Techniques of researching social movements

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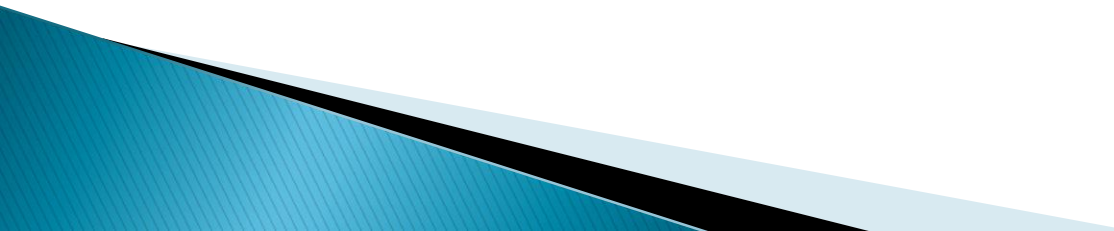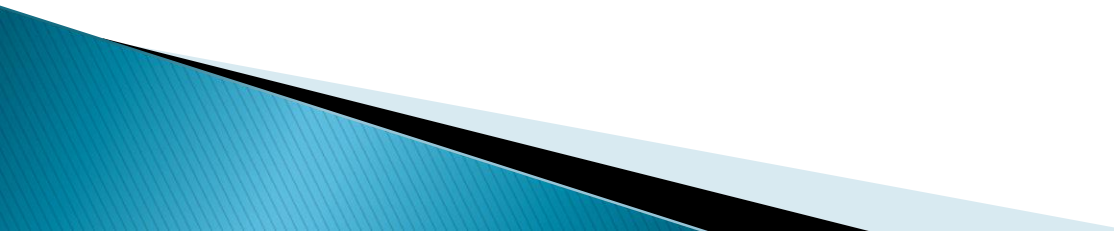
Introduction

- Why research social movements?
  - Recent research on social movement in the region, largely centered on contemporary movements.

- How to approach a social movement?

- How to distinguish methods and choose which one fits for your purposes?

Self check

- What are you interested in?
  - Occurring vs. recent vs. past social movements
  - Research question and aim

- How much time do you have to do the research?

- Can you access the field?

- What skills and resources do you have at your disposal?

- Do you need any additional resources?

Participant observation I

What is it?

- Participant observation is perhaps the best and most literal way of entering the field, as such it is a valuable method for occurring movements.

Things to consider:

- Who or what are you observing?
- Try to be specific with what you aim to get from the field?
- What are you interested in analytically?

Participant observation II

How do you do it?

- Choose which sites, how long and why (tentative)
- Find an entry point (build trust)
- If you participate more actively, reflect on your role and be upfront about your biases
- Field notes (precise and elaborative)
  - Tip! You can use your voice recorder for reminders or mental notes. Remember to be mindful of your surroundings!
- Be transparent about what you are researching and be analytical

Interviews

Interviews

- In-depth information
- Can check details and verify facts
- Builds a better rapport (especially when combined with PO)

How do you decide what to ask?

- theory and research quesiton
  - Deductive
  - Inductive
  - Abductive
- Important to know what you want to know!
- It is also important to consider who you are interviewing.
  - Informers vs. participants

How to approach interviewees?

- Networks and snowballing method

Interview tips

- Establish the rules!
  - Is the interview anonymous or public
  - Approximate timeframe and format

- Location
  - Important to choose a place both you and interviewee are comfortable with.

- Recorder
  - Do you have a recording device?
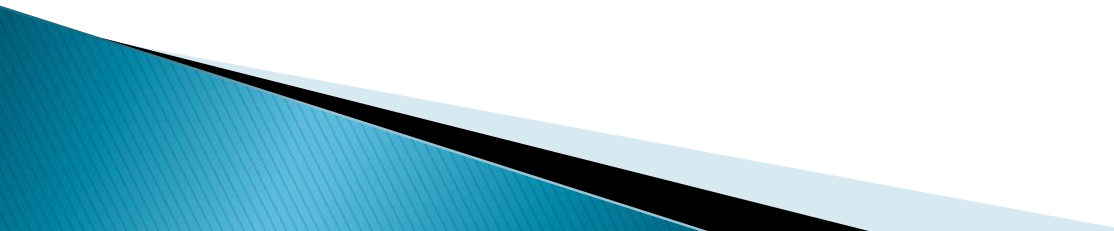 - Share how you will use and protect the recording.

Focus Group Discussions

- Focus Group Discussions
  - Collaborative
  - Less pressure for the participants (not always!)
  - Better when participants are more reluctant

- Location
  - Need a calm room, can ask local university or NGOs whether they would be willing to share any space with you.

- How do you approach participants?
  - Snowballing method, particularly you can ask interviewees or friends
  - If you participate in the protests you can make contacts directly

Other methods

- Visual
  - Researchers may choose to analyze the visual aspect of movements such as pictures, placard, etc.
  - Benefits are that you can do this in you are also comparing movements, including movements in the past.
- Historical Analysis
  - Also a method to use if you are researching past social movements.
  - Useful when doing comparative work across movements and maybe countries.

- Life histories
  - Useful method when looking at social movements in a more longue duree approach.

- Discourse and Frame Analysis
  - This is a method that can also be combined with methods for both contemporary and past movements. It includes analyzing speeches, placards, manifestos etc.

Ethical considerations

- Consent
  - Ask for consent and establish framework (anonymity, consent to be recorded)
- Recourse
  - Give a choice of opting out or of complaining
- Safety
  - Make sure both you and your interlocutor feel safe
- Data protection
  - Make sure to have a system of ensuring data safety and protection
- Make sure to check if your institution has ethical requirements or guidelines!

Analyzing the data I

Manual

- Transcribing the material (recommended in the original language if possible)

Coding

- Thematic clusters and sub clusters emanating from p.o., interviews and/or focus group discussions

Software

- For a larger data set, softwares provide a way to see the data and be able to create a better view of the connections and main trends. Can also help in checking for researcher's bias.

Analyzing the data II

- How to code?
  - First step is to go back to your research question and your theoretical framework:
    - what are the key words you need?

  - After a first reading of all transcripts which are the patterns you have noticed?
    - How do these patterns connect to your research question?

  - Make a list of the codes, and then also add sub-codes if necessary.
  - Make sure to include both descriptive and analytical codes.

Analyzing the data III

- Should you use software?
  - The answer is no, you do not need to use a software such as Maxqda or Nvivo, but there are benefits to using it.

- What are the benefits to using a software?
  - If your data set is too large then a software can better help you in analysing it.
  - You can use it for multiple uses, for instance you can code pictures, transcripts of interviews, speeches, etc. and have all the material in one place
  - Helps you in structuring the data and possibly avoiding personal biases.
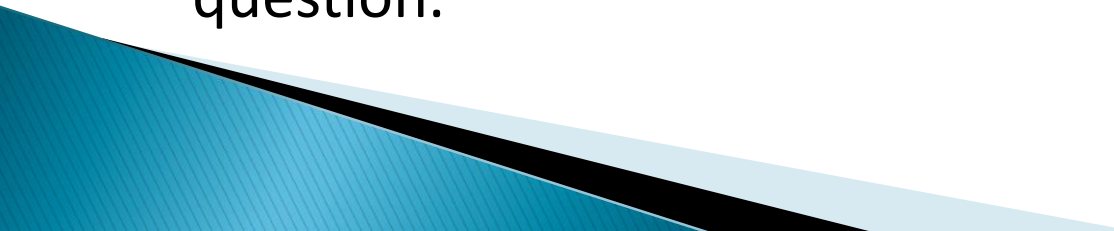
Code System

Code System	**1563**
GREEN	31
Tetovo/periphery/other cities	22
Political parties	83
Descriptive context	40
Quotable	211
Citizenship	172
Societal problems	61
Participation/ other protests	45
Social Media	5
Media	8
Changes	42
Futures	14
Youth	1
Personal	3
Identification	9
changes	21
toll	22
aims and motivation	41

Other groups	0
participation	5
issues	5
Gender	0
issues	12
participation	12
Inter-ethnic participation	16
reasonings	34
not present	10
present	9
Inter-ethnic relations	17
Nationalism	6
Negative	11
Positive	17
2001	3
Characterization	27
Regime	2
Fall	4
Suppression techniques	16
Characterization	21
Colorful Revolution	49
ideology	17
participation	17
methods and organization	89
aims and motivation	17
Demographic	1
ethnic	9
Gender	4
Skopje 2014/ city	21

Closing thoughts

- Make sure to know what it is you want from the field. Even if you do not have a precise question yet, you should have an idea of what it is you are interested in more specifically.

- Engage with different theories and approaches until you find the right fit.

- Using a research design which involves more methods is the best way to get to the core of the story you are trying to tell, establishing the facts, and answering your research question.

Thank you for following along on this course

Please direct any questions to:
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