

DATES

- Announced in class: 06 November 2019
- Deadline submission: **9:00 Am 25 November**

LEARNING GOALS

In lectures four and five of Theory Construction, we have discussed how you can translate your initial interests in a social phenomenon into a social-scientific research design (including research questions, hypotheses, methods and a time plan). For this assignment you put this into practice. You will need to reflect in particular on research goals, and on the role of existing concepts & academic literature in different social-scientific approaches (i.e. post-positivist and interpretivist) to social research.

The goal of this paper is not to write about your specific phenomenon *as such*, but to reflect on a research design for this social phenomenon that you would like to research in your thesis. You should demonstrate that you understand the course material by applying it.

INSTRUCTIONS

(1) Choose a **social phenomenon**. We recommend you to take the same phenomenon as for the first assignment, but doing so is not compulsory. If you choose a new phenomenon, you first need to go through the same steps of creative theorising. You do not need to explain or demonstrate this process (max. 250 words).

(2) **Develop two research designs: one positivist and one interpretive** (max. 1200 words each). For each research design, you should address the following topics:

a. A reflection on the **research process**. How do literature, data collection and data analysis fit together? In which order will you use them? We recommend that you use the terms and building blocks described in the slides and the texts (e.g. deduction, induction, abduction, hermeneutic circle, role of theory, concepts, hypotheses & research topics, ...). Be sure to use them correctly, explaining what they mean in the specific context of the approach that you are developing.

b. The **methods** you will use, thereby explaining why these methods are adequate to the overall research design.

c. **Formulate a research question** for each approach. For the (post-)positive research design, this probably includes hypotheses and a (simple) model. Explain how these fulfil the functions and/or characteristics of a good hypothesis. For the interpretive research design, you need to describe why the preliminary research question is suggestive enough to guide your research and flexible enough to adapt to the findings from the field throughout the research. It is recommended that you give examples as to how you might need to adapt your research question.

d. For each research design, describe at least one **research goal** as described by Ragin and Amoroso, and explain why this fits well with those research designs.

In this assignment, make sure to emphasize the *contrasts* between the two research designs.

Especially with regards to the research question & goal, you should reflect on the differences between the two approaches.

Where appropriate, you can take inspiration from existing literature and theory. Make sure to cite correctly. Throughout the assignment, you can always refer to what you have learned in other courses (with correct citations where needed).

SUBMISSION

Submit your assignment on the deadline (**25th of November 2019**) in electronic format, via email 73198435@fsv.cuni.cz

The intended length of the assignment is 1800 to 2550 words. It is graded out of 20 and **Late submissions** receive a reduction of 2 out of 20, repeated for every extra week of delay. But, as always: quality above quantity. You are advised to write in Dutch, unless you feel sufficiently proficient in English.

Make sure your name, course title and the title of the assignment are clearly visible on the first page.

If you do not succeed in submitting the assignment before the deadline, give me a heads up by email and try to submit as soon as possible.

EVALUATION

While grading this assignment, I take into consideration the following criteria:

- Correct use of relevant concepts & theories introduced during class and in the reader.
- Degree in which you demonstrate understanding of differences and similarities of the various research goals and approaches.
- The research questions and how well they fit the corresponding approach.
- Formal requirements (e.g., use of scientific language, respecting the deadline, etc.).

FEEDBACK

I will provide individual feedback for each one of you and send it back by email. If you have any questions to clarify the assignment, you can contact me through email. After you receive your assignment, if you have any comments or questions you can ask me either after lecture or by email.