Journey of computer-assisted data analysis with ATLAS.ti
Susanne Friese
Max Planck Inst. for the Study of Religious & Ethnic Diversities, Göttingen

1 Background
If you embark on the journey of analyzing qualitative data, you will encounter many challenges. Using a tool like ATLAS.ti makes it easier (like driving a car as supposed to walking), but also requires new and different skills. The NCT method of computer-assisted analysis was developed to guide you step-by-step through your journey and to succeed. By the way, NCT stands for Noticing things, Collecting things and Thinking about things.
A good analysis already starts with an analytically useful file name. The next challenge is to set up your project properly, in terms of data management but also in terms of being able to utilize all available options later on. Once this is accomplished, the next task is to develop an efficient coding system. The NCT method helps you to make the correct decisions and to spot potential misleading paths. It also offer advice on the steps that come after coding, on how to make best use of comments and memos, provides guidance on how to use the network view function and not to forget, how to bring it all together and write your report.

2 Overview
Add a category title as you know have worked your way from the bottom up.

3 Process
First cycle coding – describing the data landscape

Describing your data in more detail – the structured landscape

Follow the arrows to learn how to develop an effective coding system

Building Categories
If you generate lots of codes very close to the data, you need to pay attention NOT to walk into the code swamp.
Collect codes that belong to one aspect into a code family. Merge similar codes, thinking about a more abstract label.

Building sub codes
Here, someone has done lots of collecting...
Let’s take a look at the „children are hard work but…” code. You need to read all instances, notice and think about suitable sub codes. Write them on a paper or in a memo.
Add the sub codes to the project, use pre-fixes so that they are sorted under the same category label. Next you need to recode the data.

Overview
Add a category title as you know have worked your way from the bottom up.
Another potential error
Coding on the wrong level. Indicators: long code labels.
Recommendation: code precisely, don't attach "all" that apply to one paragraph.
Use the strategy only if necessary, for instance when coding with a team.

Further analysis tools
After your data is coded
Writing up analysis
Working with research question memos

Seeing how it all fits together
Begin to visualize the linkages and connection you see.

Querying your data allows you to look at your data from all kinds of different angles.

Begin to visualize the linkages and connection you see.

What you can do with a well-structured code list

Further analysis tools
ATLAS.ti – page 2

References