

# Analysing and interpreting qualitative data using ATLAS.ti

## Lecturer: Gerben Moerman

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## Course Contents and Objectives

The logic-in-use in qualitative research is that the fieldwork phase is crucial in high quality research. Especially in methodology sections of ethnographic publications, the main focus is on fieldwork roles and the data collection.

Interpretations and conclusions often seem to have arisen directly from the data rather than through analysis and interpretation. Obviously this is a faulty representation; data-collection, data analysis and interpretation are closely intertwined in most qualitative projects. Besides, in analysis and interpretations countless choices are made, resulting in different genres of analysis and different qualities.

In this course there will be a blinkered view as well, since the focus will be on data analysis and interpretation only. We briefly touch on the main ontological and epistemological principles of qualitative research. Afterwards we will learn how to use ATLAS.ti for the genres of qualitative research usually connected to computer-assisted qualitative analysis. The focus will therefore be on content analysis (in different variants, even quantified), analytic induction and grounded theory.

## Format:

The seminars are based on four teaching methods: Introductory lectures, class discussion of the reading material, computer seminars and individual or group work. Every week, you are required to do all readings in advance, and invited to participate actively in the collective discussion. In the computer seminars we will learn how to work with ATLAS.ti and see what choices are made in different genres of qualitative analysis.

Attendance is mandatory.

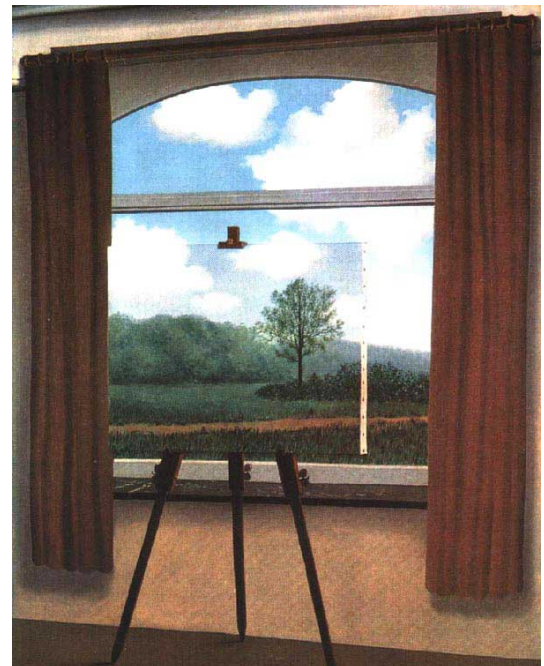


Figure 1 René Magritte La condition humaine, 1933

**Place and time:**

REC-P 1.27 (computer room)  
Fridays from 9 to 13 (sometimes 12).

**Objectives**

The learning objectives for this course are that students after this course will have gained insight in Qualitative analysis in general and more specifically on more classic approaches, such as Content analysis, Analytic Induction and Grounded Theory. After the course, students will be able to work with ATLAS.ti to do qualitative analysis, choosing a topic, as well as a method.

**Assessment:**

Assessment will be based on class discussions (10%), three homework tasks (30 %), a final assignment (50%) and a very short presentation (10%). Anti-plagiarism rules apply. The report (in word document or pdf) is to be uploaded to Ephorus on Blackboard as well.

**Homework 1: Deductive analysis a.k.a. How to use ATLAS.ti with a simple code set**

Resulting in a summary of the analysis and a short reflection on a coding, using a predefined code scheme. We will have a Classroom discussion on the reflection.

Length: 1000 words (+/- 10%) excluding appendices

To be uploaded to Blackboard before February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013, 11.00.

**Homework 2: Comparison of 2 genres in an essay**

This homework consists of a short essay, in which the usability of qualitative software for two distinctive qualitative genres is discussed.

Length: 2000 words (+/- 10%)

To be taken to class on paper and uploaded to Blackboard on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013, 9.00.

**Homework 3: Bernie Beck's Trick & Mindmap**

Inspired by Howard Becker's discussion of Bernard Beck's Trick: "Tell me what you've found out, but without using any of the identifying characteristics of the actual case" (Becker, 1998: 126).

A *mind map* based on Bernie Beck's trick.

Length: 500 words

To be taken to class on paper on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013, 9.00.

**Final Assignment: Methodological report on qualitative analysis**

The final assignment is to do a qualitative analysis and report on it. The analysis could be on **any topic**, using **any genre** of qualitative analysis, using **any kind of data**. Since you are free to choose your own topic and genre, the type of data collection is up to you. However, since this course is not on qualitative data collection (although that shows a terrible single-mindedness, I'm sorry), and qualitative data collection in

classical ways would take a lot of time, I would suggest you to use existing materials. Those materials could be anything, such as transcribed interviews, policy documents, observations, pictures, movies, songs, maps, newspaper articles, letters to the editors, tweets, internet forum discussions, Youtube comments, TED-seminars or whatever you can think of.

In the past many of my students have for chosen for newspaper articles using Lexis Nexis. I will briefly describe how it works, but using it is not obligatory.

LexisNexis is a digital newspaper archive that contains a large number of contributions from newspapers. Access to he archive is free within the UvA-domain (and via VPN). You can use a powerful search engine to select documents. Think and reflect on the sampling method.

Obviously while choosing topic and data, you should also delve into the method. In small groups we will assist other students in this delving and their analytical choices and technical issues.

The conclusions of the analysis will be the main focus of the very short presentation (pitch) in the last session.

The main focus of the report, however, will be the methodology *used* for the qualitative analysis.

To be taken to class on paper and uploaded to Blackboard on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013, 9.00.

<b>Session</b>	<b>First half of the session</b>	<b>Second half of the session</b>	<b>ATLAS.ti</b>	<b>Background literature</b>	<b>Specific Literature</b>
<b>Week 1 Feb. 8</b>	Introduction Analysis and interpretation	Explanation of Homework 1: Deductive analysis ATLAS.ti	Basics of ATLAS.ti, Code & Retrieve	Friese (2012) intro and chapter 1	
<b>Week 2 Feb. 15</b>	Interpretation and Overview of qualitative genres	Classroom discussion about homework 1 Explanation of homework 2: Comparison of 2 genres in an essay	Networks & Queries	Moses & Knutsen (2007) Chapter 2, 8 Bernard & Ryan (2009) chapter 1 Silverman (2006) chapter 2	
<b>Week 3 Feb. 22</b>	Content analysis, Grounded theory 1	Explanation of final assignment: Methodological report of qualitative analysis Decision on topic	Families, Tools	Ryan & Bernard (2003) Bernard & Ryan (2009) Chapter 13 Bryman (2008) chapter 22	Hsieh & Shannon (2005) Maxwell (2005) chapter 3
<b>Week 4 Mar. 1</b>	Rigorous approaches, Analytic induction Grounded theory 2	Deadline of homework 2 Explanation of Homework 3: Bernie Beck's Trick & Mindmap		Becker (1998) chapter 5 Hammersley (2010)	Charmaz (2006) Glaser (2002) Glaser & Holton (2004) Kelle (2005)
<b>Week 5 Mar. 8</b>	Bernie Beck's trick		Individual and group work	Maxwell (2005) chapter 3	
<b>Week 6 Mar. 15</b>	Final Thoughts	Deadline final report	Individual and group work	Wolcott (2002)	Atkinson (2005) Hammersley (2007)

## Literature

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