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**A Report on Participation in the European Consortium for Political  
Research (ECPR) Summer Methods School**

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I sincerely thank the Norwegian Research School in Global Health (NRS GH) for the grant and this wonderful opportunity to participate in the *NVivo for Qualitative Data Analysis* and *An Introduction to Qualitative Data Analysis: Concepts and Approaches* Courses at ECPR Summer Methods School. I am most grateful to NRS GH.

## Course Title

I participated in the Methods Summer School of the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) from 27<sup>th</sup> July to 5<sup>th</sup> August 2017 at the Central European University (CEU) in Budapest. I enrolled in a three day short and intensive course on NVivo and a one week course on Introduction to Qualitative Data Analysis.

## Topics and Learning methods

The short intensive course was hands-on and practical using the instructor's and participants' own gathered data to learn how to use the NVivo software to analyze qualitative data. Learning methods comprised of short lectures, step by step guidance through the use of the software and daily assignments. The instructor and teaching assistant were very patient and helpful with troubleshooting and using of the software. Topics covered included coding, generating queries, using visualizations such as maps and matrix in NVivo to report data and keeping memos which could be used as an audit trail for data analysis. In addition, the course covered how to conduct literature review using the software.

The second course on qualitative data analysis covered three main topics on data analysis and a Master Class for troubleshooting questions from participants' own studies. The first topic, concepts and approaches to qualitative data analysis provided in-depth insights on how to align research questions with research purpose, method, research paradigm and analysis. Because of my previous participation in qualitative methods courses, I thought the topic on research questions, purpose and paradigm was repetitive and unnecessary. This, however, proved to be very useful because although I originally designed a comparative analysis, the course revealed that with the data I have collected so far, my study cannot do more than a thematic analysis. Thus, I reorganized my research questions and purpose to align with thematic analysis and constructive social science approaches.

The three other topics focused on coding, seeking patterns and presenting findings. A quick scan through some published qualitative studies showed that in analyzing qualitative data most scholars end at the coding phase without seeking patterns (Beazley, 2009). In addition, some qualitative studies still dwell heavily on the display of findings using quotes and lots of text with little or no visualizations. Thus, these three topics effectively showed how to move beyond coding to explore how codes/themes overlap, co-occur, sequent or differ. Finally, different visualization options for parsimoniously and beautifully displaying findings of qualitative research were taught.

At the end of class daily, participants had an approximately three-four hour assignment covering the topic of the day. Participating in these assignments enhanced understanding of the taught topic. Even though individual feedback was not provided, participants had the opportunity to book consulting times with the teaching assistant for further discussion or ask questions in class the following day.

While in Budapest, I passed through the St Stephens Basilica and the Buda Castle. In addition, throughout my stay in Budapest, I walked every morning to school enjoying the beautiful view of the central European City.

### **Benefits to my PhD project**

I participated in these courses in the middle of data gathering which I will say was very timely. While participating in the course, I constantly thought of my research questions, the data gathered so far, how to move forward with data gathering and how to organize the remaining field work and data gathered for a rigorous analysis. In general, I have learnt how to conduct my PhD project and other future studies in a transparent and coherent manner. Other benefits gained from the courses are summarized below.

- First, the PhD committee of the University of Bergen requires of students to provide an audit trail and evidence of how literature review and data analysis were conducted. Therefore, I am hoping to conduct my literature review in NVivo and keep an audit trail which will be submitted as part of my synopsis.
- Secondly, conducting my data analysis in NVivo will create the opportunity to produce an audit trail from codes, queries and memos for publications and the synopsis.
- In addition, I have practiced how to seek patterns from my data using codes/themes which will generate rigorous analysis and facilitate the publication of my findings in high rated peer reviewed journals.
- Through the use of visualizations learnt from this course, I have acquired the skills of using visualizations to display findings from qualitative research parsimoniously and beautifully. These skills will be used in writing articles and synopsis.
- Finally, I have made new friends from other European Universities who I will keep in touch with.

The skills gained from participating in these courses will be constantly improved while writing articles for publication and synopsis. These skills will enhance my career in research and teaching after completing my PhD.

### **Satisfaction**

I am extremely satisfied with the two courses and highly recommend them to other PhD Students in Global Health. The course is organized by the ECPR and therefore most students are from Political Science and other non-health related Social Science background. However, knowledge and skills in qualitative data analysis are useful for all qualitative studies irrespective of the discipline. Moreover, the instructor herself is from a Social Work and Development background and therefore has a lot of experience

conducting studies which overlap with Global Health. I will also suggest to future participants to take this course or other data analysis course prior to data analysis.

## Reference

Bazeley, P (2009). Analysing qualitative data: More than identifying themes. *Malaysian Journal of Qualitative Research* 2(2) 6-22.

## Pictures

A view of St Stephen's Basilica



Preparing a presentation for the Master Class





Giving a presentation on analysing a Grounded Theory Study

