

## Methoden Mix – Multimodality Research

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### Multimodality Research

Recent contributions in organization and management research have acknowledged the relevance of a number of communicative resources for meaning construction that go beyond the spoken and/or written word (e.g., visuals, materiality, sound, or scent). Borrowing from social semiotic theory, such communicative resources are referred to as 'semiotic modes' – and the fact that most acts of communication combine multiple modes has become known as 'multimodality'. The rise of a multimodal perspective has substantial consequences for organization and management research. Ultimately, the restricted understanding of communication in and around organizations as primarily spoken and/or written language masks a large part of what is actually going on. For instance, while socially legitimate statements may well be disseminated in verbal form, more problematic messages can be hidden in ambiguous multimodal constructions. Similarly, organizational groups that are marginalized and denied 'voice' may utilize modes different from the verbal to coordinate resistance. Capturing such a multimodal understanding of organizations and their environments is, however, methodologically challenging. Not only do researchers need to explore additional sources of data, they also require a certain 'multimodal literacy' for understanding and interpreting these diverse communicative cues. In the talk/workshop, I will provide a brief overview of what multimodality is, and how it can be made conducive to organization and management research. I will then sketch a methodical/methodological approach to multimodal discourse analysis that draws from hermeneutics, visual sociology, and social semiotics, and allows for the analysis of larger samples of visual and multimodal material in order to reconstruct patterns in discourse. Q&As will address specific issues the participants face in their own work, including how to publish multimodal research in journals with organization and management studies.

*Suggested reading: Jancsary D; Höllerer MA; Meyer RE, 2016, 'Critical analysis of visual and multimodal texts' in Wodak R; Meyer M (ed.), Methods of critical discourse studies, edn. 3rd, SAGE, London et al., pp. 180 - 204*