SOC607: METHODOLOGY SEMINAR
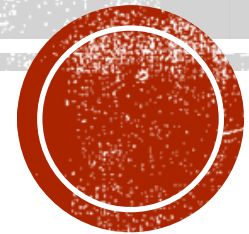
From a research interest to a research proposal

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- **Writing a research proposal**

-> 60% of the mark (20% first draft, 40% final draft)

-> topic related to issues covered in course

-> formal requirements: 8-10 pages; 1,5 spaced, ASA style referencing

-> group work/individual work

-> deadline for 1st draft 20th November, for final final draft 1st January

-> peer review deadline 31th November

- **Writing a blog contribution**

-> 15% of the mark

-> topic related to issues covered in course/personal experience/field trip

-> formal requirements: 2 standard pages long

-> audience: readers of RESPEKT (liberal public interested in social issues and politics)

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

What is a research proposal?

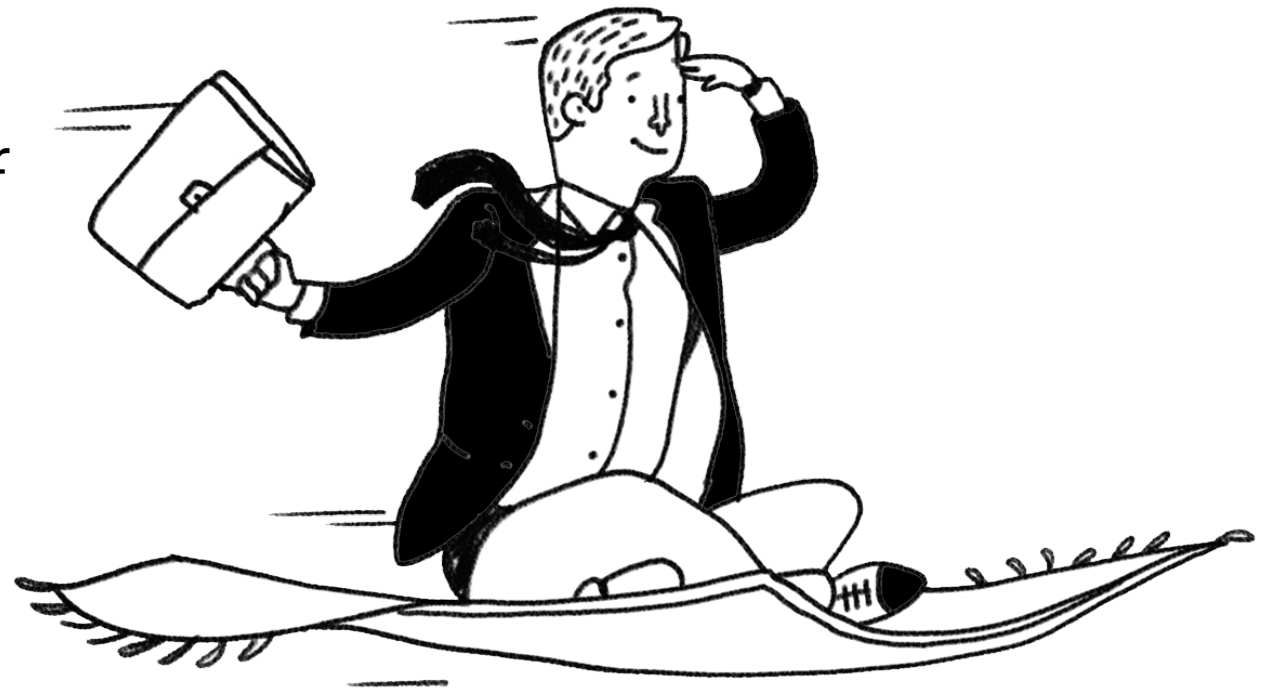What is a purpose of a research proposal?

Who do you write it for?

What is YOUR experience with writing a research proposal?

RESEARCH PROPOSAL AS A...

- … roadmap to the research

- … proof of scientific competence

- … means of structuring an argument

- … personal „mind trainer" and a mirror

- … lifebuoy when you get lost

- … basis for scientific co-operation

- … necessity to get funding

- … FLYING CARPET

SOME THINGS TO CLARIFY BEFORE

- Who am I and where do I stand?

- What theoretical tradition I plan to follow on?

- How much do I know about the problem?

- Do I want to test a theory or do I want to develop a new one?

- How much capacity do I have for a research? (time, money, knowledge, access)

- I am alone, or are we a few?

- What I want to achieve with my research?

- To whom am I writing a research proposal?

DESIGNING YOUR OWN FLYING CARPET

Seminar task – individual work

1. think about a research topic
2. specify a research problem
   (max 5 sentences)
3. formulate a research question
4. formulate a hypothesis (quanti) /
   research assumption (quali)
5. decide on methodology
6. justify a research to your supervisor
   (3 arguments)

HOW TO WRITE A RESEARCH PROPOSAL?

- *What defines how the proposal will look like?*

1. TITLE

- Study on writing a research proposal

- "Do you have any idea?" The role of interaction in the research proposal preparation

- Approaches to research proposal drafting: Cases of German and Anglo-Saxon educational systems.

- The sky is falling! Psychological perspective on the failure in research proposal writing

- Writing a research proposal: Study on the reasons of the failure in students' preparation of a good research proposal from the perspective of ANT

1. TITLE

- Craft a hook
- Choose two or three key words
- Keep it brief but clear
- Try to avoid jargon or abbreviations

2. ABSTRACT

- Summary

- Important strategic element

- Usually around 200-300 words

- Brief, but clear and convincing

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

➤ purpose of the study

➤ justification of the project

➤ hypothesis/research puzzle

➤ research questions

➤ definition of key terms and concepts

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

- Are you willing to fill a research gap?

- Are you testing a new theory?

- Do you a aim to provide an in-depth understanding of a certain phenomenon?

- Are you giving voice to a marginalized group of people?

What other research purposes come to your mind?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How to formulate a good research question?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Avoid too simple or too obvious questions

"Is social exclusion a negative social phenomenon?"

- Avoid yes/no questions

"Does low income lead to social exclusion?"

- Be as clear as possible

"Has the number of marginalized communities increased?"

- Make the question narrow and pointed

"In what way does legislation affect the groups in risk of social exclusion?"

- Avoid multi-headed questions

"How can one's education and family status impact one's chances on a labor market?"

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research questions usually producing robust findings are:

➤ What is the nature of…?

➤ What are the functions of…?

➤ What are the mechanisms by which…?

➤ What factors affect….?

➤ What strategies are used…?

➤ What is the relationship between…?

WHAT? & HOW?

➤ How do … perceive…?

➤ How do … affect …?

➤ How are … defined?

➤ How do … differ?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Think about your research question.

In what ways could it be improved?

Talk to your partner.

CLARIFYING CONCEPTS

"How does the status of a child influence their educational chances?"

Conceptualization

-> what do we understand under **status**? How do we define **educational chances**?

-> are there more **dimensions** of this concept? What are their **indicators**?

Operationalization

-> how do we measure **status**? How do we measure **educational chances**?

CLARIFYING CONCEPTS

- Think about your concepts.

- How would you define them?

- Do they have more dimensions? If yes, what dimensions do you plan to focus on?

- What would be their indicators?
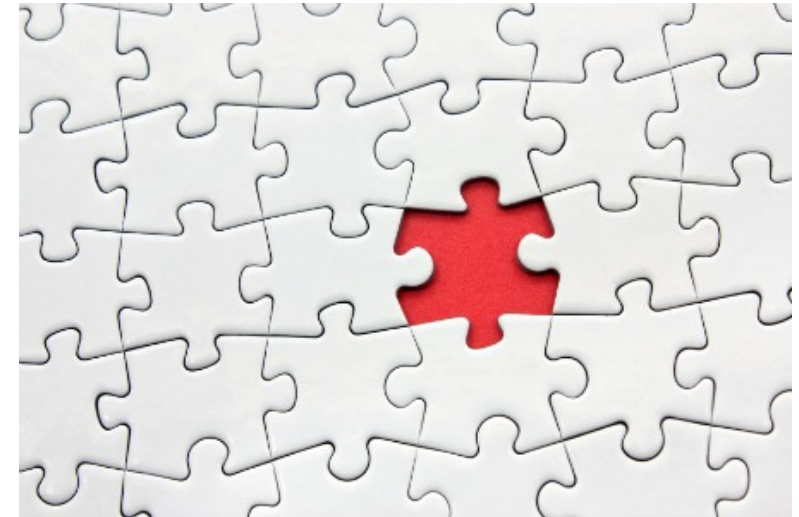
- Take 3 minutes for reflection.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

- an overview of the existing literature relevant to my research problem

- an intellectual starting point and a **justification** of the study

TIPS and TRICKS

➤ don't read for understanding, skim for concepts

➤ make your authors communicate

➤ engage in a dialogue, criticize

➤ identify a blind spot of the theory

5. METHODOLOGY

- Overview
- Proof of competence
- Justification
- Method vs. Methodology

5. METHODOLOGY

- Components:
  - **1. intended research design**
  - 2. sample to be examined
    - *Who? Why? How many? How can I get to them?*
  - **3. tools and techniques for collecting evidence**
  - **!consistent with the nature of the research question!**
    - *…. Interviews? Ethnography? Focus groups? Discourse analysis*
    - *Content analysis? Policy analysis? Experimental methods? Factor*
    - *Analysis? Focus groups? Comparative analysis? …..*
  - **4. data analysis techniques**
    - *How will I code my data? How will I analyse my data?*

6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In what ways may your research cause a thread to the individuals/community involved?

Social exclusion, stigma, minority status ->
sensitivity and vulnerability!

Think about the…
➢ Personal data
➢ Identification data
➢ Respect provided to respondents
➢ Protection of data

➢ Time for a consent form?

7. TIME SCALE

=

amount of time I need for the study and for single steps

REALITY...

Want to make God laugh?

Tell Him you've got plans.

BESIDES

- **8. Sustainability**

- **9. Dissemination**

- **10. Budget**

- → mainly in applied research

8. SUSTAINABILITY

How are you going to assure that your results will last?

→ the ability of a project to maintain its outcomes (operations, services, benefits, ecc.) during its life time

Institutional stability

Continued community participation

Continued environmental stability

9. DISSEMINATION

How are other people going to find out about your results?

10. BUDGET

What are you going to need money for? Why?

How much it will cost?

What sources are you going to use?

ACTIVITY: REVISING YOUR RP

- Come back to your research proposal. How do you feel about it?

- What is its strongest point? What is its weakest point?

- Is something not clear?

- Read your research question once again.

- How your thinking about your RP changed during the class?

HOW TO WRITE GOOD BLOGS?

Do you have any experience with writing blogs?

Some TIPS and TRICKS
- Catchy title
- One main line of an argument
- Artistic catchy style
- Audience specific. Who might be the reader of RESPEKT?
- Personal story rocks, emotions are strong carriers of a meaning

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USGHnNT4mb4