

## QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF DATA

or "post modern" or "new paradigm" research

encompasses a variety of quite different approaches

- Research should concentrate on the **meanings of actions and interactions in a social context**, not on isolated units and processes.
- Research is conducted as closely as possible **with participants**. At the most radical end, the participants themselves are involved in the running and analysis of the research project (i.e. collaborative research).
- Participants' own terms and interpretations are the most relevant data.
- **Theories are allowed to emerge**, rather than be constructed before the research is carried out or be imposed on the data. Consequently, theories tend to be tied to the specific research context ("local"), rather than generalize about all human behaviour ("global").
- Preferred methods of investigation are: open-ended questionnaires, semi- or unstructured interviews, relatively unstructured observation and participant observation a.o.

### Evaluation of this approach

- + Is often less influenced than quantitative analysis by the biases and the theoretical assumptions of the researcher.
- + Understands participants as rounded individuals in a social context.
- The findings tend to be unreliable and hard to replicate, because categorization and interpretation of data may differ a lot between one researcher and another, although qualitative researchers use alternative criteria for reliability and validity.