FQS FORUM: QUALITATIVE SOCIAL RESEARCH SOZIALFORSCHUNG

About this Issue

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We are pleased to present the third *FQS* issue to our readers, which is dedicated to "Text . Archive . Re-Analysis". Besides contributions directly linked to the issue's topic, you also will find within *FQS* 1(3) some selected single contributions, a reply within the *FQS* Debate on "Quality of Qualitative Research", as well as review notes and review essay and conference reports, hopefully interesting for qualitative researchers. [1]

1. Text . Archive . Re-Analysis

Within the "Text . Archive . Re-Analysis" section, 46 authors from 13 different countries are discussing in altogether 27 contributions their experiences with documenting, archiving, accessing and re-using qualitative data in various disciplines. As far as we know, this is the first systematic presentation towards this important, but up to now not sufficiently recognised topics. [2]

General introduction

First of all, Louise CORTI allows an in-depth overview over the international state of qualitative archiving. Referring to Qualidata's experiences—which was the world's first initiative to pioneer preservation of qualitative social science data on a national scale—she describes current archiving cultures, the range of objectives and strategies employed by Qualidata projects and optimal models of qualitative data archiving. She also introduces some of the major barriers to qualitative data archiving—namely researchers' concerns, lack of communication between "quantitative" and "qualitative" data archivists, and the paucity of long-term vision for archiving by national funders of social science. [3]

Preconditions of qualitative archiving

Anne Sofia FINK deals with a rather important but however mostly presupposed and rarely discussed precondition in her article: Relying on experiences with the Danish Data Archive she discusses the role the researcher plays in archiving of the data he or she collected. [4]

While this role up to now often seems to be a rather problematical one, Charles K. HUMPHREY, Carole A. ESTABROOKS, Judy R. NORRIS, Jane E. SMITH and Kathryn L. HESKETH "demonstrate the advantages of including an archivist as a member of the research team": According to the authors' experiences with two qualitative projects, besides others "co-investigators needed to come to agreement with the principles of data preservation and sharing, ...; the research ethics application and approval had to incorporate the conditions of preservation and sharing; and we needed a comprehensive plan for preservation that would ensure the creation of high-quality data products worthy of deposit ... The

conditions of use, cataloguing records, and citation guide are all part of preparing the data for access." [5]

Malcolm ASHMORE and Darren REED deal with another important precondition of any qualitative archiving: referring to epistemologies of "hearing" vs. "reading", the authors discuss critically the most times imbalanced recognition of tapes on the one hand and transcripts on the other hand, coming from a proposed superiority of the tape compared to the transcript especially within conversational analysis. [6]

Progress of preserving and questions regarding data protection

Louise CORTI, Annette DAY and Gill BACKHOUSE introduce some considerations towards confidentiality, informed consent and towards accessing and preserving qualitative data. The authors highlight the legal issues surrounding fieldwork "contracts", set out the ethical and legal problems for archiving and offer a number of practical solutions to overcome these. The various options for archiving specific kinds of data, often with their own unique dilemmas, are discussed in a practical context, with examples drawn from Qualidata's archiving experience. CORTI et al. pay particular attention to the techniques and efficacy of anonymisation and outline methods of gate-keeping for access to data. [7]

Louise CORTI and Nadeem AHMAD are using the example of data from George BROWN's research from the 1960 and onwards to show how Qualidata undertook the preparation, scanning, documentation and archiving of a vast amount of data in the field of medical sociology. Additionally discussed are ways of giving the most appropriate access to these most times sensitive data, a topic, also Almut LEH describes—referring to the "German Memory" Archive of the "Institute for History and Biography", FernUniversität Hagen, Germany: LEH discusses problems of anonymisation, of giving access to qualitative data and of their physical preservation. [8]

Concepts of archiving qualitative data—Disciplinary perspectives

This section contains contributions concerned with qualitative archiving under different disciplinary focuses respectively referring to different research topics. [9]

Susann KLUGE and Diane OPITZ present a computer-assisted concept for the archiving of qualitative data, developed at the "Archive for Life Course Research", Special Collaborative Centre 186, University of Bremen, Germany. This concept also provides suitable strategies for anonymisation and detailed conditions for accessing and transmitting data. In addition, the database system "QBiQ" was developed, which not only helps to preserve and archive qualitative and quantitative (longitudinal) data, but also "provides main functions of common text analysis like coding, carrying out of text retrieval etc. Furthermore, it offers some useful interfaces for text analysis systems in order to facilitate the data exchange between different programs." [10]

Jens ALLWOOD, Maria BJÖRNBERG, Leif GRÖNQUIST, Elisabeth AHLSEN and Cajsa OTTESJÖ describe the transcribing and analysis tools, used for the Spoken Language Corpus at the Linguistics Department, Göteborg University, Sweden. Christina ORSATTI discusses along her experiences with the "Archivio Provinciale per la Tradizione Orale" (Italy) problems of cataloguing data from ethnological and anthropological research. Along with others, she deals with questions concerning the context of research, "confidentiality, the role of the ethnographer and the integrity of the field-work". Using case studies from the Centre for Social Anthropology and Computing, University of Kent, UK, David ZEITLYN describes possible advantages for anthropological research and teaching, if archives—containing e.g. fieldnotes and other research material such as photographs, film and the results of their analysis—are available online. [11]

Roland GROESCHEL introduces the German Interview Archive "Youth in the 20th Century": The "approximately 340 interviews with individuals, who were members of youth-organizations or were engaged in youth work or youth policy ... cover the time span from 1910 to the 1990s, and they are especially interesting for historical pedagogics and historiography." Changes and difficulties of qualitative archiving from a historian's perspective Zoltán LUX discusses along the data collections of "1956 Institute" (the Institute was founded in 1990 and deals with research upon the Hungarian revolution 1956). In addition to briefly describing the Institute the authors also discusses questions e.g. concerning the problem of sharing individually possessed information, of disposal and control over information, of identifying authentic sources of data and the importance of archives for digital publications. [12]

Marc LUDER, Marius NEUKOM and Bruno THOMANN describe the archive and the research group on "Clinical Narrative" at the Department of Clinical Psychology, University of Zurich, Switzerland, and—besides others—they introduce "Jacob", "a content analysis tool for everyday life stories" and its application within research on psychotherapy. Uwe SCHELLINGER concerns himself with another kind of psychological researching and archiving: He discusses along the archives of the German "Institut für Grenzgebiete der Psychologie und Psychohygiene e.V." and its data collections on "Extra-Sensory Perception" and "Psychokinesis" some premises, problems and perspectives within this research field, increasingly interesting also from historical, cultural sciences or sociological points of view. [13]

While the above mentioned concepts of archiving are mainly useful for different kinds of academic research, Dominique Le ROUX and Jean VIDAL report their experiences with archiving and re-analysing qualitative data within Verbatim: At Verbatim—part of the Research and Development Department of the French electricity company, Electricité de France—various qualitative surveys had been conducted "in order to better understand customers' requirements and the problems encountered by the company's employees". Besides describing the development and actual state of Verbatim, the authors are dealing especially with ethical and methodological issues which arose during their research. [14]

Creation and transmission of qualitative data bases—Access and documentation

Christine PLASS and Michael SCHETSCHE describe the use of NUD*IST for archiving and analysing qualitative data. They explain in detail "how to transfer general questions into a systematic categorisation with the assistance of NUD*IST" and present concrete work procedures and difficulties they encountered during their work. [15]

A very detailed report of using a qualitative database for the analysis of interviews is provided by Thomas KUEHN and Andreas WITZEL: They introduce the structure and the category scheme as the index system of their database "DABIE", developed by The Special Collaborative Centre 186 at the University of Bremen, Germany, and they discuss different ways of using this database for the process of data analysis, giving rich examples for interested readers. [16]

Thomas MUHR is concerned in his contribution with possibilities to increase "the Re-usability of Qualitative Data with XML": As a rising number of programs for the analysis of qualitative data exist, "each having their own approaches, strengths and weaknesses", it becomes crucial to find appropriate ways of dealing with these often proprietary formats. As a very important future tool the author discusses the eXtensible Markup Language (XML), which "has the potential to represent data in a way ... that retains its semantics and makes its re-use in 'alien' applications an economical option." [17]

Referring to her experiences within a major national data archive—the Finnish Social Science Data Archive—Arja KUULA stresses the documentation of qualitative data for archiving, in terms of the much needed development of appropriate international standards. She discusses an existing international standard for social statistical data, the DDI, based on an XML markup of the dataset description or "metadata". Thus XML is also by KUULA seen to be a very powerful tool for presenting and transferring datasets. [18]

Re-use and secondary analysis

Nigel FIELDING deals with several opportunities qualitative software programmes may offer for the re-use of qualitative data. Describing advantages of secondary analysis the author at the same time rejects some repeating methodological objections raised against qualitative re-analysis, and he offers some important insights into the sometimes difficult relation between the use of qualitative software and re-analysing efforts by reference to the social context of the research environment. [19]

Using the case of Murray Research Center, USA Jacquelin B. JAMES and Annemette SORENSON discuss "the special challenges that data archives face when archiving and preparing for new research longitudinal studies with a large qualitative component. We discuss issues of confidentiality, how best to organize longitudinal data for future use, including ways in which to permit future follow-

ups without compromising confidentiality, and ways to teach investigators how to plan for the archiving of their longitudinal research." Concerned with the preparation of qualitative data for further analysis, the authors place a special focus on why "qualitative data to a much greater extent permit new investigators to look at the data in new ways than do quantitative data." Finally, Dorothy SHERIDAN presents some information about the development and the actual work of "Mass-Observation", a public archive established at the University of Sussex, UK in the early 1970s. SHERIDAN discusses the Mass-Observation Archive "as a prime example of the ways in which social research data can be re-evaluated within new research frameworks, in response to new formulations of research questions, and even within entirely new methodological paradigms." [20]

Zdenek KONOPÁSEK and Zuzana KUSÁ are concerned with the re-use of qualitative data, mainly referring to their experience as qualitative researchers especially engaged in an ethnomethodological approach to narratives. They describe their use of data "for studying new topics that are sometimes far from the original research questions and objectives", and discuss what special demands arise from an ethnomethodological perspective e.g. towards the "quality and pinpoint accuracy of transcripts ... field memos." In addition to KONOPÁSEK and KUSÁ, Jochen GLAESER and Grit LAUDEL introduce the readers to a re-analysis they conducted using interviews from the archive of The Special Collaborative Centre 186 at the University of Bremen, Germany. They describe their efforts towards re-analysing, e.g. focusing on problems coming from the anonymisation of these interviews. Additionally, the authors discuss the results of their external validation and the importance of "researchers' constructions", leading some times to "assumptions that cannot be justified by empirical data." [21]

Within his contribution "Re-using Qualitative Research Data: A Personal Account", Paul THOMPSON invites the readers to share some of his experiences during the last decades. The author describes how he together with colleagues re-used the dataset "Family and Work Conditions before 1918", he collected himself during the early 1970. Further examples concern secondary analysis of datasets other researchers provided, namely from a quantitative longitudinal cohort followed since 1958 by the National Child Development Study and from a project on transnational Jamaican families conducted by Mary CHAMBERLAIN and Harry GOULBOURNE. [22]

Short descriptions and conclusion

The topic "Text · Archive · Re-Analysis" ends with short descriptions of six data archives. The Archive for Life Course Research, University of Bremen, Germany; Deutsches Gedächtnis ("German Memory") in the Institute for History and Biography, FernUniversität Hagen, Germany; The Murray Research Center: A Center for the Study of Lives, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University, USA; The Qualitative Data Archival Resource Centre, University of Essex, UK; Verbatim: Qualitative Data Archiving Base, France, and The Verein zur Förderung von Forschungen zur politischen Sozialisation und Partizipation (POSOPA) e.V., Germany. These short descriptions enable the reader to get

quick information about fields of research, concepts of the particular archive, kinds of data archived, access and contact possibilities etc. [23]

Following the descriptions, Katja MRUCK discusses possible difficulties and advantages of qualitative networking, using her experiences of managing *FQS*. She also shortly summarises possible points of further co-operation between *FQS* and INQUADA, an initiative on networking qualitative archives world wide. INQUADA resulted from the idea that there is a demand for both sharing and wanting to access a wider range of data sources, and that these demands can be accomplished with the right infrastructure and strategies in place. [24]

We hope that the new network for qualitative archiving, INQUADA established in October 2000 at the International Social Science Methodology in Cologne will provide an opportunity as a new space for groups archiving and providing access to qualitative data. The Network aims to provide a forum for seeking advice and support on qualitative data archiving and for sharing experiences and contributing to the knowledge pool. The first expert seminar will be held at Essex, UK in March 2001 and will focus on documentation standards for qualitative data, especially in terms of the suitability of the Data Documentation Initiative (see also CORTI in this issue and the INQUADA web site at http://www.essex.ac.uk/qualidata/current/inquada.htm). [25]

2. Further Contributions which do not Belong to the Issue's Topic

FQS 1(3) like the issues published earlier presents selected single contributions: Doris FRUEH and Claudia ORTHMANN deal with the use of the Internet for qualitative research: While ORTHMANN discusses problems of data collection within a study, conducted at the Free University of Berlin, Germany, to analyse communication in chat rooms, FRUEH—also relying on her own empirical findings—presents a more systematic contribution on "Online Research within a Qualitative Paradigm". [26]

Within "{Coteaching | Cogenerative Dialoguing} as Praxis of Dialectic Method", Wolff-Michael ROTH, Daniel V. LAWLESS and Kenneth TOBIN are discussing their model and praxis of teaching, in which "all individuals (teachers, teachers in training, supervisors, and researchers) participate in assisting students to learn". Eva SCHAEFER gives the reader some insight into "An Ambivalent Life Concept of a Young Actress", while presenting results from her empirical study. Finally, Erhard TIETEL published the English version of his contribution "The Interview as a Relational Space", which was published as a full text in *FQS* 1(2) in German language. [27]

Further contributions published in *FQS* 1(3) belong to the rubrics *FQS* Debates, *FQS* Review and *FQS* Conference Reports: [28]

With his critical note "Bending the Knee to the Acquisition of Economical Resources—against deeper epistemological insights", Franz BREUER replied to

Jo REICHERTZ introduction for the debate on "Quality of Qualitative Research"—On the Problem of Validity of Qualitative Research—published in *FQS* 1(2). [29]

FQS reviews contains various review essay and reviews, namely review essays from

- Christopher J. COLVIN on Mary D. Lagerwey (1998). Reading Auschwitz,
- Alfredo GAITÁN on Carolyn Ellis & Arthur P. Bochner (Eds.) (1996). Composing Ethnography: Alternative Forms of Qualitative Writing,
- Kip JONES on Wendy Hollway & Tony Jefferson (2000). Doing Qualitative Research Differently. Free Association, Narrative and the Interview Method and
- Rudolf SCHMITT on Ronald Hitzler & Anne Honer (Eds.) (1997). Sozialwissenschaftliche Hermeneutik. Eine Einführung. [30]

Additionally, reviews were provided by

- Jan BRACE-GOVAN on Barry Glassner & Rosanna Hertz (Eds.) (1999). Qualitative Sociology as Everyday Life,
- Susanne FRIESE on Doris Mosbach (1999). Bildermenschen. Menschenbilder. Exotische Menschen als Zeichen in der neueren germanen Printwerbung,
- Günter MEY on Jürgen Straub (1999). Verstehen, Kritik, Anerkennung. Das Eigene und das Fremde in der Erkenntnisbildung interpretativer Wissenschaften, and finally
- Clive Seale's 1999 book on "The Quality of Qualitative Research" has been reviewed twice, by Louise CORTI in English and by Udo KELLE German language. [31]

Hopefully, this collection of review essays and review notes realises some of the suggestions, Günter MEY offered within his Editorial Note, which contains a plea for "Re-evaluating Book Reviews: As Scientific Contributions". [32]

Ending with Conference reports—see Roland POSNER on the Workshop "The Rhetoric of Gestures", Sarah DELANEY on the Second International Conference on Software Development by "Qualitative Solutions and Research", and Raimund DEHMLOW on the 2. International Otto Gross Congress—this Issue hopefully will provide a broad and interesting view into different topics, concerning qualitative research. [33]

Publishing such an issue means an enormous amount of work for all persons involved: the editors, the authors, and the reviewers alike. So we would like to thank all who helped us to produce *FQS* 1(3), and especially worth mentioning besides many others are Günter MEY, who organised the Book Reviews and assisted whenever necessary, Clemens POVEL, who provided the technical routines necessary, Euclides SANCHEZ, who cared for the translation of so many

abstracts into Spanish language, and Tina PATEL: without her voluntary, careful and inspiring copyediting of the English texts this issue would not have been possible. [34]

At least we like to thank our readers: For the interest and some times engagement in *FQS*, for reading and commenting critically, and for helping to maintain *FQS* as a vivid resource for qualitative research also in the future! [35]

Citation

Mruck, Katja, Corti, Louise, Kluge, Susann & Opitz, Diane (2000). About this Issue [35 paragraphs]. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *1*(3), Art. 1, http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs000311.

Revised 7/2008