tion was so mistaken in its framing that there is nothing to be gained from pursuing it further. Researchers should consider the many ways in which a surprising result may be useful. Does it illuminate a larger theoretical debate? Is it a case of someone’s pet theory slipping up under unexpected cir-
cumstances? Of the common wisdom being overturned? Of an unexpected application of a literature not considered in the original research proposal?

Researchers may become convinced in the course of field work that they are testing the wrong hypotheses. The theoretical literature on which the research proposal was based may have been out of date, not attuned to realities on the ground in a particular field site, or otherwise inapplicable. The researcher may have made an informed and intelligent but nev-
ertheless wrong guess about a particular political dynamic under investigation. Under most circumstances, it is a simple matter even in the midst of field work to come up with new hypotheses that seem more reasonable, and with new ways to test them. If the problem is discovered at the very last moment and there is no way to go back to the field or get more information remotely, a more radical change in research strategy may be necessary. But these occurrences are rare when researchers are diligent about prioritizing their data col-
lection needs and testing data as it comes in, and reassessing progress periodically.

The most disheartening moment for many field researchers is that moment when they fear that the very research question they have been preparing to answer is misguided. I believe that this moment is almost inevitable. Good field re-
search involves observing the often inexact fit between theore-
ties and facts on the ground. Theories often reflect ide-
tal, white real places are the "cases" that force us to update underlying assumptions and think about theory in new ways as one interacts with sources and data. In and of itself, this inexact fit between theory and data should not be a cause for concern. The real problem is the wrong question to be asking under the circumstances, in the most extreme cases a project may need to be fundamentally re-
thought. Often, relatively minor adjustments to the re-
search question will lead to a change.

There are other less profound, and probably more com-
mon, reasons why a research topic may come to seem irre-
levant or uninteresting. By including a cyclic or quickening exams cause a long period of time to lapse between the initial con-
ception of a research agenda and its execution on the ground, very topical research may come to seem less relevant. It is wise to consider this potential consequence when planning a research topic from obscurity, particularly if it is related to very current events. In the field, it may be necessary to take a more histori-
cal view, or link up to a different set of theoretical issues if a topic once thought to be cutting edge is beginning to fade. Researchers should also expect to confront periods of boredom with a ma-
or research project — periods when any topic other than the one at hand seems more compelling. When this happens, it may be helpful to form group proposal, dis-
semination prospects or the like to remind oneself of the theo-
retical, substantive, and/or normative motivations driving the project.

Most research projects do evolve over the course of time spent in the field, in response to data limitations, new informa-
tion, a changing political environment on the ground, and the literature present in a field of study. A re-articulation of theory that characterizes life in the field. Before making any major changes in a research agenda, though, I suggest soliciting input from an intellectual support network consisting of col-
leagues, collaborators, and/or advisors. An intellectual support network in field work, when researchers become steeped in on-the-ground un-
derstandings of a problem, it is easy to become overwhelmed with empirical detail and lose theoretical focus. An intellectual support network can help researchers maintain a sense of the forest during periods when trees are likely to dominate the landscape.

Solid Input
The diminishing cost and increasing ease of staying in contact with "home base" (via email or phone) while in the field may make it feasible to maintain contact through short trips on the order of one to two trips a year. If one suspects that there may be a lack of communication, it is possible to contact colleagues by email to verify that they are not feeling isolated. One can justify it for a single, short trip to contact colleagues to check in and discuss the status of the project. This seemingly simple piece of advice is difficult to follow in practice. A few concrete suggestions are in order. First, keep track of data collection priorities, digest incoming data regularly, and keep an up-to-date "to do" list. When sources begin to repeat themselves — when you’ve heard or read the same thing three times and you believe it to be accu-
rate — it’s time to move on. Only if the claim being made is highly controversial would more supporting evidence be necessary. Second, I advise you to take breaks from your research during your time off. If during your research the field there is an opportu-
unity to do something other than attach questions to another, it pays to map out an outline to try to fill data requirements for several research projects at once. If you find yourself with extra time in the field after all of your data needs have been met, resist the urge to gather more. Spend the time digesting what you have more thoroughly, or better yet, begin writing up your results.

The perils of gathering too much data are real, and under-
appreciated by most researchers. For those on a tight budget, it is easier to assume that getting data back home is expensive, particularly in paper form. Thoroughly digested data, on the other hand, weigh less! In addition to being expensive, ship-
ping masses of unneeded data back home can seriously de-
lay barriers beginning the write-up phase, a time that must be de-
ved to reading, digesting, and organizing.

Few researchers actually gather every piece of informa-
tion they think a single piece of advice is difficult to follow in practice. A few concrete suggestions are in order. First, keep track of data collection priorities, digest incoming data regularly, and keep an up-to-date "to do" list. When sources begin to repeat themselves — when you’ve heard or read the same thing three times and you believe it to be accu-
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Symposium: Discourse and Content Analysis

Yoshiiko M. Herrera
Harvard University
herrera@fas.harvard.edu

Bear F. Braumoeller
Harvard University
bbraumoeller@fas.harvard.edu

This symposium grew out of our own interests in content analy-
sis (CA), discourse analysis (DA), and the diverse epistemolo-

gical and methodological issues that a comparison of the two 

and CA can provide. When John Gerring raised the possibility of a sympo-
sium on the subject for this newsletter, therefore, we were in-
trigued by the possibilities. We took the opportunity to do what, in our opinion, is the very best empirical and theoretical con-
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troller and CA.
the two methods, Hardy et al. come around to arguing that actually there can look like two methods, and then they outline possibilities for overlap in Table 2. Similarly, in making the case for stating the assumptions behind content analysis, Lowe points out that doing so is important because it can be seen as something (because we can’t, or pretend that we don’t have any) and because if assumptions are made explicit they can then be relaxed to fit particular research circumstances. One could apply this principle to aspects of methodological assumptions toward different research goals in particular. DA is fundamentally concerned with power relations and the获悉的 of the meaning of language, both of which are outside the horizon of content analysis.

As this initial summary of the comparisons of discourse and content analysis suggests, there was some disagreement on not just the definitions of discourse and content analysis, but also definitions of discourse itself. Although the latter does not matter, the definition of language and text, as well as the related concept of practice, Laffey and Welsby provide a definition of discourse as the structures and practices that are used to construct meaning in the world. They also argue that discourse is "the content and construction of meaning and the organization of knowledge in a particular realm." These definitions are remarkably unlike Lowe’s definition of discourse as a "practically" or in other words, a "theory of what is more or likely to be said, and of what the conceptual elements are that generate and constrain these possibilities." There is no mention of discourse as the result of practice, and Laffey and Welsby are particular discourse practices and structures make certain representations possible; one could reasonably ask whether for what practitioners of DA understand as "conditions of possibility" of cognitive practices might rather than simply resonate with the idea of a "constructivist" view of how discourse functions in the world.

Laffey and Welsby emphasize that discourse is not just a particular collection of words, but a constitutive set of structures and practices that do not merely reflect thoughts or realities, but rather structure and constitute these—and the second is causal, but from a methodological point of view it alone matters whether the empirical implications are the same, and in this case, they seem to be.

Another way of thinking about the definition of discourse is to inquire about the meaning of language; this issue was raised by Fiske, as well as by Neusendorf and Laffey and Welsby. Language simply a reflection of power (subjective or objective), or is it a part of language itself constitutive of reality? Fiske argues that in the former ontology is separate from epistemology, whereas in the latter they are connected because the way one comes to know the world determines what that world is, at least from the point of view of theory. The discussion of competing definitions and compatibility of discourse and content analysis raised several other deep questions that arise out of or inform these discussions. The first is the issue of how to understand the relationship between epistemology, ontology, and methodology; in other words, which are the constitutive elements of CA as a whole. In this paper, Neusendorf and CA, suggests how the two can be complementary. Laffey and Welsby, however, argue more strongly than some of the others that, although there are several superficial similarities in technique, DA and CA are oriented toward different research goals in particular. DA is fundamentally concerned with power relations and the获悉 of the meaning of language, both of which are outside the horizon of content analysis.

Ontology, Epistemology, and Methodology Issues of fundamentally different ontologies and epistemologies arise often. This issue famously informed Friedrich Kratochwil and John Gerard Ruggie’s (1986) critique of regime analysis, namely, that the (positivist) epistemology of regime analysis fundamentally contradicted the (intersubjective) ontology of regimes themselves. The basic issue was that “the different approaches construct the social world differently—just as Neusendorf argues for the methodological and ontological positions, to wit: Can methodology be separated from epistemology and ontology, and if so, does one come first, or is one deterministic of the other? In the specific context of discourse analysis a particular question: determining what is to know. Lowe, paraphrasing Alexander Wendt, argues that methodology underdetermines epistemology—in other words, the methods we use do not solely determine what we can know. Obviously, Laffey and Welsby, and as well, are not convinced that methodology can be separated entirely from epistemology. However, the debate in this context raises a somewhat different question: determining the extent to which a method is useful. The question here is whether the particular methodologies are useful in solving real-world, practical problems. One reason to be interested in the combination of methods is that they are often combined in practice, and that the combination of methods is useful in solving real-world, practical problems.

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paruse the sets of relationships described by DA into formal statistical terms producing algorithmic thought experiments. For example, Lafey and Welles describe discourses as "sets of rules that both enable practices and are reproduced and/or transformed by them." The statement that rules enable prac-
tices would seem only to eliminate the possibility of certain prac-
tices in the absence of certain rules, not to make any predictions about the frequency of those practices in their presence. The reproduction and transformation of prac-tices would suggest seriously and possibly inscrutable endogeneity issues: error terms in time-series models with multiple dependent variables are rather complex—some, for example, incorporate multiple separate error terms to capture different sources of unexplained variation (e.g., contemporaneous shocks). The transformation of rules, moreover, sug-gest either that the relationship between rules and practices is not constant over time or that it is contingent upon some additional, unspecified factor. Despite the simplicity of the initial formulation, therefore, the associated statistical specifici-fication would have to be highly sophisticated in order to coun-
tact a variety of threats to inference. These threats are no less present in qualitative analysis, of course. Moreover, some elements common to both kinds of analysis are given dramati-
cally different interpretations by the consortium: whereas Lowe comments on time-series models as a "one-dimensional model," Hof argues that one of the attributes of DA is that it specifically directs attention to absences and anomalies—phenomena most likely ignored or relegated to the error term in a probabilis-tic model. While it is true that the nonquantified data will ever exist, constructing quantitative models of the pro-
cesses described byQualitative Methodologists might be a useful exercise: qualitative analysis could be made aware of structural possibilities that the nonstatistician and quanti-
tative analysts might begin to produce methods that more closely capture the kinds of processes common to DA re-
search.

The role of the analyst, while central to the issue of sub-
jectivity, may also be a place for overlap between DA and CA. Crawford notes that DA requires many choices on the part of the analyst, especially regarding the limits of the discourse. Indeed, the boundaries of the discourse, or the object of study, for those engaged in discourse analysis is not clearly and externally delineated. Hof argues that DA in fact assumes an "open social system," in the sense that there are overlapping webs of meaning with no obvious starting or end points of analysis. But despite the implicit goal of most statistical tech-
niques to minimize the role of the researcher, it is also the case that any type of quantitative analysis, including CA, requires the analyst to make choices about the limits of what is or is not included in a model or data set. These choices matter substantially in the process of extracting meaning from text, regardless of the method used.

Indeed, given the necessity of scholarly understanding of a subject, even for CA, it is interesting to ask whether it is even possible, except in the crudest and most mindless ways, to do CA without some level of interpretive activity. Nevertheless, Hof argues that one needs to do some DA before CA, in order to come up with coding guidelines, but one can push the ques-
tion further to ask if DA and CA are inseparable or if there is an ordering in which one should come first. Another point of considera-
tion is to what extent one can use CA techniques (methods) within discourse analysis or vice versa, i.e., DA methods within CA or positivist meth-
oodology. The contributors are split on these questions: Some argue that the methods can be used together or in a hybrid form, whereas others disagree.

Finally, the question of positivism and social scientific method-
ology raises the issue of how both CA and DA address the concepts of replication and validity. Neesander argues that DA is more concerned with the hierarchy of evidence on reliability; others see less of a distinction in this regard. Lowe addresses this issue for CA, while Crawford makes the case that DA can be both rigorous and attential to replication and validity issues. Hof agrees with Crawford with regard to scientific rigor, validity and replicability and refuses to con-
clude science to either positivism or CA, arguing instead that DA can be used to generate theories and test hypotheses in a scientific manner.

Change and Timeframes of Analysis

A third set of questions that this symposium has raised is to do with the time and space involved in change over time as well as the appropriate timeframes of analyses. The issue of change over time is not unrelated to the earlier issue of ontological position: can reality be taken as fixed or is there a real distinction between a potential and an actual state? If one does not acknowledge that reality changes, the question is whether analysis of reality requires a constantly dynamic model—and, if so, whether the parameters of such a model can even be taken to be fixed. Lafey and Welles suggest that attention to change over time is one difference between DA and CA, with DA being attentive to fluidity in meanings while CA assumes a static conception of reality; Frieke argues that this distinc-
tion may be "too stark." Moreover, while there may be differences in the choices that researchers make regarding this issue, it is clear that both DA and CA must nevertheless at some point posit enough reality to be able to acknowledge (with some baggage that cannot be removed, for example, the extent that DA is interested in the construction of meaning, presumably the set of relevant meanings changes from one particular state to some other state; how else but by capturing meanings at mul-
tiple points in time can one claim that meanings have been constructed or changed? Thus, beyond the ontological dif-
ference, the difference in attention to the fluidity or reality or meanings may be a matter of emphasis rather than a substi-
tutive difference between DA and CA.

A second way in which DA and CA differ with regard to time, however, is the timeframe: whereas with a CA timeframe for each bit of data is rel-
tively constant, as Crawford points out, in DA the researcher must "extend the time frame"—that is, investigate where the "beliefs" or ideas came from and how they changed, rather than just accepting them as they are at a particular time. This

tracing of individual elements of an argument to different pe-
riods of time seems to be more common in DA than CA, but one could imagine adapting CA methods to accommodate this concern.

Power

The last issue to consider in the difference between DA and CA is the way that each addresses issues of power and hierar-
chy, in which ways sociopolitical structures constrain, produce systems of meanings is a fundamental concern of DA. Lafey and Welles" concept of interpretation specifically addresses this through the investigation of sub-
ject positions in terms of contracted and expanded hierarchies, more so than in outlining DA methodology. Crawford argues that research-
ers must identify specific beliefs of dominant actors for a par-
ticular context. All other contributors to the DA discussion similarly note the importance of power considerations in DA. This concern should be acknowledged as a core contribution of DA, but we may still question whether power is exclusively the concern of DA, or whether power considerations could be interesting in CA and other types of qualitative or quantitative methods.

Conclusion

It is clear, by virtue of their detailed responses to our unstruc-
tured initial query, that many of our contributors have thought quite a bit about the questions of the fundamental natures of CA and DA and which relationships might exist between them. We are happy to be able to offer their collected thoughts on the subject in the hopes that they will enlighten, provoke, and produce further discussion.

Fondnotes

1 We are grateful to Karin Frieke, Will Lowe, and Jutta Welles for comments on an earlier draft. Errors of fact or interpretation remain our own.

2 When faced with the prospect of rendering the kinds of statements about the world that DA produces in statistical terms, one might reasonably wonder what the point of such an exercise would be. There are, we think, two answers. The first, simply, is to permit generalization from a representative sample to a larger population. The second, elaborated below, is to take advantage of a substantial statistical literature on threats to inference, many of which might very well apply across methods.

References


Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is a methodology for analyzing social phenom-
ena that is qualitative, interpretative and contextual. It explores how the socially produced ideas and objects that populate the world were created and held in place. It not only embodies a set of techniques for conducting structured, qualitative investigations of texts, but also a set of assumptions concerning the constructive effects of language (Burr-
man & Parker, 1993). Discourse analysis differs from other qualitative methodologies that try to understand the meaning of social reality (e.g., Grene, 1973) in that it endeavors to uncover the way in which reality was produced.

Discourse analysis also presupposes that it is impos-
sible to strip discourse from its broader context (Fairclough, 1995). Discourses have no inherent meaning in themselves and, to understand their constructive effects, researchers must
locate them historically and socially. The meanings of any discourse are "created, supported, and contested through the production, dissemination, and consumption of texts; and emanate from interactions between the social groups and the complex societal structures in which the discourse is embedded" (Halliday, 1999).

Discourse analysis is thus more than a method: it is a methodology (Wood & Kroger, 2001) based on two primary assumptions. First, discourse analysis is founded on a strong social constructivist premise - that human meaning is not something that we uncover, but something that we actively create through meaningful interaction. The study of the social thus becomes the study of how the objects and concepts that populate social reality come into being (Phillips, Lawrenson & Hardy, forthcoming).

Second, discourse analysis grows out of the belief that meaning - still hence social reality, arise out of interrelated bodies of texts - called discourses - that bring new ideas, objects and practices into the world. For example, the discourse of strategy has introduced a series of new management practices over the last fifty years (Knights & Morgan, 1991); the postwar discourse of human rights has brought about the contemporary idea of a refugee with rights to asylum (Phillips & Hardy, 1997); and the discourse of AIDS has empowered groups of patient-activists (Magnat & others, 2001). Discourse analysis is more than a methodology - it is a perspective that it a practice. A discourse is defined as a system of texts that brings objects into being (Parker, 1990). From this perspective, social science becomes the study of the development of discourses that support the myriad of ideas that make social reality meaningful. And, since discourses are embodied in texts (Chalaby, 1996), discourse analysis involves the systematic study of texts to find evidence of their meaning and how this meaning translates into a social reality (Phillips & Hardy, 2002).

Highlighting Similarity; Recognizing Difference

Content analysis, as it is traditionally employed, differs from discourse analysis quite profoundly even though it is similarly concerned with the analysis of texts. Most importantly, it is a positivist approach - the fundamental activity is a hypothesis testing using statistical analysis (Schwandt, 2001). At a practical level, it involves the development of analytical categories that are used to construct a coding frame that is then applied to textual data. Content analysis as a mode of textual analysis is characterized by a concern with being objective, systematic, and quantitative (Kassarjian, 1981; 9): objectivity in the sense that the analytic categories are defined so precisely that different coders may apply them and obtain the same results; systematic in the sense that clear rules are used to include or exclude content or analytic categories; and quantified in the sense that the results of content analysis are amenable to statistical analysis. Underlying this concern is the belief that the meaning of the text is constant and can be known precisely and consistently by different researchers as long as they utilize rigorous and correct analytical procedures (Silverman, 2001). Content analysis is the study of the text itself not of its relation to its context, the intentions of the producer of the text, or the reaction of the intended audience.

While discourse analysis and content analysis are both interested in exploring social reality, the two methods differ fundamentally in their assumptions about the nature of reality and the role of language in particular. Discourse analysis focuses on the precarious nature of meaning and focuses on exploring its shifting and contested nature; content analysis assumes a consistency of meaning that allows for occurrences of words (or other, larger units of text) to be assumed equivalent and counted. Where discourse analysis focuses on the relationship between text and context, content analysis focuses on the text abstracted from its context. On this surface, the difference between the two methods could not be more stark (see Table 1). While discourse analysis is concerned with the development of meaning - and in how it changes over time, content analysis assumes a consistency of meaning that allows counting and coding. Where discourse analysis see change and flux, content analysis looks for consistency and stability.

It is, however, worth pointing out that there are forms of content analysis that look more like discourse analysis. Gephart (1993) describes more qualitative forms of content analysis that do not assume highly stable meanings of words but, rather, include a sensitivity to the usage of words and the context in which they are used. These are not the same as discourse analysis and can, in fact, be used within a broad discourse analysis methodology in the analysis of social reality. In Table 2 we provide an indication of how content analysis might be used in a way that is compatible with discourse analysis. As one moves from simple counting to more complex interpretation, the two forms of analysis become increasingly compatible, although at the expense of positivist objectives. For content analysis to form part of a discourse analytic methodology, it is necessary to weaken the assumption that meaning is stable enough to be counted in an objective sense. As discourse analysis is a perspective, all textual analysis is an exercise in interpretation and while clear exposition of the methods used to arrive at a particular interpretation is a hallmark of good research, it cannot remove the necessity for interpretation. With this proviso, content analysis is useful though it is a matter of focus on being systematic and quantitative, play a potentially useful role in expanding our understanding of the role of discourse in constructing the social reality.

In conclusion, while discourse analysis and content analysis come from different philosophical bases, they can be complementary. Traditionally, the differences mean that they provide alternative perspectives on the role of language in social studies. In this regard, they are complementary in terms of what they reveal despite conflicting ontology and epistemology, which it is not easy seen in the future to connect on analysis on reliability and validity, contrasting sharply with the focus on the interpretive accuracy and reflexive examination that characterizes discourse analysis. More interpretive versions of content analysis also complement discourse analysis.

### Table 1: Differences between Discourse Analysis and Content Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse Analysis</th>
<th>Content Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontology</td>
<td>Constructivist - assumes that reality is socially constructed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistemology</td>
<td>Meaning is fluid and contextually relevant in ways that can be contextualized through the use of interpretive methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Source</td>
<td>Textual meaning, usually in relation to other texts, as well as practices of production, dissemination, and consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Qualitative (although it involves counting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categories</td>
<td>Explanation of how participants actively construct categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inductive/Deductive</td>
<td>Inductive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjectivity/Objectivity</td>
<td>Objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of context</td>
<td>Can only understand texts in discursive context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Formal measures of reliability are not a factor although coding is still justified according to academic norms; differences in interpretation are not a problem and, in fact, be a source of data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Validity</td>
<td>Validity in the form of &quot;performance&quot; i.e., demonstrating a plausible case that patterns in the meaning of texts are constitutive of reality in some way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflexivity</td>
<td>Not necessarily high - author is part of the process whereby meaning is constructed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2: Using Content Analysis within a Discourse Analytic Approach

| Dealing with Meaning | There is no inherent meaning in the text; meanings are constructed in a particular context and the author, consumer, and researcher all play a role. There is no way to separate meaning from context and any attempt to count must deal with the precarious nature of meaning |
| Dealing with Categories | Categories emerge from the data. However, emerging empirical research and theoretical work provide ideas for what to look for and the research question provides an initial sample frame |
| Dealing with Textual | The categories that emerge from the data allow for coding schemes involving counting occurrences of meanings in the text. Analysis is an interactive process of working back and forth between the texts and the categories |
| Dealing with Context | The analysis must locate the meaning of the text in relation to a social context and to other texts and discourses |
| Dealing with Reliability | The results are reliable to the degree that they are understandable and plausible to others i.e., does the researcher explain how he/she came up with the analysis in a way that the reader can make sense of it |
| Dealing with Validity | The results are valid to the degree that they show how patterns in the meaning of texts are constitutive of reality |
| Dealing with Reflexivity | To what extent does the analysis take into account the role that the author plays in making meaning? Does the analysis show different ways in which this meaning might be constructed? Is the analysis sensitive to the way the patterns are identified and explained |
In 1862 Bismarck said, "The great questions of the age are not settled by speeches and majority votes — yet by aid and blood." (Quoted in Shurtleff, 1995: 140) While beautifully evocative, Bismarck's reasoning raises more questions than his formulation answers. What are the great questions of our age? How do those preoccupations arise? If political argument is meaningless, or nearly so, why do acts engage in it? And if some issue is settled by force, what led individuals and nations to sacrifice their blood and treasure, their sons and daughters? Realists generally say that one of two factors typically explains the preoccupations of an age and the resort to force: humans are motivated by either material interests or the drive for the power necessary to secure their interests. We need look no deeper.

Yet there are obviously cases where actors disagree about their "interests," don't know their interests, or act contrary to it to enhance their power. For example, realists would have predicted that Great Britain keep its possessions of distant parts of the world as the largest slave trader in the 18th and 19th Centuries; yet the British ended their own participation in the slave trade. And in 1807 and spent millions in treasure and thousands of lives in order to destroy the slave trade. How did the slave trade and slavery, once taken for granted as good, just, virtuous and right for both master and slave, become stigmatized and eventually abhorred as illegitimate and even criminal? Is the explanation related to the meanings individuals and groups attach to practices and how those meanings change? Discourse analysis can help uncover the meanings that make the "great questions of image" and understand the dominant relations of power. Discourse and argument analysis can also help us understand how these meanings, and the social practices associated with them, change.

Aims and Varieties of Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis aims that discourse — the content and construction of meaning and the organization of knowledge in a particular realm — is central to social and political life. Discourses set the terms of intelligibility of thought, speech, and action. By understanding discourses then is to understand the underlying logic of the social and political organization of a particular entity and to recognize that this arrangement and the structures of power and meaning underpinning it are not natural, but socially constructed. For example, contemporary debates on "femininity," "masculinity," and "sexuality" and assumptions about who has authority to speak about what and how that authority is exercised. And understanding discourses is necessary to understand which relationships are considered fundamental and which can be negotiated. Some discourses frame how we think about politics and the issues of our time. How do we come to know and manipulate it. That understanding has evolved, and is still evolving, while its content and evolution is related to other discourses in the social and political world. For example, gender and racial discourses intersect in modern scientific discourse. Further, the discourses of different social sciences provide subtle practices and actors, legitimizing them, and delegitimations other practices and actors. For example, anarchists are decried and physicists are exalted.

Discourse analysis, which can help us decipher the underlying meaning, deep assumptions, and relations of power that are supported by and constructed through a discourse, can be done many different ways depending on the type of discourse and the use intended. However, one of the fundamental elements of discourse analysis is Aristotle (1991) was an early scholar of argumentation and rhetoric. Hayward Aller (1996), building on Aristotle and others, offers examples of how to model narratives, arguments and fairy tales. Karen Lillian shows how scientific discourses "do not solve environmental problems" they merely offer alternative interpretive lenses through which problems can be viewed, lenses that lend themselves to particular policy solutions. And postmodernism (Duffy 1991) has examined how "representations" structure relations between North and South, Karin Krikke (1998) uses Wittgenstein to analyze the language games of international politics and in particular how discourse by answering those questions change relations of power that are being used about the states. Space does not allow discussion of other approaches taken for example by Hopf (2003), Wells (2003), and the authors in Wells, et al. (1999). For a recent survey of critical discourses see Rüegg, 1999. For a technical overview see Wikard and Meyer (2001), and as Laffey and Weldon argue in this issue, discourse analysis need not be restricted to the analysis of written texts.

Argument Analysis

Meanings are constructed over time within and across cultural groups and are political arguments made and political issues decide over some duration. Thus, anyone seeking to understand certain interpretations of the world become dominant, how other views were subsumed or erased, and how new meanings took hold must examine some slice of the discourse prior to co-terminus with the question they are interested in. In other words, the analyst must make choices about how the kind of discourse they will focus on and the boundaries of the discourse — both temporal and genre — that they will examine.

If one is interested, for example, how particular nuclear arms control questions were understood by participants one might engage in argument analysis of a discrete debate or formal argument. For example, Homer Dixon and Karan (1989) use graphical argument analysis to articulate and expose the "window of vulnerability" argument. Their method is suitable for explicating the architecture, if not the deeper meaning, of the logic of claims and how attacks might affect the strength of an argument. Alternatively, Duffy, Feingold and Tyack (1997) used "dialogical analysis" to understand US-Soviet arms control negotiations which they test by showing that "certain
that are the starting points and background assumptions without which the arguments would be unintelligible. This entails tracing the process and examining the content of decisionmaking over long periods of time within particular historical and cultural contexts. The focus is on the articulation, context, content, and flow of arguments. Fourth, informal argument analysis may attempt to show how and why some beliefs and arguments won out over others and ultimately why certain policies were changed. In practice this means tracing whether and how the ethical arguments put forward succeeded in changing the terms of debate and whether an ethical argument meant to overturn a practice or support a change actually altered decision-makers’ conceptions of possibility and their interests, alter the balance of political power, and have its normative beliefs institutionalized. This also entails looking at the grounds for change in the support for conformity and receptivity to new arguments. Informal analysis of ethical arguments thus emphasizes the content and context of arguments — the words used (and not used), appeals actors make to dominant (unquestioned) beliefs and beliefs of others about their legitimacy, and the use of evidence. This method focuses on how the arguments develop over long periods of time, in particular social settings, including definition and redeﬁnition of the problem (meta-arguments and framing), and the evolution of the features in the argument that are taken for granted or contested.

In the case of informal argument analysis it is important to compare with other plausible explanations for behaviors to see whether the arguments are important causally. There are several “tests” for the causal signiﬁcance of ethical argument. 1) Temporal ordering — normative beliefs and ethical arguments should be given as a justiﬁcation for the behavior before or simultaneous to a behavior change, not after; 2) after an ethical argument succeeds, one would expect a (not necessarily universal) change in the normative beliefs that underpinned the ethical arguments and the behavior; 3) the relevant normative beliefs should be used in arguments about correct behavior and those who use those arguments are not ignored; and 4) the prespeciﬁcations for behavior implied by the ethical argument are not adhered to, those who do not adhere to the standards of normative belief to justify their (non-normative) behavior on ethical or practical grounds (the actors themselves acknowledge that they are norm violators and make an argument about why their violation was good or necessary); 5) the normative belief is linked with other normative beliefs, becoming part of the argument used to advance these other norms. For example, anti-slavery, human rights, and self-determination beliefs should be discussed with each norm’s reasoning being used to legitimize the other norms. The new norms become part of the normative beliefs of the discourse.

Two harder tests of the role of normative belief and ethical argument, are: 6) the presence and use of international sanctions by the majority of the international community to change the behavior of those who violate the normative prescriptions or those who support such norm violators. Finally, 7) ethical arguments may be viewed as causally important whether and to the extent that actors with incentives to violate normative prescriptions act counter to their “interests” and follow the new normative prescriptions, when the extent that actors re-frame their interests in light of coming to hold new normative beliefs. For the last to be valid three conditions should hold: states (or rather the inﬂuential elites that shape governance) re-frame their interests (not just believe they do); actors should not have been compelled by other (non-normative) circumstances, such as a change in their ability to pursue their interests; and some sort of discernible shift in who “owns” the interests (or at least believe they do); actors should not have been compelled by other (non-normative) circumstances, such as a change in their ability to pursue their interests; and some sort of discernible shift in who “owns” the interests (or at least believe they do);

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Footnote: I thank Melanei Carnapp and Karin Fierke for comments on an earlier draft. I also thank the editor of this exchange for their comments.

Even if normative beliefs and ethical arguments were all of some importance, we still cannot prove causality. However, passing all or several of these tests make it more likely that normative belief and ethical argument had a causal role.

Challenges of Discourse and Argument Analysis
No matter what method of discourse analysis one chooses, there are numerous challenges to doing discourse analysis.

The ﬁrst challenge, and perhaps the most daunting unrecognized by any form of discourse analysis, is the identiﬁcation of the discourse. As Konstante Dott notes, "Discourse analysis" involves the terms of intelligibility whereby a particular 'reality' can be known and acted upon. When we speak of a discourse we are referring to a set of texts, or a topic, but also importantly to the social practices to which those texts are inextricably linked. . . . a discourse is inherently open ended and incomplete. . . . Any fixing of a discourse and the identities that are constructed by it, can only be an approximation to understand nature. (1996: 6) Thus, discourse analysis involves making hard choices of the extent and limits of analysis. Which leads to the next set of problems, those of interpretation and reliability, which are dealt with differently by the various approaches noted above. In other words, our analysis may not only be so large as to be unwieldy and overwhelming, but it is also necessarily partial and subject to dispute by others. There is no space here to discuss in detail the various indicators who employ discourse analysis tackle these challenges. Suffice it to say however, that nearly all the scholars I have mentioned have given explicit attention to these questions.

There are two other elements of discourse analysis which is there is also insufficient space to discuss here. Scholars who engage in discourse analysis must have a thorough understanding of the linguistic, cultural, and political elements of production, class structure, social formations, and institutions — in order to situate their analysis and explain relationships. And those who engage in discourse analysis should be empathetic. Specifically, while an authoritative belief in the discourse one is analyzing is actually unhelpful, a certain degree of empathy — the cognitive and emotional apprehension of the world from another perspective — can sharpen the analyses

Indeed, a well developed sense of empathy would probably be a useful asset for many forms of both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Endnotes
1 I thank Melanei Carnapp and Karin Fierke for comments on an earlier draft. I also thank the editor of this exchange for their comments.

2 Even if normative beliefs and ethical arguments were all of some importance, we still cannot prove causality. However, passing all or several of these tests make it more likely that normative belief and ethical argument had a causal role.

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In this article I am going to argue two points. First, content analysis should not be seen as fundamentally different to any other type of quantitative method available to political scientists. And second, that political methodologists need to integrate content analysis into their current statistical machinery. The first point is descriptive, and I'll defend it by drawing some detailed analogies between existing methods, e.g. cross-tabs and regression, and seemingly unrelated content analytic techniques. At the high level, this will involve sketching out a probabilistic framework for understanding content analysis in general. More specifically, I’ll try to show that content analytic techniques often make sense if they are understood as implementations of particular statistical models. These models and their assumptions are fairly explicit, so the process of uncovering them will have three desirable effects. First, and most obviously, knowing what assumptions your methods presume allows you to recognize when applying them is likely to be inappropriate. Conversely, this helps answer the question: ‘should I use content analysis for this?’ Second, a good understanding of assumptions makes it easier to relax or change them individually, in response to substantive needs. Finally, but perhaps most importantly, the specific conditions under which the methods are integrated can be tested and informed by standard statistical theory.

Philosophically, the question of constructing a probability model for existent content analytic practice is not description but explication. Content analysis may well work with a probability model in mind when doing research, but reconstructing a model is a way of explaining why, and under what conditions what analysts do makes sense.

A class of probability models for content analysis

Arguably, the methodologist’s standard statistical tool is the linear regression model. At the most basic level, a regression relates some observable outcome, y, to other observable phenomena, the z’s, and assumes that y = x + u + e. That is to say, the model implicitly assumes that the linear model is a valid representation of the form of the relationship between the outcome and the explanatory variables. If this is not true then the assumptions about the model are not met, and the results cannot be trusted.

Several methodologists have attempted to construct a more comprehensive model for understanding content analysis, since although words and phrases are observed, their content is only inferred. For a more useful model approach we must look to psychology, to the classical literature on language and individual differences that developed factor analysis. Content analyses, by
Working the analogy

Returning to the single category case, the quantity $p(y|x_{\text{insight}})$ can be used to rank any new document according to how much of the LIWC concept $\text{insight}$ is expressed in it using Bayes theorem. This model is an explication because the $p(y|x_{\text{insight}})$ will rank all new documents (with $x_y$) in different orders (and words and phrases). In classical latent variable models, $x$ is inferred by assigning it a prior distribution $p(x)$, and using Bayes theorem to find $p(y|x)$:

$$p(y|x) = \frac{p(x|y)p(y)}{p(x)}$$

Psychologists can often make strong assumptions about $x$, e.g. many psychological attributes are Normally distributed in the population. In content analysis this is not usually possible, so $p(x)$ may be taken to be flat. In this case $p(y|x)$ is proportional to $p(x|y)p(y)$.

Probability models and assumptions

To take a concrete example: Pennebaker's Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) content dictionary (Pennebaker and King, 1995) has an entry for the concept $\text{insight}$, containing the following list of words to accept, acknowledge, adjust, admit ...

If there are $K$ of these words, and we assume for simplicity that $\text{insight}$ is the only content category in the dictionary, then one explicit probability model might look like this: $p(y|x_{\text{insight}})$ is a Multinomial distribution with probability $\lambda_{x_{\text{insight}}}$. In content analysis, $\lambda$ is the proportion of the words in the list, and $0$ for every other word.

Since all conditional distributions express a recipe for generating data, in an idealized way that would be effectively implemented with a list of categories and word lists. But that is exactly the point. Knowing the assumptions we have been making will allow us to adjust the model for better predictions.

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Methodological Reflections on Discourse Analysis

Mark Lavey
SOAS, University of London
M23@soas.ac.uk

Jutta Welles
University of Bristol
Jutta.Welles@bristol.ac.uk

Part of the difficulty in establishing methods for discourse analysis (DA) is that DA is not singular. Distinct forms of analysis are collected under this label, involving different understandings of discourse, drawing on different disciplines and canons, and specifying different methodologies. DA is most commonly understood to refer to language. Analyses thus often deploy the terms source to refer to "extended samples of spoken dialogue" (Fairclough, 1992: 3) such as conversations and so prompt analyses of, among other things, tacking or the structuring of conversational openings and closings (e.g., Atkinson and Drew, 1979; Coulthard, 1992).

For us, discourse is not equivalent to language. Instead, we define discourse as structure and practices. As structure, discourses are ‘silent rules’ or ‘rules by people’ and which use them – ‘in the construction of meaning about their world and their activities’ (O’Toole and Agnew, 1992: 192-3). As practice, they are structures of meaning-in-use. This conception of discourse implies that:

- Discourses are sets of rules that both enable practices and are reproduced and/or transformed by them. In examining a discourse, we examine ‘a group of rules’ that define not the dead existence of a reality, but the canonical use of a vocabulary, but the ordering of objects (Vicoaui, 1972: 49).
- Discourses manifest themselves in both linguistic and non-linguistic forms and practices. The study of discourse therefore cannot be limited to the study of texts or language narrowly defined (Neumann, 2002).
- Discourses are productive. They produce subjects, objects, and the relations among them. They produce truth as well, stipulating the criteria according to which claims are judged. DA thus highlights the mutual implication of power and knowledge.
- Discourses are always implicated in institutions, broadly conceived. They circulate through and around – sometimes re-forming, sometimes remaining, sometimes participating in or being expressed through, sometimes completely ignored or marginalised by – sites of institutionalised power.

Power and Politics

DA is always about power. Indeed, in some sense, discourse analysis must always be about power. The conditions of possibility of discourse analysis, the tools of discourse analysis, the effects of discourse analysis, the implications of discourse analysis, the uses of discourse analysis – all of these are implicated in, and contribute to, power relations and power processes.

A crucial question in the investigation of interpellation is ‘who speaks’, that is, which subject position authors the discourse? A further question is ‘who are the interpellations of “we”’s political discourse (Welles, 1999: 105-107). This ‘we’ is a ‘shifty shifter’ (Schwienbein, 1984: 305) that facilitates interpellation: it is a referentially ambiguous one that allows authorship to shift between and among ‘we, U.S. decision makers, “we, the U.S. state,” and “we, the U.S. public.” Identifying a shifty shifter exposes a mechanism that helps to construct a subject position – ‘we, the U.S. state’ – while simultaneously discarding disparate audiences into a single identity, creating common sense by basing concrete individuals into that identity, and legitimating the argument in which the identity participates. Of course, “we, the U.S. state” is not monolithic: it is a complex set of relations – must combat totalitarianism wherever “we” find it. In turn, not only must such a subject position make sense, i.e., be meaningful, it must also make it possible to negotiate the world. Interpellation thus gets at the question of practical adequacy. It is this ‘making sense’ of interpellation – in both senses – that generates common sense – the moment of ideological closure, of normalization and naturalization, when those hauled by the discourse say “we of course.”
Discourse and Content Analysis: Some Fundamental Incompatibilities

Ted Hopf
Ohio State University
hopf.2@osu.edu

Let me begin with a caveat. My version of discourse analysis that attempts to do as much a normative ideal in my own mind, as much as a description of how it actually is or has been done in practice, although I find the Hardy, Harley and Philip's (1992) definition a very comfortable fit. Therefore, it may come off like "already existing socialism" came off to residents of the late Soviet Union. Moreover, my understanding of what content analysis is and does is doubly biased in the opposite direction, some vague memories of graduation, and I'm sure that assignments that purported to be using that method supplemented by the contributions to this symposium. I apologize for both biases, but hope you will not stopreading just yet! What follows is an enumeration of those aspects of DA that I find fundamentally incompatible with CA, conventionally understood. (Though HHIP's surging of a more qualitative CA softens some of these differences considerably.) But then, perhaps surprisingly, I claim that DA is in fact much more "scientific" than either practitioners of DA or CA acknowledge.

Seven important differences:

• DA is a theory of power politics
• DA assumes an open social system
• DA assumes social, not natural, kinds
• DA places texts in intersubjective context
• DA treats anomies and absences as evidence, too
• DA is about daily social practices, a social text, not just a written one
• DA assumes at least the partial autonomy of language

From the outset, it must be acknowledged that DA is in fact a political theory as much as a method of inquiry. As Crawford and HHIP criticize here, DA asserts that language is a medium within which prevailing power relations are articulated. The use of discourse reproduces these predominant configurations of power, and disrupting and challenging them is one of the central features of what we call politics. This means that the meaning of any given text for DA often points to some underlying political problem or question. I do not think that the latter come up very often as topics of inquiry in CA.

DA recognizes that discourse is not just a role in society, text. (Ricoeur 1983, 135) To put it another way, it is impossible to control for "omitted variable bias." (King, Keane, Verba 1994, 172) The meaning of any conversation or family outing is not fixed; it depends on the contexts in which a particular text is being performed. Not only is meaning dependent on the particular text in which a practice is located, but also on the relationship of that text to others. DA therefore assumes (intertextuality, the relationship among texts. (Greenblatt 1990) And if texts are related to one another through other texts, or the texts stop, so to speak, it is an open social system, and statements about meaning must therefore be moderated accordingly. Neurondorff appropriately warns against "drawing general conclusions about one's qualitative findings." (Neurondorff 2004)

This lack of certainty about ultimate meaning is in part rooted in the assumption that the variables of interest are socially constructed in a particular intersubjective setting, and are therefore not fixed by nature but may be present elsewhere, or at a different time. In other words, meanings and categorizations are social, not natural, kinds. They are products of human agency, not of God or Nature. So, these meanings mediate in relation to each other, rather than in relationship to an objective reality. Within the objectivist anchor, natural kinds are impossible, and so, generalizations with high levels of scientific certainty are too, (Laudan 1991) Since meanings are bounded by context, DA does not expect a word like "market" to mean the same thing wherever and whenever and it is used. Different meanings across contexts that are available to CA to assist into its "a priori coding instrument." (Neurondorff 2004) Instead statements and actions are always within a broader text that give them intersubjective meaning... 

Textual references:

mention giving and meaning-taking relationships with other texts. These necessary intertextuality implies not only that the meaning of a "variable" cannot just be assigned by a putatively objective observer, but also that this meaning cannot be assumed to be the same across time and place. KK's "unit homogeneity" problem. (KKV 1994, 93-4) DA does not pretend to solve the complex problems of history, ideology, politics, social kinds, omitted variable bias, and unit heterogeneity. Instead, it recognizes them as inapplicable problems requiring not the application of yet more methodological techniques, but rather the admission that knowledge claims about social phenomena must remain profoundly less ambiguous. In other words, epistemology and ontology trump methodology. The result is strong claims, but within more bounded historical and temporal domains. For example, the context for Weldes's discursive analysis of the Cuban missile crisis is the Kennedy Administration in 1962, or he does not make any claims about American foreign policy or after that crisis. (Weldes 1982) As the Kiez's "low level" or the British or even the French military after the war. (Kiez 1997) DA recognizes its epistemological differences with CA, but does not try to overcome them, but instead bases more modest claims as a consequence of these differences.

DA also assumes that two kinds of phenomena matter that CA might not regard as so critical: absences and anoma...
lies. The assumption in DA is that if women never appear as engineers, race car drivers, presidents, or prime ministers, this is evidence of how daily lived reality is being socially con-
structed in a particular context. It is unclear to me how CA would theorize this context, its emphasis on a "pri
coding instrumentation." Second, and related, in a pre-
dominant discourse of women in high status and high pay-
ning careers, the anomalous presence of a woman bank 
cubby, for example, would be highly into just to DA. It 
would perhaps be treated as the possible emergence of a 
counter-hegemonic discourse on gender, and would prompt 
more attention to see if other kinds of "subversive" practices 
were present. I guess this is really saying that if some 
theory and thought have to overcome to make their version of an 
idealized speech situation work, here is a problem with CA. 
How would a content analyst code Cohn's use of words that 
she herself and other working women in the text? CA would perhaps 
suggest that the important theorizing here should be done 
about the discursive structure that is "causing" the language 
that has to be chosen to participate in the conversation, not 
in the words themselves. If this is the case, then CA would 
not treat anomalies as noise, unexplained variance, or part of the 
error term.

DA is absorbing than words or written texts. It is also 
about the daily conduct in which each of us engages to make 
our way in the social world. (Berger and Luckmann 1966, 
Bourdieu 1970, and Goffman 1973) While DA much too often 
ignores the role of visual patterns in concentrating its 
attention on the written and spoken word, CA seemingly 
ignores it altogether. When a white woman walking down the 
street shifts her handbag to the other side of her body upon 
crossing an approaching large grey black mack, she is dis-
cussively constructing race relations in that context. She has 
said not a word, and there is no written record of the event. 
But that simple action produces as much meaning as a 
written word can. This is what pushes DA beyond where it 
usually gets to go.

Finally, DA usually assumes at least the partial autonomy 
of language, such that actors are themselves, in part, consti-
tuted by the daily practices in which they participate. (Dorty 
1983) CA, on the other hand, takes the speakers as given. 
This is reminiscent of the old debate between neorationalist 
and regime theorists about international institutions. Are the 
 latter just "products," or are they really structures that we use lan-
guage to express our preferences, or does language itself 
constitute those very preferences in the first place?

A recent example springs to mind. I observed to a colleague 
of mine how surprised I was that the speakers' series she di-
rected was entitled Statesman's Forum. She laughed and 
said she were no the women leaders from the part of the 
world for which she was responsible. In this Foucauldian 
change is revealed her liberal confidence that language merely 
reflects reality and my assumption that language is helping cre-
ate reality. Carol Cohn, while a postdoctoral scholar at Harvard, 
discovered the power of the predominant discourse on nuclear 
weapons, such that some of the very concepts she would have 
liked to introduce into the conversation, peace, for exam-
ple, were simply beyond her ability to do. This discourse of 
deterrence and warfighting. (Cohn 1987) Notice I use the 
phrase selected against, and not prevented. After all Cohn 
was not physically restrained from talking about peace, but 
rather if she wanted to change the conversation, a speaker 
who would have continued legitimacy, authority, and credibility, 
she could not talk about peace in a way meaningful 
to her. She, instead, had to assimilate herself to the discourse 
of post-exchange ratios, hard target kill capabilities, circular 
error probable, drawdown curves, and the like. Here is dis-
cursive power at work; here is the partial autonomy of lan-
guage and the struggle of cultural actors to translate their 
theory of discursive power embodied in normally constrained 
subjects.

We should wonder as well about HHP's validity measures of DA 
and CA. I would have said that CA has behavioral impli-
cations: these beliefs imply these actions. And I would go on 
to try to get DA to make similar predictions based on its analysis 
of the politics and institutions of discursive reproduction in the 
world of interest. 

In sum, I think that DA can maintain its fundamental dif-
ferences with CA while simultaneously being far more meth-
odologically rigorous, and not participate more vigorously and 
equally putatively more scientific methods of analy-
sis in fashioning accounts of the social world.

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negotiation processes with successful vs. unsuccessful outcomes. The analysis technique and findings might prove useful not only in a practical, predictive sense for negotiation practitioners, but also in providing a baseline for further analysis of these and similar profiles. The "markings" of significant shifts in the relational roles of negotiators and perpetrators located via CA might be used in further study by DA analysts. Thus, CA may provide identification of the "pragmatic" conditions for successful communication, while DA provides a more nuanced interpretation of their meaning. CA is not limited to an analysis of words. As far back as the film Payne-French (1915), the creators of early silent movies on American youth (Charters, 1933; Dale, 1934), the stylistics, images, and behaviors of characters in moving image content have been systematically analyzed via CA. Concern over the effects of violent television in the 1960s and 1970s brought renewed commitment to such CA studies, spurred development of CA schemes to measure such novelties as anti-soci, pro-social, gender-typed, family role, and occupational stereotypes (cf. Greenberg, 1976; Greenberg, 1980). The analysis of written or transcribed spoken words, a subset of content analysis, is called text analysis. Its computer-aided form (now supported by more than 20 software packages) is called content analysis (or computer-assisted text analysis), a fast-growing segment of the CA literature. CA is limited to a focus on messages. A simple inference from such messages to source motivations or receiver effects is breaking the CA data. But to the full advantage of its findings, CA may be linked with source and/or receiver data, providing core evidence for a full model of the communication process (what has been called the "integrative model of mass communication analysis"; Neuenfeldt, 2002). For example, Nuccitelli and Neuenfeldt (1998) analyzed a wide variety of textual and graphical characteristics of business-to-business print ads, and then statistically linked those characteristics with the likelihood of readership and recall for the ads, derived from a commercial magazine readership survey. And Hergog and Faux (1995) paired their CA of news stories about AIDS transmission in major newspapers and news magazines with findings from independent public opinion polls. They found news coverage to predict public opinion at a later point in time; public opinion did not predict subsequent news coverage. In both cases, the bigger picture of message effects was generated by a combining of systematic CA and quantitative data from "external" studies. And, both examples show the potential of CA procedures—particularly when linked with other data sources such as public opinion or control both in terms of information flow and message impact on receivers. Such dynamics seem central to the fundamental concern of DA with power and hierarchy.

DA and CA Compared

The range of substantive topics appropriate to DA is also generally appropriate to CA. Moreover, the various "sources of data" for CA are also usable as the focus of CA analyses. Both methodologies have embraced the use of computers for particular tasks, although in both cases, their application generally seems to be a case of old wine in newer, faster bottles. In considering both DA and CA, there is a common bottom line—"There are no unmediated data" (Phillips & Hardy, p. 85). Those using DA attempt to fully discuss the meaning and usage of what they call "all the backgroundings—assumptions, epistemologies, etc.," while those using CA attempt to minimize their mediation (through adherence to the scientific method, including an aim toward making the CA more "objective") to objective measures and analysis. The overriding importance for CA of validity, and the relative lack of concern with reliability (Phillips & Hardy, pp. 79-80) implies a high core dissimilarity between the two methodologies. For CA, reliability is paramount—in fact, measures that do not achieve an acceptable level of reliability ought to be dropped from further analysis. Further, replicability is clearly not a focus of DA, while it remains an additional important standard for CA.

Thus, in CA, measurement is via a coding scheme that is written out in great detail, with an accompanying coding form (or a set of cards) (word/concept cards if the findings are strictly of written text). In all cases the coding instrumentation is established a priori, and the goal is to create a coding plan that is so carefully defined that virtually anyone, with sufficient training, can serve as a reliable coder. This coders work with DA, for which the researcher serves as the measurement instrument. Hence, the measures and analysis are highly dependent on the expertise and orientations of the researcher. As DA has been in the investigation of the societal-level discourse. Their analysis of cartoons unpowered prototypical portrayals of refugees and of the refugee system itself that would most likely go undetected via CA. But a future CA could make use of the findings to effect a more broad-based study of cartoons, creating a realistic summary picture of the "message pool" available to various publics at various periods in time. Additionally, a CA adds the pedagogical aspect (cf. Fish, 1997; Gee, 1996; Gee & Gross, 1976) that the findings are not entirely the product of one analyst's opinion.

Conversely, a CA may serve as a stimulant to the conduct of a DA. For example, one unexpected finding of Smith's (1999) study of women's portrayals in U.S. commercial film was that films with more females in creative control (i.e., writing, directing, producing) presented more gender-typed portrayals of women. This crisis for a follow-up, and DA seems uniquely suited to establish and assess the presence of, or the absence of, these factors when they do not even observe the portrayals as gender-typed. Here, CA provides the "clue" as a critical pattern in message content that deserves a more in-depth look. 

In short, all the research agrees that quantitative and qualitative investigations should routinely be used together. It is wrongheaded to proceed on any quantitative study without considering various conceptual assumptions derived from the reflex processes of qualitative research; it is equally wrongheaded to draw generalized conclusions about one's qualitative findings without adding quantitative evidence on the prevalence and patterns of message occurrence.

A Final Observation

Perhaps the most compelling—and startling—macro-level observation one can make is the profound impact of the second of the two methods is in fact a social constructivist one. The discourse concerning DA reveals the approach to be one of interpretation, introspection, and primacy of cognitive activity, with emphasis on meaning, communication, and debate, while the discourse of CA is one of a more "industrial" milieu, with emphasis on production, output, and broad-based generalization. These framings correspond to views of DA as communication (or its visual counterparts, and CA's validity of description and identification by the observer) and CA as interpretive (with evident concern for the shared understanding of the research assumptions, process, and findings). It would be interesting to trace the roots of those creating such discourses; to situate the contexts of their training and identify the assumptions of their pedagogical origins. More fundamentally, it seems that aside from the CA researchers might well served to consider such discursive contrasts, and to consider how the approaches and advantages of the two techniques are comparable.

Endnotes

1 This distinction between objectivity and intersubjectivity reflects the unambiguous natures (e.g., Fish, 1997) of true objective in measurement, and have opted instead for a goal of intersubjectivity—i.e., such clear and public proclaimed assumptions and methods as to assure fully shared meaning among researchers.

2 The operationalizations of gender-typing were derived primarily from a host of qualitative investigations, most of them critical-cultural.

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World or Worlds?

The Analysis of Content and Discourse

Karin Fierke
Queens University Belfast
K.Fierke@queens-belfast.ac.uk

There are many approaches to discourse analysis and I would be reluctant to try to capture its essence. Perhaps the most familiar use in International Relations has emphasized the construction of identity and difference. However, scholars such as Crawford have focused on argument analysis, Duffy, French and Tuck on language games, and I have in a somewhat different way, Milikan on the sequencing of moves in foreign policy interactions, and Sylva and Majlesi on the construction of foreign policy choices. Alter on an ethnomethodological sociological approach to studying how people play contested Speaker’s Dilemma games and Welbes on the discursive construction of the Cuban Missile Crisis, problematizing its status as a crisis. Not all of these scholars would refer to themselves as discourse analysts, but they are all in different ways dealing with the analysis of texts. As Milikan rightly points out, there is a stream of thinking among discourse analysts in international relations that rigor and systematic method should be avoided given their association with positivist methods. That discourse analysis, in contrast to the rigor and formal methods of content analysis, is relativistic, interpretive and a bit woolyinded is an assumption that is often shared among critics alike. This difference is often implied in the distinction between formal and informal.

I would like to argue that this dichotomy should be drawn into question. The difference between discourse analysis and content analysis has less to do with the degree of formality in the method per se than the methodological foundations on which the analysis is conducted. There is a distinction between methodology and method. Methodology refers to those basic assumptions about the world we study, which are prior to the specific techniques adopted by the scholar undertaking research. Methodology includes both ontological and epistemological, the question of whether they can be separated is at the heart of the methodological difference. My analysis revolves around a contrast of two ideal types, which are over-simplified, and is part of a language, recognizing that both traditions involve a diversity of approaches and assumptions. I will focus on four issues: the relationship between language and world; the question of stability vs. change; coding vs. interpretation; and the meaning of formality.

World or Worlds?

Both content analysis and discourse analysis revolve around the analysis of texts. However, they each assume a different understanding of the relationship between word and world. Do we assume that language constitutes objects or subjects in the world or that it is constitutive of the world? In the former case, the nature of being (ontology) is separate from the way of knowing (epistemology). The existence of discrete objects or subjects is unproblematic, and these can be attributed to each other. On a very basic level, the ability to treat words as discrete categories is a necessary point of departure for their quantification. Arguably counting individual words requires their isolation from a context, or a number of attempts of context analysis do attempt to cluster categories, to explore further entanglements of a word, and overcome contextual related deficiencies. However, at the scale of context, we can say that the emphasis on quantification goes hand in hand with an assumption, building on the tradition of logical positivism, that language mirrors objects in the world. In other words, the discourse of content analysis can deal with either perspectives, but changing perspective, although the underlying assumption of multiple worlds is more evident when mapping the process by which worlds are changed. Theorist of examples of argument analysis, cited by Crawford in this issue, is less (but not pre-selecting a range of codes the richness of the context and change within it are likely to be lost. In this case, the change was also evident in a shared grammar, which was being maintained, repaired, dismantled or undermined by different actors and intimate relations (including marriage, divorce, emancipation, etc.) What was accepted at an earlier point in time that (deterritorialization was a prawn which could not escape, and a foundation of stability separating two alliance families) became the object of contestation. This provided the basis for mapping the transition from the relatively stable world of the Cold War division of Europe, to a new world of a European transcending East and West.

Objective Quantification vs. Subjective Interpretation

That the scholar who codes categories is engaged in objective quantification is often taken for granted. Some claims that discourse analysts bring subjective interpretation or their own perceptions to the reading of texts. However, building on the example above, I would argue that discourse analysis is not the sole domain of language at the site of contestation draws the latter into question. It is no more subjective to identify a grammar based, for instance, on a system of relationships between prisons, librarv shapes and activity. Sometimes a word or cluster of words occurs in texts relating to detention: Of course, individuals do interpret single texts in a variety of ways, and debates over the significance of this have a long history in politics, focusing on the nature of the relationship between context, text and individual. My point is that the distinction between objective quantification and subjective interpretation begins to blur when the analytic description of a situation which would seem to be necessary in making any claims about an area such as international relations. The above study involved some six hundred texts. The patterns by which subjects, objects and practices were reflected, suggests that there is more subjectivity in the analysis, the pattern of analysis on a shared language and grammars that frequently occurred across texts from different types of action.

A single word can have any range of meanings when placed in a different context. A journal referee once pounced on the word ‘romantic’ in Russian had a wide range of different meanings than in English. However, when the word ‘romance’ is embedded in a cluster of other categories, such as ‘unrequited love’, a relationship between a strong masculine actor and a weak feminine act (a frequent correspondence in Russian public texts regarding the relationship be-
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Quantification is easier if single words are quantified rather than patterns of relationships between subjects, objects and practices within a world. Many content analysts have embraced the greater complexity of analyzing clusters of relationships and are therefore engaging in practices that are not dissimilar to the one described above. The question is what is gained or lost in the translation into numbers. What is gained is credibility within a world of science that values quantification over other forms of analysis and one in which the word formal has acquired the meaning of using quantification. What is potentially lost is the human, social and political processes by which actors call the world around them into question. If formal is taken to mean systematic and rigorous analysis, then there are numerous examples of scholars engaged in discourse analysis who, with this definition, can be considered to be formal analysts. This redescription may seem problematic in that formal analysis is derived from a scientific grammar, which includes categories of measurement, replication and quantification, which have been acquired from the natural sciences. However, there is a clear distinction between the work of the natural scientist and the social scientist is that content analysis cannot be a method of the former. The natural scientist has a freedom to impose meaning on the natural world. The social scientist does not because the subjects of analysis are meaning creating creatures. We thus inevitably are involved in negotiation with the subjects of study and cannot hope to provide an accurate representation of their world if we simply impose our own categories. We also have a greater responsibility to recognize that we are situated in a social world, constrained by relations of power and meaning, which are defined within historical and cultural contexts. Critical theorists have long emphasized a concern that the assumption of a stable and universal world serves to legitimize existing structures of power and meaning. It is this difference between the desire to know and understand a stable world vs. a changing world that distinguishes the two approaches. Quantification is more complicated in the latter case, but not impossible. However, in either case there remains a question of the threshold at which a pattern can be claimed as a pattern.

Raymond D. Duval, “Pedagogies of Critical Social Theory.”
David Sylvon, “In the Field: Qualitative Methods, Discipline and Practice.”
Discussant: Alexander Wendt

5. Roundtable on Mixed Methods in Post-Communist Russia
Chair: Mitchell A. Orenstein
Participants: Anna M. Gryzmal-Busse, Keith A. Durden, Jason Wittenberg, Yoshiko M. Herrera, and David D. Laitin

6. Analyzing Necessary and Sufficient Causes: Applications and Issues
Chair: David Collier
Gary Goertz, “Assessing the Importance of Necessary or Sufficient Conditions in Qualitative Set-Social Science.”
James Mahoney, “Explaining the Great Reversal in Spanish America: Statistical Analysis vs. Fuzzy-Set Analysis.”
Jason Seawright, “Qualitative Comparative Analysis via a Weirig: Comparing the Underlying Assumptions.”
Gunther Grint, “A Boolean Approach to Party Preferences: A Five-Year Study.”
Discussants: Jonathan N. Katz and David Collier

7. Roundtable on Uses of Language in Constructivist International Relations
Chair: André Klotz
Participants: Jeffrey T. Checkel, Roxanne Doty, Matthew J. Hoffmann, Cecelia Lynch and Iver B. Neumann

8. QCA/IFS: The State of the Art and Future Prospects
Chair: Benoît Rihoux
Badrine Ali, “Aggregating Causality in Multiple-Level Theories: A Linguistic Fuzzy Logic Approach.”
Sakura Yamasaki, “Social Network Analysis and Qualitative Comparative Analysis: An Exploratory Study.”
Carsten Schneider and Claudia Wagemann, “The Fuzzy-Set/QCA Two-Step Approach to Middle-Range Theorizing.”
Discussant: Andrew Bennett

9. Philosophies of Qualitative Sociopolitical Inquiry
Chair: Janice Bially Mamet
Michael J. Shapiro, “Political Theory versus The Fetishism of Method.”
Discussant: Janice Bially Mamet and David Dellinger