

More on analysis
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Going Online:
Social Media and Social Groups

INF5220 April 24th 2015
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(Based on Sisse Finken's lecture notes)

Analysis starts early

- Analysis starts early in the research process
 - Focusing and refocusing of research aims and questions
 - Phasing and 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 diary



What is analysis?...continued

To make formal sense of empirical material generated through fieldwork by reconsidering it, looking at it carefully and critically (Crang & Cook 2007:133).

- «It's about translating a messy process into a neat product" (Crang & Cook 2007, p 133)
- View relationship between patterns as 'structures' in the data which create explanations (Madden 2010:148-149)

Analyzing field material, you can ask the following questions:

- What are people doing?
- What are they trying to accomplish? How, exactly, do they do this? What specific means and/or strategies do they use?
- How do members talk about, characterize, and understand what is going on? What assumptions are they making?
- What do I see going on here? What did I learn from these notes?
- Why did I include them? (Emerson et al. 1995:146)

Analysis continued

- You can bring in analytical concepts/theory to the process of analysis
- 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)
- 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)
- Take backup – work on copies!!!!

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



Refreshing GT

... from last week

- GT is both an inquiry and the product of the inquiry – it's an analytical guideline that helps focus the data collection, build theories, and develop concepts (The Sage Handbook:507)
- Data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory, then proves it. Rather, one begins with area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge" (Strauss & Corbin 1990, in Thoresen 1999).
- "Grounded theorists give priority to developing rather than verifying analytical propositions" (Emerson, Fretz, Shaw, 1995:143)
- Theory should be grounded – "to take an existing (....) theory or a set of pre--defined concepts as point of departure (...) is a risky endeavor. It means that an external structure is imposed on the data." (Thoresen 1999)
- That is, rather than taking predefined concepts and explore them in the field settings to see if, how, when, and to what extend the concepts are relevant to the study: "we need to treat concepts as problematic and look for their characteristics as lived and understood, not as given in the textbook" (Charmaz 2005:512)
- For new turns in GT see e.g. Clarke (2005) or Charmaz (2005)

Critique of GT

- 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.
- A systematic coding of data does not (in itself) lead to theory - the bibliography of the researcher plays a role in the analysis - data do not talk and reveal. Tove Thagaard (1998): *Systematikk og innlevelse. En innføring i kvalitativ metode*. Fagbogforlaget

Other approaches to analysis...on request

- **Conversation Analysis**

(ethnomethodology - naturally occurring conversations)

– the social world is not orderly, it's dynamic

– how order is established in (inter-)action)).

Examples of ethnomethodological analyses: Suchman (2007); Heath et al. (2011)

- **Discourse Analysis** (interviews, observation, documents, video/audio). The social world is produced by and produces objects/subjects/phenomena - "How does discourse function? Where is it to be found? How does it get produced and regulated? What are its social effects? How does it exist?" (Ricardson & St. Pierre 2005:969).

(Atkinson & Delamont 2005 + Ricardson & St. Pierre 2005 + Peräkylä 2005)

Social Media

- Going Online to the *Field site*

- Virtual world? Is it real? -Online/offline?
- Whom/what to study – what field site?
- How to draw boundaries? – what do you study?
 - FB group (Reyes and Finken 2012) ?
 - Culture, online social group - boundaries meaningful to the ones studied
 - Online multiplayer gaming (Nardi 2010)
- Sit at home, create a persona, rather than the embodied physical appearance (race, gender, age, looks) Markham 2005:794

METHODOLOGY

- Ethnographic
 - Culture, methodological choice

What about AR, CS, GT?

What about paradigms?

METHODS

- Observation
- Notes
- Conversations (chat)
- Interview
- Email
- Screen dumps

ROLE OF RESEARCHER

- Open about research agenda
(informed consent?)
- Observer
- Participant
- Facilitator

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

- Ethics
- Methods used
- Realness?
- Non-verbal aspects as in f2f settings
- Silence does not equal absence
- Technology part of the performance
- Space of work or leisure

Markham 2005

Literature not listed in syllabus

- Atkinson, P. & Delamont, S. (2005): Analytical Perspectives. In Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.): *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage Publications.
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- Madden, R., (2010): *Being Ethnographic*, Sage
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