

Jürgen Raab

Bildhandeln und Bildwissen im Medium der Fotografie

Methodische Herausforderungen der sozialwissenschaftlichen Interpretation von Einzelbildern

[Visual Agency and Image Knowledge in the Medium of Photography. Methodological Challenges of the Social Scientific Interpretation of Images]

The empirical sociology of knowledge is still reluctant to proposals for methodological controlled analysis of photographs. While the interpretation of texts, movies, videos on the basis of well established methods such as conversation analysis, genre analysis, and sequential analysis emphasise the importance of details in communication, and proclaim the interpretation of details of action and of presentation to the core criteria of their methodological approaches, photographs still appear to them as epiphenomena of the social. From this point of view the social and the cultural meanings of photographs must be examined primarily by analysing the contexts of their production, and of their reception, as well as the modes of their social exchange. Contrary to this position and from a phenomenological point of understanding, the article considers pictures as symbolic forms, and develops initial guidelines for a hermeneutical constellation analysis of photographs.

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