

A

ACCESS

Definition

The process of gaining and maintaining entry to a setting or social group, or of establishing working relations with individuals, in order that social research can be undertaken.

Distinctive Features

Access is part of the initial phase of social research, and is usually negotiated at the start of the research project. Access can also be conceptualized as a continuous process (Lee, 1993). Relationships may need to be renegotiated throughout the course of research. It is sometimes unclear exactly what access is required once research is under way.

There are a variety of practical and theoretical matters associated with ensuring research access. There are certainly practical issues involved in gaining entry to settings or data, and to establishing rapport with research participants. These might include formal approaches or applications (by letter or direct contact), arranging initial meetings and providing descriptions of the research for potential settings and participants. It is usually appropriate to offer reassurances of confidentiality and trust as part of initial access negotiations.

Identifying and establishing rapport with key gatekeepers or (informal) sponsors within a setting can be important to gaining and maintaining access (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). This can entail developing a theoretical or analytical appreciation of the

setting or social group, and the relative standing of different social actors within the field. There are also occasions when access will need to be negotiated with a variety of different social actors within the setting. This can mean paying particular attention to the role(s) that the researcher adopts during social research, and the ways in which these roles are managed throughout the research encounter. This role management can include adopting certain styles of dress or personae in order to fit into the setting.

Complex and protracted access negotiations are most often associated with qualitative or ethnographic work (de Laine, 2000). However, there may be similar processes involved in gaining access to secondary data, documentary sources, or large research samples. Establishing trust and gaining a working familiarity of the research field are essential components of undertaking social research of all kinds.

Evaluation

Access is not a single event to be undertaken only at the beginning of the research process. However, advice tends to focus on the initial negotiation of access, rather than on the maintenance and renegotiation of access over time. Access is more than seeking formal permission or gaining informed consent. It is also part of a more general process of active engagement with settings and social actors, and of recognizing the need to work at ethical research relationships (Denscombe, 2002).

How much information to disclose during access negotiations is a matter for careful

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consideration. It may not be possible to inform potential research participants about the full extent of the research, particularly if an exploratory study is envisaged, with new research questions emerging over time. Equally, full disclosure may not be desirable, perhaps because this may jeopardize access, or potentially change the behaviour of informants. Sometimes it is easier to give a fuller account of the aims of the research once initial access has been secured and a level of rapport and trust established. However, where possible, those concerned should be told about any implications of the research from the outset. Deception should certainly be avoided.

Amanda Coffey

Associated Concepts: confidentiality, covert research, dangerous research, ethics, gate-keeper, impression management, informed consent, organizational research, participant observation, reflexivity, research bargain, unobtrusive measures, validity of measurement

Key Readings

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ACTION RESEARCH

Definition

Action research is a type of applied social research that aims to improve social situations

through change interventions involving a process of collaboration between researchers and participants. The process is seen to be both educational and empowering. Action research should not be confused with evaluation research which attempts to measure the impact of interventions without the active collaboration of participants.

Distinctive Features

In a systematic review based on UK health-care settings, Waterman et al. (2001) identified two distinguishing features of action research: first, the cyclic process, and second, the research partnership. The action research cycle begins with the analysis of a social situation or the identification of a problem. This is typically followed by the formulation of some kind of intervention (for example, nurses in a clinic may change the way they carry out some aspect of professional practice), which is then evaluated. The planning, action, reflection and evaluation may lead to new rounds of intervention and evaluation. The research element often focuses on the process of change and the achievement of planned objectives.

The second distinguishing feature of action research is a partnership or collaboration between the researcher(s) and the researched. In traditional research there is a clear separation between the researcher(s) and the researched, which is seen as essential to preserving objectivity. In action research, however, there is a deliberate attempt to involve participants as a way of promoting change and as a device to reduce the social distance between researchers and subjects. This involvement is felt to be both educative and empowering. As Greenwood and Levin (1998: 6) say: 'Action research aims to increase the ability of the involved community or organization members to control their own destinies more effectively and to keep improving their capacity to do so.'

It is clear that underpinning these distinguishing features are certain value commitments. The first of these is what could be called a democratizing motive, which

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reverses the conventional relationship between researchers and researched, which some action researchers see as elitist and exploitative. The second commitment is to participation. Drawing on a long heritage of pragmatist scholarship Peter Reason (1994) has argued that traditional social science alienates subjects from their own understandings of the world. Action research attempts to transcend this alienation through the active involvement of people in transforming organizations or social groups. The third commitment is to forms of inquiry that rely on subjective understanding. Action researchers believe that it is only through action and reflection that participants can understand their social situation and through formulation of interventions arrive at new understandings.

Evaluation

If judged by the standards of conventional academic research, action research might appear to be unscientific. The close and collaborative relationship between researchers and researched, for example, could be seen as a source of bias because the researcher is no longer independent of the research setting. The flexible design features of action research projects might also be an anathema to the mainstream social researcher. In contrast to the clear specification of research questions or hypotheses to be found in conventional empirical studies, action research is characterized by a fluid and ongoing process of formulation, implementation, adaptation and evaluation in which the identification of stages or project milestones is often difficult. Research design in action research is evolutionary rather than specified beforehand in a research protocol.

Since there is such a marked difference between conventional and action research it would probably make more sense to judge the latter on its own terms. Such a judgement would need to consider the action research process, with its emphasis on participation to bring about change and the role of reflection and self-evaluation in that process.

Evaluation should also take into account how action research aims to change the way people do things. Its outcomes are not necessarily 'findings' in the conventional sense of theoretical progress, but in terms of new practices, changed behaviour patterns or improvements in organizational processes.

Given the rapidly changing nature of organizational settings and the continuing pressure on organizational members to improve their performance it is likely that action research has a considerable contribution to make in the management of change. As Waterman et al. (2001: 57) suggest, action research has the potential to go 'beyond an analysis of the *status quo* to directly consider questions of "what might be" and "what can be".'

John Newton

Associated Concepts: applied research, emancipatory research, evaluation research, messy research, participatory action research, policy-related research, practitioner research

Key Readings

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ANALYTIC INDUCTION

Definition

A research strategy of data collection and analysis which explicitly takes the deviant case as a starting point for testing models or theories developed in research. It can be characterized as a method of systematic interpretation

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of events, which includes the process of generating hypotheses as well as testing them. Its decisive instrument is to analyse the exception or the case that is deviant to the hypothesis.

Distinctive Features

This procedure, introduced by Znaniecki in 1934, of looking for and analysing deviant cases is applied after a preliminary theory (hypothesis, pattern or model) has been developed. Analytic induction, above all, is oriented to examining theories and knowledge by analysing or integrating negative cases.

The procedure includes the following steps: (1) a rough definition of the phenomenon to be explained is developed; (2) a hypothetical explanation of the phenomenon is formulated; (3) a case is studied in the light of this hypothesis to find out whether the hypothesis corresponds to the facts in this case; (4) if the hypothesis is not correct, either the hypothesis is reformulated or the phenomenon to be explained is redefined in a way that excludes this case. Thereafter, the researcher actively searches for negative cases to discredit the hypothesis, model or typology.

Practical certainty can be obtained after a small number of cases has been studied, but the discovery of each individual negative case by the researcher or another researcher refutes the explanation and calls for its reformulation. Each negative case calls for the redefinition of concepts and/or the reformulation of hypotheses. Further cases are studied, the phenomenon is redefined and the hypotheses are reformulated until a universal relation is established.

Evaluation

Analytic induction is not based on enumerative argumentation. As it focuses on the single deviant case to test a more or less generalized model, it is a genuinely qualitative way of assessing the stability and limitations of research findings. With its emphasis on testing theories it goes one step further than

the development of grounded theory. Three types of results are obtained with analytic induction: forms of activities (how something is done normally), accounts of self-awareness and explanations, and motivational and other reasons for specific behaviours are all analysed and presented.

Analytic induction does not start from conventional definitions or models of what is studied. As it implicitly assumes that hypotheses, theories and models are not immediately perfect, it is a strategy to refine interpretative conclusions from data. By searching for negative cases and by testing models and theories against them, it is a strategy to defin' their limits and to make explicit under what time, local and social conditions they are *not* valid. Therefore, analytic induction is a way to generalize and to delimit qualitative, case-based findings.

Analytic induction has been criticized as it does not – as originally intended by Znaniecki (1934) – provide a means for establishing causal laws and universals. There are question marks against the generalization of case studies and external validity in general. Nevertheless, analytic induction has its own importance as a procedure for assessing and developing analyses by the use of negative cases.

Uwe Flick

Associated Concepts: case study method, constant comparative method, deviant case analysis, grounded theory, hypothesis, induction, validity

Key Readings

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ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE (ANOVA)

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE (ANOVA)

Definition

A set of procedures that estimate and attribute variance in a data set to different sources and determine the probability, under the null hypothesis, of obtaining the differences between the variance estimates by chance.

Distinctive features

In ANOVA, variance attributable to differences between groups of scores is compared with an average variance attributable to differences between the scores within each group. Between-group variance is defined with respect to differences between the group means, and within-group variance is defined with respect to differences between the individual scores and their group mean. If the nature of the groups influences the scores more than chance fluctuation, then the between-group variance estimate will exceed the within-group variance estimate. If this difference between the variance estimates is sufficiently large, then the null hypothesis that all group means are equal is rejected.

The *t*-test compares the means of two experimental conditions. However, when there are more than two groups or conditions, more than one *t*-test is needed to compare all of the conditions. Unfortunately, the likelihood of obtaining a significant result by chance increases with the number of statistical tests carried out (that is, hypotheses tested). A Type 1 error is committed when the null hypothesis is rejected erroneously. Therefore, the Type 1 error rate increases with the number of statistical tests applied to any data set. ANOVA was developed to assist in the analysis of data obtained from agricultural experiments with any number of experimental conditions without any increase in Type 1 error. ANOVA procedures appropriate for an extensive variety of experimental designs are now available (e.g. Kirk, 1995).

Nevertheless, despite ANOVA being developed for use in experimental research, it

may be applied to any data organized by categories. However, as with any statistical procedure, interpretation of the ANOVA results will depend upon the data collection methodology and the conformity of the data to the statistical assumptions underlying the analysis (e.g. Rutherford, 2001).

Evaluation

When regression, ANOVA and ANCOVA (analysis of covariance) are expressed in matrix algebra terms, a commonality is evident. Indeed, the same matrix algebra equation is able to summarize all three of these analyses. As regression, ANOVA and ANCOVA can be described in an identical manner, clearly they follow a common pattern. This common pattern is the GLM (general linear modelling) conception. It is said that regression, ANOVA and ANCOVA are particular instances of the GLM or that the GLM subsumes regression, ANOVA and ANCOVA. Unfortunately, the ability of the same matrix algebra equation to describe regression, ANOVA and ANCOVA has resulted in the inaccurate identification of the matrix algebra equation as the GLM. However, just as a particular language provides a means of expressing an idea, so matrix algebra provides only one notation for expressing the GLM.

Andrew Rutherford

Associated Concepts: experiment, general linear modelling, inferential statistics, multivariate analysis

Key Readings

- Keppel, G., Saufley, W. H. and Tokunaga, H. (1992) *Introduction to Design and Analysis: A Student's Handbook*, 2nd edn. New York: Freeman.
- Kirk, R. E. (1995) *Experimental Design: Procedures for the Behavioral Sciences*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
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ANTI-RACISM RESEARCH

Definition

Research that focuses on studying the belief (and social practices) that there are racial groups which have distinct physical or cultural characteristics usually, but not only, defined in negative terms.

Distinctive Features

The desire to categorize people into racial types based on physical appearance (or skin colour) has a long tradition in Western society (see Banton, 1987). Darwin's evolutionary theory of 1859 instituted the idea that there was a racial hierarchy based on different species or races with natural, discernible biological characteristics. Darwin also talked of the 'civilized races of man' exterminating and replacing the 'savage races' and was at one with Galton in demanding control of how different races breed (eugenics). For many decades, in a variety of national settings, positivist 'race scientists' researched for the genetic base of race. These investigations were originally encouraged by European colonization and the development of the European and American slave trade and reached their high point in Nazi Germany, with extensive government resources being allocated to verify scientifically the superiority of the Aryan race. However, social scientists increasingly argued that we needed to put quotation marks around the word 'race' to indicate that we are dealing with a social construction of individuals and groups, rather than an established unproblematic scientific fact (Wetherell, 1996). This rejection of the scientific validity of the concept of race opened up the possibility of more sophisticated research designs examining how and why 'race' matters.

A substantial programme of research has been carried out based on standardized social surveys and tests with the acknowledgement in the United States and the UK in the 1970s that white racism was a serious social problem. 'Racism' can be said to refer to beliefs

and social practices that draw directly or indirectly on the conviction that there are racial groups which have distinct physical or cultural characteristics which are usually but not only defined in negative terms. Social scientists distinguished *racial prejudice*, which is hostile and negative attitudes towards minority races and ethnic groups, *racial stereotyping* and *racial discrimination*, defined as unjustified negative or harmful action towards minority races and ethnic groups. The conclusions were that racial prejudice and racial stereotyping premised upon notions of white superiority were widespread and pervasive in the United States and the UK. There was also evidence of racial discrimination across a variety of social and economic settings, and of *racial violence*, the most extreme form of discrimination.

Researchers realized that one problem with survey and questionnaire data was that it only provided information on the racism that people were willing to admit to. In addition, as a result of social changes, it became apparent that fewer people were willing to express overtly racist attitudes to researchers. This posed a key question: were white people becoming less prejudiced or were an increasing number of people much more knowing and therefore guarded about revealing their true sentiments on racial matters to researchers? Researchers concluded that subtle more flexible forms of racism had replaced the old-fashioned racism expressed by previous generations of respondents (McConahay et al., 1981). This is likely to be the case because in several countries the direct expression of racist views has been outlawed.

One of the key proponents of this argument is US social psychologist David Sears (see Sears, 1988; Sears et al., 1999). His work on the new racism describes a more elusive, abstract symbolic language of race that avoids blatantly negative racist statements in favour of political code words and symbols. This new racism being expressed is partly based on a view of racial discrimination as being outdated and puts the onus of achievement and equality on blacks and other minority groups.

ANTI-RACISM RESEARCH

The new racism asserts that it is black people's own deficiencies that are the cause of their problems, not the history of slavery segregation, discrimination, prejudice and racism that is assumed to have come to an end. The new racism is thought to be most obvious in white people's views on affirmative action and various social problems. Conversations on these topics are often framed by an unspoken subtext of racist attitudes and negative associations. Researchers have devised sophisticated modern racial prejudice scales to examine various covert forms of contemporary racism (see Sears et al., 1999; see also Bobo, 1999; Dovidio and Gaertner, 1998). Wetherell and Potter (1992) have argued that the modern racism approach in social psychology is limited by its dependence on the prejudicial model of racism. They argue that racism should not be narrowly equated with a particular psychological complex of feelings, thoughts and motives. Their interviews focused on how the taken-for-granted discourse of white New Zealanders rationalizes and justifies Maori disadvantage, how inequality is normalized and rendered unproblematic and conflicts subdued.

Sociologists, suspicious of the psychologizing of racism, have undertaken ethnographic case studies of community attitudes towards race or have accidentally uncovered everyday talk about race to be a central issue in the course of research. Some of the most interesting if controversial sociological studies have involved research on white racists groups (see Blee, 2002). A substantial body of sociological research findings also exists on the media and racism. Research on race and the news media, for understandable reasons, tends to concentrate on studying how visible ethnic minorities are negatively portrayed and crudely stereotyped by white-controlled media organizations. A particular focus is analysing the discourses used by sections of the news media to racialize public debate about law and order and other social problems (Law, 2002). The possibilities for researching media and racism have increased dramatically with the development of the Internet.

A separate sociological research programme has focused on analysing official data to identify racial and ethnic inequalities, most noticeably in the labour market, government agencies, housing, education, the media and criminal justice. This has concentrated minds on structural and systemic rather than individual and group dimensions of racism. In the UK context this debate received renewed focus as a result of the conclusion of the judicial inquiry into the murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence that the murder investigation was hindered by 'institutionalized racism' within the Metropolitan Police (see Macpherson, 1999). Originally coined in 1967 by the US Black Panther Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, the inquiry defined institutional racism as: 'the collective failure of an organization to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people' (Macpherson, 1999: 28). This finding has provided a challenge to social scientists to develop the methodological tools to research the British government's programme of action to identify and eradicate 'institutional racism'. Given the nature of the Macpherson inquiry, it is not surprising that a considerable focus of research is on the rules, procedures and guidelines that produce discriminatory outcomes in the criminal justice system.

Evaluation

Contemporary racism takes a bewildering variety of forms and is spawning a new generation of research questions that require a rethinking of conventional methodologies. This is also generating critical writings on the ethical dilemmas associated with the *doing* of anti-racism research (Twine and Warren, 2000). Researchers need, for example, to work through how their racial and ethnic backgrounds influence the analytical lens through which they view their research subjects. There are also 'who's side are we

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on?' questions and the temptation to expose the views of racist respondents to advance a particular political agenda. Finally, there is the controversial question of whose racism is researched? To date the primary focus has been on the racism of lower socio-economic white groups. Researching institutional racism will require, amongst other things, accessing powerful government agencies and multinational corporations. In addition, there is also a lack of research on what we might describe as the rationales and dynamics of non-white racism.

Eugene McLaughlin

Associated Concepts: critical research, discourse analysis, discursive psychology, emancipatory research, Internet research, media analysis, official statistics, politics and social research

Key Readings

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APPLIED RESEARCH

Definition

Research that focuses on the *use* of knowledge rather than the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. A motivation behind applied research is to engage with people, organizations or interests beyond the academic discipline and for knowledge to be useful outside the context in which it was generated.

Distinctive Features

This engagement with the 'outside world' (for example, government departments, commercial organizations, pressure groups) gives applied research some distinctive characteristics. Bickman and Rog (1998), for example, argue that basic and applied research differ in purposes, context and methods. Although the differences are presented in dichotomous terms, the authors suggest that in reality they should be seen as continua. The differences of *purpose* can be described in terms of the goals of knowledge production. For the basic researcher the production of knowledge is an end in itself whereas for the applied researcher knowledge is used to further other ends or goals. For example, a basic researcher might be interested in understanding how

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customers make purchasing decisions with no other concern than the process of decision making itself. An applied researcher might be interested in the same kind of behaviour but be primarily concerned with how the findings of the research could be used, say, to increase the sale of certain commodities.

This points to an important difference in the *context* of applied and basic research. Applied research is often initiated by someone other than the researcher (it could be a government department, a pressure group or a commercial organization). Basic research, in contrast, is more often than not conducted by the person(s) who formulated the topic or research question in the first place. Where research is 'other initiated', the researcher may have less control over various aspects of the research process (for example, the design of the study, its scope and timeframe and, perhaps, whether the results will be made publicly available). Where research is 'self-initiated' there is greater opportunity to 'set one's own agenda' and be less constrained about how the research is managed and conducted. Even so, the standard conditions attaching to externally funded projects mean that basic researchers are also subject to a number of 'other-initiated' requirements (for example, compliance with ethical guidelines)

There are no specific research *methods* associated with either basic or applied research, but Bickman and Rog (1998) suggest that applied researchers are more likely to pay greater attention to issues of external validity. This does not imply a lack of attention to internal validity on the part of applied researchers; it is simply a matter of usefulness. Applied researchers will want to show that their results can be used to address a problem or issue in the 'real world'.

Evaluation

Different social science disciplines have engaged in applied research with different levels of enthusiasm. Some, like economics, have established a close relationship between the development of theory, techniques of measurement and statistical analysis in order to explain the workings of the economy (and

other economic phenomena) which frequently inform government decision makers. Outside government, university-based economists, have a long-standing reputation for their forecasts on economic growth (Begg and Henry, 1998).

Psychology, too, has always recognized the practical application of its knowledge base. In World War II psychological assessment techniques were used to recruit pilots, and after the war returning members of the armed forces brought home emotional problems which were managed by a growing number of clinical psychologists. Today, the discipline of psychology has become institutionalized as a professional activity with a variety of applied specialisms, such as clinical, educational, forensic and industrial. Each specialism has its own conferences and peer-reviewed journals under the umbrella of the relevant national association for example, the American Psychological Association and the British Psychological Society.

Sociology, in contrast, has been slower to develop as a form of practice, though this is perhaps more the case in the UK than the United States. Even in the US, however, the President of the American Sociological Association opened his 1980 presidential address with the remark that 'the stance of our profession toward applied work ... has been one of considerable ambivalence' (Rossi, 1980: 890). Various explanations have been put forward for this stance. The 'opt out' view argues that sociologists have always seen their discipline primarily as a form of scholarship in which the subject is seen as an accumulation of literature to be learned, debated and developed. As such, sociologists have not been concerned to promote or advertise their work to others. The result, Martin Albrow has suggested, is that sociology has become something of a 'subterranean mystery' (Albrow, 2000); a craft rather than a profession. The 'sell out' view argues that sociology's identity is borne out of radicalism. The 'debunking motif' inherent in some views of the sociological enterprise has meant that sociologists have been reluctant to become embroiled in applied research because this would entail an endorsement of existing power structures

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and would turn sociologists into state-funded 'apparatchiks'.

These 'anti-applied' views are not completely dominant, however. A volume of essays published by the British Sociological Association called for an 'active sociology' (Payne and Cross, 1991). Its editors argued that no academic discipline can afford to become too introspective or passive towards the world outside academia. What is required, they say, is 'an applied sociology ... [which] ... will be an active participative sociology which engages with society' (1991: 2).

John Newton

Associated Concepts: action research, critical research, econometrics, evaluation research, emancipatory research, policy-related research, politics and social research, practitioner research

Key Readings

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AREA SAMPLING

Definition

A form of sampling in which the clusters that are selected are drawn from maps rather than

listings of individuals, groups, institutions or whatever. Sometimes a further sub-sample is taken in which case the phrase multi-stage sampling is used.

Distinctive Features

With area sampling, data are collected from or about all individuals, households or other units within the selected geographical areas. Area sampling is sometimes referred to as block sampling, especially in the United States. It is also a form of cluster sampling.

Evaluation

Area sampling is used a great deal in countries where there are no adequate population lists, which are replaced instead by maps. However, the boundaries on such maps must be clearly defined and recognizable, both at the stage of sampling and at the stage of data collection. This form of sampling is not appropriate where the aim of the research is to follow a cohort of individuals over time because of the population changes within the areas that have been selected in the sample.

Victor Jupp

Associated Concepts: cluster sampling, cohort study, cross-sectional survey, longitudinal study, sampling, social survey

Key Reading

- Moser, C. A. and Kalton, G. (1971) *Survey Methods in Social Investigation*. London: Heinemann.

ATLAS.TI

Definition

One of a number of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) programs designed to facilitate the management and analysis of qualitative data. It was

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originally developed as an exercise to support grounded theorizing.

Distinctive Features

Like all CAQDAS programs, Atlas.ti is a tool for facilitating analysis rather than a method in itself and therefore can feasibly be used to support a number of methodological or theoretical approaches. It supports the management and analysis of textual, audio and visual data and enables the creation of (semantic) networks to facilitate theory building processes.

As well as the code and retrieve, organizational (for example, demographic variables) and search (for example, Boolean, Proximity etc.) tools available in most CAQDAS programs, Atlas.ti provides a number of additional tools which increase flexibility and facilitate analytic development.

The code margin view is fully interactive, enabling codes and memos to be easily and quickly accessed, edited, merged, replaced and linked. Not only can codes be grouped into (for example, theoretical) families, but the new Super Families tool enables additional hierarchical collections to be created and a particular code can belong to any number of families. The Autocoding tools are also particularly flexible.

In addition to being able to directly code multi-media data, objects (for example, Excel, PowerPoint) can be embedded into rich text format (rtf.) files. These objects can then be edited in-context as the functionality of the corresponding application becomes available within Atlas.ti.

The Networking tool is extremely versatile, allowing quotations (segments of text), codes, documents and memos to be linked to each other in a variety of ways. It is also possible to create hyperlinks between quotations to, for example, track a story or sequence of events within or between data files. As a presentation tool, the Networking facility is flexible, allowing, for example, quotations to be displayed as illustrations of research findings or theoretical processes to be visualized.

The Query tool allows both simple and sophisticated interrogation of the data set.

Searches can be filtered in a variety of ways and the Supercode tool allows search expressions to be easily saved and re-run. Some of the more sophisticated search operators are based on the nature of links between codes.

A number of tools facilitate the organization and management of team projects. These include a tool to merge projects, a facility allowing shared data to be accessed by several projects ('Hermeneutic Units'), support for East Asian and right-to-left languages, easy ways to back up and move projects and XML project export.

Atlas.ti also enables the integration of quantitative and qualitative aspects of projects offering a flexible word count facility, the results of which can easily be exported to statistical or spreadsheet packages. It is also possible to import (and export) demographic information.

Evaluation

The evaluation of any CAQDAS package must take into consideration a number of factors – such as methodology, theoretical approach, type of data, size of data set, project aims and requirements. Therefore certain packages may be particularly useful for certain types of studies and researchers are advised to investigate the various options before choosing.

Atlas.ti is clearly amongst the more sophisticated options available, offering a variety of powerful and flexible means by which to explore, work with and interrogate qualitative data. As such, it enables analysis to go beyond code and retrieve processes.

Perhaps its most frequently cited advantage is that, in comparison to other CAQDAS software, Atlas.ti keeps the researcher very 'close' to the data. For instance, when navigating around coded data, if required, quotations will be illustrated in their source context – allowing easy in-context re-coding. Atlas.ti is therefore often seen by researchers as particularly well suited for 'grounded' approaches to qualitative analysis.

Atlas.ti is a multi-faceted software and the user may employ only a small proportion of the tools available for any given project. Its size and flexibility are both its advantage and

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its disadvantage. It can be used easily at a basic level but possibly needs a more experienced and confident researcher to make innovative use of specific tools for investigating and representing complex relationships.

Christina Silver

Associated Concepts: CAQDAS, coding, The Ethnograph, grounded theory, NUD*IST, qualitative research, QSR NVivo

Key Readings

- Atlas.ti website <http://www.atlasti.de/>
 CAQDAS Networking Project website <http://caqdas.soc.surrey.ac.uk/>
 Coffey, A., Holbrook, B. and Atkinson P. (1996) 'Qualitative data analysis: technologies and representations', *Sociological Research Online*, 1 (1).
 Fielding, N. and Lee, R. (eds) (1991, 2nd edn 1993) *Using Computers in Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.
 Kelle, U. (ed.) (1995) *Computer-Aided Qualitative Data Analysis: Theory Methods and Practice*. London: Sage.
 Lewins, A. (2001) 'CAQDAS: Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis', in N. Gilbert, *Researching Social Life*, 2nd edn. London, Sage. pp. 302-23.
 Weitzman, E. and Miles, M. (1995) *A Software Source Book: Computer Programs for Qualitative Data Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

occurs in longitudinal research when the subjects studied drop out of the research for a variety of reasons, which can include: unwillingness of subjects to continue to participate in research, difficulties in tracing original respondents for follow-up (for example, because of change of address) and non-availability for other reasons (for example, death, serious illness). A survey of major longitudinal studies in the United States found that the average attrition rate was 17 per cent (Capaldi and Patterson, 1987, cited in Sapsford and Jupp, 1996). Therefore, quite a lot of cases may be lost.

A second sense of attrition relates to the loss of data from secondary sources in the process of collection. A commonly used example is the case of crime statistics, which are the end product of processes of decisions by victims to report crimes to the police, police decisions about recording and decisions by various agencies in the criminal justice process which may or may not result in prosecution, conviction and the imposition of a particular sentence. Using the British Crime Survey (BCS) (a random household survey of criminal victimization) as a base line, it is estimated that only 45 per cent of the crimes recorded by BCS are reported to the police, only 24 per cent are recorded as crimes, 2 per cent result in a conviction and 0.3 per cent result in a prison sentence (Home Office, 1999). Thus there is a considerable loss of data between the base source and subsequent measures.

ATTRITION

Definition

The 'wearing away' or progressive loss of data in research.

Distinctive Features

Attrition occurs when cases are lost from a sample over time or over a series of sequential processes. One form of sample attrition

Evaluation

The problem of attrition is not merely the problem of a reduction in sample size but, more importantly, it raises the possibility of bias. Those who 'drop out' may have particular characteristics relevant to the research aims (for examples, see Sapsford and Jupp, 1996: 9). The same point applies to the crime statistics example: certain crimes may be less likely to be reported, recorded or result in a conviction. For example, Kelly (2000), reviewing studies of attrition in rape cases, found that fewer than 1 per cent of these cases

AUDITING

result in conviction. Researchers thus need to be aware of the problem of attrition and the threats to representativeness that can result.

Maggie Sumner

Associated Concepts: bias, cohort study, longitudinal study, official statistics

Key Readings

- Capaldi, D. and Patterson, G. R. (1987) 'An approach to the problem of recruitment and retention rates for longitudinal research', *Behavioural Assessment*, 9: 169-77.
- Home Office (1999) *Digest 4: Information on the Criminal Justice System in England and Wales*. London: Home Office.
- Kelly, L. (2000) 'A war of attrition: recent research on rape', *Trouble and Strife*, 40 (<http://www.cwasu.org/warattrition1.htm>).
- Nathan, G. (1999) 'A review of sample attrition and representativeness in three longitudinal surveys', *Government Statistical Service Methodology*, Series No. 13. London: Government Statistical Service.
- Sapsford, R. and Jupp, V. (1996) *Data Collection and Analysis*. London: Sage.

Also, a form of evaluation called programme and performance auditing is routinely performed at state and national levels. As defined by the Comptroller General of the United States (US GAO, 1994), a performance audit is 'an objective and systematic examination of evidence ... of the performance of a government organization, program, activity, or function in order to provide information to improve public accountability and facilitate decision-making'. A programme audit is a sub-category of performance auditing in which a key objective is to determine whether programme results or benefits established by the legislature or other authorizing bodies are being achieved. Evaluators of social programmes and performance auditors share a professional interest in establishing their independence and warranting the credibility of their judgements.

Second, an auditing procedure has been suggested as a means to verify the dependability and confirmability of claims made in a qualitative study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Schwandt and Halpern, 1988). A researcher is advised to maintain an audit trail of evidence documenting the data, processes and product (claims) of the inquiry. A third-party inquirer then examines that the audit trail can attest to the appropriateness, integrity and dependability of the inquiry process and also the extent to which claims made are reasonably grounded in the data.

Third, auditing has entered the scene of social science theory. At issue is the proliferation of audit practices in all spheres of human activity - management, education, social services, healthcare and so forth - influenced largely by the ideology of New Public Management (NPM). NPM emphasizes a programmatic restructuring of organizational life and a rationality based on performance standards, accountability and monitoring. By being submitted to formal audit procedures the work of organizations is held to be more transparent and accountable.

Evaluation

Whether auditing and evaluation are (or ought to be) comfortable bedfellows can be

AUDITING

Definition

A procedure whereby an independent third party systematically examines the evidence of adherence of some practice to a set of norms or standards for that practice and issues a professional opinion.

Distinctive Features

The concept and practice of auditing is manifest in several ways in the social sciences. First, in social programme evaluation, the general idea of auditing has informed the process of meta-evaluation - a third-party evaluator examines the quality of a completed evaluation against some set of standards for evaluation.

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debated. Some observers have argued that evaluation and performance auditing differ in the ways each conceives of and accomplishes the aim of assessing value. Some of the differences noted between the two practices include the following. First, auditors address normative questions (questions of what is, in light of what should be) while evaluators are more concerned with descriptive and impact questions. Second, auditors work more independently of the auditee than evaluators do with their clients. Third, auditors are more exclusively focused on management objectives, performance and controls than evaluators. Fourth, auditors work with techniques for generating evidence and analysing data that make it possible to provide quick feedback to auditees, while evaluations often (though not always) have a longer time frame. Fifth, although both auditors and evaluators base their judgements in evidence, not on impressions, and both rely on an extensive kit of tools and techniques for generating evidence, they often make use of those tools in different ways. Finally, auditors operate under statutory authority while evaluators work as fee-for-service consultants or as university-based researchers. Other observers have argued that the practices of auditing and evaluation, although they often exist independently of one another, are being blended together as a resource pool for decision makers and managers in both public and private organizations. In this circumstance, an amalgamated picture is emerging of professional objectives (for example, placing high value on independence; strict attention to documentation of evidence), purpose (for example, combining normative, descriptive and impact questions) and methodologies (for example, making use of a wide range of techniques).

A variety of criticisms based in empirical and conceptual investigations are directed at the audit society, audit culture, or the culture of accountability as the latest manifestation of the infiltration of technological, means-end and instrumental rationality into the forms of everyday life. Auditing is viewed as an example of a key characteristic of modernity – that is, the drive for efficiency, perfection, completion and

measurement that strongly shapes conceptions of knowledge, politics and ethics. For example, some scholars argue that auditing (and associated practices such as total quality management, performance indicators, league tables, results-oriented management, monitoring systems) is not simply a set of techniques but a system of values and goals that becomes inscribed in social practices thereby influencing the self-understanding of a practice and its role in society. Thus, to be audited, an organization (or practice like teaching or providing mental health care) must transform itself into an auditable commodity – auditing thus reshapes in its own image those organizations and practices which are monitored for performance (Power, 1997). Others argue that audit culture or society promotes the normative ideal that monitoring systems and accountability ought to replace the complex social-political processes entailed in the design and delivery of social and educational services and the inevitably messy give-and-take of human interactions. Still others contend that the growing influence of an audit culture contributes to the disappearance of the idea of *publicness* as traditional public service norms of citizenship, representation equality, accountability, impartiality, openness, responsiveness and justice are being marginalized or replaced by business norms like competitiveness, efficiency, productivity, profitability and consumer satisfaction.

Thomas A. Schwandt

Associated Concepts: applied research, cost-benefit analysis, critical research, evaluation research, meta-analysis, performance indicator, politics and social research, process mapping, secondary analysis, social indicators

Key Readings

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 Power, M. (1997) *The Audit Society: Rituals of Verification*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

Schwandt, T. A. and Halpern, E. S. (1988) *Linking Auditing and Metaevaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

US General Accounting Office (1994) *Government Auditing Standards*. Washington, DC: US General Accounting Office.

Wisler, C. (ed.) (1996) 'Evaluation and auditing: prospects for convergence', *New Directions for Evaluation*, No. 71. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

Definition

A form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context. It includes methods of research and writing that combine autobiography and ethnography. The term has a dual sense and can refer either to the ethnographic study of one's own group(s) or to autobiographical reflections that include ethnographic observations and analysis.

Distinctive Features

In autoethnography there is both self-reference and reference to culture. It is a method that combines features of life history and ethnography. The term autoethnography has been used both by qualitative researchers in the social sciences, who emphasize the connections between ethnography and autobiography, and by literary critics who are mainly concerned with the voices of ethnic autobiographers. Autoethnography can be associated with forms of the following: first, native anthropology or self-ethnography - in which those who previously were the objects of anthropological inquiry come to undertake ethnographic research themselves on their own ethnic or cultural group; second, ethnic autobiography - in which autobiographers emphasize their ethnic identity and ethnic origins in their life narrative; and third, autobiographical ethnography - a reflexive approach in which ethnographers analyse

their own subjectivity and life experiences (usually within the context of fieldwork). For literary critic Mary Louise Pratt (1992), autoethnography is a mode of self-and group representation on the part of colonial or post-colonial subjects that is informed by representations of them by others who are more dominant. In literary theory, autoethnography is frequently viewed as a form of counter-narrative.

Memoirs, life histories and other forms of self-representation are analysed as autoethnographies when they deal with topics such as transnationalism, biculturalism or other forms of border crossing, and local cultural practices. Ethnographers make use of such texts to explore these issues in the context of life experiences and cultural constructions of these. Ethnographers have also adopted the term autoethnography to label forms of self-reflexivity. For example, Arthur Bochner and Carolyn Ellis (2002) are sociologists who advocate an 'emotional sociology' that incorporates personal narrative as a method to avoid the objectification of more scientific methods of research by erasing boundaries between the self of the researcher and that of the researched. Anthropologists such as Reed-Danahay (1997) use the concept of autoethnography to analyse the uses of self-writing among anthropologists and among 'natives'.

Evaluation

Autoethnography, as a method of research and writing, requires reflective and critical approaches to understandings of social and cultural life and the relationship between the self and the social. Autoethnographic texts are most compelling when they synthesize objective (outsider) and subjective (insider) points of view, rather than privileging the latter. Because there is such a wide range of work currently labelled 'autoethnography', ranging from creative nonfiction to ethnic autobiography to the testimonials of postcolonial subjects, the task of evaluation is challenging and depends in large part on the intent of the writer/researcher. Questions are frequently raised about authenticity and voice in such

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texts, regarding the authority of the speaker. Personal accounts of fieldwork are, for example, often used to evoke the 'ethnographic authority' (Clifford, 1983) of the ethnographer. Autoethnography calls attention to issues of power, and can be most effective when it foregrounds the complex and nuanced relationships between researcher and researched, dominant and subordinate, in the context of individual experience and socio-cultural structures of beliefs and control.

As a method, autoethnography is frequently contrasted to 'objective' scientific or positivist methods that call for the researcher to set him- or herself apart from the object(s) of research. In ethnography, this would require a stance of distance from the self, from those who are being studied and from the social contexts of the research situation. Those who advocate an autoethnographic approach argue that reflexivity about oneself and about the research situation, that is, being aware of one's position in the context of research rather than denying it, is vital to a full understanding and is not completely at odds with forms of 'truth' or validity. Although there are variations in the degree to which autoethnographers emphasize their own experience or that of the ethnographic

context, this form of research and writing is critically evaluated on the basis of how well it synthesizes the subjective experience of participant(s) in social and cultural life and the structural conditions in which their lives take place.

Deborah Reed-Danahay

Associated Concepts: cultural research, ethnography, intellectual craftsmanship, life history interviewing, oral history, reflexivity

Key Readings

- Bochner, A. P. and Ellis, C. (eds) (2002) *Ethnographically Speaking: Autoethnography, Literature, and Aesthetics*. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.
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