Research Methods in Social Communication and Media Studies

Handouts to the Methodology Workshop
Qualitative Methods in Media and Communication Studies
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Goals and Interests of Knowledge

1. Understand the complexity of communication as a social practice in order to develop theoretically complex and competent research projects

2. Understand research as a tool of reasonibility and of science building: not reducing, but producing problems

3. Understand the relation between theory and practice in a societal context

4. Understand Social Science as Integrated Cultural Studies interpreting the paradigmata of social acting as paradigmata of socially relevant interpretation: intervening program
Research: A Cybernetic Program of Observation Between Theory and Practice

COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

Societal realization

theory

HOW?

practice

BY WHAT MEANS?

WHY?

WHAT?

BY WHAT MEANS?

solution

improvement

every day-discourse

ground model

visional discourse

scientific-discourse

analysis

problematization
RESEARCH as a Communicative Shared Observation – on Communicatively defined Observations

DEFINITIONS / TERMS as Agencies of Observation
- structures
- functions
- phenomena
- experience
- norms

Research Society – Society Research

Everyday Theories:
Routines of Observation
Objectivation of Observation

Scientific Theories:
Interruption of Routines
Critical Observation of Objectivation
General Levels of Theorezing

- **Two-Step-Theory Concept** *(interested in objectivation)*
  1. Observation - Model
  2. Find empirical characteristic

  Essentialist paradigm

- **Concept of Semantic Upload** *(interested in interpretation)*
  Describing phenomena in modes of metaphors.

  Phenomenological paradigm

- **Contextual Theory Concept** *(interested in relevance)*
  Connecting Arenas of Observation and Acting
  (Desiderates and Aporias of Communication: Truth, Credibility, Trust, Identity, Authenticity, Autonomy, Freedom, Responsibility, Competence, Knowledge etc.) - Constructivist paradigm
Conceptual Paradigms: Action and Observation

Communication models maximize explicability of implicite sense within experience and observation - creating a metaphor of description of sense

- **Action-model** → trivial stimulus-response-technique
- **Interaction-model** → trivial partnership-imagination
- **Transaction-model** → analytical concept of action-reaction-structure explaining social dynamic construction of identity (transaction analysis on the levels of structure / game / script)
- **Observation-model** → constructivist concept of symbolic interaction: Common social and cultural frame for difference of experience / diversification and appropriation of sociality
Media Communication Models

- **Transport model: stimulus-response**
  sender > message > medium > recipient > message

- **Transformation model: user’s gratification**
  sender > message 1 > medium > recipient > message 2

- **Mediation model: symbolic interaction**
  sender < > media(tor) system < > recipient

- **Agency of social greement model: media as reference of public interest**
  market place (rationality of public participation)
Forum: A Model for Media Communication
What is to be Researched in Media Communication? (Mind-Mapping)

**SYMBOLIC INTERACTION ANALYSIS**
- Power
- Profession
- Ownership
- Ideology
- Intention

Media approach
- Various relations
- Competition
- Concentration
- Intern relations

Media communication
- Participation
- Interaction
- Publicity
- Truth / trust?
- Objectivity?
- Expectations
- Media-market
- Media-structure
- Media-format
- Quality

Media usage / media habit
- Cultural
- Personal
- Need
- Desire

**COMMUNICATOR RESEARCH**

**MEDIA- / FORMATE ANALYSIS**

**CONTENT ANALYSIS**

**AUDIENCE RESEARCH**

**effects:**
- Barriers
- Binding
- Knowledge
- Evaluation

**power dependence:**
- Policy
- Economy
- Culture
- Religion
COMMUNICATION MEDIA-CULTURE SOCIETY
Mutually Each Other Explaining Dispositives

PHILOSOPHICAL-ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE
Ethics, Construction of meaning and Sense

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE
Media as a Cultural Archive and a Functional Memory

LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE – LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION
Language as a structure of culture.

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE – Communicaological Interpretation of Society

PEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVE
To work on a best practice of society. Learning, researching,...

(SOCIAL - ) PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE
Habits, Patterns and Attitudes of Communication.

MEDIA TECHNOLOGY PERSPECTIVE
Media system and Discourse as a Mirror of the Constitution of Society.

COMMUNICATION - POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE
Communication / Media – the Infrastructure of Democracy
Research Basics

Research Structure

• **theory**
  – terms
  – definitions
  – hypothesis
  – every-day assumptions

• **methodology** (theory/rationality of observation)

• **methods** (tools)
Compatibility of Complexities

Methodology

Complexity of ...

Reality/Context of Observation

THEORIES

OPERATIVE / Structuralist

MODEL / Heuristic

CONTEXTUAL / Culturalist

Controlled observation
THEORETICAL and METHODOLOGICAL POSITIONING - LEGITIMATION OF INTEREST OF KNOWLEDGE

1. **EMPIRICAL – ANALYTICAL (Extensiveness)**
   Interested in figures, features and numbers. Research is based upon what is measurable and countable.

2. **CRITICAL – REFLECTIVE (West – criterions)**
   Interested in categories (values, critical horizons) and application of categories.

3. **NORMATIVE – ETHICAL (postulated)**
   Interested in verification of norms and rules (affirmation of order)

4. **PRAGMATIC – TECHNICAL (to arrange)**
   Interested in learning how to do, how to repeat, how to improve. (Not interested in ethical or cultural problems.)

5. **HERMENEUTIC – INTERPRETATIVE (qualitative moment)**
   Interested in open understanding what is observed: qualitative and exemplaric explication of reality - observation

6. **EMANCIPATORIC (open reproof)**
   Interested in realizing new enlightenment, open for active intervention.
Communication System as a multidimensional network of relations = more than a sum of connections between elements
Logics of Science
From Observation to Knowledge

Data

Information

construction

Knowledge

of rationality
Connectivity of Roles (expectation, images, stereotypes, rituals, rules) in the way of symbolic interaction; playing a role, taking a role – building identity and acting for identification.
RELATIONS and CATEGORIES
What are we researching on?

With the help of categories (norms, experience, phenomena, functions, structures) we have to define the problem – the object of the research!

If we want to understand the role, we need to be acquainted with the system (example: market competition system – see picture above). With knowing the system we can define and analyze someone’s role.
(What kind of role does someone play? Who defines the role?)

It’s important to define a goal!

First, it’s necessary to define:

- STRUCTURE
- FUNCTION (the outcome...)
- PHENOMENA (how does the system reflects)
- EXPERIENCE
- NORM (value, knowledge...)

Second, it’s important to decide between qualitative and quantitative method.
Systematization / Empirical Methodology

- **Inductive** (analytical-empirical methodology) versus
- **Deductive** (phenomenological-explorative methodology)

- **Primary** (field research methods) versus
- **Secondary** (desk research procedures)

- **Qualitative** (aiming exemplification, generating hypotheses) versus
- **Quantitative** (aiming representation, confirmation or falsification of hypotheses)
# Empirical Field Research

## Quantitative
- Countable indicators
- How do indicators play a role
- Representative and objective figures

## Qualitative
- Unknown causality relations
- Which indicators could play a role
- Exemplaric hypotheses for further research

## Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proof</th>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do indicators play a role</td>
<td>Which indicators could play a role</td>
<td>Exemplaric hypotheses for further research</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Interacts of Quantitative and Qualitative Methods I

**QUANTITATIVE**
- numbers (measure qualities)
- figures
- statistics
- comparison
- development
- evolution
- evaluation
- classification
- prognostic
- strategies
- regularities, rules
- representation
- causality
- norms = validity and reliability
- interest = to find representative figures

**QUALITATIVE**
- description
- explication
- examples
- reconstruction
- dublication
- complexity
- context
- openness
- research means to communicate
- reflexivity of research and object
- flexibility
- subjectivity
- casuality
- Interest = to understand in context of dubiousness of knowledge (subjectivity)

- **OBJECTIVITY**
- **REPRESENTATIVITY**
- **VISIBILITY**
- **UNDERSTANDING**
- **EXEMPLARITY / EXPLICATION**
- **INTERPRETATION**
### Interacts of Quantitative and Qualitative Methods II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUANTITATIVE</th>
<th>QUALITATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interrest</strong></td>
<td>• examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• no hypothesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• thesis are generated and not improved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tools</strong></td>
<td>• opened tools (opened questions, interviews, discussions, open observations,...)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• closed tools (closed questions)</td>
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</table>
# Interacts of Quantitative and Qualitative Methods IVa

## Qualitative

**Assumptions**
- Reality socially constructed
- Variables complex and interwoven; difficult to measure
- Events viewed from informant’s perspective
- Dynamic quality of life

**Purpose**
- Interpretation
- Contextualization
- Understanding the perspectives of others and learning to know from (with) experts

## Quantitative

**Assumptions**
- Facts and data have the objective reality
- Variables can be measured and identified
- Events viewed from outsider’s perspective
- Static reality of life

**Purpose**
- Prediction
- Generalization
- Causal explanation and knowledge to be learned from others
## Interacts of Quantitative and Qualitative Methods IVb

### Qualitative Methods
- Data collection using
- Participant observation
- Unstructured interviews
- Concludes with hypothesis and grounded theory
- Emergence and portrayal
- Inductive development: Grounded Theory
- Data analysis by themes from informant’s descriptions
- Data reported in language of informant
- Descriptive write-up

### Role of researcher
- Researcher as instrument,
- Personal involvement
- Empathic understanding

### Quantitative Methods
- Testing and measuring
- Commences with hypothesis and theory
- Manipulation and control
- Deductive and experimental
- Statistical analysis
- Statistical reporting
- Abstract impersonal write-up

### Role of the researcher
- Researcher applies formal instruments
- Detachment
- Objective distance
Interacts of Quantitative and Qualitative Methods V

**QUANTITATIVE**
Measuring, observation (methods: questionnaire, interview, content analyses, observation, experiment...)

In *quantitative* research we classify features, count them, and even construct more complex statistical models in an attempt to explain what is observed in formal language.

**QUALITATIVE**
Descriptive information, gathering individual opinion (methods: questionnaire, interview, conversation with experts, group discussions,...)

The aim of *qualitative* analysis is a complete, detailed contextual description in an interpretative language.
1. TEST

Behavioral science is a systematic procedure for comparing people’s performance, feelings, attitudes, or values

- **standardized** (closed test) / **not standardized**
- **Direct** (result = concrete, direct, instant) / **projective** (results depend upon how people experienced the test)
- **Individual test**
- **group test**
- **intelligence test, functional test, personality test** (we can measure intelligence, function, ...)

2. QUESTIONAIRE

- **oral**
- **written**
- **standardized / not standardized**
- **interview / intensive interview**
3. GROUP DISCUSSION / FOCUS GROUP
(qualitative tool – gives a reference for further research)

4. SOCIOMETRY

5. OBSERVATION
• Non-participating / participating
• explorative / standardized
• reactive / non-reactive process

6. CONTENT ANALYSES
• categorial analyses (counting system)
• evaluating analyses
• contingency analyses
• qualitative content analysis
7. EXPERIMENT

• laboratory experiment
• field experiment
• simulation (to simulate different situations)

8. SECONDARY ANALYSES

• one or more research
• statistical materials

First we analyse different research reports... In context of the outcome that follows the research plan has to be formed.

9. RESEARCH STRATEGIES

• more time points – to research the representative group
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods and Instruments for Social Research IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **scales** | one-/ more-dimensional  
- beliefs, behaviour, hypothetical situations |
| **tests** | (non) standardised, direct vs. projective, individual vs. group tests  
- IQ-, effectiveness-, personality tests |
| **questionnaire** | (non) standardised, verbal vs. written, in-depth interviews |
| **observation** | with(out) participation, (non)reactive, explorative vs. standardised |
| **group discussion** | open, with(out) moderation |
| **secondary analysis** | one or more surveys of statistical material |
• representative ("polls") – standardised structured individual interviews

• barometer – changes within a period of time (pre-election polls)

• panel – repetitive surveys (teletest)

• random (accidental choice) vs. quota (willfull choice) → exactly predetermined (name, address) interviewees
Research Process I

- Research = a systematic investigation to find answers to a problem.
- Intention = methodical researching.

1. definition of the field
2. definition of the problem
3. hypotheses
4. methods
5. research implementation (data gathering)
6. results
7. evaluation
8. conclusion

Social science RESEARCH (two competing methods):
- the scientific empirical tradition
- naturalistic phenomenological mode

Social science RESEARCH means:
- to recognize
- to operate
- to discover
- to become aware of new cognition, new knowledge

- evidence of results > scientific, empirical
- evaluation
1. PROJECT FRAMEWORK
   + problems to be clarified (what)
   + goal of interest (why)
   + research fields (where)
   + tools (how)

2. SECONDARY ANALYSIS
   + theory (book)
   + research (books, reports)

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
   + working hypothesis
   + arguing hypothesis
   + indicators of problems to be analyzed

4. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK
   + decide qualitative or quantitative research
   + decide research object (people, institutes,...)
   + decide question / tools

5. TOOLS
   + develop tool structure (for interview, questionnaire....)
   + program (plan – when, who,...)
   + description – protocol

6. EVALUATION
   + Important (what was important)
   + Application (in order to verify or falsify the hypothesis)
   Quantitative interpretation / statistics

7. CONCLUSION
How to do the research? I(a)
The Linear Model

**PROBLEM**
We have to define the problem! From the list of problems we have to exclude the right one.

**SETTING UP THE QUESTIONS**
What are we trying to discover? From the main, leading question we have to go in to depth.

**A PLAN, THEORY, MODEL**
At the beginning we have to decide which model and theory shall we take – with the argumentation.
We need theory also with reason to improve it.

**HYPOTHESIS**
We must prove, that there is link between two different meanings, elements, subjects,..
From 20 different hypothesis we have to select 5. With the help of the theory we can define the hypothesis.
How to do the research? I(b)  
The Linear Model

OPERATIONALISATION of the MAIN CONCEPT  
We have to define the categories and variables and study thoroughly the causal – consecutive connection. We need to examine closely the field of study.

DATA GATHERING

DATA EVALUATION  
We need to have the right theory.

HYPOTHESIS - EVALUATION  
confirmation or falsification, to confirm or refuse our hypothesis

EXPLANATION  
We can change the hypothesis

THEORY – based on the research
How to do the research? II
The Cyclic Model

Assumption about the problem
IMPLEMENTATION

Example 1
RESEARCH EVALUATION

Example 2
RESEARCH EVALUATION

Example x
RESEARCH EVALUATION

VALUE of THEORY

comparison
comparison
comparison
How to do the research? III
A Complex Model of Research Procedure

1. Social problem
2. Theory (+existing research)
3. Problem
4. Exploration
5. Hypothesis
6. Definition of terms
7. Isolation of relevant indicators
8. Operationalisation
9. Codes
10. Indicators
11. Survey (data collection)
12. Sample (pretest)
13. Statistical evaluation criteria and tests
14. Evaluation and statistical check
15. Interpretation (description, analysis, explanation)
16. Presentation
17. Lectures
18. Publications

Discovery context:
- Social problem
- Theory
- Order
- Problem
- Exploration

Argumentation context:
- Definition of terms
- Isolation of relevant indicators
- Operationalisation
- Codes
- Indicators

Application and action context:
- Hypothesis
- Theory
- Presentation
- Lectures
- Publications
- Social problem
How to do the research? IV
A Simple Model of Research

choice of the problem

problem definition

theory- & hypothesis construction

determination of methods

term definitions & operationalisation

determination of sources

measuring

data collection

data interpretation

data analysis

presentation
References

Used References (in German):

- Mayring, Philipp (2000): Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse. FQS

Other Possible References (in English):

- Bohnsack, Ralf: Qualitative Analysis and Documentary Methods in Educational Research