Documentary method an group discussions :

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Documentary Method and Group Discussions

In the first part of this contribution I will outline some central methodological or epistemological questions which we have to deal with in qualitative research. It will be shown that the documentary method may give some essential answers to these questions by its special stance of observation and analysis which then will be exemplified by research on base of group discussions.

In the second part, I will demonstrate the practice of interpretation with the documentary method in detail using the example of a transcript from a group discussion among young men with a migration background.

1. Methodology, Analytic Stance and Theoretical Framework

Considering the actual state of art in the area of qualitative methods in Germany and beyond in international discourse, one general problem has to be faced in methodology and practice of qualitative research: in correspondence with the discourse in the epistemology of social sciences, qualitative research is forced to overcome objectivism with its claims of a privileged access to reality, but at the same time has to prove its validity and its scientific quality.

1.1 Objectivism versus Subjectivism in Qualitative Research

The tendency towards an objectivistic stance in empirical research has its origin partly in criticizing the subjectivism in quantitative research. As pointed out, among others by Theodor W. Adorno (1976), even highly aggregated data, which lay claim to representativity, mostly only permit an access to the subjective perspective of those under research. The differentiation between the subjective meaning and the objective structure, however, was often gained at the expense of taking the perspective of the observer as more or less absolute.[1] The social as well as the scientific standpoint of the observer thus was not reflected.

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1 In the area of qualitative methods in Germany, this holds especially true for example for objective hermeneutics in the tradition of Frankfurt School (see also: Bohnsack 2003).

By criticizing this objectivism, qualitative researchers in the tradition of social phenomenology, turned back to the subjective meaning („subjektiv gemeinter Sinn") in the Max Weber's sense (1978) and took it as the basic element of methodology and theory of action in social sciences – following Alfred Schütz (1962) in his way of continuing and specifying Weber's position. This, however, has left us with an unmastered problem. By following the subjective meaning we can learn a lot about the perspective, i.e.: the theories and the intentions, of those under research. But there is no way to differentiate methodologically between the perspective of those under research and the perspective of the observer. As a consequence there is no real methodological difference between common sense and scientific interpretation.

The problematic relation between objectivism and subjectivism outlined here is obviously not restricted to the area of qualitative methods. It seems to be a rather central problem in nearly all methodologies and theories of action in social sciences. The discussion of these epistemological problems, however, has been carried out with a certain intensity in the area of qualitative research. Both antagonistic positions – subjectivist as well as objectivistic – have in common that they stick to the aporie, the incompatibility, of objectivism and subjectivism.

To overcome the dilemma between the way of empirical research which reconstructs the subjective meaning by systematizing it, but remains within the borders of what is taken for granted by common sense, on the one hand, and the objectivistic claim for a privileged access to reality, on the other, it was Karl Mannheim (1952 and 1982) who made an essential contribution as early as in the 1920th. Mannheim's sociology of knowledge offers a perspective for observation and interpretation, in which – although there is a clear-cut difference between the observer's perspective and the subjective meaning attributed by the actors – the actors' (those under research) knowledge is still the basis of analysis.

Essential to this specific stance of observation is the distinction between two different sorts or levels of knowledge: the reflexive or theoretical knowledge on the one hand, and the practical or incorporated knowledge on the other. It is the latter kind of knowledge which gives orientation to action. This is implicit knowledge. Mannheim also called it „atheoretical knowledge". In English it is Michael Polanyi (1985) who has coined the term „tacit knowledge".

This implicit or tacit knowledge forms a sort of structure, by which action is orientated mostly independent from the subjective meaning, and has insofar a certain objectivity opposed to it. At the same time, however, this structure of implicit knowledge is a mental product. Mannheim (1984: 94) therefore has called it an „objective mental structure formation" („objektiv-geistiger Strukturzusammenhang"). This sort of structure, thus, – to emphas-

ize yet again – belongs to the knowledge of the actors themselves. It is knowledge at the actor's disposal, and not knowledge which the observers have a privileged access to, as is typical for the objectivistic approaches. The social scientific interpreters thus do not presume or presuppose that they know more than the actors in the field, but that those actors themselves do not really know what exactly they know. Thus, the task of the scientific observer is the explanation of this implicit or tacit knowledge. This epistemological starting position is fundamentally different form objectivistic approaches. [2]

Thus, the documentary method is apt to overcome the aporie between subjectivism and objectivism: Although the empirical base of research lies in the knowledge of those under research and in their relevance, the observer is not committed to their subjective intentions and common sense theories. Much more she or he is able to find an access to the structure of action and orientation, which exceeds the perspective of those under research.

1.2 Theory of Practice and Practical Hermeneutics

The structure which is meant here is the "structure of practice" in Bourdieu's sense (1972), the modus operandi of everyday practice, the "habitus" of the actors (Bourdieu 1974). In a certain analogy to Bourdieu's "theory of practice" (and partly influenced by it) it has been Thomas A. Schwandt (2002, 2003 and 2005) in the U.S., one of the most famous younger researchers in the field of qualitative evaluation, who has drawn attention to the problem that the current understanding of research in social sciences is committed to a concept of knowledge (and intelligence) which is not able to meet the requirements of practice of our everyday life and our practical relation to the world.

Asking for the structure of practice, for the practical accomplishment and construction of reality means asking for he habitualized practices, based on the incorporated experiential knowledge of the actors which guides their activities. The way of social research opening up such an access to reality has been called "practical hermeneutics" by Thomas Schwandt (2002: 47).

The consequences for the practice of empirical research, however, have not been worked out by Schwandt himself. Nevertheless, here we can directly connect between "practical hermeneutics" in Schwandt's sense and the documentary method (resp. its theoretical background: the praxeological

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2 According to the documentary method it is not the scientific observer's task to apply to the cases under research any knowledge about rules, which is only known to him- or herself. Moreover, it is his or her task to explain that knowledge and the rules, which are implied in this knowledge, which is kept to themselves by those under research without explanation. This way of analysis by explanation is the way of "inductive analysis" in the sense of Glaser/Strauss (1967; see also Strauss 1987) or more precisely the way of "abduction" in the sense of Charles S. Peirce (1932) (see also Bohnsack 2008: chapter 11).

sociology of knowledge), which has a tradition in the practice of empirical research for more than twenty years now.

Thomas Schwandt's position is rather different to the mainstream of qualitative research in the U.S., where we can identify a restriction to the dimension of theoretical knowledge. This mainstream adheres to the interpretive paradigm, as can be seen when reading for example the Handbook of Qualitative Research edited by Norma K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (1994). "Interpretivism" is connected with a reduced understanding of „constructivism".[3] In this understanding constructivism is restricted to the *interpretive* und *definitoric* construction or production of reality (see more detailed: Bohnsack 2009a). Thus, the subject of research is essentially restricted to „theoretical world-cognition", as we can call it using a term from Martin Heidegger (1986: 67). In contrast to that understanding of constructivism, a broader understanding of it also comprises the production and construction of the world in everyday practice (see also Bohnsack 2001 and 2005).

The restriction to the „theoretical world-cognition", to the theoretical knowledge of the actors in social research, is mainly supported by the fact that the methodical access to this dimension of action is uncomplicated, empirical research is protected from complications and bigger efforts, because in this dimension, social science research can confine itself to the reconstruction of the common sense *theories* of the actors. And that means it can stick to that level of knowledge which already has been *explicated* by the actors themselves. Their expressions can be taken literally.

1.3 The Change in Analytic Stance from Asking 'What' to Asking 'How': from Immanent to Documentary Meaning

Going beyond the literal meaning or – in terms of Karl Mannheim (1952) – the "immanent" meaning, requires a change in analytic stance. The documentary interpretation presupposes a change in analytic stance which is different from common sense. It is the change from the question *what* social reality is in the perspective of the actors, to the question *how* this reality is produced or accomplished in these actors' everyday practice. By practice, I mean the practice of action as well as of talk, of presentation and of argumentation.

The change from asking what to asking how, is also constitutive for the constructivist stance of analysis. In the sense of the system theory of Niklas Luhmann (1990: 95), this is the transition between observations of *first* to observations of *second* order, the transition from observation to "observing the observations".

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3 The terms „interpretivism" and „constructivism"are mostly used synonymously in qualitative research in the U.S. – see among others Guba/Lincoln (1989) und Greene (1994).

Thus Karl Mannheim has outlined the first explanation of the stance of the observer in the social sciences, which still meets the requirements of epistemology today. The constructivist stance of analysis – especially where it has become relevant for empirical research – has been influenced by ethnomethodology. Here – for the first time – social reality is considered in a radical way from the point of view of its „ongoing accomplishment", as Garfinkel (167: vii) puts it. The documentary method is one of the crucial terms of ethnomethodology, taken over from Mannheim (1952) by Harold Garfinkel (1961 and 1967).[4]

The documentary method offers – on the level of an observation of the second order – an access to the pre-reflexive or tacit knowledge, which is implied in the practice of action. Asking for the documentary meaning can – as I already mentioned – be understood as asking for *how*: how is practice produced or accomplished. That means, asking for the modus operandi of practical action. This question has to be distinguished from asking *what* (on the level of the observer of first order), for the immanent or literal meaning.

Concerning group discussions, the immanent meaning comprises that stock of knowledge which can be made explicit by the participants themselves. This has to be distinguished from knowledge of experience, which is so much taken for granted by the participants that it must not and often cannot be made explicit by themselves. The participants understand each other because they hold common knowledge without any need to explicate it for each other.

If we look at group discussions or at everyday talk in general, only on the level of the literal or explicit meaning, discussions often seem to be without real connection between topics and without any general structure. It seems to the observer as if new meanings emerge constantly. I would like to illustrate this problem with an example from a research project about young migrant people of Turkish origin (cf. Bohnsack et al. 2002 and Bohnsack/Nohl 1998). The discourse was initiated by the interviewers asking if the young people actually live with their parents. First, the male youths in turn give narrations. They express that it would be impossible to smoke in the presence of the father because of their respect for him. Then they delineate how they behave in their peer group. At last, one of them depicts the situation of a visit in a restaurant with his German girlfriend. There was a dispute with her about who is allowed to pay the bill.

Although the topics change permanently, the young people understand (in German: "verstehen") each other obviously without being able to interpret (in German: "interpretieren") each other's utterances (cf. also below: 1.6),

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4 The understanding of the documentary method in ethnomethodology of Harold Garfinkel is (in comparison to the understanding of Karl Mannheim: 1952) however connected with some limitations in theoretical perspective, which cannot be considered here; see: Bohnsack 2001 and 2006).

that means: without being able to explicate the message connected with their depictions – to explicate the framework or structure of orientations, which underlies their depictions. This framework of orientations, as we call it, can only be unfolded by depictions and narrations, that means: it can only be depicted metaphorically. It is the researcher who on behalf of the participants explicates their frame of orientation, who brings it to terms. The task of the researchers as documentary interpreters, thus, is the theoretical explication of the mutual implicit or intuitive understanding of the participants.

Only when researchers succeed in such explications, will they be able to identify the pattern of meaning resp. the problem which underlies the whole discourse and which is worked out through different topics. Thus, it becomes possible to look beneath the surface of continuously emerging new opinions of the participants and to identify those general patterns or frames of orientations which are represented in the discourse.

In our example that pattern of meaning or orientation which could be identified throughout the whole discourse, has been called the pattern of the "separation of spheres". It is a separation between the *inner* sphere, the sphere of life inside the family, the networks of relatives and ethnic community, and the sphere outside of it in the public: the *outer* sphere. This distinction is constitutive for the youths entire everyday practice. So we can see that the traditional habitus of respect towards father and family requires to keep central elements of the outer sphere (that means: the activities of the young people within the peer group, at school and at the work place) out of the inner sphere (for example, even the activity of smoking a cigarette).

Thus, we have a separation or severance of spheres which makes it hardly possible to have an open negotiation between children and parents about problems relevant for the young people's identity. Both spheres with their different morales stand apart from each other. This separation of spheres concerns different areas of the everyday life, which become topics of discourse – among others i.e., the relationship with the German girlfriend. In case of a conflict between these different morales there is no (meta-)communicative negotiation with the girlfriend, but a strategic circumvention.

Also in other passages of the same group discussion (for example when the young people talk about their experience with ethnic discrimination), we find that frame or pattern of orientation we have called the separation of spheres. On a certain level of abstraction, we can recover a homologous pattern throughout the entire discourse once we have succeeded to identify it in one of the passages or topics.

Those passages are much better qualified than others to identify the general pattern of orientation in the sense of the habitus of a group or a person we call focusing passages or *focusing metaphors*. These passages are characterized by detailed or dense depictions (what we call *metaphorical density*)

and by a high commitment (what we call *interactive density*). The identification of these passages makes it possible to get a quick and valid access to the central patterns of orientation.

By this example central components of the documentary method, especially the documentary interpretation of group discussions, can be demonstrated:[5]

- ▫ The documentary meaning can be distinguished from the immanent or literal meaning.
- ▫ The documentary meaning reveals itself, if the process of discourse is taken into account.
- ▫ On the one hand, such a process analysis requires a detailed reconstruction of the reference of the utterances to each other. We call this „organization of discourse".
- ▫ On the other hand, such a process analysis means to take into account the „dramaturgy of the discourse", to identify its culminating points, its „focusing metaphors"

1.4 Focusing Metaphors and Conjunctive Spaces of Experience

Culminating points in the dramaturgy of the discourse, as they are represented by focusing metaphors, refer to the centers of common experience of the members of the group, to the centers of a common space of experience. Following Karl Mannheim (1982), we call this a "conjunctive space of experience" (in German: "konjunktiver Erfahrungsraum").[6] Those, who have biographic experience in common, have commonalities in their history of socialization and, thus, have a common or conjunctive experiential space, understand each other immediately insofar as these biographical commonalities become relevant in interaction and discourse.

These commonalities can be found in different dimensions. They may concern the dimension of generation, of gender, of milieu or class, the dimension of the life course or – as in our example – the dimension of migration, because the young people have a common history of migration. Accordingly, we distinguish between those spaces of experience which are generation, education, gender, and migration specific and/or specific for a phase in the life course (for instance adolescence). To take this into account, empirical analysis must always be *multidimensional*.

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5 For further examples of research with group discussions and the documentary method see the contributions in: Bohnsack/Przyborski/Schäffer 2006, and for further information on the methodological background and the history of the method of group discussion see: Bohnsack 2004 as well as 2008: chapter 7.
6 Differing from the English translation in Mannheim 1982 (p. 204), where we can find the term: "conjunctive experiential space", I prefer to translate the German "konjunktiver Erfahrungsraum" (Mannheim 1980: 227) with "conjunctive space of experience".

Which one of these experiential spaces becomes dominant, depends on the composition of the participants in the discussion (see also Przyborski 2004), on biographical elements shared by the participants. The reconstruction of the dramaturgy of the discourse and, thus, the identification of focusing metaphors enables us to identify the space of experience and, thus, the background of socialization which is dominant within the group (in our example this is the space of experience of migration in the history of the family).

The group then gradually adjusts itself to those topics, which are in the centre of the common experience, if the researchers are successful in initiating a discourse, which may gain a self-dynamic and, thus, becomes independent from researcher's interventions. This means that researchers – at least in the first phase of a group discussion – should interfere with the discussion only insofar as this contributes to getting the discourse going, to enable, to initiate or to keep the self-dynamics of the discourse (see also Bohnsack 2008: chapter 12.1).

The self-dynamics are important for another reason: it is only in the interplay of the mutual reactions of the participants that the collective meaning (in difference from the individual meaning) of the utterances is constituted and by this is available to the researcher's interpretations. It is solely in the mutual references to each other that the collective pattern of meaning, the tacit knowledge as a collective knowledge, documents itself.

Besides initiating the self-dynamics of the discussion, it is a central principle of leading a group discussion to initiate or generate descriptions or narrations of everyday practice. The implicit knowledge of those under research can be found mostly in concrete and detailed depictions of practical action. By this the *structure or patterns of orientations* underlying the practical action, the „modus operandi" or the „*habitus*" in the terms of Pierre Bourdieu, can be identified.[7]

Let me give you another example; it originates in earlier research on young people from a small town in Northern Bavaria (Bohnsack 1989). Here, we have a passage taken from a discourse of young female workers. In the young women's discourse – in contrast to young men – gender relations became the central topic, a topic that demonstrated all the features of a focusing metaphor and, thus, were in the focus of the discourse. The following passage which I will explain to you, is about the gendered division of labor – more specifically, it is about their respective father's participation in housework.

In the following, we will look at part of a longer depiction given by one of he girls, a depiction of how the father potters about in the kitchen (Haus: Geschlechtsrolle, 5.07-42 u. 6.20-27). (In the original version the transcript is in the Bavarian, or more precisely, in the Franconian dialect, which, of course, cannot be transmitted here):

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7 For further information concerning the terms „habitus" and „patterns of orientation" see: Bohnsack 1998 and 2008: chapter 8)

Text: Discussion group: House. Excerpt: gender role

Df: When my mother is cooking, he says: what have you been cooking again, what does it taste like, let me have a look. Then she says: go away, I am doing the cooking, o.k.. Or when he has his fit sometimes, he goes away and buys meat and stuff, and then she says: what have you bought again? Hmm, I'll cook something in advance and we'll put it in the freezer it then. Then he goes there (in the kitchen) and cooks from nine in the morning till ten in the evening if it's possible. And then we always have to, we are not allowed to stand around in his way, but we are also supposed
                                    ⌊
several: @1@

Df: to tidy up. He takes everything out, he needs all the cooking pots, for everything he cooks he needs a separate pot (.) he always says we have four hotplates he always says: there are not enough   ⌉
                                ⌊
several: @1@

Df: hotplates for me, we need more hotplates, he cooks like a maniac, I'm serious, and he always   ⌋
                                    ⌊
several: @ 3 @

    says. Now I haven't got a pot left, (.) clean the pots, then we are standing there cleaning the pots. Then he says , now you are standing in my way again and then (.) then

                            ……..

Df: But when the, when the (my) mother is sweeps the kitchen or so (.) then he runs through the kitchen so that you can see every (single) step. My mother says: Couldn't you have waited until (.) until this is dry, it only takes five min-utes? No I've had to go in there right now. And (.) (   ) (.) (   ) (.) he is allowed to do everything. But we are always playing the twits, when he is doing the cooking, that really annoys me.

The young women deal with a problem which is obviously central for them by in turn contributing descriptions and narrations of their everyday family life. For us, who were leading the discussion, it was – at least at the beginning – not at all clear, what was going on here (in terms of ethnomethodology: the utterances were highly "indexical"; see: Garfinkel 1961).

1.5 Habitus or Framework of Orientation as Central Subjects of the Documentary Method

After a procedure of interpretation (which is exemplified in its steps below in chapter 2: „Exemplary Interpretation of a Text") we can at least work out the following pattern of meaning, that is: the documentary pattern of meaning as the the young women's framework of orientation:

- Pretending to be helpful to the women with his cooking or maybe also believing he is being helpful, the father is allowed to penetrate into the women's sphere, into the kitchen and to have his 'go' there. In this way, the father does not take any responsibility neither in respect of economy nor tidiness. The responsibility remains with the women.
- Modes of men's participation which are not really organized according to partnership in the sense that men take over any responsibility, are only apt to restrict the women's scope of action. At the same time, they increase the burden of their work, because men – having dealt more playfully with female work – can retire and leave the main work, the „dirt" and „muck" to the women, as the girl puts it, so that women at last are the 'twits' or 'dupes' or losers.
- Although it does not correspond with the desires or intentions of the girls, who would prefer living together in a mode of partnership, the more conventional organization of the roles has the advantage that it opens up a sphere of autonomy to the women within these limitations. It becomes evident that this is the central framework of orientation or habitus of the young women.

The other girls participating in the discussion then referred to each other by bringing other depictions of social scenes into the discussions, which in parts had different topics: for example, the relation to the boyfriend and his sexual obtrusiveness or the relation to the father, who uses physical violence trying to discipline his daughter.

Looking carefully at the depictions in this passage as well as in other passages and also in discussion with other young female workers, the same pattern, a homologous pattern of meaning is always documented. Searching for this homologous pattern of meaning is the general task of the documentary method: obviously, we have homologous problems in different groups. This is the problem of defending the women's sphere against men, and their practice of intervention.

At the same time, these metaphorical depictions of the young women may give us an explanation for this gender specific orientation. Our interpretations in the framework of the sociology of knowledge are about to reconstruct or redesign those social processes or processes of interaction, of which this gender orientation of the division of spheres, may be seen as a result. These gender relations may be seen as the result of a background or space of experience, which can be reconstructed or redesigned. We call this reconstruction the *sociogenetic interpretation*.

By these interpretations of the scenic or metaphorical depictions we also get an access to those activities and consequences of action which are not identical with the theories, intentions or normative expectations of the actors. We can get some insight into the non-intentional consequences of the activities apart from normative demands and apart from the common sense-theories.

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Thus, the intention or the normative demand of the father in our example is "to be helpful in the kitchen". The consequences or entanglements of action, however, look quite different. On the other side, the normative or theoretical orientations of the young women concerning partnership sharply contrast what is documented in their depictions. In the process of family interaction they are always entangled again into a structure which let them refrain from the orientation to partnership in favor of the outlined habitus of the division of spheres. The documentary method as a process analysis, thus, also allows us to differentiate between theories, norms and intentions on one and the non-intentional or habitualized activities or practices on the other hand.

1.6 Understanding (Verstehen) versus Interpretation (Interpretieren)

Taking a closer look at the young women's depictions, we can see that the documentary or metaphorical meaning cannot be brought to an explication by the young women themselves – neither the pattern of orientation concerning the division of spheres nor the process of the genesis of this pattern of orientation. The depictions of their experience much rather belong to the preflexive or implicit knowledge. The theoretical explication is, as mentioned above, the task of the scientific observer. Such an explication of the implicit patterns of meaning is what we call *interpretation*.

Those patterns of meaning, however, can also be comprehended, as already mentioned, without an explication, that means: without an interpretation. This is what Karl Mannheim (1982: 242pp.) called „*understanding*" (in German: „Verstehen"; Mannheim 1980: 271pp.). The young women understand each other by referring in turn to the tacit knowledge or tacit meanings which are implied in their depictions without any necessity to interpret each other. In contrast to understanding it is interpretation that means the (theoretical) explication of the process of practical action by which the pattern of orientation is constituted and reproduced, which requires a specific line or *stance of analysis*, namely a „genetic stance", which I characterized by asking *how*.

This analytic stance is connected with „bracketing the validity aspect" (Mannheim 1982: 80) of social facts (in German: "Einklammerung des Geltungscharakters"; Mannheim 1980: 88), i.e., it is connected with a suspension of the character of validity of social facts. The claims for truth and normative rightfulness, as they are connected with the social facts by those under research, are put in brackets, are suspended. Thus, the interpreter has no interest in the question, if the depiction (i.e., the description how the father potters about in the kitchen) is right, if it corresponds to the fact or to the truth. Moreover, the interpreter asks for what is *documented* in the young women's experiential depictions about their attitude, their habitus, their frame of orientation.

Because that pattern of orientation or meaning, which is constitutive for their everyday practice (the pattern of the division of spheres), is not explicated by the young women themselves, it is not completely *conscious* to them. However, as it comes to an expression in their descriptions and narrations, it is also not totally *unconscious* or latent. Concerning the question which sort of consciousness we have about our own habitus, Bourdieu has commented that we cannot oppose a „completely transparent consciousness" to a „totally opaque consciousness". According to Bourdieu (1972: 200) it is self-evident „que l'on ne peut répondre en opposant, selon l'alternative du tout ou rien, la conscience parfaitement transparente à l'inconscient totalement opaque".

Those patterns of meaning and orientation which are subject to interpretation in the documentary method, belong to the young women's collective stock of knowledge in such a way that they actually do not know what they know. And the explication of this implicit or tacit knowledge is (as mentioned repeatedly) the task of the documentary method. To the main difference between the immanent or literal meaning on the one hand and the implicit or documentary meaning on the other, I will now come back to a rough sketch of the working steps of the documentary method (which are exemplified in chapter 2: „Exemplary Interpretation of a Text").

1.7 Formulating and Reflecting Interpretation

The transition from the immanent to the documentary meaning is, as explained above, the transition from asking *what* to asking *how*. In accordance to this, what has been said, depicted, or discussed, what has become the topic of discourse is to be separated from *how* – that means: in which framework – the topic is dealt with. This framework of orientation (which we also call habitus) is the central subject of documentary interpretation. The comparative analysis from the outset is of central importance for this interpretation because the framework of orientation takes shape and can be empirically examined only in comparison to those of other groups or other cases. We have to ask: how is the same topic dealt with by other groups or by other individuals?[8]

Concerning the practice of research, this methodological difference between the immanent and the documentary meaning, resp. the difference between the observations of the first and the second order, results in a clear-cut separation of two working steps: following this two step interpretation, it can

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8 Comparative analysis is not only for the generation of types but also from the outset of the reflecting interpretation of central importance for the documentary method. And here we also owe much to grounded theory in its original version (Glaser/Strauss 1967; Glaser 1965). The concept of generating theory in the grounded theory, however, does not achieve the level of multidimensionality in generating types (see 1.8).

be made clear where and how far that, which has been interpreted (i.e., expli-cated by those under research), is only *formulated* by the researchers – this is what we call *formulating interpretation* – and when, at which point, the re-searchers bring up their own interpretations in reflection upon the implicit self-evident knowledge of those under research; this is what we call *reflect-ing interpretation.*

The basic structure of formulating interpretation is the decoding and formulation of the topical structure of a text. Formulating interpretation in itself is separated into different steps (which are explained in chapter 2). The task of the reflecting interpretation is, as mentioned above, the reconstruction of the framework of orientation, of the habitus. To be successful, we have to get access to the inner logic of the utterances and their references, of the text produced, and thus, have to reconstruct the formal structure of the text (apart from its topical structure which is the subject of formulating interpretation), as we also do with the formal structure of the picture (see the other contribu-tion of Ralf Bohnsack in this volume).

In the case of group discussions it is above all the (formal) *organization of discourse* which has to be reconstructed. This means we have to character-ize the way of how participants refer to each other formally in their utter-ances (see also chapter 2 and Bohnsack/Przyborski 2006, as well as Przy-borski 2004).

1.8 Typification and the Multidimensionality of Analysis

The next step of analysis, the step of typification, of constructing types (cf., i.e. Bohnsack 2007 and 2009a), builds on the components of the framework of orientation common to all the cases (groups): For example, in our research about young people of Turkish origin, we were able to identify more or less in all cases, in all groups, one common problem of orientation, which I cha-racterized above as the problem of the separation of spheres, the separation of the outer from the inner sphere. When we classify this as typical for migration and, thus, build – as we call it – a migrational type, we practice comparative analysis insofar as we are looking for things in common to all groups of people of Turkish origin. Furthermore, we also use comparative analysis insofar as we look for differences, for contrasts to non-migrant groups.

Going further, the reconstruction of a migrational typification is only va-lid if the migrational (conjunctive) space of experience can be worked out in its relation to other spaces of experience, resp. to other typifications. We also refer to an overlap of different spaces of experience or different typifications. For instance, when comparing young people of Turkish origin of different sexes, from different milieus or classes, and from different generations, we find different ways of dealing with the same migrational problem; the prob-lem of the separation of spheres.

On the one hand, comparative analysis is required to reconstruct, i.e, gender and generational typifications as variations or differentiations of the migrational typification. On the other hand, the validity and the generalizability of the migrational typification is only proved, if it can be identified throughout these overlaps or differentiations. The degree of validity and generalizability of a single typification – for instance the migrational typification – depends on how manifold, i.e., how multidimensional the single case may be located within an entire typology, how often it can be related to other typifications like gender, generation or life cycle (cf. in more detail: Bohnsack 2007 and 2009a). This is what is meant when we say that – in the perspective of the documentary method – typifications are always multidimensional.

2. Exemplary Interpretation of a Text

2.1 Transcript

The guidelines for transcription according to the documentary method are given in annex I of this publication.

The German original of the transcription contains words spoken in Turkish accent or Berlin dialect as well as mistakes in word order or choice of words. In the English translation, we tried to give an account of the speaker's original expressions which explains unusual phrases and sentence structure in the English transcript.

Text: Discussion group: "Sand" Side B 3/6

Excerpt: "Marriage" (duration: ca. 5 minutes)

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1    Ym: Do you want to have a family some day? (1)
2    Bm:                                      └yes, when (1) when our time has
3        come for that, don't know (.) I can't tell; (2)
4    Am:                                       └ yes having a family is nice
5        but it is not easy you know, (2)
6    Y1:                                  └mhm
7    Bm:                                    └I am unemployed anyway and so on
8        (2) I think I won't get married so soon.
9    Am:                     └ a family what does it mean a family °you know?°(1)°(no)(3)
10   Bm:          I would have had some opportunities to marry, but I did not do it in
11       the end.
12   Am:        └you have to find the right one you know, that's what I think. (.) Of
13            course (.) I want to marry           │
14   Y1:                                       └mhm
15   Am: or uhm I want to live together with a woman; (3) but at the
16       moment, (4) °ehh° (.) it's not @so easy you understand?@
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17:  Y1:                                                          ⌐ @yes@
18   Bm:                                                              ⌐ If
19        I (          was given the opportunity      ) some day
20   Am:  ⌐ well you cannot find the right one you know, for example (.) I have uhm
21        have at the moment, I say (.) many women you know? ((clearing throat)) but (.)
22        I don't like any of them; I can't take one of them you know? (.) I cannot say
23        okay you are my wife °can I° (3)
24   Y1:                                              ⌐mhm
25   Am: because for me a woman (.) has to be perfect you know, (2) I mean she has to
26        be (.) there for me all the time you understand, and I for
27   Y1:                                              ⌐mhm
28   Am: her too; (1) that's the way I think but eh many people do not think so. (2) °yes.°
29        (7)
30   Am: and when I get married I get married in my way °you know,° (3)
31   Bm:                                                        ⌐In
32        your way?
33   Am:        ⌐ yes. I mean it  cannot tell me anything
34   Bm:        ⌐ how do you mean?
35   Am: I mean (.) my mother for example says to me (1) yes I live how I:
36        think it to be right; you  understand,
37   Bm:                                              ⌐ yes; (2) yes I don't know either (.) but I
38        believe sometimes you just have to adjust to your family you know,
39   Am:                                                    ⌐ I mean know she
40        wants to (.) tell me                          |
41   Bm:                                                    ⌐ to
42        adjust to the culture and so on.
43   Am:                              ⌐ yes what culture yes, °I°
44   Bm:                                            ⌐ yes but actually you  cannot
45        forget your culture; you have your own culture too; you cannot suddenly
46        say yes no (.) if you if (.) if you don't know who you are you cannot
47        (2) you are
48   Am:        ⌐ °yes::°
49   Bm: nothing (.) °somehow like that.° you must know what you are and
50   Y1:                              ⌐ mhm
51   Bm: who you are
52   Am:  ⌐now at ours  two are engaged; yes now says to me, (.) my
53        mother says to me now, (.) better take one from (.) uhm (2) from our
54        region you know, I mean from
55   Y1:                    ⌐mhm.
56   Am: our family's surrounding. (1) she says to me; °(I mean)°. (1) and there where I
57        was last year, (2) an acquaintance has a daughter you know, (1) and he says to
58        me,(.)do you want to have a look at her, won't you (.) how do you like her, I
59        sai-no I don't want anything @you know what am I supposed to do with her yes (.)
60   Am:                              ⌐@(.)@
61   Bm:                                    ⌐@Yes@ they do match-
62        making; it's matchmaking
63   Y1:      ⌐Yes            |
64   Am:                    ⌐ matchmaking you know, then I was in Istan-
65        bul, my (.) uncle said to me, I go to Kocaeli; this is the next (.) town
66        yes; (1) it is (.) pretty close two hours. (.) you can come with me yes when
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67       he says, he said, if you like (.) yes ehh (3) Baldiz ((Turkish word)) what does it
68       mean? Baldiz, (1)
69  Bm:              ⌊Brother-in-law?
70  Am:                        ⌊I mean (a  is) the sister of his wife (.) is supposed to
71       live there you know, (2) he said if you            |            |
72  Bm:                                                     |            ⌊ yes I see.
73  Y1:                                                ⌊(sister-in-law
74       you say)
75  Am: like my sister-in-law will be there too, you may become acquainted with her
76       you know, (2) I said I will only come to ehh see the town you know,
77  Y2:  @(.)@
78  Bm:      ⌊@yes. (2)
79  Am:        ⌊@(2) no I do really mean that (2)@
80  Bm:                                    ⌊of course that's the reason why you
81       went there you now,@
82  Am:  no because for me this was @(2)@
83  Bm:                    ⌊@yes tell us that you went there! (.) it
84       somehow                    |            |
85  Am:                             ⌊@(2)@   ⌊sen
86       (erdo) anlat- ((Turkish))
87  Bm:  doesn't matter;@
88  Am:  sana ((Turkish)) ⌊For me it was, Kocaeli (.) I wanted to see it anyway,
89       you know, and I said to me it doesn't matter
90  Y1:      ⌊mhm
91  Am:  I go there and eat uhm eh something together with them and then we come
92       back again it is quite nearby anyway, (2) then I was there, (.) it's a small
93       town, (.) we ate something together, (1) and then he
94       asked me, and °eh° how do you like her? I said what kind of question @is that,
95       you know, (4)@
96  Y2:  ⌊@(.)@
97  Bm:      ⌊@yes what's happening here; you get paranoia at first@
98  Am:                                        ⌊I sai- that's all right
99       you know I don't want to hear anything about it; now if I say I don't like her
100      or then (.) he will be
101 Y1        ⌊mhm
102 Am: offended (.) at once yes (2) then he always turns to me
103 Y1:                    ⌊mhm
104 Am: I said no I don't want you know; I don't like her I said
105      she doesn't look good @(3)@ then he said (2)
106 ?:                     ⌊@(.)@
107 Am: then we are again he they want to find someone for me you know
108      I mean (.) if he did not succeed then comes the
109 Y1:     ⌊mhm
110 Am: next you know; ey Am, @I have a (1)@ (1) I say
111 Y2:                    ⌊@(3)@
112 Am: stop it I don't want to. and when I was back in the village, (3) appar-
113 Y1:                    ⌊mhm
114 Am: ently my mother had called said ((clearing throat)) Am comes, (.) and (.)
115      he is looking for a girl or he wants to have a girl you know, (.)  had said so
116      (once); and at once when I come out of the house in the village, in our village
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117        there is a waterfall you know where the people (.)
118  Bm:                                              └ scoop water.
119  Am:                                                        └scoop water youknow, (.)
120        I came out (1) it was really in the morning, and all women were standing there
121        at the water you know, (2) @(7)@
122  Y1:                    └ mhm
123  Bm:                          └@suddenly you were standing there they are watching
124        or what (.) according to old tradition they are watching (2)
125  Y2:              └@(.)@
126  Bm: that's what it was like? @(1)@ how nice you know you should have made a film
127  Am:                              └@(       ) were standing a lot yes@
128  Bm: ey. @(2)@
129  Am:      └@there were many yes@
130: Bm:                              └@Turkish films are like this ah (.)@
131  Am:                                              └really.@ (2) th=th=th=th
132        (8)
133  Y1: phhhhh! (1)
134  Am:              └@(.)@ t'was funny yes.
135  Bm:                └@(.)@
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Formulating interpretation

The first step of interpretation on the level of the immanent meaning can be subdivided into the "topical structuring" (thematische Gliederung) and the "detailed formulating interpretation". Structuring of the subject matters means differentiation of paramount topics (PT), subordinated topics (ST), subsubordinated topics (SST) and may be subsubsubordinated topics (SSST). The following example shows the topical structuring of the whole excerpt, because this step does not take up too much room. The „detailed formulating interpretation" is only presented exemplarily for the first subordinated topic.

2.2.1 Topical Structuring

PT 02-131: Marriage in ones „own way" and „matchmaking" (making
       marriage arrangements)

ST 02-28: Difficulties in founding a family
       SST 02-11: Founding a family is nice but not easy and the time for
                  it "must have come"
       SST 12-27: One must find "the right one"

ST 30-131: Marriage in one's "own way" versus "matchmaking"
       SST 30-51: Marriage in his "own way" versus "adjustment to the cul-
                  ture" (41-42)
       SST 52-112: Marriage by matchmaking through the family, the relatives

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and acquaintances in Turkey

SSST 56-62: Matchmaking in the region of origin of the family

SSST 64-112: Attempt of matchmaking by the uncle

SST 112-131: Matchmaking is like a "Turkish film" (130)

2.2.2 Detailed Formulating Interpretation

ST 02-28: Difficulties in founding a family

Founding a family is approved of, because it is something "nice". Although the young men would have had several opportunities to marry, it is not "easy". The opportunities of founding a family depend on the young men's further development, which is not easily predictable. In this context the problem of unemployment is important. However, it is also difficult to define the sense or meaning of what determines a family. It is difficult to find "the right" person. In this context Am's expectations are higher than other people's.

2.3. Reflecting Interpretation

▫ 01 Question by Y1

This question is an "exmanent" question, i.e., a question unconnected to any topic discussed so far. The preceding passage was about Turkish young women and the problem of virginity, but this topic had also been initiated through an exmanent question (a question by the interviewers) and was hardly discussed by the young men. According to our rules or principles of leading a discussion the question also should include attempts to initiate narrations or descriptions (see also: „Reflexive Prinzipien der Initiierung und Leitung von Gruppendiskussionen" – „Reflective principles of initiating and leading group discussions" in Bohnsack 2008: chapter 11.1).

ST 02-28: Difficulties in founding a family

SST 02-11: Founding a family is nice, but not easy and the time for that "must have come"

▫ 02-11 Proposition by Bm and elaboration of his proposition in interaction with Am

2-05: This utterance implies a development model, a model of collective ("our time"; 02) development. Therefore, Bm has some expectations about his further development. These expectations are still very vague and cannot (only) be influenced by his own plans, but they are inevitable, dependent on fate. Therefore, he cannot be more precise. Am explains that their uncertainty

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has nothing to do with a lack of corresponding wishes or sketches but with problems in realizing these plans ("problems in enacting"). It is beyond their own power; it is not easy to realize their own (existing) wishes and biographical sketches.

07-08: Elaboration of the difficulty of realizing ("enacting") by Bm: "I am unemployed anyway" means: I am unemployed and therefore it is not easy (for me) anyway. Bm gives one of the reasons which prevents the realization/ "enacting". However, this reason touches the prevailing conditions, preconditions for the foundation of a family, and not family or the social relationships itself.

09: The difficulties are increased or escalated by Am: It is not only because of the prevailing conditions that they are uncertain when the time for a marriage has come. Another reason for their uncertainty is that for the young men it is not clear what exactly is the meaning of "family".

10-11: Bm would "have had some opportunities". According to what has been explained before, this means that the young women would have been willing to marry. It has nothing to do with Am's attractiveness that he has not yet got married or started a family, the reasons are obviously those already mentioned. – Altogether it is documented by Bm's comments that he has thought about his biographical options in a responsible manner.

SST 12-27: One must find "the right one"

▫ 12-28: Elaboration of the proposition by Am
12-16: Am now elaborates the proposition's component mentioned in 04-05 and 09: It is not so easy to have a family or to live together with a woman because the "right" woman has to be found (this especially means a woman who agrees with him on what "family" means, what a family is supposed to be). Hereby Am elaborates the background of his proposition in 09.

Equating "having a family", "getting married" and "living together", or rather the indifference towards these alternatives, implies, that there is no link with tradition. Therefore a certain frankness towards the kind of relationship or rather the kind of family is implied. (Hence Am goes beyond the frame set by Y1's question.)

20-27: Increasing (of the) difficulty of one's own situation (in contrast to 12): at present they cannot find the "right one".– Like Bm in 10-11 Am now emphasizes that this is not caused by a lack of attractiveness.
- Demanding to be there for each other mutually (25-26) and also looking for a perfect relationship does not imply (with the background of frankness towards the kind of relationship) an orientation towards traditional role models, but the orientation towards an open relationship which can be negotiated.

- What is made explicit in 02-03, 05 and 15-16 also finds its expression on a performative level in the long breaks (15, 16, 23, 29) (which are not interrupted and thus supported by Bm): they do not know exactly, they cannot say exactly, they are at a loss and it is not that easy.
- At the same time it is documented in 28 (and also in the questions asking for confirmation, the "question tags": 05, 09, 16, 22-23, 26), that Am anticipates that his attitude is difficult to understand. As Y1 reacts to the questions (except for 09), it seems to be addressed to him (it becomes obvious, that the discourse between the researchers and the persons under research is still relatively dominant in this stage of discussing of this topic; this will change later on). Am anticipates or guesses a strangeness not only towards the German interviewers, which becomes obvious in line 28, but also towards his peers. This refers to differentiation typical for the social environment (which can be verified by comparative analysis with other groups).

ST 30-131: Marriage in one's "own way" versus "matchmaking"
SST 30-51: Marriage in his "own way" versus "adjustment to the culture" (41-42)

▫ 30-51: Thesis-antithesis ("antithetical") discourse between Am and Bm: proposition by Am, antithesis by Bm

30 and 33: Proposition by Am; 35-36: elaboration of the proposition by Am in the modus of a theory of orientation; 39-40: elaboration of the proposition by Am in the modus of an abstract description.

Am gets married "in his way and his mother cannot influence him": His mother cannot say anything to him or rather what his mother says cannot say anything to him.

31-32 and 34: Antithesis by Bm in the modus of a question; 37-38 and 41-42: elaboration of the antithesis by Bm in the modus of a theory of orientation.

43: Antithesis to the antithesis (of Bm) by Am in the modus of a question

44-51: Continuation of the antithesis by Bm in the modus of a "theory of orientation" or rather a theory about the own self. "In my way" (30) as well as "I live how I think it to be right" (35-36) are addressed antithetically to "adjusting to the own culture" by Bm. Only "adjusting to the own culture", which means the culture of origin, makes it possible to answer the question "what you are and who you are" (49 and 51 as well as 46), which means answering the question concerning their own identity. In sociological vocabulary (in the words of Erving Goffman) Bm shows the tendency to answer the question "who he is" in the modus of his *social* identity, an identity which is ascribed to him, whereas Am rather adapts to his *personal* (individ-

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ual) identity. This means that two ways or modes of developing an identity or two ways of "sociality" (Sozialität) are antithetically compared.

SST 52-112: Marriage by matchmaking through the family, the relatives and acquaintances in Turkey

▫ 52-62: Follow-up proposition in the modus of exemplifications by Am and wording/formulation of the proposition by Bm (61-62)

Am illustrates on the basis of *two examples* what it leads to, according to his opinion, if someone "adjusts" to the culture, or rather he explains to Am the kind of adjustment he objects to. He disapproves of the kind of adjustment which leads to a marriage based on "matchmaking".

SSST 56-62: Matchmaking in the region of origin of the family

Exemplification I:

The mother refers to two different engagements in the family or ethnic community ("at ours" relates to a "we"-community not being questioned) and thereupon drafts a negative image, a so called negative "counter-horizon". These engagements did obviously not develop out of matchmaking, which is the way she prefers. Later on, it becomes evident that she prefers that modus of matchmaking in which the wife comes from the husband's home region. (As the others do not keep to the traditional modus, the comment implies that the modus becomes precarious.)

Exemplification II:

An acquaintance (who obviously comes from Am's Turkish region of origin) tried to make Am get to know (or even marry) his only daughter (but without directly making his intentions clear).

In both exemplifications a framework of orientation is implied from which Am distances himself. This orientation says that it is regarded as an adequate basis for matchmaking or rather marriage, that the female partner's origin is in the home region of the husband's family.

This origin seems to be a guarantee for habitual concordance (a concordance concerning the habitus), which is a necessary condition for the marriage. (Another reason for matchmaking might be that an effective social control of the marital relationship can be guaranteed if the people involved know each other. In this sense, relatives, acquaintances or friends from the region are not only predestined for a marriage as husband or wife, but also as 'people intervening', people who help to find a partner for someone else from their home region.)

In sociological vocabulary: Am distances himself from a modus of constructing habitual concordance on the basis of social identity.

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61-62 In his formulation (explication) of the proposition by Am, Bm expresses that he exactly understands Am, that he approves ('validates') Am's presentation by not opposing to it and therefore, takes the first step towards a *synthesis*.

<u>*SSST 64-112*</u>: Attempt of matchmaking by the uncle

▫ 64-112: Further exemplification in a narrative modus by Am, approval (validation) and thereby synthesis by Bm (97)

Am presents in his narration further components of the "framework of orientation" concerning the matchmaking:
- The aim of matchmaking or the true intentions are not directly but merely indirectly discussed between the intervening person and the person a partner shall be found for: "you can meet her" (75).
- Am refuses the attempt of matchmaking also indirectly, but thus creates or produces ambiguity.
- Caused by ambiguity, i.e., by the uncertain (definition of the) situation, the uncle insists on his attempt to matchmaking (93-94). Here it is documented that the way in which Am expresses his objection indirectly cannot be understood. This and also the distance towards the interventions shows the great distance between Am and his parent's culture of origin.

In 97 Bm helps to find the right phrases. He formulates a component of Am's proposition (helps with formulating a component of Am's framework of orientation). From his own experience, Bm knows the situation in which one suddenly realizes that one is in the middle of a situation where someone else (against Bm's intentions) attempts to do matchmaking. Consequently, there is the danger to develop "paranoia". By this, Bm also expresses his objection towards matchmaking or rather towards certain forms of matchmaking.

Bm therefore opens up a *synthesis*: The bond or the adjustment to the culture of origin, which he had first demanded from Am, need not go so far.

77-88: Inserted meta-communicative dispute (dispute on a metacommunicative level): The others (or at least Bm) do not think Am's indifference towards the young woman to be credible. (The utterance of Y2 and Bm, i.e., their laughing, get their significance for the interpreter concerning the verbatim sense only through Am's reaction in line 79).

98-107 Am finds himself in a dilemma. (This is expressed in a "performatory" way in the breaking off in 105 and 107 and in the disorder of the sentence in 107. The experience of being entangled/caught up is so lasting that it is still obvious in the present situation). He did not succeed in objecting to the attempt at matchmaking. Am is obviously not able to express this in a manner according to his culture of origin. Now he can only get out of this situation by disapproving of his potential bride. This may risk insulting his uncle.

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107-112: Formulation of his own proposition by Am

SST 112-131: Matchmaking is like a "Turkish film" (130)

▫ 112-126: Further exemplification in the modus of continuating the narration by Am in interaction with Bm:

As Am cannot express his objection towards the whole procedure of matchmaking in an adequate way, the people from the village and/or his mother go on matchmaking. In the end, Am is not only pursued or hunted by the people intervening but also by his potential wives ("paranoia" 97). Although the situation has the character of a pursuit, it is attractive in a way: the situation is as antiquated ("according to old tradition", 124) but at the same time also as romantic as scooping water in the morning. The fact that the young women are interested in Am confirms as well the attractiveness of his family as his own (see: 10-11 and 21-22: the problem is not a lack of attractiveness)

▫ 126-131 Conclusion by Bm in interaction with Am

Matchmaking, i.e., making arrangements to find a partner for a young person and the modus of social relationships connected with it is a traditional pattern of orientation. This pattern was of great significance to the parental generation, but for the young people themselves it is hardly realistic, but at the same time as attractive, as a romantic film.

The kind of male existence in which the foundation of marriage and family is carried out on the basis of common grounds of the regional origin, appears to be like a film or a cliché, and as antiquated, but at the same time it is highly attractive because of its romantic character.

Especially in this conclusion, the collective character of the orientations and experience of the two persons involved becomes obvious. Bm and Am both share extensively common experience or – more precisely – experience identical in structure, i.e., they share a conjunctive space of experience. This enables them to arrange the narration and its performance in a highly cooperative manner (although Bm has not experienced that concrete situation told by Am).

Their common experience and their common frame of orientation is worked out by Am and Bm in a special mode of the *organization of discourse*: the antithetical mode of discourse.

Analysis of talk, which is able to reconstruct the process of discourse in its specific dramaturgy and its mode of discourse organization – in our example it is the antithetical mode of discourse – may succeed in working out complex patterns of orientation in their ambivalence which is typical for our everyday life. By reconstructing the process of discourse, it can be shown that the ambivalence which documents itself in the antithetical counterpositions is collectively shared, is common to both of the speakers (so we have a

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"congruency of the frames of orientations", as we call it; see Bohnsack 2008: chapter 8.1). Although at face value, it seems they express quite different ("incongruent") frames of orientations.

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