

# METHODS 2

## FILMIC APPROACHES: PHOTO, VIDEO

INF5220

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(based on Sisse Finken's  
lecture notes)

# FEEDBACK OBSERVATION I

- Good work – doing an effort, reflecting! Well written!
  - A good basis for starting to explore qualitative research
- Is parameters/objectives/goals necessary for conducting observation as a method for data collection?
  - In the positivist paradigm?
  - In the interpretive paradigm?
  - Being prepared for encounters with the unexpected
- Gender and age – are these always relevant?
- Counting – consider when it provides insight and when it does not.
- Experiences with user testing (HCI) and doing interpretive research
- Assumptions versus interpretation
  - Describe what you base your interpretations on.

# USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS

- Strategy using photos: who takes the photos (researcher, researched?)
- Document and amplify text (authenticate, “being there”)
- Photos as a way of prompting reflections/ memories
- Photos can contextualize (visual documentation) and connect the viewer to the argument (vis-à-vis text)
- Photos can be helpful in studies on social change’
- Photos as material objects (part of living)
- Analyzing still/moving pictures (notes/ transcripts, patterns, symbols, who, how, what)

Crang & Cook 2007 + The Sage Handbook 2005

# PHOTOGRAPHS

- The researcher takes photos
- Use already existing photos
- Asking people to take photos
- Constructing useful data from photos

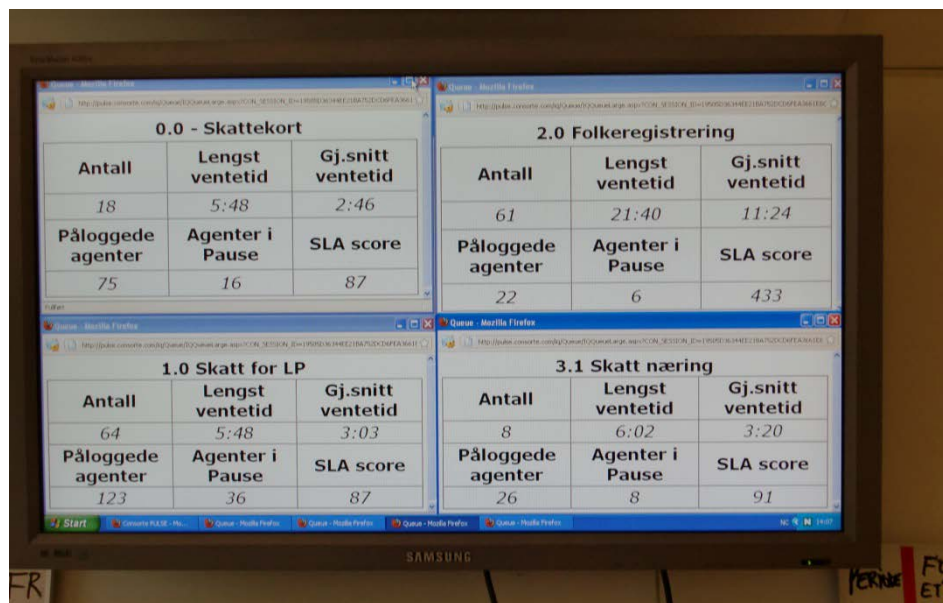
Crang & Cook 2007 + The Sage Handbook 2005

# PHOTOGRAPHS 1

- Researcher takes photos
  - Take down observation “scratch notes” (so you know what’s on/behind/outside the photos)
  - Photos as documentation (complementing fieldnotes, memory, what used to appear strange)
  - No unmediated reality

Crang & Cook 2007 + The Sage Handbook 2005





# PHOTOGRAPHS 2

- Use already existing photos
  - Discuss photos -> multiple viewpoints

Crang & Cook 2007 + The Sage Handbook 2005



“Skrapa komager”, Anne Katrine Dolven, Photo: Theirrey Bal, STORMEN, Bodøs nye bibliotek og konserthus, Source: nrk Nordland

# PHOTOGRAPHS 3

- Asking people to take photos
  - Serve as projective stimuli
  - Getting pictures is more important than fine art
  - Action Research?

Crang & Cook 2007 + The Sage Handbook 2005



# Photos are not neutral

- People act up/ shy away
  - The photographer decides what to capture + what to show
  - Can document the researcher's/ photographer's expectations
  - A way of **getting at** data, more than data themselves
- 
- "Recent critical work has [...] highlighted three problematic issues regarding the 'reality' of photography, film, video and other visual media":
    - First, photography can never show unmediated reality.
    - Second, still and moving pictures are often bound into existing discourses.
    - Third, such photographs were also used to help 'reconstruct' visions of the other (Crang & Cook 2007:105-106).

# VIDEO

Much of what goes for photos goes for video, but pay notice to....

- Think about: framing, focus, distance, angle, point of view, shot duration, tracking, cutting, continuity between shots
- Video can be transcribed into text and analyzed as such (but it depends on what you want to do – do you want to hand in a written thesis, an appendix with a movie, a movie) – see e.g. Suchman & Trigg (1991) for example of transcribed video
- If you choose to transcribe, remember descriptions of setting, persons present, interactions, etc. as when you do observation/interviews.
- Always take down observation “scratch notes” when you film
- What kind of equipment (software) do you have to edit video? – what about hardware? – do you have the expertise to use editing software or do you know somebody who can help you?
- What do you want to use the video for?
- Time consuming
- Seek informed consent and preserve subject anonymity

# A transcription example

Analysing how design workshop participants used the Color Table:

Time code fixed cam	Time code mobile cam	Transcript	Description of events	Panorama	Changing viewpoint (pan)	Flow type	Flow token color (rectangular)	Token location	User	Content card	Token Color	Token location	User
11:14:28			CJ picks content card from the content board and places it on the table	P6						Content sheet 1, row4, col 2 - Bridge			CJ
11:15:36			AS changes position of purple token	P6						Content sheet 1, row4, col 2 - Bridge	Purple	Map	AS
11:24:12	11:23:53		HW place a flow card on the RFID reader	P1		Pedestrian	card assigned to orange		HW				
11:27:18			IW suggest the group set another flow the purple flow tokens	P1			Purple	in hand	IW				
11:38:00			SK minor adjustment to blue token	P1						Cafe	Blue	Map	SK

# Constructing useful data

- “Any kind of transcription, whether of audio or video data, is by definition a process of transformation, where complex, richly situated phenomena are reduced for the purpose of analysis” (Flewitt 2006)
- Systematic notes about contents
- Interpreting visual language of the pictures
- Visual language and filmic practice
- Multi-method to understand use and meaning

# Issues to consider

- To imagine that behavioral patterns become visible and self-explanatory in a videotape is analogous to believing that a photograph reveals the diagnosis of a patient's illness. [...] the expertise is in the mind and technique of the analyst, not in the recording itself. [Conducting field work is a matter of] "selectivity and interpretation that go into the process of gathering careful ethnographic [material], writing useful fieldnotes [...], and analyzing the [material] in an appropriate and systematic way." (Forsythe 1999:132-133).
- Ethical aspects – seek informed consent and subject anonymity – research sensitivity: do not take photos if they violate norms or feelings.

## Summing up “generating material 1 & 2”

- A method may not work
- Other methods may work
  - have a repository and mix
- Re-think as you learn more
- There is no guarantee of a convergent account from using multiple methods
  - Divergence can be interesting