

## WRITING IT UP / REPRESENTATION

### WRITING

Styles:

- Code-writing
- Autoethnographic-writing
- Montage-writing
- More traditional (in Sørensen)

Crang & Cook (2007):

- We make representations when we write about and describe our experiences
- “I write because I want to find something out. I write in order to learn something that I did not know before I wrote it” (Richardson 2008 in Crang & Cook)
- “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”
- “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)

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

### WHAT GOES WHERE IN A THESIS OR DISSERTATION?

- **Title**
- **Summary** 1 page (or an abstract)
- **Acknowledgement**
- **Table of content**
- **Introduction:** Setting the stage. Provide the readers knowledge about the content and answer the question: “What is this piece of work about?” by giving the reader a short precise presentation of the content of your work, including the motivation for your study: what are you inquiring (object/subject of investigation) – how and in what way is it important for a broader audience?
  - Present:
    - The area of your research (problem domain / topic)
    - Your main motivation for conducting your study (explain in what way your study is important?)
    - Purpose of your research, incl. your research question(s)

- What is your contribution
  - A brief description of how you attempt to find out (methodology/methods/theory)
  - You could also try to answer:
    - What is the target audience?
    - What is your personal motivation for this study
  - Sketch the structure (content in each chapter) of the thesis
- **Literature review:** related research, if any, positioning your work vis-à-vis the research literature.
  - A survey of literature (journals, conference proceedings, books) on the areas relevant to your research question(s) – e.g. what do you see as a challenge in relation to existing literature on the topic you're studying? Write one section pr. area. If no or limited research has been published on your specific topic think alternatively about it (does it concern organization of something, functionality, use, design, categorization, decision-making, did the field merge into another field, etc.)
  - Conclude the chapter / each section with summarizing what you want to develop further (vis-à-vis the exciting literature) or what you see as a challenge. A summery could be presented in a list, model, etc. Each issue could correspond to your analytical chapters - but they should definitely be discussed in the discussion / conclusion of your thesis.
- **Theoretical chapter** -> description of the theory you have chosen to work with and/or the concepts you have chosen from a (theoretical) framework
  - In what way has the theory been fruitful when engaging with your material? Both in the field, when analyzing, and writing up?
  - Avoid the temptation to explain and illustrate the theoretical concepts with examples from your work - (save that for later in your analyses)
  - If your motivation is to develop theory, your chapter should be structured in a way that leads up to your motivation (e.g. argument such as: the theory needs elaboration in this and this way, which I will provide insight on xxx)
- **Presentation of setting / case/ field / object of study**
  - Provide an overall impression of the 'place' your research unfolded -> the specific background information that is necessary (helpful) for understanding your "case"; but which is not the kind of information you want to delineate within your analyses (rich descriptions of e.g. a company, it products (services), customers, the people who crossed your path during field work, their inter-relations, work task, etc.)
  - Could be from your own empirical work, or from other's descriptions (research, documents, etc.)

- Not always a separate chapter. You could present this information in the introduction or in the methodology chapter (in a section devoted to describing the case / the setting / object(s) of study).
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- **Methodology chapter:** a discussion of what you have chosen to do *and* how your choice is relevant and relates to the knowledge you seek.
  - Law + ethical considerations: e.g. sensitive data?, personal data? Which legal framework are you moving within (make use of § when you describe your concerns); consent form; confidentiality; anonymity (keys?); only collect material relating to the topic of your thesis; deletion of material after end exam (date of completion) -> here you make use of Gisle's lecture.<sup>1</sup>
  - A choice of methodology and methods between alternatives -> justify. You should demonstrate that you are aware of strengths and weakness of your strategy, design and methods.
  - A detailed report of the fieldwork that was carried out:
    - What did you do, how did you do it, why did you what you did? Some of these activities can be summarized in an appendix outlining your activities in the field + e.g. your interview guide.
  - How did you select your 'case' and its participants (those you interview and observe)? How did you conduct observations (what kind of situations, what time, what activities, particular focus, etc.)? Whom did you interview, on what issue(s), in what situations or settings (during work hours, in an office, at a cafe?) Did you collect documents (which ones, from where, specific situation?)
  - How did you work with your data (organize by indexing in themes, concepts? coding/memos?)
  - Challenges you encountered during generation of data (access, change of method, some transcripts not read (verified) by participants, limited time, etc.)
- **Analytical chapters (empirical)**
  - One or several - how do they relate to each other?
  - Theory /concepts are briefly re-introduced and applied.
  - Thoroughly analyze a broad variety of your research material.
  - Analysis and discussion can be integrated, or discussion can be provided in a separate chapter. The discussion should link up to the issues discussed in chapter two and/or three (literature review + theory)

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<sup>1</sup> "During data collection, I will follow the Norwegian regulations on collecting and managing personal information entitled: Personopplysningsloven (Personopplysningsloven, 2000). Pursuant to Section 8 of this law, I will collect data only from those who give written consent. Prior to getting consent, the participants will be informed about the conditions with which the data will be used, as defined in Section 19. In accordance with Section 11, I will only collect data which is relevant to my study, and use it only to the closely defined purpose of this thesis. No sensitive data will be collected, and all data will be kept confidential." Rekaa, I. E. L. (2009) – master thesis in process – draft on Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>. This excerpt appears with Rekaa's consent.

- **Interpretation/discussion:** what does your outcome tell? Contextualize your contribution. If you do not integrate your analyses with discussion you need a chapter devoted to interpretation/discussion. It's a matte style (or how you work).
- **Conclusion** – sum up + cementation of the outcome of you fieldwork.
  - Summary of findings, main problems and your conclusions
  - Present your research question(s) once more (you should return to them or to your initially stated aim through the conclusions drawn).
  - What did they lead to?
  - Comparisons with literature in chapter two - how does your outcomes (findings) fit in?
  - What are the contributions and implications (practical, theoretical and/or methodological)?
  - Possible directions for further research
- **Bibliography** - alphabetically listing of all the texts referred to or cited
- **Appendix:** e.g. interview guide, photos or a visual depiction like a drawing of the field site and/or the relations of material-immaterial members -> if relevant, such depiction could go into one of the chapters), maybe a log of activities in the field (date/time; activities (observation, interview, attending meetings, phone, email, online visits)).

(This outline is based on Silverman 2005, previous lectures, and questions from + conversations with previous students of INF5220)

## REPRESENTATION

**REPRESENTATION ~ depict, illustrate, stand in for** (e.g. search in your digital dictionary (synonym) and see what definitions come up – compare with what is said in the beginning of the Hall movie).

Why is it important to talk about representations?

What do Crang & Cook (2007) say about representations (filmic approaches, descriptions from encounters in the field, more?)?

**Representation** seen through Richardson & St. Pierre (2005):

- Producing text (and other artifacts) isn't a neutral activity
- Language produces meaning rather than reflecting social reality
- Representations (and our orientations to them) reflect epistemological origin

**MOVIE:** Representation and the Media – Stuart Hall.

- Visual representation
- The observer is part of producing meaning
- Meaning is never fixed (nor neutral)
- Power/knowledge
- Stereotypes of positive/negative images: rather than maintaining stereotypical representations they should be contested.
- Where do images come from?; Who produces images?; How is meaning closed down in representation?; Who is silenced on the production of images? Hall asks -> (see e.g. also Richardson & St. Pierre 2005; Mol 2006; Latour 1999)<sup>2</sup>
- Representations are images of something - they are produced - they produce.

Within this view images, texts, technologies, e.g., aren't just produced - they also produce (new or altered) figures, configurations, constellations; it is not a matter of being critical (negative stereotypes) or optimistic (positive stereotypes), but rather about unfolding, laying bare, and seeking understandings about how meaning, discourse, practice, material are intertwined. That is, to draw a parallel to issues dealt with earlier in the course: it's a matter of gaining understandings about what participants do or ascribe meaning to, how they do what they do, with whom/what, and with what effects.

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<sup>2</sup> Literature not listed on syllabus:

Silverman, D. (2005): *Doing Qualitative Research*. Sage.

Mol, A. (2006): *The Logic of Care: Health and the problem of patient choice*. Routledge.

Latour, B. (1999): On recalling ANT. In Law, J. & Hassard, J. (eds.): *Actor Network Theory and after*. Blackwell Publishers.

Ricardson, L. & St. Pierre, E., A. (2005): Writing: A Method of Inquiry. In Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.): *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage Publications.