Modes of Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative analysis begins with working on the raw data.

Recall that the modeling approach to all data analysis specifies that the raw data we have in hand is a function of three aspects of the process of inquiry:

Data is a function of (1. Research design, 2. Information about social reality, 3. Noise)

1. Research Design
   1.1 Sampling
       Random Sampling is not always random and may not be possible or the best selection method.
       We never observe the total universe of possible observations, there is always some selection rule we use to generate the data. One needs to be aware of how this selection rule generated the data and how it may have biased the observations. Bias means that the observations we analyze are not representative of what is really going on in the social system we are studying.

   1.2 Measurement: Some information is always lost when we specify a measurement procedure. Bias may be the result.

2. Model or structure of social reality
   Your model or structure is a reflection of the real information or social reality indicated by your notes.

3. Noise
   This is the random circumstance or fluctuations in the data.

You want to reduce the data to your model. Get rid of the noise and simplify to the important illustration. Look at the research question and the five modes of analysis: Descriptive, Explanatory, Predictive, Interpretative, and Advocacy.

Our job as analysts is to separate out the model of social reality based upon valid information from the data that is generated primarily by our research design (sampling, measurement) and noise.

Data used in qualitative analysis is primarily text, audio, or visually recorded data bits.

Modern Qualitative Data Analysis relies heavily on the computer, so the first objective is to transfer the data into digital form.

Field notes are one of the major sources of data.

1. Analysis of Field Notes.

When doing field work:
1. Begin with simple ideas. Start framing
2. Do not look for things that are not there.
3. Evidence for social structure comes with practice and experience.

Audio devices and video recordings help an analyst to go back to the setting.

Basic Strategies should be employed in the analysis of qualitative data. The ultimate purpose is data reduction in short.
1. Develop an indexing system.
   The system you develop should help you find your data at a glance. While your data is not for publication, it should be organized proof of your work and conclusions that could be examined and revisited at a later date by those trying to duplicate your work.
   a. The first step is to define location. (Define where) Use a bookkeeping system of day and time, page and paragraph identification.
   b. Also use conceptual indexing (Define What) identifying units of analyses and grouping of thoughts and feelings identified that support your concepts.
   c. Organize text according to these categories. Copy and Paste into an indexed document with a third or fourth set of field notes.

Sources:
Bernard: Field Notes, pp. 355-367.
Lofland: Chap 9 and 10; Topics include Social Science Framing, Analyzing Data, Quoting and Memoing
Britt: Review Developing a Model and Qualitative Modeling
2. Modes of Analysis

All of the modes of analysis outlined below rely on many of the same, core, analytical techniques taught as part of the critical thinking and conceptual path modeling approach to social science inquiry. While the nature of the data may differ from mode to mode as well as the research question, all the modes require analytical reasoning ability, conceptual analysis, and careful attention to the type of research question asked and how evidence is used to address that question.

Descriptive Analysis

Your summary by narrative description.
1. Categorization (Handles/Concepts), Framing
2. Typology
   2.1 Simple Typology
      2.1.1 Nominal Concepts
      2.1.2 Codes or values for that concept.

When writing up the text focus on the typology. Use observations from the data. Use examples that are clear from your data.
Construct a Measurement CPM:

2.1.3 Use data that is logically and empirically valid.
   2.1.3.1 Categories need to be mutually exclusive.
   2.1.3.2 Categories should be exhaustive.
   2.1.3.3 Use consistent operational definitions from the data.
   Be able to consistently code hard and easy for example.
2.2 Compound or Joint Typology

2.2.1 Multiple concepts of the same or related phenomena. For example, there may be more than one dimension of how students determine whether a course is desirable to take. Perhaps job relevance plays a part. Cross classify these dimensions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Relevance</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>A lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hard</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now you have six types of orientations. If one course was not relevant and coded 0 you could have six possible types of classifications but only five are found in nature. This is useful for theory building. One can compare the logical typology to the empirical typology.

Example: Look in the field notes or text for evidence and counter evidence (Negative case analysis) or test of theory. Hard courses with no job relevance may not be found and empirically should be 0. Ideally one would be able to return to the field and try to find a case to disprove this theory. Now you have a compound or joint typology of six categories. Summarize the six orientations to give a full account of what is going on in the system.

Narrative Analysis

A narrative can be descriptive, explanatory, or interpretive. It tells a story. It focuses more on the organizing role a narrative itself may have on the biographical events, or historical processes, being studied. It is a mode that focuses more on the subjects than on conceptual models, in comparison to CPM models.

Narrative

Emphasis is on cases-subjects. Useful for small amount of cases. Stories are uncovered or generated that:
1. Understand
   - The subject as living out there own story. Create a mini play. Focus is on biographical history.
2. Analysis
   - Analytical assumption, The goal is to reconstruct the narrative as an analyst so that we gain understanding.
3. Analysis Technique: One could use Event Structure Analysis (ESA). Focus is on cases. Try to create a causal narrative. What events were necessary for this to happen. Create the causal understanding.

When we construct Conceptual Path Models, concepts and variables are the focus. Represent images of how people choose their actions.
**Discourse Analysis**

This is the study of verbal interactions or conversations.

1. You want to describe the characteristics of the conversation.
2. Explanatory ideas—Consequences and causes of the interactive responses. Structured—What is the purpose or motivation of changing behavior.
   For example: How are statuses and authority structured? Established? How are these differences used? Analyze discourse from this point of view. (Scheff: model of shame, denial of atonement, as a model of discourse that can accelerate to aggressive interactions.)
3. Analysis Technique: ESA. Use pieces of the conversation. Read the Heise article for more information, the example he used was a discourse between two professors.
4. Objective: Is generally to explain some structure. What kinds of statements and categories are here? Use a simple narrative pattern.

**Interpretive Analysis**

1. Classification Purposes. Example: Cappell’s modeling of the interpretive decision scheme used in National Labor Relations Board cases.
2. Discover—understand the classification categories of the subjects used.
3. Indigenous or embedded meaning: Hunt for the meaning and significance of those categories as articulated by the respondents or subjects themselves.
4. Imported meaning: The analyst imposes an interpretation on the events. Categories used to interpret the data are imported by the analyst. (See Bellah reference.) These interpreted models are often brought in through theory.

Social criticism is one form of interpretive analysis. Some say the social sciences are not much more than opinion, and any opinion is as good as any other. The scientific approach calls for some means of evaluating the validity of competing models, even of interpretive models.

It is important with qualitative data to note the themes and schemes of interpretative analysis. Use rules and definitions to classify ideas and note cultural significance. Consider alternative interpretive themes and state the logic and considerations that made you, the analyst, choose one interpretation and not another.

**Content Analysis**

Code the Text and create categories. Example, code the dialog in a Simpson’s episode for the values referred to, or the level of cynicism.
Grounded Theory

Inductive: means we begin with a focus on the particular, detailed data, and move to the general: abstract concepts.

Iterative—Means the process is circular. Process is theory building. Models emerge from the data and are discovered through repeated interrogation of old and newly collected data.

Reflexivity: Analyst is aware of role he plays in constructing the model.

The analyst focuses on the thinking being done and how one’s own involvement is becomes part of the model.

Bernard, Russell.  
Glaser, B.  
Grounded Theory Web Site, linked via SOCQRL Sociological Theory Link  
Lofland, J., & Lofland, L.H.  
Miles, M., and Huberman, A.  