

Hubert Knoblauch/Bernt Schnettler  
Jürgen Raab/Hans-Georg Soeffner  
(eds.)



# Video Analysis: Methodology and Methods

Qualitative Audiovisual Data Analysis in Sociology



PETER LANG

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## Introduction to the third edition

Methods for analyzing social interaction with audio-visual data have improved significantly over the past few years. It is only a slight exaggeration to say that this research area has been expanding enormously in the last few years, and the interest in qualitative video analysis is growing at dizzy speed. This rapid development was not anticipated at the time when the first edition of this book was prepared and published. A second edition is already sold out. The editors, as well as the contributors, are pleasantly surprised by the widespread attention this book and the papers included have received. Unusual enough for an edited book of this type, it is therefore living to see a third edition.

One of the reasons for this widespread interest may lie in the fact that it was probably the first book published in English to address the methodology of interpretive video analysis in the Social Sciences. As a collected volume, it, secondly, includes a number of excellent contributions which are grounded in decades of experience with video analysis, particularly in the ethnomethodological tradition. Represented by authors like Christian Heath, this mostly anglo-saxon strand has, undoubtedly, set the international standards for qualitative video analysis in this area (for a historical overview cf. Erickson 2011). A third reason for the interest in this book is to be seen in its methodological pluralism. When we first published this collection, it was our firm intention to open the methodological debate between different theoretical traditions within the field of qualitative social research using video data. Therefore, the book at hand includes contributions representing forms of video analysis more entrenched in the 'continental' tradition of interpretive social research, like communicative genre analysis, sociological hermeneutics or documentary analysis.

As broad as the range of approaches represented in this book may be, the texts are generally committed to what is increasingly called videography. The notion of videography highlights the fact that video is not only used as a technology for analyzing audiovisual data made available by different media, such as film, television or the internet. The notion of videography underlines the fact that the audiovisual data have been recorded by the researchers themselves in a more or less naturalistic social situation (cf. Knoblauch, Schnettler, Tuma, in print).

In the face of the rapid changes in the field, the reader should be aware of some publications which give insights in more recent developments of methods of video analysis in various fields, such as education (Goldman et al. 2009; Dinkelaker & Herrle 2009), and on specific issues, such as the analysis of films (Reichert & Englert 2011). The most prominent and encompassing publication on qualitative video analysis is, without doubt, the monograph by Heath, Hindmarsh & Luff (2010). This book will be a useful reference for everyone looking for a thoroughly developed methodology and for practical advice when conducting own research with video data. In addition, the journal *Qualitative Research* recently devoted a special issue (2012) on the question of qualitative video analysis.

Regardless of the increasing number of publications on the methodology of interpretive video analysis, there are still a number of problems and tasks pending to be resolved in the nearer future, which cannot be addressed here (cf. Knoblauch 2012). It is still too early to consider the field as settled. Therefore, the temptation to update the articles in this book was high. For reasons of feasibility as well as time and costs we had to dismiss the idea of an updated version. We remit the interested reader to another book in preparation in which we discuss in detail recent developments in video analysis (Tuma, Schnettler & Knoblauch 2012). It also includes examples from our own research and provides practical instructions.

Particularly with respect to the methods of collecting and analyzing audiovisual recordings, books, however, are of limited help when seeking to enhance ones methodological skills and expertise. For video analysis, as in many other qualitative methods, the old boy scout's aphorism "Learning by Doing" applies. Fortunately enough, there are now numerous workshops and special training courses on how to conduct video data analysis.

With the present third edition, we make available once again what has resulted as an important milestone in the development of interpretive video analysis. We wish to express our gratitude to Dr. Kloss from the editing company Lang for his patience and solidarity with which he accompanied this project.

Bayreuth, Berlin, Bonn & Magdeburg  
Summer 2012

The editors

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## **Video-Analysis**

### **Methodological Aspects of Interpretive Audiovisual Analysis in Social Research**

#### **I**

In recent years, we have witnessed the proliferation of an increasingly sophisticated new instrument of data collection: Video camcorders. Camcorders do not only allow for a rich recording of social processes. They also provide and produce a new kind of data for sociology. In fact, some authors believe to be able to discern a “video revolution”: the effects of this “microscope of interaction” are expected to be as profound as was the invention of the tape recorder, which gave rise to new research disciplines such as conversation analysis.

In fact, video is much more widely used nowadays in the most diverse branches of society than the tape recorder ever was. Video-art, wedding videos, holiday videos and the huge variety of usages of video on the internet demonstrate to anyone and everyone that video has become a medium that pervades our everyday life. An ever-increasing role is played by video-mediated forms of communication, such as video-conferences (Finn, Sellen & Wilbur 1997). It is quite likely that the dissemination of UMTS will also lead to a more wide-spread use of mobile video mediated communication and video-messaging. Finally, video surveillance technologies have become an accepted part of our daily lives (Fyfe 1999, Fiske 1998).

As accepted and broadly used as camcorders and video records may be in all institutional spheres as well as in private life, the methodological discussion of their use in scholarly studies is greatly underdeveloped. As a medium used by the people themselves, video deserve much closer attention than we are able to pay them in this book. If we, however, look at the science of society – sociology (and, for that matter, other social scientific disciplines) – we discern a wide disregard for video. Whereas text-centred approaches have been subject to innumerable methodological reflections and methodical designs, video has neither as a method of data collection nor as a medium used by the members of our society been able to attract much attention from sociologists and other students of society and culture.

It is for this reason that we would like to take this opportunity to tackle the task of presenting methodologies for the analysis of video. By this we do not mean methodologies for the use of visual data, for this has already been the subject of many books (cf. Banks & Murphy 1997, Davies 1999, Emmison & Smith 2000, Pink 2001).

Instead, we are interested in methodologies that address questions related specifically to analytical work with video recordings.

Very early on, the advantages of video as an observational technique proved to be quite obvious (cf. Gottdiener 1979, Grimshaw 1982, Heath 1986). Compared to observations made by the naked human eye, video recordings appear more detailed, more complete and more accurate. In a technical sense, they are more reliable since they allow data analysis independent of the person who collected the data. However, despite the fact that video now is widely used in sociology and the social sciences, there have been but very few attempts to discuss the methodology of working with this medium as an instrument of data collection and analysis. No doubt, debates on visibility, visual culture and visualisation abound – also in the social sciences. Nowadays, there is a huge amount of criticism at the level of epistemology. Anyone interested in the field will discover flourishing debates on the cultural meaning of video-clips of Madonna's pop songs or the epistemological question as to the hows and whys of the picture's betrayal of the viewer. However, few are the scholars who actually address the question of what to do in case one dares not just to talk about epistemology, but instead to use the medium and work empirically with the data produced within its various forms (Jordan & Henderson 1995, Heath 1986, Lomax & Casey 1998, Heath 1997, for classroom interaction cf. Aufschnaiter & Welzel 2001).

By publishing this volume, we wish to change this situation, at least to some degree. The goal of this book is to provide ways in which videos can be analysed sociologically. The book, then, is an attempt to gather a number of researchers familiar with video analysis in order to focus on, scrutinise and clarify the crucial methodological issues in doing video analysis. The questions we would like to tackle are: what are the central features of video data; what kinds of video data can be distinguished; and particularly how should we analyse and interpret video data? In trying to answer these questions, the book will provide support for all those who are planning to use video as an instrument of data collection and analysis.

## II

When we speak of video analysis, it should be stressed that we are not referring to any and all kinds of work with video. To the contrary, there are a number of qualifications to the kind of studies represented in this volume which must be named in addition to all those features mentioned in the papers. First, it will become quite obvious that we have limited the range of studies presented *to social scientific analyses* of video data. People, their actions and the structures constructed by these actions lie at the heart of what is of interest to these studies. Within the social science framework, a variety of disciplines will be represented: sociology, anthropology, linguistics and education – as well as a number of researchers who would locate themselves across these disciplines or

in fields in which their studies are being applied (such as architecture, city planning or design). For the sake of brevity and for other contingent reasons, we have to concede that a number of disciplines are not represented in which video analysis has gained some importance, such as the psychology of perception or the visual arts.

The range of disciplines and the kind of video analysis portrayed in this volume share a second feature. Whoever scans the contributions in this book will soon discover that they seem to share a similar topic. Across the variety of fields, most of the studies focus on what one would call activities and interaction. Be they studies of the use of high technology and workplace settings, be they studies of people visiting museum, science studies or classroom investigations etc. – all of them to focus on *visual conduct* in general and on *interaction* in particular. It is the focus on the *audiovisual aspects of people in action* which constitutes the central subject of these video analyses. In more theoretical terms, one could say that the field of video studies is circumscribed by what Erving Goffman called the ‘interaction order’, i.e. the area of action in which people act in visual co-presence – a co-presence which can be captured by the camera. And since what people do covers a huge range of areas, the potential topics of video analysis is almost endless.

As varied as the topics may be, the manners in which the authors approach their topics are just as distinct. Although video analysis initially privileged experimental settings and studios, the kinds of analyses included here turn to what has come to be called “*natural data*”. Of course, natural data does not resemble the data found by natural scientists; since all video analysts agree in the interpretive character of their data, there should be no misunderstanding of natural data in this sense. Instead, by natural data we mean that the recordings are made in situations affected as little as possible by the researchers (Silverman 2005). Natural data refers to data collected when the people studied act, behave and go about their business as they would if there were no social scientists observing or taping them. There is no doubt that the very presence of video technology may exert some influence on the situation that is being recorded, an influence commonly labelled ‘reactivity’. In fact, this issue is addressed in this volume. Nevertheless, many studies show that the effect of video becomes negligible in most situations after a certain phase of habituation. The stress on the naturalness of data should, however, not be understood as a total neglect of other kind of situations. Interviews or even experiments may also be subjected to video analyses, the general assumption being that they are not as a result taken to represent something else (i.e. what is talked about in the interview), but only as what they are: interviews or experiments. In general, however, video analyses turn to more profane situations: people at work, people in the museum, people sitting in a café etc. It is, by the way, this orientation towards “natural situations” that leads video analysts to sympathise strongly with ethnography, particularly the kind of ethnography which turns towards encounters, social situations and performances as championed by Erving Goffman (1961, 1967, 1971). In order to distinguish this ethnographically oriented video analysis from other standardised forms of video analysis, it seems therefore quite reasonable to apply to it the term ‘videography’ (cf. Knoblauch, this volume).

However, although the “naturalness” of the data is a goal towards which video analysts in general strive, it would be misleading to assume that there is only one sort of data for video analysis. Rather, there is a whole array of what may be called “data sorts” produced by video data collection. There are two reasons for this variety: first, because people in “natural situations” may themselves use video recording technology, they provide video researchers with various sorts of videos, such as weddings videos, videos from other festive occasions or bits and pieces of their everyday life. Second, researchers may produce videos in differing ways. They may, for example, ask the actors themselves to portray their everyday life by means of the video, e.g. by producing video diaries<sup>1</sup>; they may actively use the camera as an instrument of visual construction of data or they may edit the video data in various ways which are now much more readily accessible. On these grounds, we would suggest distinguishing between various sorts of video data. By sorts of video data, we refer to the ways in which the data are constructed (cf. Knoblauch 2003: chap. III). Some sorts of video data are sketched on the diagram below. The ways in which data is constructed may be distinguished in two dimensions: on the one hand, the data are manipulated through various technical procedures. No doubt, the technical recording itself may be considered a decisive form of manipulation. However, whereas different technologies (Super 8, V 8, digital video etc.) produce almost the same results, the differing technologies allow for an additional set of manipulations: beginning with repeating, slow motion and single frame, these include ways of selection, highlighting, enlargements etc. We subsume all these forms under the label “record”. Secondly, videos may be distinguished by the way they address the situation. Whereas some just try to “copy” what has been visualised, others attempt to make something seen which is not happening without their influence. Wedding guests wish to see the newlyweds kissing each other in front of the camera; the experimenter wishes that the subjects shake hands, the film maker wishes the actors to hit each other. This level of manipulating the situation for the sake of what may be seen on the video by the recipients we call ‘recipient design’. Within these two dimensions we can locate a number of data sorts: video-diaries, weddings videos, “natural videos” etc.

The studies represented in this volume share an additional common feature. Whereas in a number of fields, e.g. in psychology or in engineering, we find a strong tendency to standardise, even automatise data analysis (Mittenecker 1987, Koch & Zumbach 2002), the contributors of this volume propose a rather different methodology. It is not that they oppose standardisation or automatisation in general. However, they all share the conviction that it is definitely premature to approach audiovisually

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1 Thus Holliday (2000) asked subjects to produce ‘auto-ethnographic’ videos in order to show how they organize their daily lives. In a similar way, in Anthropology, for example, indigenous people have been asked to use the video in order to preserve their “native” perspective (cf. Ruby 2000).

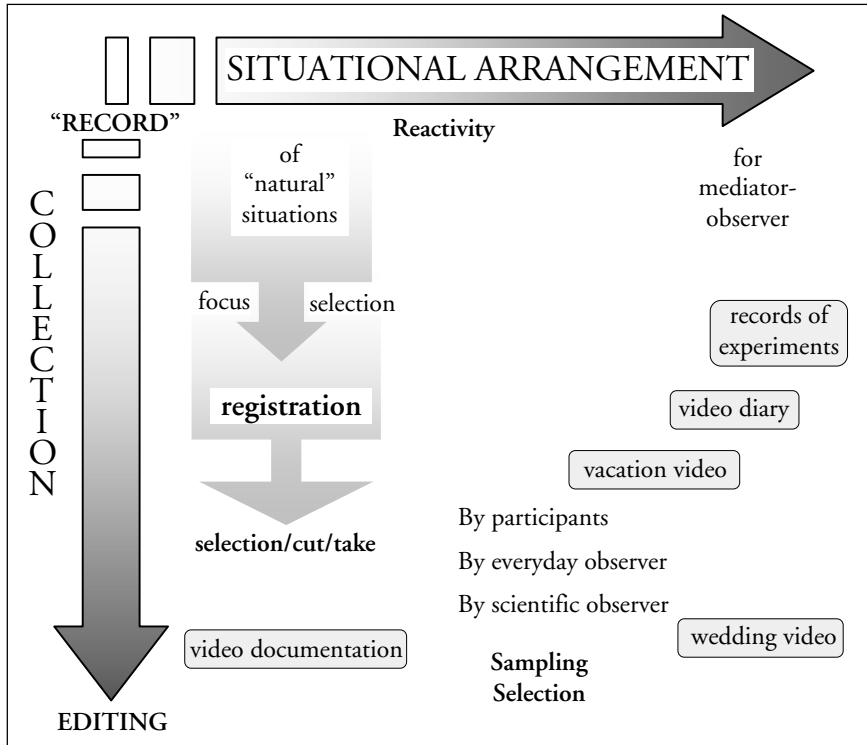


Fig. 1: Methodological Dimensions of Video-Data Collection

recorded data by means of standardised coding procedures. Instead, all of the methods suggested here can be said to relate to what is commonly called *non-standardised, qualitative* or, to be more exact, *interpretive social research*.<sup>2</sup> They share the assumption that the world in which people act is a world of meanings and that, therefore, research on people in action must account for the meanings of these actions. Yet it would be utterly misleading to assume that the volume's methodological orientation is monolithic. Within the field of interpretive or qualitative video analysis, there is still quite a variety of approaches. The volume tries to collect at least the most prominent of them. Ethnomethodology and conversation analysis represent, of course, major fields, as do genre analysis, grounded theory and sociological hermeneutics.

2 To Pink (2001), reflexivity is the major feature of visual anthropology in general and video studies in particular. In our view, reflexivity is subordinated to the demand for interpretation – a demand which goes back to founding fathers of interpretive social sciences such as Weber and Schutz.

Thus, the papers as a group share a series of topics which are crucial for the current state of video analysis. In addition to the common orientation as social scientific, naturalistic and interpretive studies of social interaction, all papers stress that *sequentiality* is fundamental to video analysis. Although sequentiality can mean various things, (particularly between the hermeneutic notion and the rather conversation-analytical one), the parallel between the sequentiality of the medium and the sequentiality of social activities is fundamental to video analysis. Since all approaches are interpretive, the analyses build in one way or the other on what may be called “ethno-hermeneutics”. They also share the methodological conviction that interpretive analysis of video-data requires more than “visual empathy” combined with a mainly descriptive “structured microanalysis” as Denzin (2000) suggests.

### III

There is no doubt that the book cannot at once solve all the problems of video analysis. To the contrary, the papers presented here permit us to identify a series of issues that urgently need to be tackled. First, the problem of *complexity*: the relative neglect of video in the social sciences is sometimes attributed to its complexity and abundance. A few minutes of recording produce a large quantity of visual, kinaesthetic, and acoustic data that must be transcribed and prepared for analysis. Video data is certainly among the most complex data in social scientific empirical research. It is multi-sensual and sequentially ordered, enclosing both diachronic and synchronic elements, e.g. speech and visual conduct, gesture, mimic expressions, representation of artefacts and the structure of the environment, as well as signs and symbols. Moreover, it represents aspects related to recording activity itself, such as the angle and the focus of the camera, the cuts, and other elements pertaining to the activity of filming and editing. Hence, video recording generates an extraordinary abundance of data, confronting the researcher with the problems of data management, retrieval and selection. This may not only cause the problem of data overload, but also raises the question of how to select sequences appropriate for further scrutiny. It might also be the case that the quality of the recordings may be detrimental to analytic purposes. There may be interesting parts of video that can not be selected for further scrutiny due to, for example, recording problems (wrong perspective, defect in recording, people running through the image, etc.). Beyond such obvious practical restrictions, the methodological problem of what constitutes the unit of analysis and how to assure a balance between time-consuming microanalysis and an overview over the whole data corpus remain open questions for future methodological debates.

The second problem to be tackled urgently is the *technological challenge*. The role of technology should be taken into consideration to a much stronger degree than we can do here. The very fact that the methodology is heavily based on a technology subjects

it to future technological developments. This does not only raise the question mentioned above of what impact the technology may have on social scientific video analysis (and *vice versa*). Video confronts the researcher with a number of technical and material challenges. Some of them concern the implementation of camera, microphones, software etc. This technical part is still underestimated in the methodological discussion. Even if technology may not be considered an “autonomous actor” (Rammert & Schulz-Schaeffer 2002), the employed artefacts definitely exert at least some influence upon the course of action in the research process. Without doubt, the instruments change the way in which we collect, construct, analyse and interpret our data. Methodological considerations rarely reflect this material issue because we are used to discussing methodology in much more abstract terms. Hence, we may ask in which ways the instruments interfere with our analytical work. This question is especially pertinent for video analysis, which, compared to other qualitative methods, requires quite a lot of technology. Indeed, it may represent one of the most expensive and intricate ways to conduct qualitative research. Fortunately, equipment has become much cheaper and easier to handle in the last few years. Today, filming does not cost us 30,000 German Marks as it did when social psychologist Kurt Lewin started using films in the 1930's (Thiel 2003). Nonetheless, researchers still must purchase camcorders, tapes, tripods, microphones, etc. for the purpose of recording videos. In addition, analysing video data requires intelligent storage and cataloguing systems for raw data, powerful computer hardware and a series of software tools to digitalize, transcribe and analyze data and to present research results. Due to miniaturization and popularization, a very basic version of video equipment has even become accessible for students. Nevertheless, expenses entailed for basic research equipment (somewhere between equipment available for popular use and that used by television professionals) easily may amount to tens of thousands of Euros – in addition to the space, time and patience required to select the appropriate apparatus and software. Its handling requires also novel technical skills, quite unprecedented in qualitative inquiry. And, unlike other, more conventional forms of qualitative research, e.g. participant observation or interviews, preliminaries and preparation take considerably more time in qualitative video analysis. This may cause a certain delay in the analytical work, as quite extended portions of time are consumed by mere “craftsmanship”. (As a result, qualitative inquiry may become more similar to quantitative research. As in surveys, much work is invested in preparation, providing skills to the coders, handling the data-collections etc.).

Third, the relation between text and image must be clarified. No doubt, the relation between the spoken and the visual is of general epistemological importance. In the case of video analysis, however, this issue exhibits a very practical aspect: the *transcription* of data inscribes in its particular way how the visual is accounted for by the analysis, so that any further development of video analysis will also depend on the way in which data are being transcribed or otherwise made accessible for analysis. Analysis will increasingly be able to draw on visual representation, with the result that written

transcripts may lose their importance to such a degree as to possibly open the way for a “visual mentality” in analysis – a mode of analysing that depends less on the written word than on visualisation and imagination. The ongoing technological changes may also affect the way (and are already now affecting the ways) in which studies are being presented (cf. for example Büscher 2005). However, for the time being, we still rely on the rather conventional forms of transcriptions and frame grabs which are used in this book.<sup>3</sup> Consider that transcribing data is not just a preliminary phase of analysis. It forms an essential part of analysis. Transcribing generates observations that are fundamental to analytical inferences. As in research based on natural communicative activities or interviews, the transcription of video data is simply indispensable.

Conversation analysts and linguists have developed a wide array of transcription systems that transform the analytically important aspects of spoken language into textual representations (cf. Dittmar 2002 for a comprehensive overview). Nevertheless, transcription systems for video data still remain in an experimental stage. “There is no general orthography used for the transcription of visual and tactile conduct”. However, “over the years researchers have developed *ad hoc* solutions to locating and characterizing action” (Heath & Hindmarsh 2002: 20?). In this volume, readers will find a variety of approaches for transcribing the visual aspect which, nevertheless, may all be characterized as relatively preliminary. These “ad hoc solutions” are comprised of transcripts consisting basically of detailed description of what occurs in the video. There are also types of transcriptions for the non-verbal aspects and their relation to the verbal behaviour of the participants, ‘conduct score’, and sketches of action sequences or ‘thick interpretative descriptions’ in addition to representations of data that attempt to make use of the visual potential of video data.

Finally, one of the most salient problems is the *legal implications* of video-recording. Like any other form of research, video analysis is subject to legal and ethical restrictions. This concerns questions such as: where are video analysts permitted to film, who is permitted to record social interactions for analytical purposes, which of these images may be stored, analyzed or even used for publication and thereby disclosed to a wider audience. Although there have been intense debates on issues related to video recording in public places, their focus has been primarily on security issues and the questions of infringement on individuals’ right to privacy. To our knowledge, there is no specific regulation for scientific video recordings at the moment.<sup>4</sup> To assure that some kind of ‘informed consent’ exists seems to be, in the meantime, the most reasonable practical solution, although there may be cases in which this is virtually impossible (e.g. for each single pedestrian in wide-angle shots of public places). In addition,

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3 In addition, some of the video recordings analyzed in the different contributions to this book are available at <http://www.tu-berlin.de/fb7/ifs/soziologie/AllgSoz/publikationen.htm>.

4 We are grateful to Prof. Dr. Hansjürgen Garstka, the German federal government’s Secretary for Data Security, for his comment on the legal situation in Europe.



unlike for example the case of interview transcripts, anonymisation of moving images is a technically much more demanding task. Consequently, respecting the right to privacy in video analysis is a difficult and as yet unresolved problem, in addition to the legal implications of possible infringements on copy-rights and other rights that may be touched by capturing, recording, analysing, storing or publishing video data of some sort (i.e. the fine distinction the legal systems draws in the field of data protection in general). Legally, the use of video for scholarly purposes of the kind described above oscillates between the individual freedom, which puts particular restrictions on “natural recording” practices, on the one hand, and the freedom of research, which puts no limits on the potential subjects of video recording to the extent that these may be of scientific relevance. Because of the tension between these two extremes, researchers often find themselves caught in a dilemma. We hope that this dilemma will soon find a legal solution.

#### IV

As mentioned above, the different directions of video research represented in this volume share a number of features: they are social scientific, naturalistic, interpretive studies of visual conduct. As such, they refer, of course, to the long tradition of sociological thinking in general as well as to the study of social action and interaction in particular. In focusing on the realm of the visual, they also draw on the history of visual anthropology and sociology. The era of visual studies was opened at the turn of the last century, when photography and film started to be used within the social sciences (for an example see Breckindrige & Aboth 1910, MacLean 1903, Walker 1915, Woodhead 1904). By means of visual technologies, anthropology developed a visual branch (Collier 1979, cf. Bateson & Mead 1942, Mead 1975, Collier 1967, Collier & Collier 1986). In the form of the much more tenacious development termed visual sociology (Curry 1984, Curry & Clarke 1978, Henney 1986), it focused mainly on photography, and film was used primarily as a means of presenting results than as a datum to be analysed. Famous early examples are A. C. Haddon, Baldwin Spencer or Robert Flaherty who, starting at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, used film in order to analyse human conduct. Flaherty, for example, became familiar with the language and culture of the Inuit Eskimo and involved them in the making of his film studies. Another example is “The Ax Fight” by Asch und Chagnon, in which a short, violent fight among the Yanomamo Indians, filmed from a certain distance, is portrayed. The text of the film consists of the comments made by both researcher during the situation filmed (cf. Marks 1995). No doubt, anthropology developed an unprecedented collection of film data which was, as mentioned, mostly used to document reality instead of analysing it (Heider 1976).

The analysis of films as data took another route. As one of the first to use film as a datum for the study of behaviour, Kurt Lewin filmed a behavioural sequence as early as 1923/1924. Lewin analysed this sequence as an example for a behavioural conflict.

Building on Lewin, in 1935 Gesell published a book on “cinema analysis” as a “method for Behavior Study” in which he used frame-to-frame analysis (for more details cf. Thiel 2003). One could consider the famous analyses of Bali dance by Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson (1942) as a continuation of these studies. In a later study, Bateson and the so called “Palo Alto group” used film in order to analyse interaction between family members. Again, psychologists were included (such as Frieda Fromm-Reichmann and Paul Watzlawick) because the main goal was to investigate if it is interaction that produces the “psychological disturbance” of individual family members. It was also Fromm-Reichmann who initiated the famous project on the “History of the Interview” in which the various modes of interaction were analysed for the very first time (Bateson 1958). Whereas the use of video in psychology increasingly came to focus on what was called “non-verbal behaviour” (cf. the seminal studies by Ekman & Friesen 1969), a parallel development saw the establishment of a marginal stream of studies with employed films to attempt to capture behaviour in a more encompassing and meaningful way. Among these were the studies of Ray Birdwhistell (1952, 1970), who analysed the interplay between nonverbal and verbal behaviour in minute detail, coining the notion of kinesics. (Birdwhistell also has the distinction of being one of Erving Goffman’s teachers, who was to become so important for the study of interaction). In a similar vein, Albert Schefflen (1965) analysed the role of posture for the structuring of psychotherapeutic encounters. Until the 1970s, however, these analyses were performed on the basis of film, which was a difficult medium for analysis. Things changed slowly with the introduction, miniaturisation and technical sophistication of video we have witnessed since then. It was particularly among conversation analysts that this medium gained relevance. This might be surprising since, for a long time (and, to some, until now), “hard core” conversation analysis prohibited the use of data of any other sort than audio recordings. On the other hand, the development of conversation analysis was supported by the use of the audio recorder, and the introduction of the camcorder seemed to extend the kind of data collection conversation analysts had been used to. Charles Goodwin was one of the first to use video in the way. He analysed spoken interaction in such a way as to show how visual aspects (particularly gaze) help to bestow order (Goodwin 1986, Goodwin 1981). Erickson and Shultz (1982) used video in their studies of four school counselors in their interview interaction with pupils. Also in the early 1980s, Christian Heath undertook video studies, targeting whole social situations such as medical encounters (Heath 1986). By the late 1970s, Thomas Luckmann and Peter Gross (1977) started a project which used video in order to develop an annotation system for interactions which was compared to a musical score. In a way, this project analyzed what has become to be called multimodality, even if most studies in this volume tackle this issue in a rather holistic way. Whereas this gave rise to a hermeneutic (Bergmann, Luckmann & Soeffner 1993, Raab 2001, 2002) and genre-analytic approach to video (Schnettler 2001, Knoblauch 2004), it was the more ethnomethodological approach of video analy-

sis which became increasingly employed in workplace studies, a field of research preoccupied with interaction at work in high technology settings (cf. Heath, Knoblauch & Luff 2000). It was again Christian Heath and his team who has contributed substantially to this field, as well as Lucy Suchman, Charles Goodwin, and Brigitte Jordan, etc. As far as we can see, it is only within this area that serious reflections on an interpretive methodology of video analysis have been undertaken. Thus, Christian Heath and others have sketched the methodological background of video analysis in several essays (1997) and Suchman & Trigg (1991) have explained the ways in which video contributes to workplace studies. Brigitte Jordan and Austin Henderson (1995) have tried to situate video analysis within the larger framework of interaction analysis. In a similar field of research, the French sociology of work, we even find a whole journal issue devoted to the issues of video analysis and visual sociology (see for example Lacoste 1997).

## V

The *papers in this volume* build on this type of video analysis; they are, as we have said, all social scientific, interpretive and naturalistic. As we shall see, their subject is human action and interaction. Despite the similarities, the focuses of the papers varies to some degree, so we have decided to put them in an order that reflects this variation.

The first series of papers focuses on *methodological issues* and address the question how video data may be analysed in a scientific manner. This question is addressed by other papers, too, since it is the common topic of the whole book. The papers in this section directly address this topic and propose analytical methodologies. These papers delineate approaches oriented to conversation analysis, ethnography or hermeneutics and, like THOMAS LUCKMANN in his short paper "Some Remarks on Scores in Multimodal Sequential Analysis", interpretive sociology in general. As he indicates, video provides a very helpful instrument for the analysis of interaction since it, despite all technical transformations, preserves the temporal and sequential structure which is so characteristic of interaction. Nevertheless, video analysis faces some serious problems which may be the reason for what he considers the "backwardness" of this method. It is the integration of the many modes of interaction, particularly the integration of the spoken and the visual, which must be addressed by a successful methodology.

CHRISTIAN HEATH and PAUL LUFF ("Video-Analysis and Organisational Practice") address the methodology of video analysis from a quite unusual and enlightening angle. Instead of sketching the ways in which analysis that meets scholarly standards should be conducted, the authors demonstrate very lucidly how video is analysed by lay persons in our societies. In treating actors whose professions require that they watch and on this basis interpret the behaviour of other actors as represented on video, they show how operators in undergrounds, personnel in surveillance centres and mem-

bers of similar professions act as (sometimes quite sophisticated) “lay sociologists” who must make sense of conduct and interactions. This sense-making is not only accomplished by watching but by also with reference to background knowledge and inferences that build on these professionals’ understanding of human conduct.

LORENZA MONDADA (“Video Recording as the Reflexive Preservation and Configuration of Phenomenal Features for Analysis”) recommends what she calls a “praxeological approach” to video practices. On the basis of an ethnomethodologically inspired video analytic framework, she strives to take into account not only the question of how data are analysed, but also how they are produced. She addresses exactly what we referred to above as data sorts, i.e. the practices by which data are constructed. One kind of practice she refers to is the “praxeology of seeing”, i.e. the setting up of the video camera before the action, the kinds of camera movements and the filmer’s interaction with the camera. Moreover, she also hints at the fact that various professions work skilfully with video data, developing their own “professional vision”. In conclusion, she draws attention to the practices of editing video records.

HUBERT KNOBLAUCH points to the problems of analysing video data, proposing an approach he calls “videography”. His article explores the potential of combining ‘focused’ ethnography with a microscopic analysis of video data. The programmatic title expresses the central importance of ethnographic field research for interpretive video-analysis. In combination with the attentive scrutiny of video sequences, ethnography is indispensable in order to make sense of and reconstruct the meaning of relevant details included in the recordings of social situations. Although video is an especially apt instrument for analyzing the details of action and interaction, a systematic collection of additional background knowledge is also of crucial importance. It is necessary to elucidate the visual aspects of the recordings, as the sequences are both situated and situative, that is both depending on and reflecting the larger social context.

In the final paper of the methodological first section, JÜRGEN RAAB and DIRK TÄNZLER suggest an approach they call “Video Hermeneutics”. This approach, based on Soeffner’s “structural hermeneutics”, has at its core a form of sequential analysis that attempts to reconstruct the range of readings, i.e. meanings, possible for single frames. By comparing different readings of key scenes, readings are excluded in order to arrive at a final, “objective” meaning. The interpretation is based on a “score” and proceeds by setting the context in parenthesis. They illustrate this approach in an analysis of two scenes of a television show.

Although they share the interest in methodology, the papers in the volume’s second section highlight the contribution of video analysis to specific *research fields*. Thus, DIRK VOM LEHN and CHRISTIAN HEATH (“Discovering Exhibits: Video-Based Studies of Interaction in Museums and Science Centres”) demonstrate how fruitfully video-analysis can be used for museum studies. The particular advantage of this method is that it allows us to study the conduct of visitors of museums arising with, at and around exhibits, in this way addressing the practice of aesthetics which has been

so often the subject of abstract theoretical debate. In order to do so, they analyse an example from a science museum. Moreover, their article also explains the reasons for conducting video analysis in general and some of the fundamental methodological issues relevant to such an analysis. Thus, they touch on the work of data collection as well as of transcription. They formulate three basic principles for data analysis: it is concerned with the indexical character of practical action, it considers social action as emergent and contingently accomplished, and it explicates the organisation through which participants produce particular actions.

CORNELIUS SCHUBERT ("Video-Analysis of Practice and the Practice of Video-Analysis") also conceives of video analysis as addressing social practice. In particular, he turns to practices in medicine, that is to say in operating theatres in which actors are confronted with technology to such a degree that it seems plausible to him to frame technology as agents in order to clarify the practice observed. In his reconstruction of the practice of video-analysis, he stresses the role of Grounded Theory. Content logs resembling coding procedures may help the researcher to collect and compare data. Video also may be used as a medium for reflection since it allows for feedback and elicitation. Because video data are thus complemented by interview, observation and narratives, he proposes to call this method videographic video analysis.

ANSSI PERÄKYLÄ and JOHANNA RUUSUVUORI ("Facial Expression in an Assessment") address a topic that had been prominent in psychology for a long time: non-verbal behaviour, or, in this case, facial expression. As opposed to the current attempts to analyse facial expression, they take an approach informed by conversation analysis. With respect to their data, which stems from "quasi-natural" conversations, they focus particularly on conversational assessments, i.e. the evaluations of persons and events that are described in conversational speech. In order to account for facial expressions found in the data, they develop a new transcription code which is added to the transcription of spoken utterances. Thus they demonstrate that the interpretation of facial expressions contribute significantly to assessments made within conversational contexts. Not only are facial displays coordinated interactively, but facial activities also incorporate the affective involvements of speakers with what is being assessed.

MONIKA WAGNER-WILLI bases her analysis of interaction in classrooms on the method of documentary interpretation suggested by Ralf Bohnsack ("On the Multi-dimensional Analysis of Video-Data. Documentary Interpretation of Interaction in Schools"). This method seeks to account for both the sequential aspects of video data as well as the simultaneity of visual information by distinguishing two dimensions of meaning: the explicit communicative dimension is at work when actors relate to the social role or the institutional order, whereas the conjunctive experiential space refers to the more implicit background commonalities of actors. She studies the threshold phase between breaks and lessons. This phase reveals itself as a transitional, liminal phase inbetween the conjunctive experiential space of the peer group and the communicative sociality of the school class.

BERNT SCHNETTLER (“Orchestrating Bullet Lists and Commentaries. A Video Performance Analysis of Computer Supported Presentations”) focuses on a relatively new option in face-to-face communication, which in many formally organized social situations quickly became something of an obligation, and that the author therefore claims to be a specific modern ritual: computer-supported presentations. Computer programs such as Microsoft’s PowerPoint offer speakers the opportunity to support their presentations with prefabricated and often animated visual impressions, i.e. diagrams and bullet lists, as well as more complex visual forms such as photos and video clips. Schnettler’s video performance analysis inquires into the specific new skills a speaker needs to coordinate different kinds of actions during his or her talk in order to gain social acceptance, and to prove him- or herself to be a competent performer. The case study of a computer-supported presentation arrives at the conclusion that ‘translating’ and ‘conducting attention’ are two core elements of a unique type of social action the author calls ‘orchestration’.

The contributions to the third part of the book share this interest in methodology, while at the same time drawing as well on a particular empirical field. In addition, they are characterised by their interest in the use of video for research (and the role of video for non-scientific practice). In studying classroom interaction, ELISABETH MOHN (“Permanent Work on Gazes. Video Ethnography as an Alternative Methodology”) calls for a manner of using video recordings which differs markedly from the “natural situation documentation” used by many. She draws on data collected while doing research in classrooms. Her argument is that the gaze, that is subjectivity of the video ethnographer as well as the visual character of these ethnographies, should be accounted for in the manner in which the data is collected and analysed. She proposes using video recordings as a form of field notes that follow the interests and the observational focus of the ethnographer. Thus, the camera moves according to what seems of importance to the ethnographer. As a result, the analysis, too, will be based on visual data, representing a departure from the word-centred report in favour of a visual display of the result.

In a similar vein, ERIC LAURIER and CHRIS PHILO (“Natural Problems of Naturalistic Video Data”) examine the question of the practical use of video in research settings. Although studying “a day in the life of the café”, they come to address what one used to call reactivity. Through their video recordings of people in cafés, they came to realise that the presence of the camera (and the absence of the ethnographer) is a constitutive feature of the setting recorded. Instead of getting rid of “reactivity” and thereby creating naturalness as the (artificial) absence of the recording device, they therefore turn to the ways in which subjects “react” to the presence of a video camera. The video, then, creates in their view a “videoactive context”, as Shrum, Duque and Brown (2005) would say. In fact, the subjects do not only react, the video triggers action on their part and thus contributes to the interaction.

Practice in a somewhat different vein is the topic of the paper by SIGRID SCHMID (“Video Analysis in Qualitative Market Research – from Viscous Reality to Catchy Footage”). She discusses the importance video has gained within the qualitative mar-