

Analysis and writing

IN 5000/9000
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ANALYSIS AND WRITING

The dictionary on analysis

- From Greek: ἀνάλυσις (ana: up, lysis: loosening)
- «Examine (something) methodically and in detail, typically in order to explain and interpret it”
- “Discover or reveal (something) through close examination” (en.oxforddictionaries.com)

Difficult to separate «writing» and «analysis»

- **Writing and thinking is intertwined** (van Maanen 2006)
- Reworking and re-re-re...-working is quite usual, as your thinking and analysis is clarifying



detailed
exploration, pr
analysis. noun
examination,
inspection, s
anning, s

«Qualitative writing may be seen as an active struggle for understanding and recognition of the lived meanings of the lifeworld, and this writing also possesses passive and receptive rhetoric dimensions. It requires that we be attentive to other voices, to subtle significations in the way that things and others speak to us. In part, this is achieved through contact with the words of others. These words need to touch us, guide us, stir us» (van Maanen, 2006)

WHAT IS ANALYSIS ?

- Looking for interesting stuff and patterns in the material
- To make formal sense of empirical material generated through fieldwork by reconsidering it, looking at it carefully and critically (Crang & Cook 2007, p 133).
- «It's about translating a messy process into a neat product" (Crang & Cook 2007, p 133)
- View relationships between patterns as 'structures' in the data which create explanations (Madden 2010, p 148-149)

From Eklund and Tomt (2016):
«Hæ? Hvorfor har ingen fortalt meg dette?» En analyse av IT-løsningene ved UiO i et Tjenstedesignperspektiv”



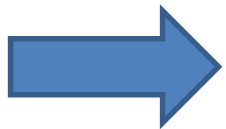
Analysis starts early

- Analysis starts early in the research process
 - Focusing and refocusing of research aims and questions
 - Addressing specific issues with specific people
 - Methods used and the kinds of data they help you to construct
 - Who you choose to involve
 - Issues in the interview guide
 - Photos and stories from you and your participants
 - The way you made sense of research experiences in your field notes



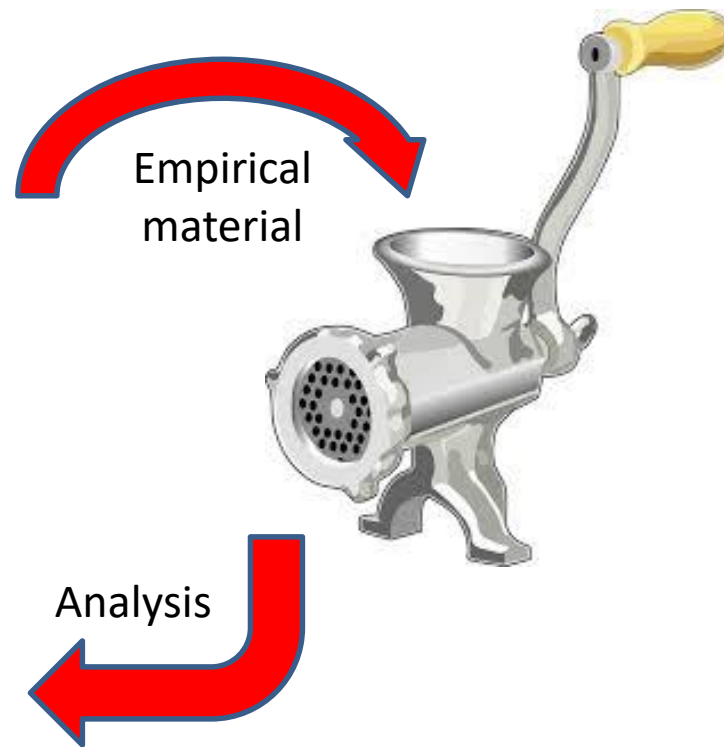
Immediate analysis in the field

- What you pick out while in the field
- What catches your attention
- What you find interesting and want to describe
- Hunch-based analysis 😊
- “Absolutt Gehør” (have absolute pitch)



Analysis can be both immediate and formal/methodological

Analysis as a grinder (1)

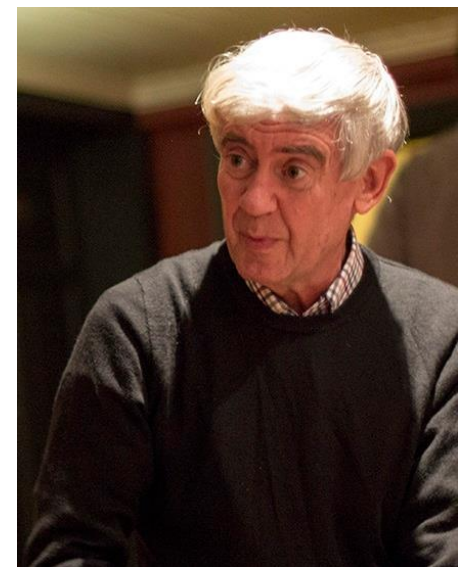


Coding in practice

- A code is «a term that tells the ethnographer that a theme or issue of interest is to be found at this point in their fieldnotes.» (Madden 2010, p 142)
- Thematic indexing: “With a color pen I marked out (circled or boxed in) events of interest. These color marks are attended by comments, explanations and references to similar and other events of interests. All of this is written in the margin or on blank back pages of my field material. Sometime I made notes on the cover of a piece of field material to indicate thematic events in the text” (Finken 2005, using Sanjek 1990 to talk about thematic indexing)
- Take backup – work on copies!!!!



A looser approach



Walsham (2006):

«I write impressions during the research, after each interview for example.

I generate more organized sets of themes and issues after a group of interviews or a major field visit.

I then try to think about what I have learnt so far from my field data.

If this sounds a rather subjective and relatively unplanned process, well it is. I believe that **the researcher's best tool for analysis is his or her own mind, supplemented by the minds of others** when work and ideas are exposed to them» (p. 325).

About software for analysis:

“The software does not remove the need for thought”

Contradictions

What with contradictions and things that don't fit together?

- Registration error?
- Difference between sources?
- Erroneously grouping of different phenomena?

This will lead you to:

- Clarify your interpretations between two conflicting sources, or
- Decide that this contradiction is part of normal human inconsistency, or
- Think that it is an important part of your understanding of a topic

These iterations gives you an understanding of important themes and events

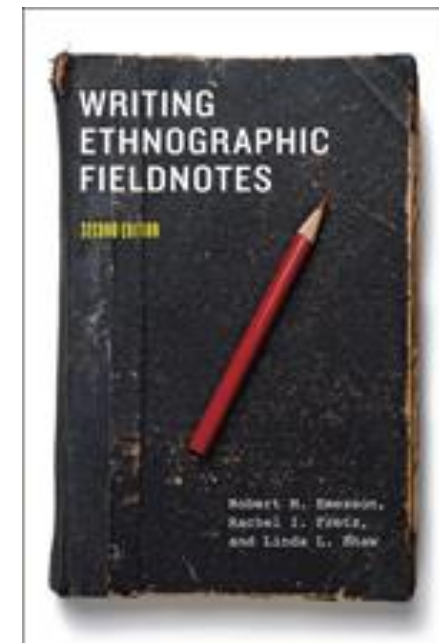
- These may turn into chapters in your master or thesis



Analysis and theory

- Theory and the generation of data cannot be separated.
- We bring theory to the field - data do not stand alone, **analysis unfolds in all phases of field research** (observations, when recording fieldnotes, when coding the notes in analytical categories, and when developing theoretical propositions).

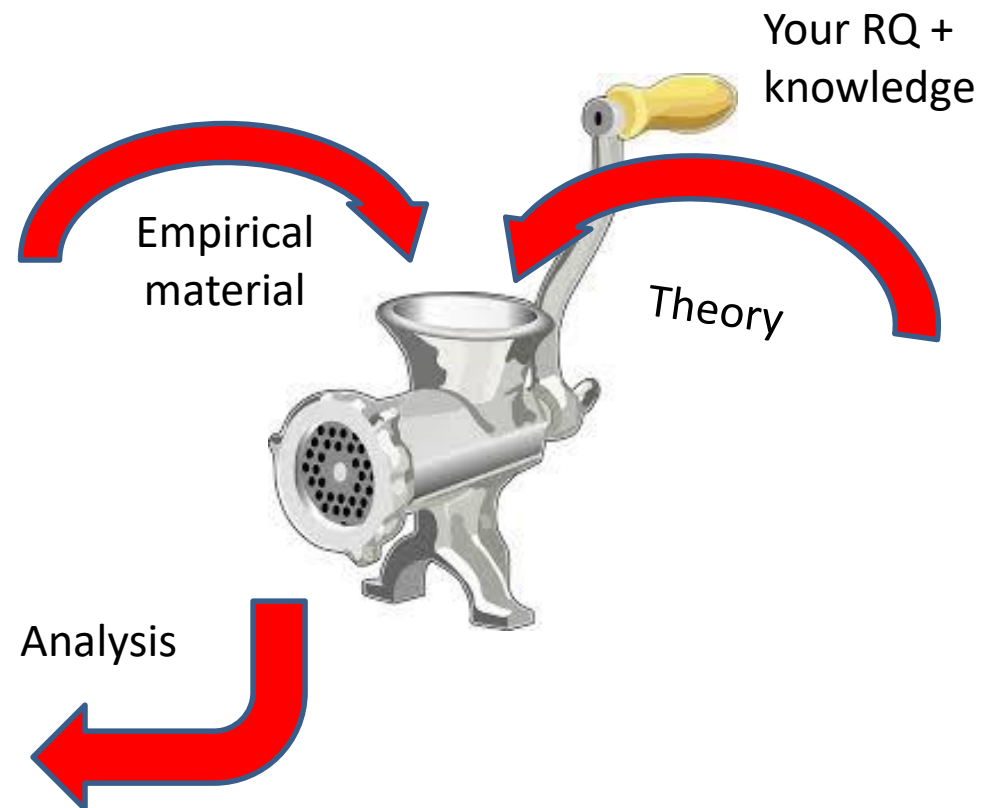
Emerson, R. M., R. I. Fretz and Shaw, L. (1995): *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. The University of Chicago Press.



Analysis as a grinder (2)

With theory:

- Theoretical concepts as sensitizing, what you look for in your material
- GT – «without theory»



WRITING STYLE

Why is **writing style** an issue?

- A «realist» account pretends to describe «the world as it is»
- Indicate that «knowledge involves perfect omniscient sight» (C&C 2007, p. 153)
- We are creating and making stories, there is no “natural” way
- Reflexivity, positionality

Crang & Cook (2007)



Remember:

Reflexivity:

the process of reflecting critically on approach, positioning, and relationship between what you encounter in the field and how you represent it.

Positionality:

Your previous experiences will influence how you interpret what you encounter.

How you appear to the informants will influence how they relate to you as a researcher.

WRITING

“We co-constitute the field with our informants. So we have tried to suggest and show ways of representing those entanglements through (...) styles of writing”
(Crang & Cook 2007, p. 202)

- Writing through codes (build on the coding)
- Autoethnographic writing (personal and co-construction)
- Montage-writing (fragmentary understandings arranged alternatively)
- More traditional top-down (in Sørensen)



We are creating and making stories, there is no “natural” way.

“Set your own criteria early on in terms of ‘aims’ of your research: e.g. ‘to use (this form of writing) to achieve (these sorts of effects)’. Then invite your reader to judge what follows accordingly” (Griffiths 2004 in Crang & Cook 2007, p. 206).

"It is hard to over-emphasise the importance of good writing." (Myers living version)

Overall message from Crang & Cook and Sørensen: find your own voice and style

Rigorous subjectivity (C&C p. 14-15)

What to tell positivists

Theoretical sampling

- Gaining selective access to appropriate groups of people
 - *(instead of random sampling)*

Theoretical saturation

- When what you hear begin to have the same ring to them
 - *(instead of a fixed large number of respondents)*

Theoretical adequacy

- Search for other researchers' interpretations of similar situations

«Research must involve the struggle to produce intersubjective truths»

WHAT GOES WHERE IN A MASTER THESIS OR DISSERTATION?

- Title
- Summary /Abstract (1 page)
- Acknowledgements
- Table of content

- Introduction
- Literature review
- Theoretical chapter
- Methodology and empirical setting
- Analysis chapter(s)
- Discussion/Interpretation
- Conclusion

What others have done

Goes into the grinder

What you have found (and learned)

Discuss with yourself
- and others

- References
- Appendix

For more, see Appendix to this lecture on the course page