

Interviewing in a Multinational Context

Issues when interviewing

- Who to interview?
 - Expert interviews
 - Interview subjects
- How to access them?
 - Direct methods
 - Snowballing
 - Via organizations
 - Participatory access

Issues when interviewing

- Making contact
 - Communications
 - Getting the interview
- Interview questions
 - Structured interviewing
 - Unstructured interviewing
- Recording
- Ethics

Issues when interviewing

- Processing
 - Transcription
 - Storage
- Analysis
 - Coding
 - Making Inferences

Multi-national context

- Language issues
 - Interpretation
 - Translation
 - Managing multi-lingual data collection
- Practical issues
 - Resources
 - Time on site
 - Legitimacy of affiliations

Account for different viewpoints, ideologies and interests

- Who are the groups with viewpoints on an issue?

Trade Unionists

Employer associations

Public servants

Company management

Union members/workers

Other groups: situational

Researchers

Deciding information sources to use

Knowledge of subject matter

Official status and authoritativeness – is the source a “must consult”

Availability

Representativeness and legitimacy

Getting viewpoints and insights from all sides on contentious position

Reliability

Scope of project

Organization? Event? Country? Locality?
Factory? Network?

What is the relevant time span?

What are the relevant aspects of the thing you have selected for your case?

What are the organizations, people, events around your case you will have to research?

What do you need to know to understand the dynamics of your case?

Evidence and inference

Produce a narrative, using the facts from empirical sources

Narratives involve selecting what is important and what to exclude – use theory to inform your judgement

Narratives involve making inferences from sources; imputing meaning to raw facts

Inferences require evidence – the stronger the evidence, the stronger the inference

Assess the evidence, check for weak points, seek more evidence on the weak points

Triangulating the facts

Use sources with an interest in presenting a different narrative to check controversial facts

For example, if both employers and unions agree a wage settlement was low, you can probably say it was without knowing more

If employers think it was high, but unions think it was low, the fact is in dispute to some extent – you must dig deeper for a real assessment

But be careful – interests can configure in unexpected ways!

