Qualitative data analysis and theorization

Course coordinator: Jens Rennstam

Credits: 7.5 ects credit points

Background and aim: The course is given by the Department of Business Administration at Lund University. It focuses on theorization and qualitative data analysis and is thereby a complement to the departments’ courses on theory.

Learning theory is different from learning theorization. The former focuses on learning what others have said, while the latter focuses on learning how to make theory yourself. In an academic context, we need theory to theorize, but only learning what others have said does not necessarily teach a student how to theorize. Against this background, the aim of this course is to improve the students’ analytical and theorization skills. In addition, since learning theorization implies learning how to think independently in light of other theorists, a secondary aim of the course is to assist the students in their process of becoming independent analysts.

Knowledge requirements: Since the focus of this course is the analytic activities that engage the researcher during and after the fieldwork, it is essential that the students who take the course have already collected a significant amount of data for their thesis. It is also necessary that the students have a basic understanding of the theory of qualitative method. It is therefore a condition for acceptance to the course that the students have completed the course “Introduction to Business Research Methods” and that they have already collected a significant amount of empirical material for their doctoral thesis.

Teaching: The teaching consists of an introductory lecture, a literature seminar and ”analytic seminars.” The aim of the lecture is to introduce the idea of the course, to communicate the pre-understandings of the students, and to prepare the students for the seminars. At the literature seminar, we discuss all the course literature, aiming to introduce the students theoretically to the practical analytical process.

The analytic seminars are the core of the course. The number of seminars depends on the number of students. The idea is to discuss each student’s data twice. The first time, the student will bring a piece of data to the seminar and describe, in writing and orally, how s/he has analyzed the data, and how s/he intends to use it to argue for a theoretical point. Based on this presentation, the student will get feedback from the other students and from the teacher. This feedback is then used to improve the text, which will eventually be the course paper.

The second time a student’s text is discussed it should have developed into a full course paper. The student will present his/her paper and receive feedback from the other students and the teacher. Broadly, the paper should contain a detailed description of the analytical process, which implies that it also contains a theorization. The feedback from the other students and the teacher should focus on two questions: 1) how well and convincingly has the student analyzed his/her data, and 2) how may this analysis be used in his/her final doctoral thesis?

Examination: The course is examined based on the course paper that the students write throughout the course. The examination task of the students is to, drawing on the course literature and other
relevant literature, analyze (which includes theorize) a piece of their own data, and account for how they did it. This should be communicated in a paper comprising about 4000 words. The paper is graded with pass or fail by the teacher.

**Learning outcomes**

Upon finalizing the course, the student should show:

**Knowledge and understanding**

- A thorough understanding of the distinction between theory and theorization.
- A thorough understanding of the key elements in qualitative analysis.

**Applying knowledge and understanding**

- An ability to perform an independent analysis and theorization of qualitative data.

**Communication**

- An ability to communicate both orally and in writing on issues and problems with regard to qualitative data analysis and theorization.

**Literature**

**Main books**


**A set of articles that are subject to alteration**


**Reference literature**