

## **Analysing analogical discourse: A discourse analytic framework for exploring the role of analogies in public engagement settings**

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In my dissertation project I embark on a detailed analysis of how Austrian citizens talk about nanotechnologies in discussion groups as a specific kind of public engagement setting. My analysis focuses on comparison processes that emerge frequently in such settings, thus exploring which analogies are collectively (de)constructed and how these discursive practices frame lay people's positions towards the debated issues. As I'm currently working on an epistemologically and methodologically oriented chapter to underpin and guide my empirical analysis, my presentation will give an overview of the main theoretical premises informing my choice of discourse analysis and – if time allows – also point out some more practical aspects of my methodological procedure. All this starts from my theoretical proposition that we should conceive of analogies not as stable entities but as fluid and open to scrutiny, for which I try to account with the notion of analogical discourse. Analogical discourse can be regarded as a specific discourse type that emerges as a reaction to specific challenges in talk-in-interaction. To embed this understanding in a broader methodological perspective, I particularly draw on discursive psychology (Potter and Wetherell 1987), which maintains an understanding of opinions and attitudes as always in the making and not as being merely articulated in discourse. Additionally, I will present recent reflections on how to best metaphorically grasp the character of public engagement settings. Finally, I will introduce the card-based discussion method IMAGINE (Felt et al. 2012) that generated the data I draw on and reflect on what seeing like IMAGINE allows me to see in my analysis (cp. Law 2009).

### **References**

- Felt, Ulrike, Schumann, Simone, Schwarz, Claudia and Strassnig, Michael (2012): Technology of Imagination. A Card-based Public Engagement Method for Debating Emerging Technologies. Soon to appear as OnlineFirst in *Qualitative Research*.
- Law, John (2009): Seeing Like a Survey. In *Cultural Sociology* 3(2), 239-56.
- Potter, Jonathan and Wetherell, Margaret (1987): *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour*. London: Sage.