

Systematization and evaluation of the concept of frames using qualitative data analysis software

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Even though frame analysis has become a popular analytical framework in media studies as well as social movement research, the methodological foundations of the empirical identification of frames lack systematization and have consequently remained underdeveloped (Bøås and McNeill 2004: 35; Long and Long 1992: 274). This paper aims at assessment of current advances in the empirical studies of frames and investigates how far computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) can improve these methodologies. At present, only a small number of descriptions provide a passing comment on the lack of significance of qualitative software for discourse analysis. Taking into consideration the growing popularity of computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) within qualitative research, the focal point of this paper is to evaluate its impact on the quality of research (cf. Macmillan and Koenig 2004) and its importance as a research tool for a variety of different analytical methods (cf. Koenig 2005).

The paper begins with a description of framing theory as it is understood for current purposes. Next, a methodology for empirical evaluation of frames is to be investigated. The proposed methodology aims at drawing on available knowledge of meta narratives to circumvent a merely inductive identification of frames. Secondly, a set of key words and key phrases that designate frames in the data is identified by means of hermeneutic analysis. These indicators are afterwards applied in semi-automatic classification of frames. Three CAQDAS, namely ATLAS.ti, MAXqda, NVivo, are to be examined with regard to their application in framing research. Finally, a short overview of how to verify frame models with cluster analysis, factor analysis, as well as latent class/structure analysis is made.

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