

UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

Institute of Food and Resource Economics

**The Interview**  
**Introduction to Content Analysis**

Jesper Lassen  
Consumption, Bioethics and Governance  
IFRO


ANIMPACT Workshop sept. 2-3, 2014



UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

**Phases of the analysis**

- Transcription of the interview
- Data reduction: Coding
- Data display / Visualization
- Interpretation
  - Answering the research question
  - Presenting the results
- Writing



## Case: perceptions of the organic Point of departure and research question

### Background:

1. Sales of organic products is increasing – often marketed as an environmental alternative
2. Yet, when asked, *consumers* seldom back their organic preferences with environmental concerns
3. On the other hand, when asked, *people* rank the environment as an important societal issue

### Research question:

What role does environmental issues play for consumers perceptions of organic products? And how does this depend on the context?

### *Reported in*

Lassen & Korzen (2009): The environment overlooked. *Anthropology of Food*, S5



## Design

What role does environmental issues play for consumers perceptions of organic products? And how does this depend on the context?

Qualitative: Focus group interviews in 2001 (pigs & pork) and 2005 (animals & meat)

### Recruitment of respondents:

- Criteria
  - Age 20-70
  - Equal representation of men and women
  - Persons responsible as well as persons less or not responsible food related activities in the home.
  - No close relation to the food sector
- Method
  - Professional bureau - screener



## Transcription

- "Translation" from oral to written text
- What counts as data?
  - Let your research question be the guide – omit e.g. full transcription of sections considered irrelevant.
  - Small talking during the introduction and after the formal interview – what is ethical?
- Level of detail
  - Verbatim: all words in the right order. Including exclamations, pauses, tone, etc.
  - Including visual data (in case of VCR)
  - Extract/ condensed
- Who transcribes?
  - Your self? Or others?
- Make instructions regarding
  - Level of detail
  - Punctuation
  - ...



## Transcription

- All interviews transcribed by a student familiar with qualitative methods (sociology)
- Transcriber present during the interviews
  - Making detailed notes about nonverbal communication
- Detailed instructions to the transcriber about punctuation
  - ... = pause, hesitation
  - [text]= interpretation of obscured speech
  - CAPITAL LETTERS FOR LOUD TALK
  - (exclamations or sentiments like laughter, sarcasm, sadness etc.)
- Draft transcription approved by researchers



## Coding - or data reduction

Aim: To transform data to a manageable corpus

- Creation of order
- Opening data for further analysis

Idea:

- To organize fragments in themes (=codes aka nodes) with common features.

Thus coding is de-contextualizing:

- Removing data from its original context: the interview

Steps

- Identify relevant codes
- Break the text up in thematic bits and assigning codes



## Coding – where do the codes come from?

Deductive

- The research question
- Theoretical
  - Inspired by existing theories in the area
- Empirical
  - Inspired by findings in similar studies

Inductive

- Data-driven (bottom-up)
  - Resulting from a careful reading of the text



## Coding – how to do it

- Recall your research question!
- Identify codes
  - First: careful reading (screening) of 1-2 transcripts for possible codes (inductive)
  - Second: inclusion of possible codes based on theory/ previous studies (deductive)
  - Third: Inclusion of other codes (intuitive)
  - Fourth: inclusion of codes developed during the coding process
    - Remember to recode!
  - Split and/ or merge codes if relevant!
  - Remember: interview themes are NOT codes!
- Hand coding or using software?
  - Coloured pens
  - Word
  - Using qualitative software
    - QSR NVivo
    - Atlas-ti
- Quality assurance
  - Recode, double code
  - Manual coding followed by search for keywords



## Codes and sub-codes

- Codes may have over- and sub-codes aka parents/ children/ siblings
  - 'Risk' could be a (parent) code in the analysis of an interview about perceptions of GM food
  - 'human health risks' & environmental risks could be sub-codes (children/ siblings)
- Coded fragments are not exclusive
  - Parts of or all of the text in a code may be part of another code



The screenshot shows a software interface with a 'Nodes' table and a document viewer. The 'Nodes' table has columns: Name, Sources, References, Created On, Created By, Modified On, and Modified By. It lists various nodes under categories like 'Associationer', 'Produkter', and 'Alternativer'. The document viewer shows a document titled 'FG1a\_Kbh\_hoj\_uld' with the following content:

**1. Introduktion**  
 I: Ja, jeg vil godt byde velkommen til den her fokusgruppe. I et par timer sammen med mig og hinanden. Indledningsvis er, vi skal i gang med, og derefter går vi i gang om 5-10 min.  
**[Introduktion fra 0:02:54 til 0:06:13]**  
 I: Vil du starte, Adam?  
 Adam: Ja, jeg hedder Adam, jeg er 44 år gammel og bor i København. Og hun er i omstændigheder så der vi er 21/2 alle...

The screenshot shows a software interface with a 'Sources' sidebar and a document viewer. The 'Sources' sidebar lists: Internals, Externals, Memos, and Framework Matrices. The document viewer shows a document titled 'FG1a\_Kbh\_hoj\_uld' with the following content:

Anja: Jeg handler ofte spontant ind, når jeg skal bruge det, dvs. jeg skal bruge det nu eller i morgen. Så får det ikke lov til at ligge så længe. Men jo, det er rigtig nok.  
 Arne: Jeg synes en af de ting, jeg har det svært ved med økologiske ting, det er sådan mejeriprodukter. Det er det der med, at det ikke er homogeniseret, det må man åbenbart ikke, når det er økologisk eller vil ikke. Jeg ved ikke, hvad det er, så den der adskilte mælk, der ligner, selvom den er helt ny og den klumpede fløde og sådan noget – det er måske bare noget, man skal vænne sig til.  
 Alice: Jeg var rigtig længe om at vænne mig til det, men nu har jeg faktisk vænnet mig til det, så jeg husker bare at ryste den, og så tænker jeg slet ikke over det, hvordan det er mere.  
 Adam: Sådan en alm. Konventionel sødmælksyoghurt, så virker den sådan mere syntetisk faktisk. Det er måske noget, man bilder sig lidt ind, men jeg synes, den virker sådan lidt mere kedelig i det, men jeg kan følge det, du siger, at selvfølgelig holder tingene måske ikke helt så lang tid, og altså, det er også lidt forskelligt. Mælk, synes jeg, smager godt, altså det smager simpelthen bedre end konventionel mælk. Jeg synes også, at økologiske gulerødder smager bedre, men de holder bare ikke helt så lang tid, det er rigtigt.  
 Alice: Det er også nogle gange, de ikke-økologiske ting de holder sig jo uhyggeligt længe, så man må ligesom tage med.  
 Anne: Men mug er heller ikke sundt, vel? Det er nogle svære valg. Det er jo også det med tid. Altså, er man i en familie, og der skal købes ind, og man ikke hver dag skal købe ind, det synes jeg i hvert fald personligt er en forhindring i forhold til det økologiske.  
 Alice: Vi er heller ikke enige om det derjenom. Det er jo prisen, der styrer meget.  
 Adam: Jeg synes jo, at alt skal være økologisk, men jeg synes, at man skal passe på ikke at overregulere det, kan man så sige, fordi det er jo ikke sikkert, at alt det, der står økologi på, det er godt, og alt det, det ikke står på, at det er dårligt. Altså, jeg synes, man skal ... jeg synes, det økologiske er, altså hele den der sameksistens imellem hvad alle levende organismer i det, det er det vigtige for mig i hvert fald: dyrevelfærd, at man afleverer den jord, som man har dyrket på en bedre måde end man modtog den. Jeg synes, det er vigtigt for mig, at man ikke bare i effektivitetens hellige navn flytter til et nyt sted og odler jorden der, men at man kan have noget, der er bæredygtigt og levedygtigt for fremtiden, og det er jo ikke nødvendigvis lovgivningen, det er bare nødvendigt, fordi folk har fundet ud af at udbytte tingene på anden vis, men jeg synes, at det økologiske er det naturlige, det er den naturlige levevis, som jeg prioriterer højt, og jeg er absolut ikke fanatisk med det. Jeg synes, man skal støtte det, og man skal have gang i det økologiske så meget som overhovedet muligt. Alt det, jeg køber, det burde være økologisk efter min mening.  
 Arne: Jeg går nærmere efter, at det skal være dansk, specielt grøntsager, der har jeg det meget højt. Måske hvis man køber en økologisk surbrød fra Spanien eller et eller andet så...

## Data reduction 1 - Coding

- Inductive, deductive and intuitive
- Final coding frame
  - Environment in an everyday context
  - Environment in a production context
  - Organic and animal welfare
  - Organic and environment
  - Organic and health and safety
  - Organic and organoleptic quality
  - Organic and convenient / appropriate
  - Organic and economy
  - Organic and trust
  - Organic and priority
  - Organic and other issues
- Coding carried out in Atlas-ti



## Phases of the sociological study

- Research question: What do you want to know about the social world?
- Choosing design: qualitative or quantitative
- Recruitment and respondents
- Operationalization: Moving from RQ to interview guide
- The interview
- Transcription of the interview
- Data reduction: Coding
- Data display / Visualization
- Interpretation
  - Answering the research question
  - Presenting the results



## Data display / visualization

Consider your analytical approach

- Narrative
  - Focus on displaying the narrative of e.g. an individual
- Content analysis
  - Across the interviews or individuals?

Whatever approach, data display is about:

- Re-contextualizing the coded fragments in a new pool of meaning to which they belong – aka retrieving.
- The creation of a body of text (fragments) within the same code (theme) across the interviews.



## Analysing the displayed data

("second order coding")

Content analysis of displayed (retrieved) codes

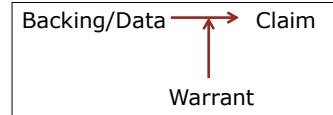
- Aim: to identify aspects/ arguments within a specific code and present these in generalized terms, by means of:
  - Meaning condensation: summarize the meaning for each coded fragment
  - or
  - Argument analysis: identify and analyse the arguments appearing in each coded fragment





## Toulmins argument analysis

- All arguments contain
  - A claim (!)
    - Peter is clever...
  - A backing / data (because...)
    - Because his marks are good...
  - A warrant (whereas/ since..)
    - Whereas /since marks measure cleverness
- Some elements may be tacit
  - Claim and backing (almost) required
  - Warrant often implicit
- Making an argument analysis on the coded fragments within a theme may reveal obscured patterns
  - argument analysis of the code Environment in interviews with lay people revealed that the environmentally related critique of GM foods was backed by
    - Concerns related to new threats against the ecosystem or
    - Concerns related to industrial pollution



*Stephen Toulmin (2003): the uses of arguments. Cambridge University Press*



## Data display - and further analysis

- Data display 1
  - Retrieved codes
- Second order coding ("coding the codes")
  - Meaning condensation
  - Argument analysis
- Data display 2
  - Retrieve and generalize meanings / arguments
- Presenting the analysis



## Interpreting the data

- Looking for patterns
  - Looking for similarities
  - Looking for differences
  - Looking for missing issues/ aspects/ positions
  - Looking for the odd, the unexpected, etc...
- 
- Reorganizing the data – splitting the retrieved codes into new subcategories (codes)
    - E.g. using Toulmins argument analysis



## Presenting the data

- Tell the story resulting from your interpretation of the data
- Use quotes as illustrations
- Don't leave the analysis to the reader: quotes must NEVER stand alone
- Be polite when present the quotes
  - Carefully dressing / trimming the language
  - Leave out irrelevant insertions



## Losing information When is the data in danger?

- The interview (while it happens)
  - Non-verbal communication; intonation; sentiments; irony/ sarcasm etc.
- The recorded interview (the interview materialized in tapes, notes, videos, etc..)
  - Data reduced to the kind of information the given media can capture.
- The transcribed interview (a written text)
  - Data reduced to the information that can be expressed in words
- The coded interview (the purposefully reduced text)
  - Un-coded data lost by purpose or due to coding failures

