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Qualitative approaches for the study of bottom- up innovative initiatives in diverse (socio- economic) contexts: the experience of Katarsis WP2



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Qualitative approaches and methods:

- need to develop scientific partial questions
- attention to the properties of the researched object/subject
- analytical categories are constituted and evaluated based on the material which comes out of the research and is subject to many readings
- the “sample” is self-constituted : establish a “population” where all aspects of the research questions are represented
- process, self-reflexivity and consciousness about positionality

WP2 Katarsis focus group discussion:

the choice for an interactive methodological tool:

- physical presence of Users
- verbal expression of arguments, ideas and beliefs
- group/interactive functioning among participants from various backgrounds



Katarsis goals:

- *practice* oriented: describe the relations formed and lead ultimately to praxis (as political intervention or in a variety of meanings of “human poieses”)
- create a common theoretical and methodological framework: contribute to the “invention” of a new *shared language* for the groups/actors involved
- reach a consensus over a *shared convention* on a commonly accepted field or aim by individuals or *ad hoc* created groups

advantages & limits:

contribution to policy development

- ✓ the *multiplicity and diversity* are at the same time aims and preconditions
- ✓ SCS are not an object of policies but rather a source of diverse *new forms emerging out of the social imaginary*
- ✓ create open space for imagination and creativity rather than lead to a standardised framework
- does not allow for a systematic comparative analysis

advantages & limits:

contextual differentiations

The wide spectrum and main differentiations of SCS, such as form, organisational structure and mode of intervention, are mainly related to their specific socio-political framework

- ✓ helps elaborate on questions and partial issues raised in each case
- no allowing universal, objective and generalisable conclusions
- does not reveal much on the context, institutional framework and path dependency of SCS

advantages & limits:

interaction & networking

- ✓ Active involvement of Users in the research method
- ✓ direct meetings and interactions such as dialogue forums and network meetings are ways the organisations of civil society are themselves choosing to exchange experience, multiply visibility and empowerment
- communication limits: language and dominant terminology

- the focus group is a process that remains open --> one could suggest a series of thematic meetings
- creating a framework that balances regulation with support for creativity and imagination

