Content/Thematic Analysis

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9:00am – 4:30pm

Course Overview

Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) is a method for the analysis and interpretation of the content of text (and visual materials) through systematic coding, classification and pattern searching. Often used in social science research, QCA is a flexible method that can be used in a variety of ways: inductively or deductively (or most often a combination of both), for cross- and within-case analysis, in a more positivist or a more interpretive spirit, and in connection with a variety of theoretical approaches, manually or with the assistance of a software. Intuitive in nature, it nevertheless requires clear and explicit analytic strategies to be carried out properly and to carry the analysis beyond simple description.

This workshop introduces QCA both as a method in its own right, and as a base method that everyone interested in qualitative data analysis (including less formalised approaches such as discourse or narrative analysis) should ideally be acquainted with, as its analytic procedures are at the core of other types of qualitative analysis as well.

Audience

This workshop is intended for students and researchers at various levels who have little or no prior knowledge in qualitative data analysis and would like to be introduced to the logic and procedures of qualitative content analysis. The workshop is suitable for participants from a variety of disciplines and working with a variety of data.

Recommended Readings

The participants are advised to have a look at the preparatory readings ahead of the workshop. They are posted in the following DropBox folder:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/w70ai0oggip3e72/AADqELglwAyEv9mW_Bfj7wqya?dl=0

Methodological texts:


Two examples of qualitative content analysis:

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.


Additional readings


**Outline (indicative)**

**Day 1**

Brief introduction to QCA:

- The logic and analytic features of qualitative data analysis
- QCA as a distinct approach (as opposed for instance to classical (quantitative) content analysis or discourse analytic approaches)
- QCA and its relation to epistemology and theory

QCA and the research process

- Inductive, deductive and hybrid approaches
- Degrees of formalisation

Analytic steps of QCA (1)

- Pre-analysis, coding and “theming” – the identification of patterns
- Cross- and within-case analysis
- Uses of theory in the coding process (“measurement” vs sensitising concepts approach)

The analysis of ’natural’ vs generated data

Comparative analysis
Day 2

Analytic steps of QCA (2)
- From themes to interpretation: first and second-cycle coding
- Beyond data analysis: the iterativity of the research process and its practical implications

The construction of a data body
- Predefined and evolutive data bodies

Quality criteria in qualitative analysis and writing up
- Validity and reliability in QCA – formal and less formal approaches and their epistemological underpinnings
- Writing up qualitative research findings
- Limitations of QCA

Software assisted data analysis
- A short presentation of MaxQDA
- Using or not using a software?