Why are we here?

1. To get an idea about our aims
   (the purpose of our qualitative data analysis)

2. To learn about techniques for ‘early stage’ data analysis
   (coding and qualitative content analysis)

3. To discuss the role of our interpretations in early
   stages of data analysis

4. To develop ideas about securing comparability of
   qualitative data analysis in cross-country
   collaboration.

Plan of the workshop

1. **Half-day strategy of data analysis**

2. **Half-day presentation of two techniques**

3. **One day experimenting with the two strategies**

Prior experiences with qualitative data analysis

Research questions

Methods of data analysis

Any software used

Research questions

1. **Why are they important?**

2. **What are our research questions?**

3. **What do we want to explain?**

Explanatory strategies in the social sciences

Identifying causal conditions

(= conditions that are necessary or sufficient for a specific effect to occur)

Most systematic approach: Qualitative comparative analysis (Ragin)

Identifying causal mechanisms

(= frequently occurring sequences of causally linked events that are triggered by certain conditions and produce a specific effect)

‘Process tracing’

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)

Basic idea: Comparing cases according to

*** conditions present or absent**

*** effects**

Truth tables (Boolean logic)

Case	Condition 1	Condition 2	Effect
1	-	-	-
2	+	-	1
3	-	+	1
4	+	+	1

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)

Problems:

1. QCA works only if all combinations of occurrences of conditions are represented by cases.

See e.g. Lieberman, “Small N’s and Big Conclusions”: drunk driving does not cause accidents

Accident	Drunk Driving	Car Entering from Right-Hand Direction	Driver Speeding	Runs a Red Light
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	Yes	No	No	Yes

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)

Problems (continued):

2. QCA works only if all causal conditions that vary between cases are explicitly included.

3. QCA requires to reduce empirical data to the dichotomy of ‘condition present’ – ‘condition not present’ (fuzzy set QCA avoids that to a certain degree)

Process tracing (finding causal mechanisms)

Process tracing = finding causal mechanisms

(Unfortunately, the literature does not tell us how to do this.)

1. Write a detailed historical narrative

2. Transform it into a theoretical explanation

(George and Bennet 2005: 210-212)

Question: How would we approach the ‘drunk driving’ cases with process tracing?

Process tracing (finding causal mechanisms)

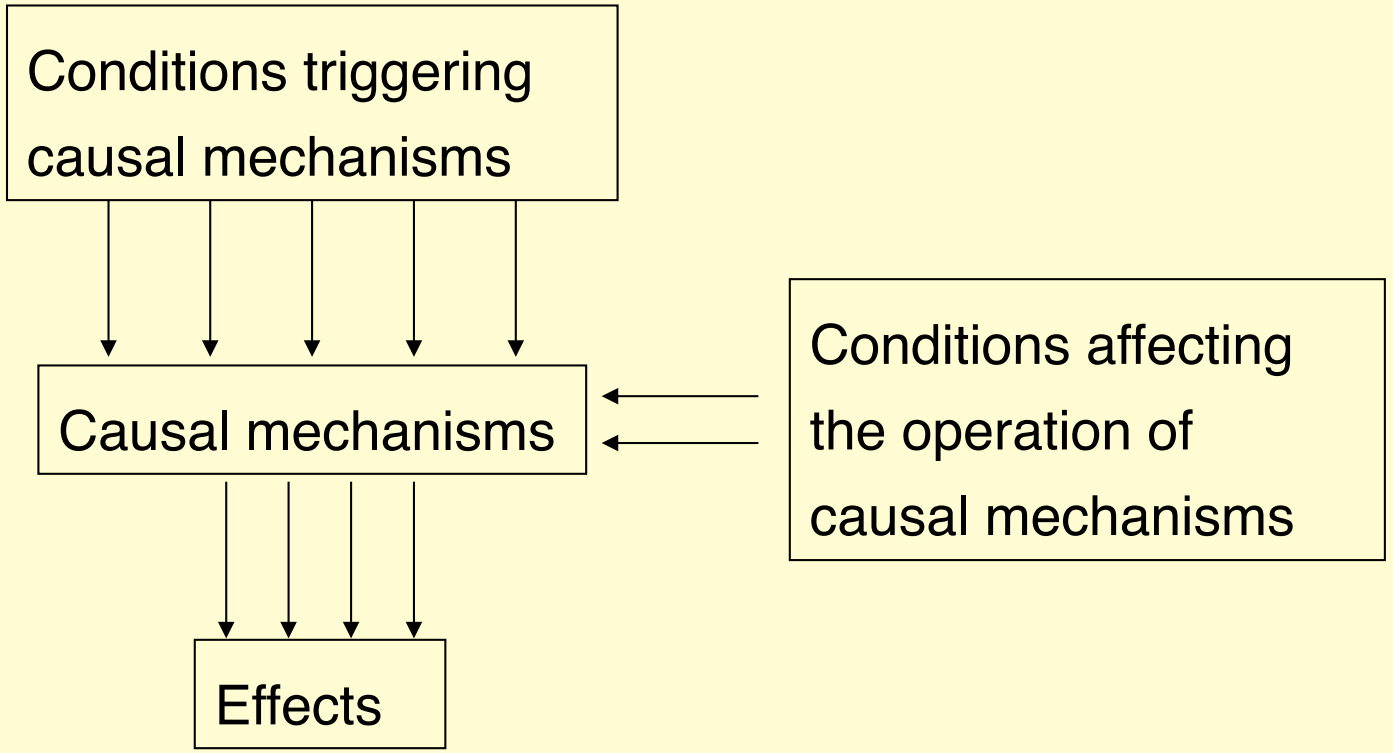
Problems:

1. Data on the whole uninterrupted causal path required

2. Equifinality (several causal mechanisms may produce the same outcome, some of them even from the same initial conditions)

Working backwards

Result:



Working backwards

Linking raw data to the research question
(identifying, locating, structuring)

↓

Consolidating raw data

↓

Empirical data in easily manipulable form

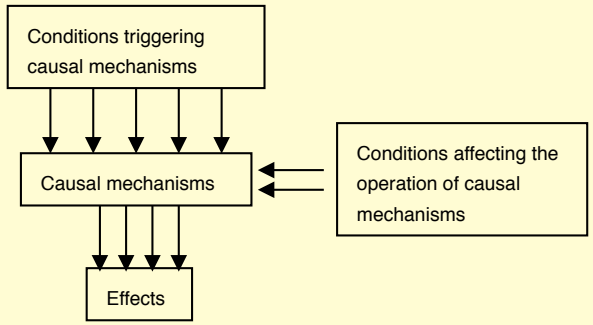
↓

Identifying patterns
(of conditions and sequences of events)

↓

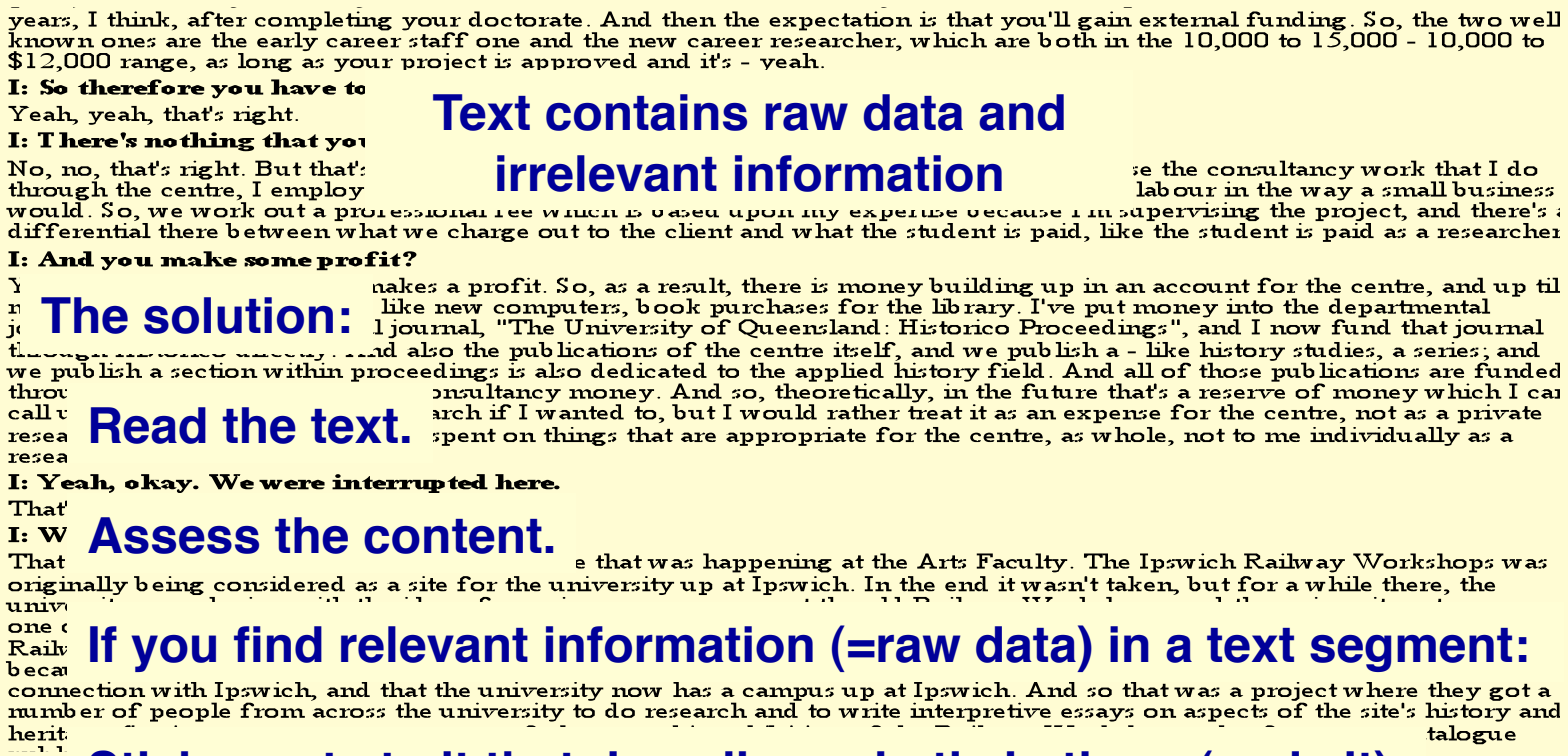
Integrating patterns
(of conditions and sequences of events)

Result:



Linking raw data to the research question

The problem:



Text contains raw data and irrelevant information

The solution:

Read the text.

Assess the content.

If you find relevant information (=raw data) in a text segment:

Stick a note to it that describes what's in there (code it).

or

Take the information away and store it somewhere else (extract it).

Linking raw data to the research question

Why did we name this step “linking raw data to the research question”?

RQ is basis for deciding what’s data and what’s noise.

RQ is basis for the structure given to the data.

Typologies

What is a type?

Abstract construct that represents a sub-class of empirical objects by expressing the combination of properties distinguishing that sub-class from the others.

A type …

- Requires a more general concept (type of what).

- Requires at least one dimension in which properties vary.

- Never comes alone.

Consolidating raw data

[only possible and necessary if you extract information]

Compress information, correct errors

Databases for finding patterns

[if we want more than just a description of a case]

We want to ‘play around’ with the data – sort them, combine them – until we see something interesting.

Ideas for rearranging data come from the research question and the data.

Data must exist in a form that supports rearranging.

Coded text

Tables

Typologies

Is RHESI a type of project?

To what types of projects does RHESI belong?

- internationally collaborative
- grant-funded
- three-year
- Social science
- multi-lingual

Typologies

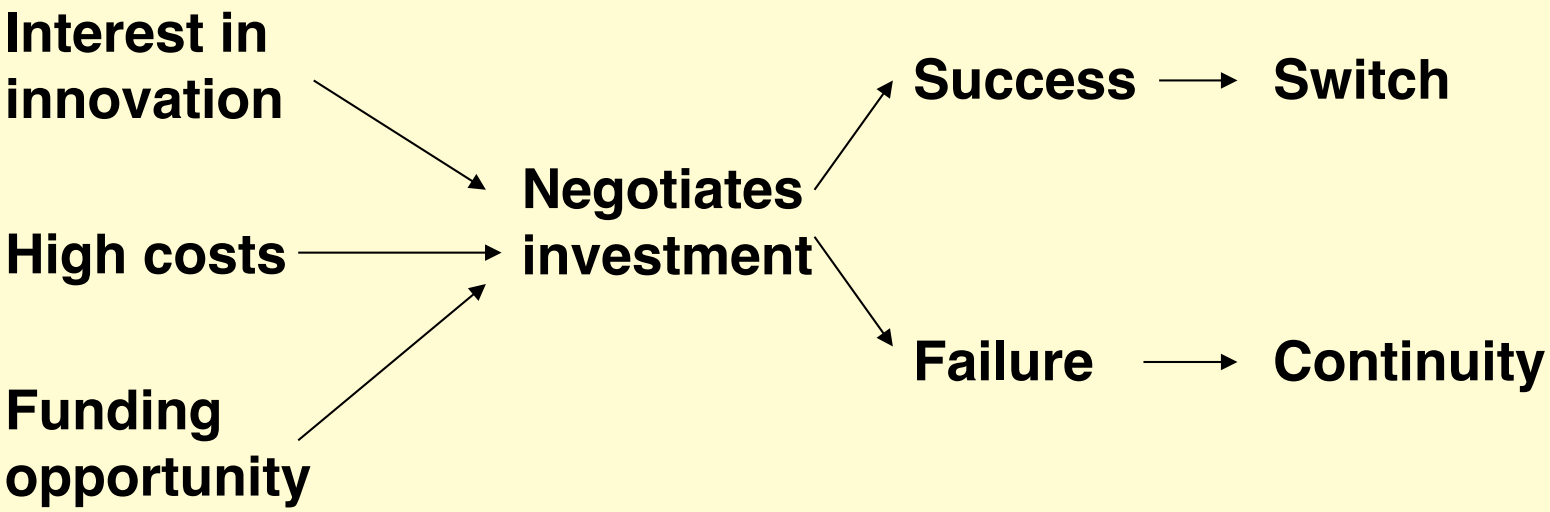
What typologies are we currently exploiting in the RHESI project?

- Innovations
- fields
- Switching costs

What other typologies could be interesting?

Mechanisms

What could mechanisms we search for look like?



What does the self-fulfilling prophecy have to do with RHESI?