Tutorial 5.1

# More on Using CAQDAS Software to Analyze Case Study Data

Chapter 5 of *Case Study Research and Applications* (6th ed.)already should have provided sufficient support but also forewarning about using CAQDAS tools. If you plan to use these tools, distinguishing among three CAQDAS functions can be helpful (Yin, 2016): (1) compiling data (retrieving and tallying specific words and terms from your notes); (2) disassembling data (moving methodically to a higher conceptual level by assigning codes to like words and terms); and (3) reassembling data (interpreting the relationships among codes, their combinations, and conceptually higher patterns). Regarding the three functions, different tools have different strengths. However, beware that, although most tools can help you to compile and to disassemble your data (e.g., Saldaña, 2009), you are likely to have to closely direct the tools in reassembling the data. Also be aware that the final result may not justify the extensive time and effort you spend in compiling or disassembling the data.

To preview possible problems, you might take a portion of your data and practice the three functions manually, before using any software tool. If you then decide to use a CAQDAS tool (especially if you have a lot of data), closely consult a comprehensive guide (e.g., Hahn, 2008; Silver & Lewins, 2014) that can help you to select a specific software tool and use it efficiently. Then check specialized guidances covering the more popularly used tools (e.g., Friese, 2012).

Possibly inflated expectations about CAQDAS tools come as a result of everyone’s experiences with computer-assisted quantitative analysis. In those situations, computer routines follow complex and preestablished statistical algorithms, with the analyst providing a set of input data and the computer arriving at the output or result. In contrast, with CAQDAS tools, you must define the complex algorithms yourself, including the level of granularity (e.g., whether to code single words, utterances, sentences, or paragraphs), the combinations worthy of attention, and the analytic routine for compiling the final results (Fielding & Warnes, 2009, p. 278). Without your explicit guidance and contrary to the experience with quantitative analysis, the computer alone cannot arrive at any usable output.

# Briefly Annotated References for Tutorial 5.1

Fielding, N., & Warnes, R. (2009). Computer-based qualitative methods in case study research. In D. Byrne & C. C. Ragin (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of case-based methods* (pp. 270–288). London: Sage. Provides a conceptual overview—but not specific steps as in the following four works—on how CAQDAS tools and functions apply to case study data.

Friese, S. (2012). *Qualitative data analysis with ATLAS.ti.* London: Sage. Covers ATLAS.ti.

Hahn, C. (2008). *Doing qualitative research using your computer: A practical guide.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Gives step-by-step guidance for using three common tools: *Word, Excel, and Access.*

Saldaña, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers.* London: Sage. Presents a wide array of coding choices and practices.

Silver, C., & Lewins, A. (2014). *Using software in qualitative research: A step-by-step guide* (2nd ed.). London: Sage. Discusses three leading CAQDAS packages individually: *ATLAS.ti 5*, *MAXQDA2*, and NVivo7*.*

Yin, R. K. (2016). *Qualitative research from start to finish* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford. Gives operational guidance for compiling, disassembling, and reassembling qualitative data.