

Master in Computational Mechanics (2011, Germany & Spain)

Bachelor in Mechanical Engineering (2009, Turkey)

Case study research in collaboration with several companies, such as Hartmann Energietechnik, SSAB, LKAB, Peltarion, Boliden, Vattenfall etc.

Published so far 10+ papers.

Examiner and course responsible of research methods in industrial engineering and management; guest lectures on diffusion of innovations, sustainability transitions, business models etc.

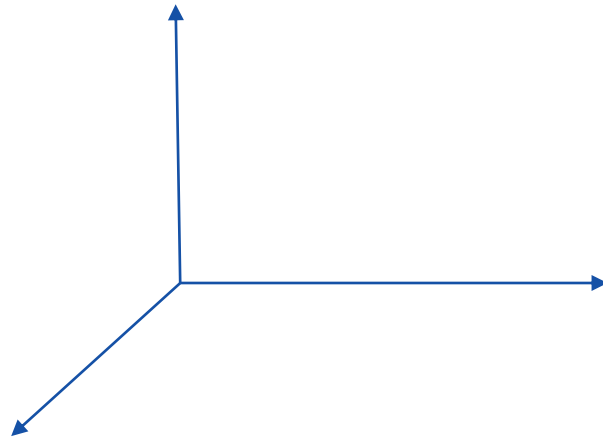
Co-investigator in two major projects: (i) Sustainable Energy Transformations in Aviation (FoES) & (ii) Artificial Intelligence and Industrial Transformations (WASP HS)

# My research (some examples)

## Theory/Concepts

Multi-level perspective on industrial transitions

Diffusion of Innovations



## Method:

Qualitative case study

Quantitative modelling

## Context:

Diffusion of solar photovoltaic systems in Germany

Industrial transformation of steelmaking industry in Sweden

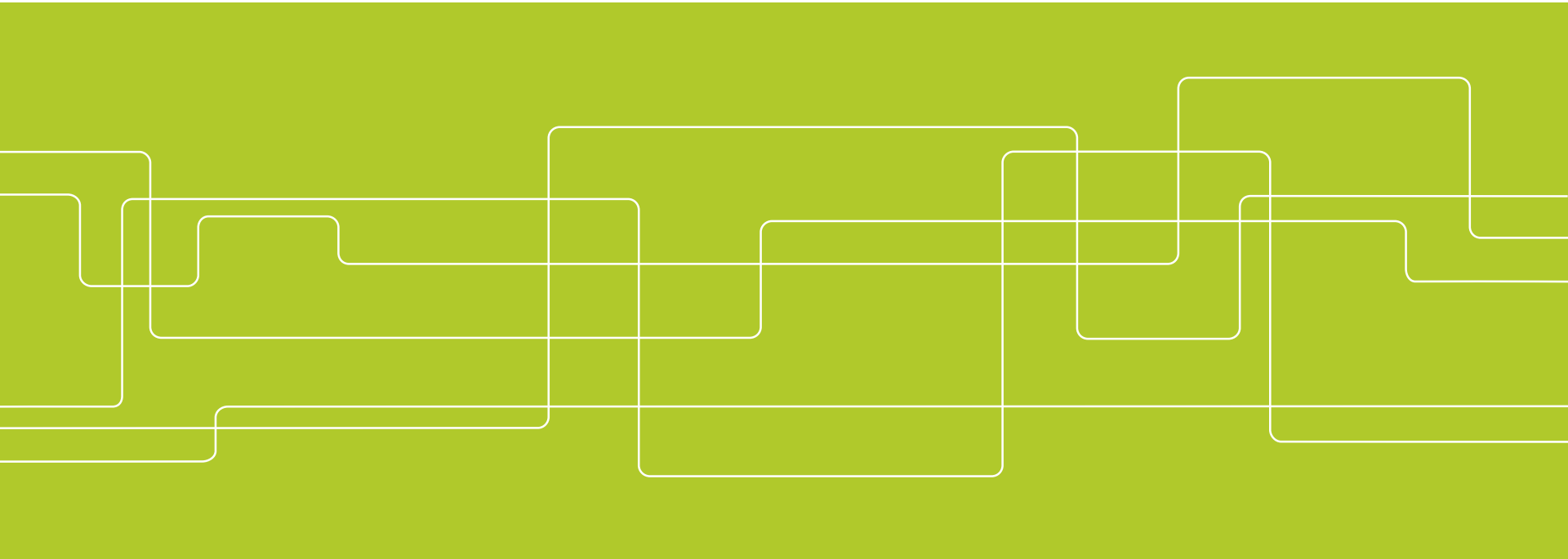


**Which method(s) do you plan to use  
in your bachelor thesis?**



# Research Methods

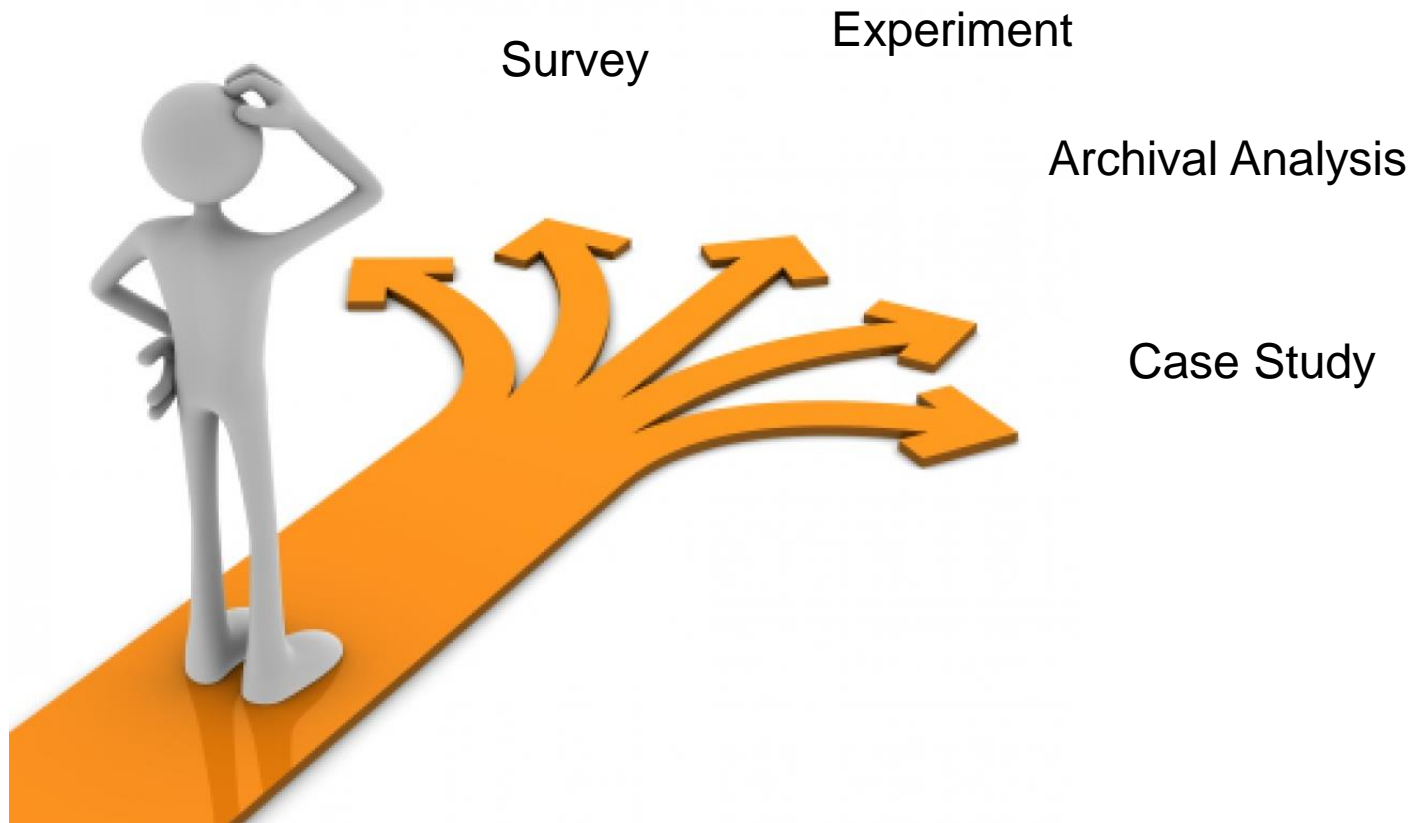
Emrah Karakaya, 24-2-2021



# Decisions in life



# Decision in research methods



# Aim high ...



## Energy Provision and Informality in South African Informal Urban Settlements

A Multi-Criteria Sustainability Assessment of Energy Access Alternatives

Simon Runsten



Minor Field Study

**Bachelor of Science Thesis**  
KTH School of Industrial Engineering and Management  
Energy Technology EGI-2015  
SE-100 44 STOCKHOLM



## Energy provision in South African informal urban Settlements - A multi-criteria sustainability analysis

Simon Runsten<sup>a,\*</sup>, Francesco Fuso Nerini<sup>a</sup>, Louise Tait<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Unit of Energy System Analysis, Sweden  
<sup>b</sup> University of Cape Town, Energy Research Center (ERC), South Africa

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### ABSTRACT

In South Africa, as in much of sub-Saharan Africa, strong urbanization trends lead to people settling in ever less suitable informal locations, which are often considered ineligible for basic service provision. This study explores how access to basic energy services can be provided to informal urban households in South Africa that are ineligible for grid electrification. This is done through a multi-criteria sustainability analysis of current and alternative ways of accessing energy services. The case of the Western Cape Province is explored, showing that barriers for electrification can be overcome in some cases, given that there is political will at the local level to do so. When electrification is unviable, off-grid electricity alternatives combined with support for access to modern cooking fuels may provide short or medium-term solutions. This study further suggests that governmental efforts of meeting basic energy needs must be persistently oriented and structured towards access to energy services, as opposed to supply of electricity.





# Index

1. Research purpose & research path
2. Research space & methodological field
3. Reviewing the literature
4. Research designs
5. Methods
6. Data collection and analysis

# Research Purpose

# What is the purpose of research?

	Exploratory	Descriptive	Explanatory	Evaluative
<b>Means to</b>	Ask open questions Discover what is happening Gain insights	Gain accurate profile of events, persons or situations	Establish causal relationships between variables	Find out how well something works
<b>Useful if you are</b>	Unsure of an issue, problem or phenomenon	Willing to have a clear picture of the phenomenon	Aiming at explaining the relationships between variables	Concerned with assessing the effectiveness of something

Saunders et al 2016 (p.174-176)

# A typical path (for a case study)

## 1. Problem/topic

- Is it interesting to anyone?

## 2. Objective

- What do I want to find?

## 3. Literature review

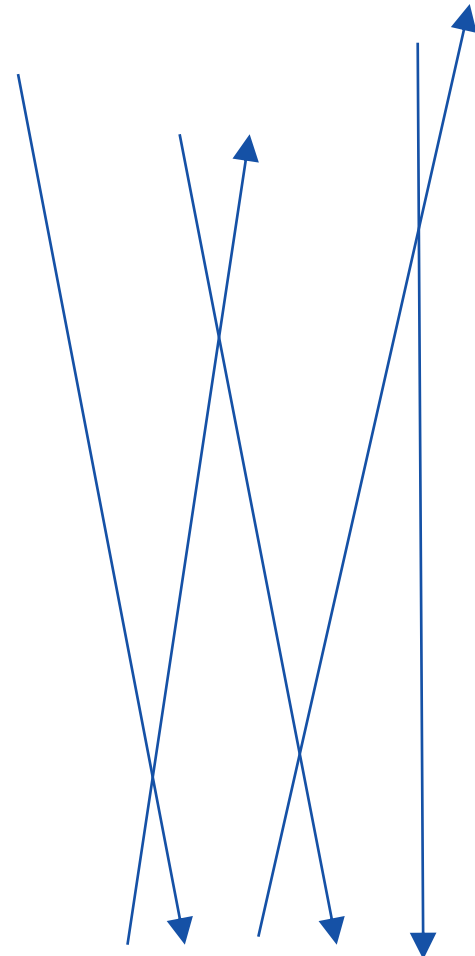
- What is the state of the art?
- Theoretical/conceptual Framework

## 4. Empirical design/analysis

- Deciding the unit of analysis
- Selecting cases
- Collecting and analyzing the data
- Interpreting the findings

## 5. Writing and reporting

- Theoretical implications
- Practical implications



*Can you change the research objectives  
during/after data collection?*

# Closed, adaptive or open designs?

*“You should not think that a case study’s design cannot be modified by new information or discovery during data collection. Such revelations can be enormously important leading to your **altering or modifying your original research design** (Yin, 2017, p.63)”*

*“if you are conducting **exploratory research**, you must be willing to **change your direction** as a result of **new data** that appear and **new insights** that occur to you (Saunders et al, 2016, p. 175)”*

# Research Space

# Dimensions of Research

Figure 1 Potential Research Space

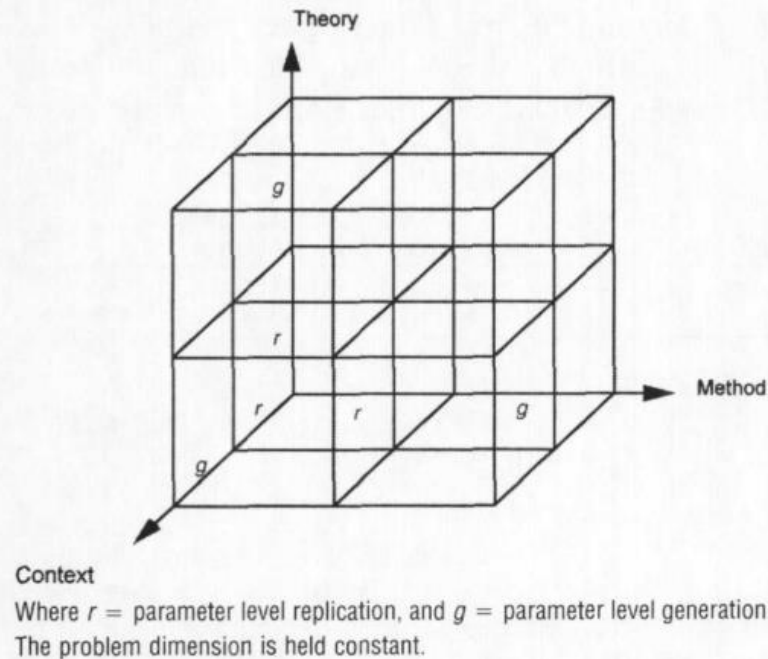


Table 1 Research Space and Levels

Level 1	
Problem	<i>General problem</i> General managerial and research question(s)
Theory	<i>Philosophical lens</i> Meta theory, including ontological, epistemological, and methodological axioms
Method	<i>Data generation</i> Methods of data production, including measurement issues, survey processes, interviews techniques, observational protocols, etc.
Context	<i>Investigative context</i> The when, where, and from whom/what data is collected (i.e., population specification and variable delineation (e.g., country, culture, industry, etc), sample issues, etc.)

(Berthon et al, 2002)





# Theory ...

‘Theory’ is a ***formulation regarding the cause and effect relationships between two or more variables***, which may or many not tested. (Saunders, 2019, p.729)

‘Theory’ is ***simply a way of imposing conceptual order*** on the empirical complexity of the phenomenal world (Suddaby 2014, p. 407).

**Which ‘theory’ or ‘theoretical concepts’ do you plan to use in your bachelor thesis?**

*When you read a paper:  
Can you identify its **theory, method and  
context?***

# Methodological Field

# Positivism / Interpretivism

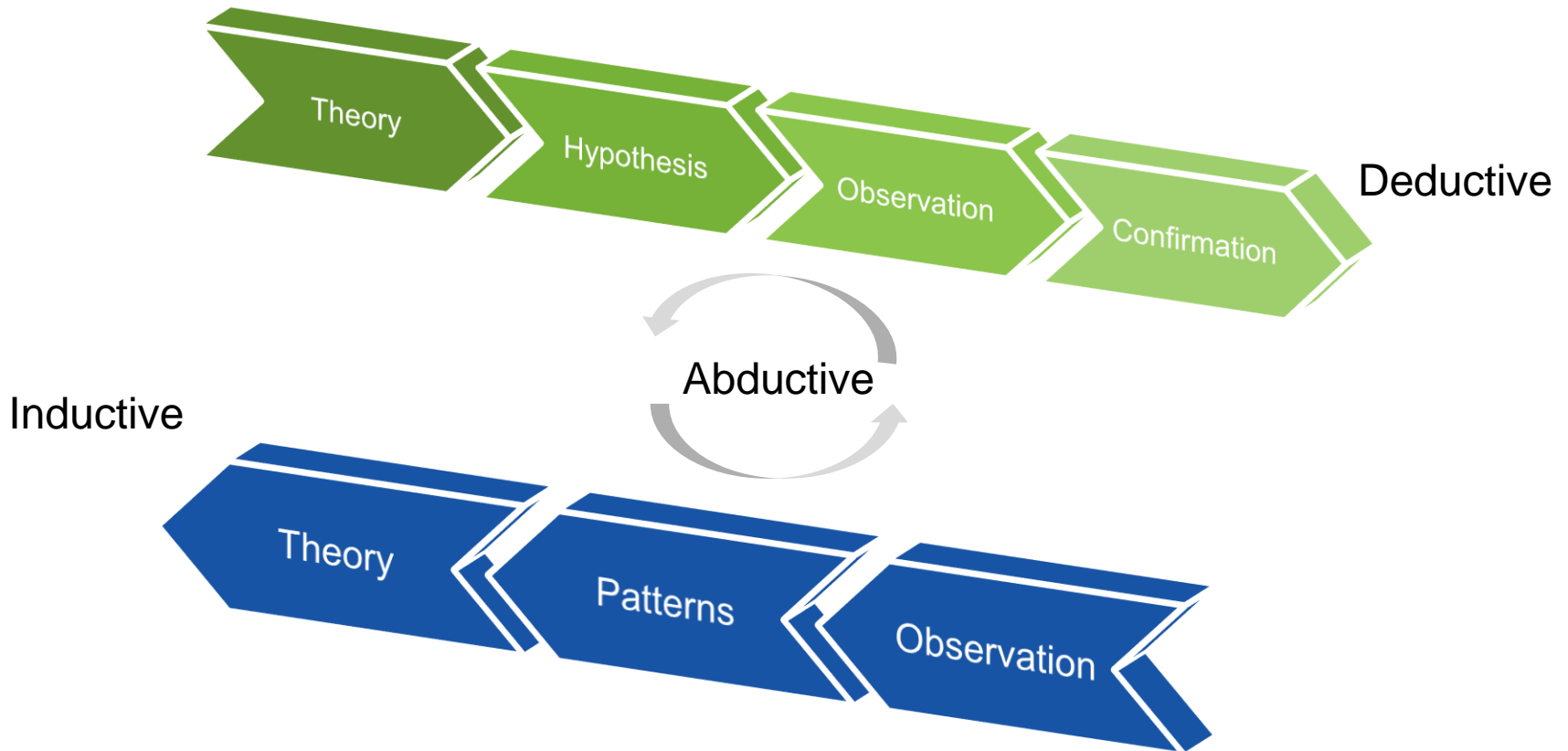
## Positivism approach

- “ [...] surrounding precise empirical observations of individual behavior in order to discover and confirm a set of probabilistic causal laws that can be used **to predict general patterns of human activity**”

## Interpretive approach

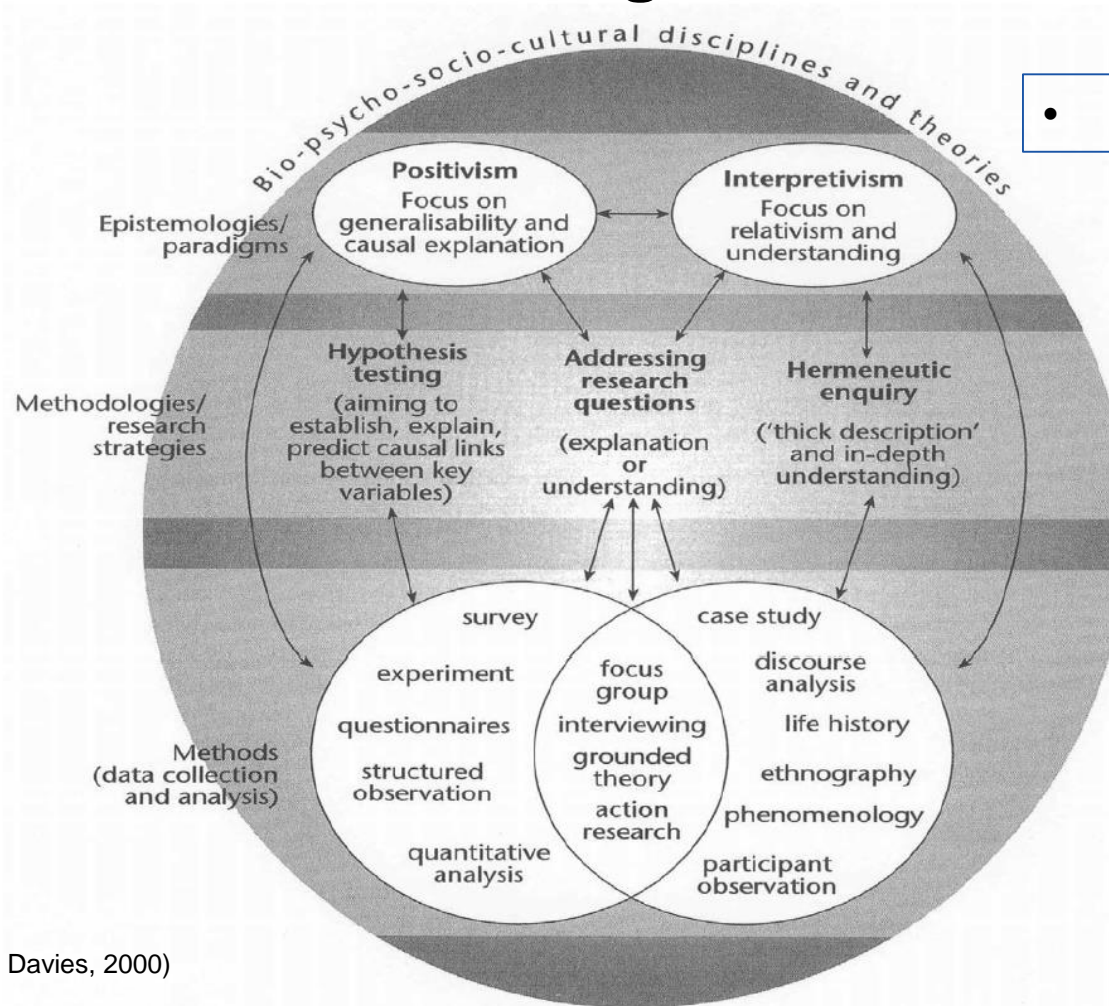
- “[...] socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order **to arrive at understandings and interpretations** of how people create and maintain their social worlds” (Neuman, 1997:as cited in Arnaboldi 2012).

# Abductive?



*“... an **abductive** approach moves back and forth, in effect combining deduction and induction (Suddaby 2006). This matches what many business and management scholars actually do (Saunders 2017, p. 148)”*

# The methodological field



- Philosophical Worldview

- Research Design / Strategy of inquiry

- Methods

(Gomm and Davies, 2000)


Creswell (2009)



# Reviewing the literature



# literature

/ˈlɪt(ə)rətʃə/ 

*noun*

written works, especially those considered of superior or lasting artistic merit.

"a great work of literature"

*synonyms:* written works, writings, (creative) writing, literary texts, compositions, letters, [belles-lettres](#); [More](#)

- books and writings published on a particular subject.

"the **literature on** environmental epidemiology"

*synonyms:* publications, published writings, texts, reports, studies, relevant works

"the literature on prototype theory"

\*Google Dictionary

# Search vs. Review

Which ones are the definitions of “Review”?

A. try to find something by looking or otherwise seeking carefully and thoroughly.

B. an act of searching for someone or something.

Search

C. a formal assessment of something with the intention of instituting change if necessary

D. a critical appraisal of a book, play, film, etc. published in a newspaper or magazine.

Review

\*Google Dictionary

# Growing literature ....

The number of science publications is growing exponentially, doubling every 9–10 years (Bornmann and Mutz, 2015)

For instance, web of Science Core Collection (WoS, 2018)

- More than 20,300 journals + books and conference proceedings
- Over 71 million records
- More than a 1 billion cited references (1900 to present)





# Why should one review the literature?

Why?

- To determine whether the topic is **worth studying**
  - then, to provide a framework for establishing the **importance** of the study
- **To explore the results of other studies** that are closely related to the one being undertaken
  - then, to provide a benchmark for **comparing the results** with other studies

Creswell (2009)

## The databases: **Any differences?**

The Google Scholar logo is displayed on the left side. It consists of the word 'Google' in its multi-colored font, with the word 'Scholar' in blue below it.

WEB OF SCIENCE™

The Scopus logo is written in a large, orange, sans-serif font. A small registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the top right of the word.

# An example on web of science

Select a database Web of Science Core Collection [Learn More](#) [Get one-click access to full-text](#)

[Basic Search](#) [Cited Reference Search](#) [Advanced Search](#) [+ More](#)

Example: oil spill\* mediterranean [x](#) Topic [Search](#) [Search tips](#)

+ Add row | Reset

Timespan  
All years (1975 - 2018) [v](#)

[More settings](#)

Web of Science Core Collection: Citation Indexes

- ☒ Science Citation Index Expanded (SCI-EXPANDED) --1975-present
- ☒ Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) --1975-present
- ☒ Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI) --1975-present
- ☒ Conference Proceedings Citation Index- Science (CPCI-S) --2002-present
- ☒ Conference Proceedings Citation Index- Social Science & Humanities (CPCI-SSH) --2002-present
- ☒ Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI) --2015-present

Auto-suggest publication names  
On [v](#)

Default Number of Search Fields to Display  
1 field (Topic) [v](#)

(To save these permanently, [sign in](#) or [register](#).)

<http://apps.webofknowledge.com/>



## In a thesis project ...

In a thesis project, it can be a chapter or a series of chapter at which you can

- provide a brief overview of **key ideas and themes** (general to narrow)
- summarise, **compare and contrast the research of the key** research streams
- **narrow down to highlight previous research** work most relevant to your own research
- highlight those aspects **where your own research will provide fresh insights**

Saunders et al (2009)



## Also ...

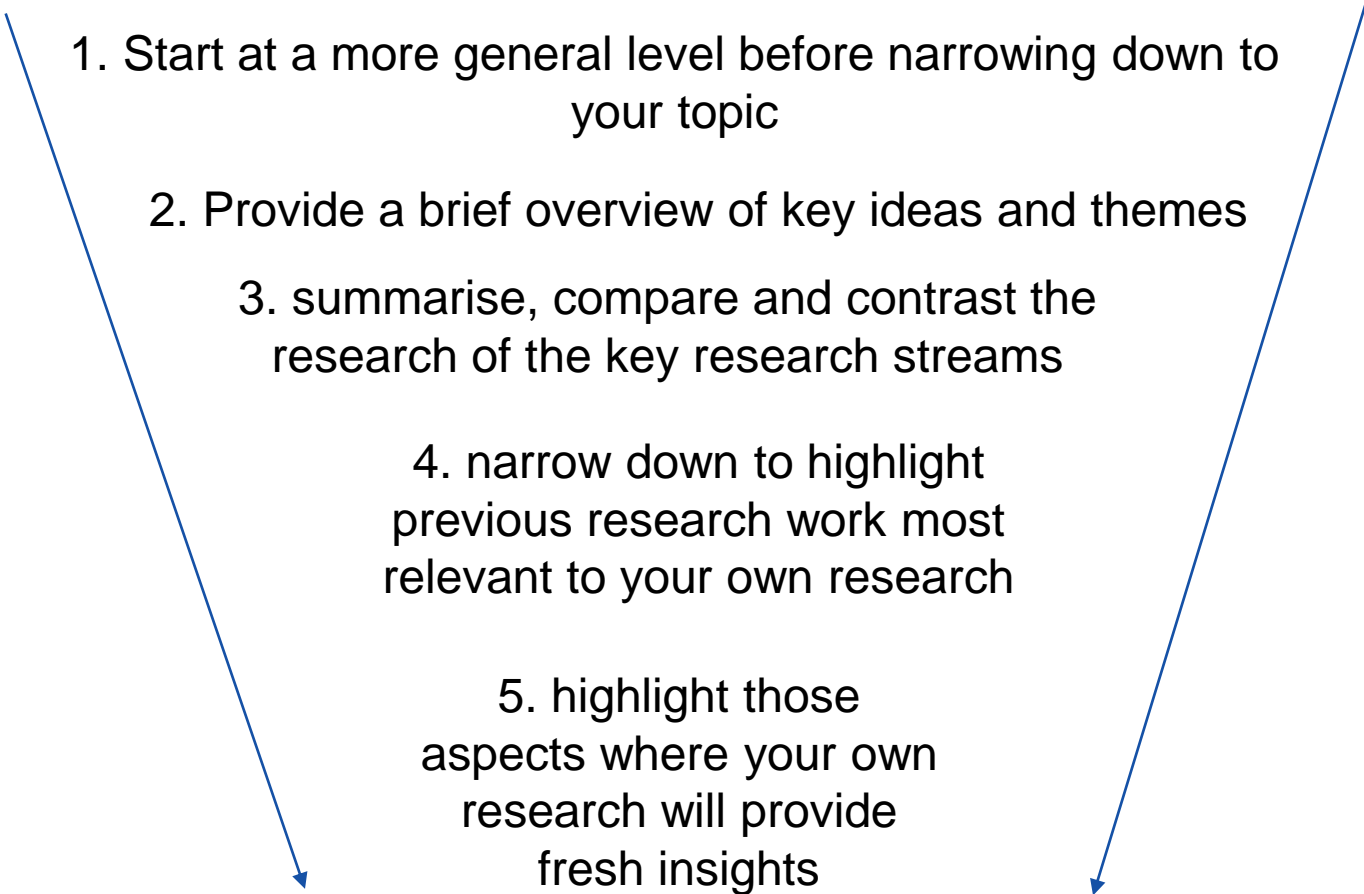
They help you to

- Generate and refine your research questions
- Avoid repeating research that has been conducted already [which is very unlikely anyway]
- Learn from different research designs



# **How to write and structure a literature review chapter?**

# One example: Funnel approach

1. Start at a more general level before narrowing down to your topic
  2. Provide a brief overview of key ideas and themes
  3. summarise, compare and contrast the research of the key research streams
  4. narrow down to highlight previous research work most relevant to your own research
  5. highlight those aspects where your own research will provide fresh insights
- 
- A large blue funnel shape is centered on the slide, with its widest part at the top and narrowing towards the bottom. Two blue arrows point downwards from the top corners of the funnel towards the bottom corners, indicating the direction of the funnel's taper.

# How to structure



**My advice:** Do not list/summarize papers one by one.  
Instead, you can come up with themes and synthesize the knowledge!



# Research designs



# Research Designs

It can be called “strategies of inquiry” as well

Two main type of designs

- Qualitative (i.e., non-numerical)
- Quantitative (i.e., numerical)

They should not be viewed as polar opposites or dichotomies

Mixed approaches are possible



# Qualitative vs Quantitative

Some examples (not dichotomies):

	Qualitative	Quantitative
Data	E.g., using words or observations	E.g., using numbers
Purpose	Exploring and understanding	Examining the relationships among variables
Questions	Open-ended	Close-ended
Strategies	Case study etc.	Experiment etc.



# Quantitative Designs

Some examples:

- **Survey research**
  - a quantitative or numeric description of
    - trends,
    - attitudes,
    - or opinions
  - Studies a sample of a population.
- **Experimental research**
  - seeks to determine if a specific treatment influences an outcome
  - true experiments, natural experiments, quasi-experiments



# Qualitative Designs

Some Examples:

- **Narrative research**
  - researcher studies the lives of individuals
  - provide stories about individual lives
  - involve a narrative chronology
- **Phenomenological research**
  - Grounded theory approach
  - Ethnography
  - Case studies

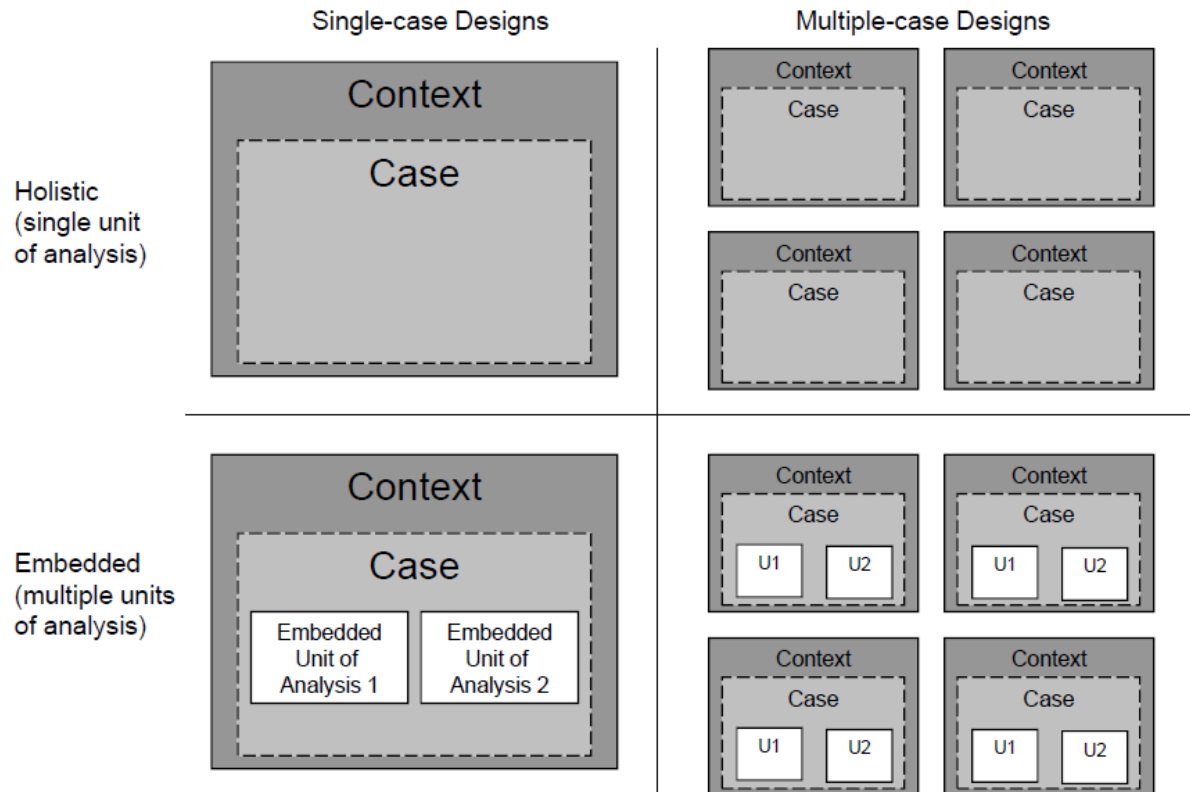


## For instance ...

A **case study** is an empirical inquiry that

- investigates a contemporary phenomenon **in depth and within its real-life context**, especially when
  - the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident
- copes with a distinctive situation in which there are **many variables**
- relies on **multiple sources of evidence**
- may benefit from the prior development of **theory to guide data collection and analysis** (Yin, 2009; p.18)

# Single vs. Multiple Units of Analysis



(Yin, 2009:32)

# Methodological Differences

	Survey	Case Study	Econometrics	....
Source of Data	Responses to questionnaires	<b>Human words, observation, documents etc.</b>	Large databases	
Position of the researcher	Outside the field	<b>Entering and observing the field</b>	Outside the field	
Data Analysis	Mathematical	<b>Non Mathematical</b>	Mathematical	
Software/tool	Yes	<b>Sometimes</b>	Yes	
Type of research questions	Hypothesis and relations among variables	<b>Open ended questions</b>	Hypothesis and relations among variables	
Phenomenon	Reducible into a model	<b>Complex</b>	Reducible into a model	

(Arnaboldi, 2012)

# Research Questions

	Research question	Control of behavioural events	Focus on contemporary events
<b>Experiment</b>	How? Why?	yes	yes
<b>Survey</b>	Who? What? Where? How many? How much?	no	yes
<b>Case Study</b>	How? Why?	no	yes

(Yin, 2016)



# Research Methods



# Research Methods

But ....

What is difference between  
methods and methodologies?

*“The most common definitions suggest that*

- methodology is the overall approach to research linked to the paradigm or theoretical framework*
- the method refers to systematic modes, procedures or tools used for collection and analysis of data.”*

*(Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006)*





# Research Methods

## Research methods

- involve the forms of data collection, analysis, and interpretation that researchers propose for their studies

## Some examples

- Big data analysis
- Questionnaires
- Experiments
- Observations
- Focus groups
- Interviews etc.

**For instance: Interviews**



# Interviews

Interviewing is a method to know about phenomenon by asking open-ended questions to informants

- **Who to interview?**
- **Which questions?**
  - It depends on research question
  - Let them talk
- **Structured semi-structured?**
- **Recording**
  - Always ask in advance
  - Ask additional questions after turning off the recorder

## Different types of interviews vs. research purpose

	Exploratory	Descriptive	Explanatory	Evaluative
Structured		++	+	+
Semi-structured	+		++	++
Unstructured	++			+

++: more frequent  
+: less frequent

Saunders et al 2016 (p. 393)

# Different types of interviews

- **Structured interviews**
  - Based on predetermined and standardized questions
  - More often in quantitative research
- **Semi-structured interviews**
  - Non-standardized
  - More often in qualitative research
  - Researcher has some themes and some key questions to cover (although their use may vary from interview to interview)
  - Some questions can be dropped and some others can be added
  - Room for open discussion
- **Unstructured interviews**
  - Ideas on what aspects to explore
  - No predetermined questions
  - Informal and non-directive



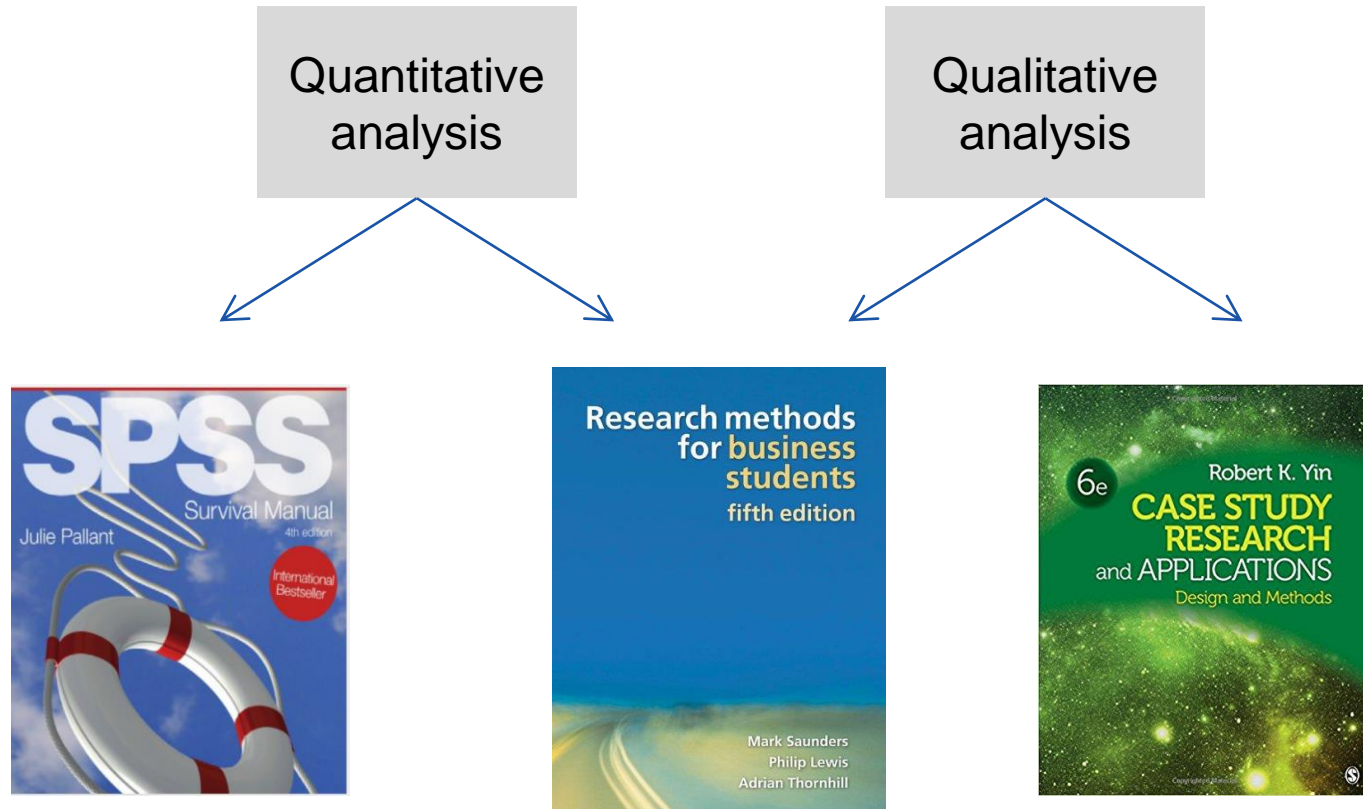
# Data Analysis

# Quantitative vs. Qualitative data

	Quantitative data	Qualitative data
<b>Data type</b>	Based on meanings derived from <b>numbers</b>	Based on meanings expressed through <b>words</b>
<b>Data structure</b>	Collection results in numerical and <b>standardized data</b>	Collection results in <b>non-standardized data</b> requiring classification into categories
<b>Data analysis</b>	Analysis conducted through the use of diagrams and <b>statistics</b>	Analysis conducted through the use of <b>conceptualisation</b>

Saunders et al 2016 (p. 482)

# Some suggestions







# For instance: interview analysis

Have you analyzed any interviews so far?

## For instance: interview analysis

The primary source for case study are interviews

- Once transcribed you start analyze the text
- Which steps:
  - Deciding on your approach to analysis
  - Coding text
    - If you are in group: make the first coding separately and then cross-check results
  - Identify variables/dimensions
  - Identify:
    - Patterns
    - Relations



# Approach to analysis

Using a **deductive** approach

- Existing theoretical framework help you organize and direct your data analysis

Using an **inductive** approach

- You do not use a predetermined theoretical framework
- You start to collect data and then explore them

**Remember:**

- It is an interactive and iterative process
- Abductive approaches are common
- You can change your approach along the way

Saunders et al 2016 (p. 569-571)

# Coding the text

- A code is a concept, a word that signifies “what is going on in this piece of data.”
- Coding, on the other hand, is the analytic process of examining data line by line or paragraph by paragraph (whatever is your style) for significant events, experiences, feelings, and so on, that are then denoted as concepts (Strauss & Corbin, 1998)
- Codes can be based on
  - Themes, Topics
  - Ideas, Concepts
  - Terms, Phrases
  - Keywords

## An example

**Interviewer:** Tell me about teens and drug use.

**Respondent:** I think teens use drugs as a release from their parents Well, I don't know. I can only talk for myself. For me, it was an experience. You hear a lot about drugs You hear they are bad for you.

### AFTER CODING

**Interviewer:** Tell me about teens and druguse.

**Respondent:** I think teens use drugs as a release from their parents ["**rebellious act**"]. Well, I don't know. I can only talk for myself. For me, it was an experience ["**experience**"] You hear a lot about drugs ["**drug talk**"]. You hear they are bad for you ["**negative connotation**" to the "**drugtalk**"].

Source: *Basics of Qualitative Research*, (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

## What can be coded in interview transcripts? (part 1)

NO.	WHAT CAN BE CODED	EXAMPLES
1	Behaviours, specific acts	Seeking reassurance, Bragging
2	Events – short once in a lifetime events or things people have done that are often told as a story.	Wedding day, day moved out of home for university, starting first job
3	Activities – these are of a longer duration, involve other people within a particular setting	Going clubbing, attending a night course, conservation work
4	Strategies, practice or tactics	Being nasty to get dumped, Staying late at work to get promotion
5	States – general conditions experienced by people or found in organisations	Hopelessness “I’ll never meet anyone better at my age” settling for someone who is not really suitable
6	Meanings – A wide range of phenomena at the core of much qualitative analysis. Meanings and interpretations are important parts of what directs participants actions.	
	a. What concepts do participants use to understand their world? What norms, values, and rules guide their actions	The term ‘chilling out’ is used by young people to mean relaxing and not doing very much
	b. What meaning or significance it has for participants, how do they construe events what are the feelings	Jealousy “ I just felt why did she get him”
	c. What symbols do people use to understand their situation? What names do they use for objects, events, persons, roles, setting and equipment?	A PhD is referred to as ‘a test of endurance’ (because finishing a PhD is a challenge)

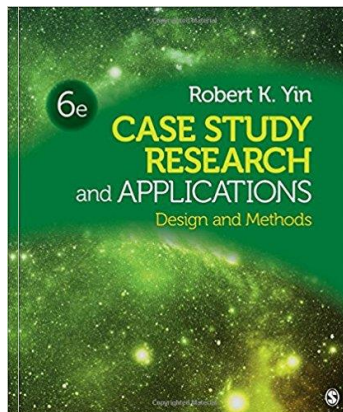
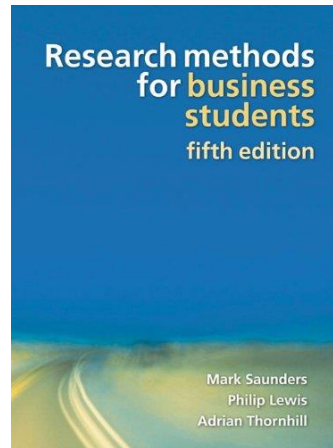
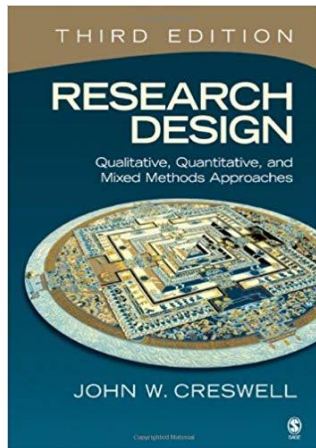
## What can be coded in interview transcripts? (part 2)

7	Participation – adaptation to a new setting or involvement	About new neighbours “In my new house I have to keep my music down at night as the neighbours have young children”.
8	Relationships or interaction	Seeing family “ Now my sister lives in the next road she visits more and we’ve become much closer.
9	Conditions or constraints	Lose of job (before financial difficulties), moving away (before lost contact with old friends)
10	Consequences	Confidence gets dates, positive attitude attracts opportunities
11	Settings – the entire context of the events under study	University, work place, housing estate
12	Reflexive – researcher’s role in the process, how intervention generated the data	Probing question “How did you feel when he said that?”

### Reference:

Taylor, C and Gibbs, G R (2010) "How and what to code",  
**Online QDA Web Site**,  
[\[onlineqda.hud.ac.uk/Intro\\_QDA/how\\_what\\_to\\_code.php\]](http://onlineqda.hud.ac.uk/Intro_QDA/how_what_to_code.php)

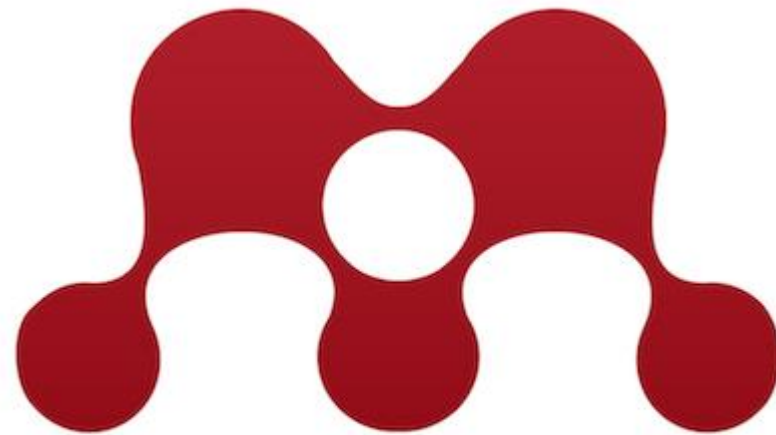
# Some key books ...





**Btw, how do you manage your references?**

**One example ...**



**MENDELEY**



Any questions or comments?



# Thanks!

Emrah Karakaya

E-mail: [emrah.karakaya@indek.kth.se](mailto:emrah.karakaya@indek.kth.se)

Profile page: <https://www.kth.se/profile/emrahka>

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