

## **Periodic evaluation of STV9029 Advanced Qualitative Field Methods**

**Instructors:** Francesca R. Jensenius and Målfrid Braut-Hegghammer

This is the second iteration of this course focusing on fieldwork methods and qualitative approaches. It has been requested by several students in the past, but due to limited availability of the core convenors due to other commitments it has not been run since 2018.

### Enrolment, format and participation

There was great interest in the course, with more PhD candidates applying for admission than what we could accommodate. We had decided on 15 as the maximum number of students to allow for a discussion of individual project. Since some attrition can always be expected, we admitted 18 students. In the end, 15 people completed the course (14 enrolled students one auditor). These students were mostly from political science, but some participants also came from economics and other related fields. Most students had prior experience with fieldwork research, but with significant variation in terms of the scope of their prior exposure to working in the field. We tailored the content of the course to suit the specific questions that the participants and their projects presented. The format and assigned readings enable scope for flexibility to tailor the sessions to the priorities and needs identified in the research notes provided by the participants one week before the course started.

The format and content of the course was similar to the first iteration, drawing on a combination of lectures, interactive assignments/research lab and individual presentations. The participants each provided a research note prior to the course, and submitted an updated research note after the course incorporating feedback and insights from the readings and discussion. This set-up worked very well overall.

We had changed the assigned readings significantly since the first iteration of the course, reflecting the rapidly developing methodological debates with regards to fieldwork and qualitative methods more broadly. The current readings worked very well, and the feedback from the students indicate that they were useful, but since this is a rapidly developing literature we are likely to update the reading list further the next time we convene the course.

### Areas for improvement and next steps

The feedback from the participants was overwhelmingly positive. The feedback emphasized the value of tailored and applied methods in fieldwork methods, which led to constructive discussions. Based on our reading of the final versions of the individual research notes, it was clear that the themes and discussions in the class led to further specification and sophistication of research design and choice of research methods.

For future iterations, and drawing on feedback from the participants, we will integrate somewhat more guided group discussions. Based on feedback from participants, we will also cover the use of images and other visual data in more detail in the next iteration of the class (e.g., sequential analysis based on combining photography and satellite imagery). As many of the projects that candidates in the course work on are multimethod, it might also make sense to relax the emphasis on qualitative methods somewhat, to open for fieldwork used for qualitative and multimethod (including quantitative) approaches.

This report is based on our own evaluations, verbal feedback from students collected during the course, as well as written feedback from 13 of the 15 participants.