Qualitative Data Analysis

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MA Programme in Political Science (elective)

Winter semester 2014-15 (4 credits)
Class meetings: Friday 3:30-17:10 and 17:20-19:00
Office hours: Friday 9am-1pm, FT902

Introduction
This course aims to introduce the participants to the basics of qualitative data analysis, and in particular to two big "families" of approaches: content-based analyses (exemplified by thematic analysis) and interpretive analyses (exemplified by discourse analysis).
The first part of the course is devoted to thematic analysis and to the logic of "coding", which implicitly or explicitly lies at the core of many types of qualitative analysis. This type of analysis looks mainly at what the data say and aims at identifying patterns within the data.
In the second part of the course we move on to discourse analysis, a type of analysis that looks less for what the data say than for how they say it: in other words, for constructions of meaning and how they shape and constrain our perception of the world. In this kind of analysis we will be particularly attentive to language as a strategic site of power struggles, and how it is used to claim definitory hegemony or to impose a particular worldview.
In addition to these two core parts, we will also look at transversal issues that concern all types of qualitative analysis: research process and design issues, sampling (the constitution of a data body), quality criteria and writing up, and further issues as necessary, depending on the topics of interest of the participants.

Learning outcomes
By the end of the course, the students will:
1. Have acquired practical skills in qualitative data analysis and know how to present their findings in an appropriate manner, in writing as well as orally;
2. Understand the nature and limitations of thematic and discourse analysis, and be able to navigate through the methodological literature with some degree of autonomy;
3. Be able to critically assess qualitative research work done by others.

Course requirements and assessment
The course takes place in the form of one double session per week. Part of it will generally be devoted to lectures and discussions of the readings, whereas another part will be more practical. Various exercises and assignments will be assigned during the semester, some of which will involve some group work. Some of these will be done with data assigned by the instructor, whereas others can be done with the participants’ own data.
The participants will write a final paper on a topic of their choice (alone or in pairs). In the final weeks of the semester, they will also present their paper in progress.
To some extent, this course can be used as a preparatory step for the final thesis (the final paper in particular). Participants who attended the "Qualitative Interviewing" course in the autumn semester may take this course as a follow-up and continue to work on the same topic/data as in the previous course (if they wish).

Assessment will be based on the following:
- A final paper (60%) of about 6000-8000 words.
- Active class-room participation, assignments (30%)
- An oral presentation related to the student's own final paper at the end of the semester (10%)

Deadline for the final paper: 10th April 2014 (to be confirmed).
Course outline
Provisional – some changes might be made depending on the number and profile of the participants.

Week 1 (16 Jan) – Introduction to the course

- Introduction to the course - practicalities
- The logic of qualitative research
- Introduction to qualitative data analysis
- Natural vs. generated data

Required reading:

Week 2 (23rd Jan) – Thematic analysis (1)

- Qualitative data analysis and the role of theory
- Data analysis and research design
- Mixed-methods research
- Understanding the logic of classification: thematic analysis (1)

Required readings
(5) Butcher, Howard Karl et al. (2001). "Thematic Analysis in the Experience of Making a Decision to Place a Family Member With Alzheimer's Disease in a Special Care Unit". Research in Nursing&Health 24: 470-80.

Suggested readings

Week 3 (30 Jan) - Thematic analysis (2)

- Qualitative research in mixed-methods designs
- Thematic analysis (2)
- First and second-cycle coding
- Coding and theory

Required reading


Suggested readings

Week 4 (6 Feb*) – Thematic analysis (3)

- Within-case analysis
- Software assisted analysis (CAQDAS)
- Inductive and deductive coding logics
- Writing up qualitative research

Required readings


Suggested readings:

Week 5 (13 Feb) – Discourse analysis (1)

- Understanding the logic of interpretation: discourse analysis (1)
- Discourses as structures
- Discourse, language and linguistics

Required readings


**Suggested reading:**

**Week 6 (20 Feb)**

*No class meeting!*

**Week 7 - Discourse analysis (2)**

- Discourses as strategic sites
- Constructing realities through discourse

**Required reading**


**Suggested readings**

**Week 8 – Discourse analysis (3)**

- Discourses as frames
- The discursive construction of subject positions

**Required readings**


(20) **Kuhar**, Roman (2012). "Use of Europeanization Frame in Same-Sex Partnership Issues Across Europe". In: Lombardo, Emanuela and Forest, Maxime (eds). *The

Suggested reading:

Week 9 – Workshop

Required reading
Tbc.

Week 10 – Quality criteria

- Validity, reliability and generalisability in qualitative research
- Epistemological issues
- Oral presentations (1)

Required readings

Suggested reading:

Suggested reading:

Week 11 – Workshop

- Oral presentations (2)

Required readings:
Presenters' texts.
Suggested reading:

Week 12 – Workshop and conclusion

• Oral presentations (3)

Required readings:
Presenters' texts

End of the semester

10 April – deadline for final papers.

26.11.2014/ls