

Parliamentary Discourse Research in History: Literature Review

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Abstract

Historical research of parliamentary discourse focuses not only on the origins but especially on the development of parliamentary discourse. It is predominantly based on textual data analysis, employing various methodological frameworks. In this literature review we provide an overview of these methods and present commonalities and differences of approaches established in history with corpus-driven approaches. This allows for a better understanding of historical analysis of parliamentary discourse and highlights the importance of ParlaMint project and the integration of parliamentary corpora into historical research.

1. Introduction

Parliamentary discourse is a salient research topic in both humanities and social science disciplines, such as sociology, political science, sociolinguistics, and history. Especially historical research is highly interested in studying not only the origins but also the development of parliamentary discourse. History is often focused on researching parliamentary debates and as Ihalainen (2021) observes, in historical research, parliamentary debates can be approached analytically as nexuses of past political discourses which means that they can be viewed as “meeting places” where in a certain time and space various political discourses have intersected.

This literature review is one in the series of literature reviews conducted in the context of the ParlaMint project (Erjavec et al., 2022). A similar literature review has been compiled for sociological research (Skubic and Fišer, 2022). The ParlaMint project develops comparable corpora of parliamentary proceedings from more than 20 European countries, accompanied by literature overviews, showcases and tutorials which will hopefully help maximize the use of these corpora in different disciplinary communities interested in analyzing parliamentary debates. This literature review summarizes historical research of parliamentary debates and the most popular research methods employed. It needs to be explicitly noted, however that despite the obvious usefulness of ParlaMint corpora, the researchers ought to consider also other qualitative and quantitative data and information in order to come to objective and unbiased conclusions. Also, in this review we focus mostly on written parliamentary records since the main interest of ParlaMint project is on written parliamentary sources. However, the importance of other sources such as surveys, records of election results, territorial records, etc. must be recognized as well since they present an important part of historical research.

The review is structured as follows. In the first part, we describe the selection procedure of the relevant articles and briefly enumerate the methods they employ. This allows for a better understanding of the methods most frequently

employed in historical analysis of parliamentary discourse. In the second part, we summarize the articles we identified in terms of 1) the main aim and topic of the research, 2) methods used, 3) data collection methods and 4) a short discussion about the possible improvements and/or problems of the research. We conclude the review with a discussion of how historical research could benefit from corpus data and corpus research methods.

2. Literature Selection and Methods

As Torou et al. (2009) show, the main objective of history is to recreate the past by researching and analyzing existing records and their interconnectedness. It is through this process that historians employ their academic knowledge, rely on experience, and decide on the relevant information and appropriate sources which this information is extracted from. Especially in political history, it is uncommon for historians to rely on only one type of source, but rather focus on various so called primary and secondary sources. The former are most commonly gathered from historical archives since they include document or artefacts created by the participants in an event or the witnesses, whereas latter include oral sources, newspapers, memoirs, visual representations, practices, etc. This means that an important factor in historical research is to understand the nature of information as well as the research methodologies and models historians use while conducting research (ibid.).

Although the variety of issues and approaches in political history is large, the emerging and quite narrow focus of political history is on analyzing the history of parliamentary discourse and political debates. Ihalainen and Saarinen (2019) show that political history frequently builds its research on textual data (documents, diaries, texts) although sometimes the exact textual methods used are not explicated. Ihalainen and Saarinen (2019) note that when conducting textual analysis, historians often draw on selected methodological tools from methods which are otherwise common in humanities and social sciences and especially qualitative sociological research, such as (critical) discourse analysis as well as content analysis. In addition to those and to other fields which include the study

of history (memory studies, conceptual history, etc.) researchers sometimes opt for mixed methods approach, corpus assisted discourse studies or text mining.

2.1 Selection of Articles

The reviewed articles were carefully selected among hundreds of sources which focus on parliamentary debates by considering some important research criteria. We identified the following scholarly search engines to look for the articles:

- Taylor and Francis Online (<https://www.tandfonline.com>),
- SAGE Journals (<https://journals.sagepub.com>),
- Wiley Online Library (<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com>),
- Semantic Scholar (<https://www.semanticscholar.org>),
- MUSE Project (<https://muse.jhu.edu>),
- JSTOR (<https://www.jstor.org>),
- Elsevier (<https://www.elsevier.com>), and
- Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com>).

We applied the following filters in order to identify the relevant articles:

- Publication period: 2012 – 2022,
- Discipline: History
- Article ranking: ‘most relevant’ and ‘most cited’
- Relevant journals: sometimes we needed to apply additional filter where we selected relevant historical journals.

By using those filters, most prominent historical journals were identified, such as Parliamentary History, Historical Research, Memory Studies, Contributions to the History of Concepts and Historical Social Research, although articles included in this review were also published elsewhere. All articles, the title of which was considered potentially relevant were skimmed; we specifically analyzed the abstract, methodology and analysis sections to confirm the relevance of the articles. A high number of articles was discarded either because of the lack of methodological explanation or because the analysis did not focus on parliamentary data. In this review we wanted to include only those articles which dealt specifically with parliamentary records and/or legislative documents and the majority of the selected research conformed to this criteria. Some of the articles, however, also included other sources which emphasizes the fact that historians use a variety of sources when researching parliamentary discourse. This is also to show that although parliamentary records could present one of the primary sources for historical research (and projects such as ParlaMint would be helpful in providing relevant data), historians still often opt for a broader research perspective and combine parliamentary records with other, complementary sources of data in their research.

2.2 Overview of Methods

A total of 27 articles were initially determined as relevant for our literature review and are listed in a Google

spreadsheet.¹ We then retained only those that clearly described the method and the data used, taking into account only the papers which primarily used parliamentary records as a source. This resulted in 11 articles which were then submitted to a more detailed analysis. Since the research questions were so heterogeneous, we did not group the articles thematically.

We reviewed predominantly articles which focused on historical research of parliamentary discourse and political communication. Out of 11 reviewed articles, 3 employed the methodological framework of Discourse Analysis, 2 articles employed Content Analysis, 1 opted for the method of Memory Studies, 2 articles used Mixed methods approach, 2 articles employed the framework of Conceptual History (Begriffsgeschichte), and 1 article employed the method of Topic Modelling.

3. Reviewed Research and Employed Methods

In this part of the literature review, we give a detailed account of the historical research that analyzes parliamentary discourse and political communication as well as the methods they employ. We provide a short description of the methodological framework and show why it is important for historical research. Then, we give an overview of the studies which employed this method.

3.1 Conceptual History

Conceptual History (Begriffsgeschichte) is a strand of historical studies which deals with historical semantics and the evolution of paradigmatic ideas and value systems over time. It was first defined by Koselleck in 1997 who shows (as cited by Litte, 2016) that the major aim of conceptual history is to uncover the logic and semantics of the concepts that have been used to describe historical events and processes in addition to being interested in historical evolution of some concepts over time. Ihalainen and Saarinen (2019) note that Conceptual History, when combined with Political History, mostly focuses on past human interaction and communication, and understands discourses as central interlinked elements of political processes, events, and action.

Interest in the field of Conceptual History was quite high in the 20th Century Germany, especially when conducting historical research of the World War II. Later, the field became prominent in political history for the analysis of political communication and events. As shown by Litte (2016), conceptual history has three main tasks: firstly, to identify the concepts that are possible in characterization of history, then to locate those concepts in the context of political or social discourses and finally to critically evaluate those concepts for their usefulness for historical analysis

3.1.1 Debates on Democracy in Sweden

Research problem: Friberg's (2012) article aims to explore the concepts of democracy that were used in Sweden and especially focuses on how the concepts were

¹https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/13mF_X3OB9CKtdfsUFDLPJZJ44VcxZ1uv9OzAE2E_E-I/edit#gid=1690588464

used by the Social Democrats (SDP) during the interwar years when the party was establishing itself and its political agenda. It examines the Swedish parliamentary rhetoric about democracy after the full suffrage reform.

Research method: The author employed German Begriffsgeschichte (conceptual history approach) as introduced by Koselleck, and the theory of ideologies (Freeden, 1998 as cited by Friberg, 2012). According to Friberg, these two methods complement each other since conceptual history emphasizes how socio-political context influences the changing meaning of the concept whereas theory of ideologies finds the meaning of this concept dependent on morphological structure.

Data collection: The main source of the data for this article were the debates in Swedish Parliament during the interwar years. In addition, the author used other governmental materials, such as reports from different committees. Both sources were only available as hardcopies, but they provided coherent source materials. The debates which were analyzed were chosen according to two important criteria. First, the debates needed to be explicit discussions in Parliament and needed to focus on the concept of democracy in the interwar years. Second, the debates had to be related to a topic that a political party (in this case Social Democrats) claimed was connected to democracy in a certain way. The debates which conformed to the first criterion were identified through the subject index of the governmental records, whereas the debates which needed to observe the second criterion were recovered through an extended analysis of materials such as party manifests, newspaper articles and records from the congress. This was necessary to get the feeling of what the SDP claimed to be connected to the democracy and then compare those records with parliamentary records. In addition, the author analyzed the articles from the Social Democratic journal titled *Tiden*, which throughout the 20th century was one of the most important Social Democratic newspapers for conducting internal debates. The analysis of these articles added to the reliability of the conceptual analysis.

Discussion: One of the problems with data collection was that all the records were accessible only as hardcopies and not electronically. Although the author gives no information about that, we could assume that the documents needed to be thoroughly read and notes taken. Also, parliamentary records do not exactly depict the actual debates since the process from an actual debate to a printed one used to be rather complicated and long. This results in sometimes significant differences between the actual speech and the written text. This long process of editing, changing, and adapting the actual text to be suitable for a printed version results in the data not objectively depicting what was said during the debate.

3.1.2 Debates on Immunity in France and Romania

Research problem: In this article Negoita (2015) analyzes the concept of parliamentary immunity. His main goal is to identify not only historical premises but also linguistic, political, and legal instruments that played part in conceptualization of parliamentary immunity in two countries – France and Romania. This article, therefore, although historical in nature, employs interdisciplinary

perspective when studying parliamentary discourse and investigates the concept of the word “immunity” as used in parliamentary discourse.

Research method: The author employs methodological framework of Conceptual History and makes comparative analysis of the two aforementioned countries. We could therefore understand this method as comparative conceptual analysis.

Data collection: The data was collected from a variety of sources which were mostly not parliamentary ones. For French, dictionaries (*Le Grand Robert de la langue française*, *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, etc.), scientific works which focused on the history of French parliamentarism (*Histoire de France* or *Les caractères ou les mœurs de ce siècle*), as well as various political documents and French Constitution were used. Romanian data was also gathered from dictionaries (*Dictionar al institutiilor feudale din Tarile Romane*, for example), as well as various historical documents and different versions of democratic Constitutions. What all documents had in common was that although they were not strictly records of parliamentary debates, they did focus on the parliamentary and political language and discourse.

Discussion: This research is slightly different from the others in this review since it does not draw directly from the parliamentary records. This analysis successfully shows how historical analyses frequently draw on sources other than explicitly parliamentary data.

3.2 (Collective) Memory Analysis

Memory analysis combines intellectual strands from various domains such as history, sociology, anthropology, education, etc. Since this is an emerging field of research, its qualitative and quantitative methodological tools are not yet fully developed. Instead, researchers who conduct memory analysis usually borrow methodological tools from other social sciences and adapt them for their own purpose. These methods frequently contain content and (critical) discourse analysis.

The main aim of memory analysis is the study of forms and functions of representing the past. Data collection includes a careful examination of primary historical sources and archival studies, as well as secondary sources such as case studies, interviews, surveys, and eyewitness reports. Once the data is collected, the aforementioned methodological tools are employed to thoroughly analyze the data. Memory analysis frequently also includes the research of collective memories and narratives. Collective memory as defined by Hogwood (2013) is a concept, which is used across disciplines to refer to the ways the past is “perceived, shaped, and constructed” and its main aim is to extract useful data from collective conversations, sharing ideas and media. This then leads to a synthesis of voices and formation of a common information thread among peers.

One of the major methodological problems that occurs inside memory analysis, is that when researchers conduct research, they usually use whatever evidence is readily available, without digging deeper into the event and research it more thoroughly. This points to the fact that even though memory analysis is a useful field of historical analysis, researchers must be attentive to employ other

approaches with which they confirm and legitimate the findings of memory analysis.

3.2.1 The Nation in Parliamentary Discourse on Immigration

Research problem: De Saint-Laurent (2014) focuses on exploring the meaning that is attributed to the national group. The aim of her article is to analyze collective memories (she names them narratives) and show what meaning they give to the nation, how this meaning is produced and how the stories told by different groups relate to one another.

Research method: She employs a qualitative analysis of collective narratives of the past. In connection with memory analysis, she employs dialogism as a methodological tool since the analysis of dialogic overtones helps reconstruct the social processes through which the discourse is done.

Data collection: It needs to be noted that this article is an analysis of the meaning which is given to the concept of nation in French parliamentary debates over a bill on Immigration and Integration. The data used consisted of official transcripts of fifteen parliamentary sessions which happened between May 2 and May 17, 2006. In addition to that, the author also included the vote session which happened on June 30, 2006. All documents are made available to the public through the official parliamentary website. In addition to using general reactions of the Assembly, the author used transcripts of the participants interventions and interruptions from the entire sessions. Once the author determined the datasets, she began with relevant data selection, which happened in three stages. In the first stage, the author identified those excerpts which were relevant for the study of the role of collective memory. She did that with the help of Nvivo² software (QSR International Pty Ltd., 2020). In this stage the author also extracted relevant references by carefully reading through all the debates and employing a keyword search, which contributed to pinpointing the indirect references. The second stage was the coding stage, where firstly thematic coding happened to map out relevant historical periods and secondly the groups which the speakers belonged to were coded into two categories – political party and outside the political spectrum. In the third stage the fragmented excerpts and data were used to reconstruct past narratives, which were then thoroughly analyzed.

Discussion: This paper is not only historical since the author herself notes that it also adopts “socio-cultural psychological perspective on memory” (ibid.). She also notes that because of the reconstructive aspect of her analysis, she checked the narratives against certain complementary sources (research in French newspapers, blogs, websites, etc.). This made the research much more reliable.

3.3 Discourse Studies

Van Dijk (2018) uses the term discourse studies to refer to a field of research, which includes various qualitative and quantitative methods and different genres, such as

news reports or parliamentary debates. This field emerged in the 1960s and is very prominent inside humanities and especially social sciences. The field of Discourse Studies includes various methods, such as Discourse Analysis (DA), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Political Discourse Analysis (PDA). All three were detected as salient in this literature review.

Discourse Analysis (DA) is one of the most frequently used methods in those social science disciplines, where the focus is frequently on the study of language and text. In historical research, Discourse Analysis is sometimes referred to as Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) and its main defining feature is in acknowledging the historical context and attempting to integrate this knowledge together with background of social and political fields into research. DHA focuses on studying the display of power through language and conceptualizes history through a theorized lens of critique. This method shares various common features with the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and provides a clear description of how to integrate historical context to critical discourse analysis, highlighting the importance of historicity to understand the continuities of discourses (Achugar, 2017). Sometimes DA, when used to analyze political discourse, is referred to as Political Discourse Analysis (PDA) (Dunmire, 2012).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) examines the means by which political power is manifested or abused through discourse structures and practices (Dunmire 2012). Achugar (2017) shows that since the past has become an area of focus for CDA, this method has become a salient one in historical research. One of its major aims is to provide an explanation of the power differences in contemporary society by researching the past events and their context.

3.3.1 British Parliament and Foreign Policy in the 20th Century

Research problem: Ihalainen and Matikainen (2016) investigated the parliamentarization of the foreign policy in British Parliament throughout the 20th century. They argue that throughout the 20th century, parliaments in general gained more power in discussing foreign policy and especially in British Parliament this parliamentarization of foreign policy debates was highly noticeable.

Research method: They combine analysis of the policy documents with the more discourse-oriented analysis of parliamentary debates. Their research method is more discourse-oriented than the traditional diplomatic history since they do not focus only on policy documents but also consider the discourse of parliamentary debates in that time.

Data collection: The authors utilized a wide variety of primary sources with the Hansard constituting the starting point of their analysis. They also used parliamentary papers such as committee reports as well as the relevant sources created by other political actors – the foreign office, other relevant government departments, voluntary associations, the media, etc. Their data therefore consists of parliamentary debates on the one hand and archival

² <https://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo-qualitative-data-analysis-software/home>

documents, public debates, and interviews on the other. They argue that the use of such a wide range of data was necessary to grasp the multi-sided nature of the policy discourse and to ensure that data was vast enough to provide the complete picture of how the parliamentarization of foreign policy debates occurred. Parliamentary records database was electronically available which resulted in authors utilizing full-text searches to locate sources for contextual analysis of parliamentary debates. They wanted to locate potentially interesting debates and analyze them by using aforementioned historical methods.

Discussion: Authors do not provide a detailed account of how the data was collected and give no information about how the documents, other than the electronically accessible Hansard, were obtained. They do, however, clearly show that in order to conduct thorough historical research, a variety of sources needs to be studied and that focusing only on parliamentary debates is not enough.

3.3.2 British Lobbying and Parliamentary Discourse

Research problem: McGrath (2018) focuses his research on lobbying which he sees as a significant component of the modern politics in Britain. In his article, he provides a detailed explanation of the scale and significance of lobbying and studies how lobbying in Britain was discussed not only by parliamentarians but also by journalists.

Research method: The author utilized keyword search on several digitized archives which helped him gather extracts from parliamentary debates and newspaper articles. He blended both qualitative and quantitative readings of the texts which leads us to assume that some kind of discourse analysis method was employed.

Data collection: The author draws on parliamentary debates as well as three other databases which together consist of 51 newspaper titles between 1800 and 1950. The data was available in electronic archives and already in written form, so no transcription was needed. The unit of the analysis is an individual newspaper article or parliamentary speech. The database consisted of four online archives: 1) Hansard (1803-1950), 2) British Library (1800-1900), 3) The Times (1800-1950), and 4) The Guardian (1800-1950). To gather the source material, the author employed a three-step process; firstly, each archive was searched using a range of keywords which are associated with lobbying which produced roughly 1.691 items. Secondly, each item was printed, carefully read, and sorted according to the descriptor he was searching for. Some of the data has already been discarded here since it did not correspond to the search parameters (e.g., did not relate to governmental bodies, material covered lobbying in countries other than Britain, etc.). In the third stage, the items which were not removed were put into chronological order and the author removed all the duplicates. This resulted in 689 items being determined as suitable for analysis. Once all the unique items were collected the individual items were examined and coded. To acquire the appropriate data, McGrath employed a five-stage process to transform qualitative material into quantitative data, although not all stages needed to be applied. He sourced the

material but did not need to transcribe it as it has already been made available in textual form. Then the data was unitized, then categorized on the basis of the actual data and relevant theory and finally each unit was separately coded.

Discussion: The author never explicitly mentioned discourse analysis as his research method. But since he talks about conducting a qualitative analysis of discourse from parliamentary records and newspaper articles, we could assume that he employed discourse analysis approach.

3.3.3 Nationalism and Political Discourse in Scotland

Research problem: The research conducted by Whigham (2019) critically examines the narratives which emerged from party political discourse after Scottish independence referendum in 2014. The aim of the research is to analyze the past discourse on nationalism in Scotland and to critically reflect on narratives about Scottish nation's past.

Research method: The author employs the methodological approach called political discourse analysis (PDA), which was introduced and thoroughly explained by Fairclough and Fairclough (2012). According to Whigham, this method was used since it provides an "original methodological contribution to the study of Scottish nationalism".

Data collection: The author focused on parliamentary discourse of the largest political parties in Scotland, namely the pro-independence Scottish National Party (SNP) on the one hand and Scottish Labor Party as well as Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party on the other. The database consisted of election manifestos and policy documents which were related specifically to the independence referendum. Because of a wide range of potentially useful data, Whigham focused primarily on political manifestos and constitutional policy documents. This also allowed for a more detailed analysis of only crucial information about each party's position on the Scottish constitutional debates. The author used the Nvivo qualitative data analysis software package (QSR International Pty Ltd., 2020) which helped him code content of each of the data sources according to the themes that emerged. This was then followed by a coding process which categorized low-level codes into higher-level discursive forms. This sample allowed for a reflection and thorough analysis of political discourse.

Discussion: It needs to be noted that the application of the Nvivo software is an exemplary one and is not frequently observed in historical research. Also, at times the article reads as a sociological one and we believe that it could just as well be classified as such since the author is also a sociologist. However, a more thorough description of the methodological framework would be appreciated.

3.4 Content Analysis

Content Analysis (CA) primarily focuses on studying and analyzing society and social life by examining the content of the visual and textual media – texts, images, and other media products. Mihailescu (2019) understands it as a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their contexts which is particularly

useful in humanities and social sciences. It is a methodological approach which can help in development of the deductive and inductive capacities, which are extremely important in historical research. In addition, it is highly useful in historical research where researchers are analyzing data with large amounts of text and where meaningful information need to be extracted from the historical documents.

Since CA frequently intertwines both qualitative and quantitative approaches, it sometimes comes close to a mixed methods. CA can sometimes be mistaken for Discourse Analysis since the two methods are very similar. Although both are interested in providing the context of an event, the main difference between the two is that CA focuses on the content of the text, whereas DA focuses on the language that is used in text and context.

3.4.1 Constructing the Child in Need of State Protection

Research problem: In this article, Smith (2016) explores the development of the discourse surrounding children in need of a state protection in Ireland. She mostly focuses on the discourse produced by legislators and government ministers who are ultimately responsible for child services.

Research method: The author employs content analysis of various bills as well as parliamentary debates. She defines it as a textual analysis, but we regard it as a content analysis since she focuses mainly on the content on bills and debates.

Data collection: The author focuses on a specific timeframe in Irish history, namely between 1922 (the formation of the Irish Free State) and 1991 (the adoption of current legislative framework for children welfare). The data consists of debates from both houses of Irish parliament – the House of Deputies and the Senate. In addition, Smith also focused on the official reports which informed these debates. In one part of her research, she focused on parliamentary debates on the Children Bills of 1928 and 1940 and Cussen Report from 1936. In the second part, she conducts the analysis of the Kennedy Report (1970), the Final Report of the Task Force on Child Care Services (1981) as well as the parliamentary debates on the Child Care Bill of 1988.

Discussion: The author dedicates only one paragraph to explicating where the data was taken from in addition to only briefly mentioning the method she used. We consider this to be one of the major shortcomings in this article since it would be useful to know how the textual analysis was performed, what the author focused on and why, as well as what was her motivation for focusing on those specific bills and debates.

3.4.2 Clientelism in Irish Politics

Research problem: The main aim of this article is to research the emergence and development of discourse which revolves around the concept of clientelism in Irish politics. Kusche (2017) focuses on the analysis of the relationship between Irish deputies and voters, which has been perceived as particularly clientelist.

Research method: Kusche identifies the main method of her research as qualitative content analysis. She shows

that although this is a historical research, it does have certain methodological features of the sociological research, since sociology also frequently employs content analysis as the main methodological framework.

Data collection: The author draws on parliamentary speeches as well as newspaper articles in order to research the emergence and development of the Irish political clientelism and its critique. This empirical material was deliberately chosen since it is made continuously available throughout the decades and is easy to access. She gathered the parliamentary data from the official website of the Irish parliament and media data from online archives of the respective newspapers. She opted for data from two of the most frequently read Irish quality papers, namely the Irish Independent and the Irish Times. The first step of her data collection consisted of keyword search of the words “clientelism” and “brokerage” in both parliamentary and newspaper records. After realizing that the two words had not been used until the 1980s, she identified other potentially relevant terms based on their emergence in items referent to the two keywords. This produced several other keywords such as “stroke politics”, “gombeen politics”, etc., which the author used to find relevant data. The period of her analysis runs up to 2012 and starts in the early 1940s. She notes that in the case of parliamentary records, the unit of her analysis is the contribution of the member of the House of Deputies or the Senate; this can either be a speech or a short intervention. In the case of newspaper articles, the unit of her analysis is an article itself. The respective units were then coded according to their focus and since some units included several views of the matter, they were coded in more than one category. Then those articles and debates which specifically focused on the link between politicians and voters were selected for a more detailed interpretation.

Discussion: This article falls under the category of historical social research and employs methodological approaches which are frequent in both historical and sociological research. She gives a detailed account of the method and data she used and where this data was taken from, which is not always the case in historical research. As seen in some of the previously reviewed articles, the author combined parliamentary and newspaper data so as to address the concept of clientelism in as much detail as possible.

3.5 Mixed Methods

Shorten and Smith (2017) understand the mixed methods approach as drawing on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods, which results in showing a more complete picture of a research problem. It is a highly complementary approach, which means that the results produced by one of the methods, can be elaborated and clarified with the findings from the other method. This means that triangulation of one set of results influences and enhances the validity of inferences. In addition, the combination of different methodologies, approaches, and various fields of research adds to the validity of the research and eliminates the possibility of research bias. Thies (2002) shows that as in many other disciplines (sociology for example), investigator bias as well as unwarranted selectivity of the use of historical source materials are the

main problems of qualitative historical research which emphasizes the importance of the selection of the appropriate methodological approach.

Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) combine qualitative Discourse Analysis with the predominantly quantitative corpus-based approach. The main aim of the CADS is to facilitate understanding from the linguistic perspective as well as from that of humanities and social science. As Partington (2012) shows, this approach uses corpus techniques to investigate a particular political or institutional discourse type and to uncover and analyze obvious patterns of language or aspects of linguistic interaction.

3.5.1 Scottish Political Rhetoric in Invasion of Iraq

Research problem: Elcheroth and Reicher (2014) conduct a systematic analysis of the Scottish debate over the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The aim of their article is to show, on the one hand the development of the debates in Scottish Parliament and conduct the analysis of parliamentary discourse of anti-war Scottish separatist parties, and on the other to examine how the conflict was construed as either for or against national interest.

Research method: The authors employ a mixed-methods approach and used thematic coding. This on the one hand produced structured inventories of arguments which served as the grid for qualitative analysis, and on the other, it produced a database which was then used for content analysis.

Data collection: The data for the analysis consist of all the contributions to four Scottish parliamentary debates referring to the Gulf War. A total of 106 interventions which occurred between January 2003 and June 2004 was used as a dataset. It needs to be noted that during the time of 2003 Gulf War, there was also the campaign for election to the Scottish Parliament which meant that the election debate was definitely influenced by the war debate. Each individual intervention was separately coded to extract the information such as which debate the speech was taken from, what was the party membership of the speaker, what was the overall moral argument and so on. Special emphasis was put on the two parliamentary debates which occurred right before the invasion of Iraq (January and March 2003) as well as on first two substantial parliamentary debates that took place after the invasion (November 2003 and June 2004). The transcripts of these debates were all published in the official records of the parliament, and they constituted the "corpus" data for their further analysis. When determining relevant data, all the transcriptions were read several times and coded for those interventions that included arguments that were thematically fitting for the analysis. The two pre-invasion debates produced 68 relevant interventions whereas the two post-invasion debates produced the remaining 38.

Discussion: This article consists of two separate studies. The first study is the analysis of parliamentary speeches, whereas in the second part, the authors turn from elite discourse to popular understanding of the war. The second part draws on the data from Scottish Social Attitude (SSA) survey and since it does not focus on the parliamentary discourse, only the first study was of interest for us.

3.5.2 Political Discourse of Israeli PMs between 2001 and 2009

Research problem: The aim of this article by Gavriely-Nuri (2013) is to look critically at the uses of collective memories in Israeli politics. Collective memories are of great significance to the case of Israel due to their historical background and this article analyzes how collective memories are used within the corpus of speeches of Israeli Prime Ministers.

Research method: The author employed a methodological approach which incorporated both, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and corpus linguistics. Because of the combination of corpus linguistics and discourse analysis, we regarded this article as using the approach called Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS).

Data collection: The data used for this study consisted of speeches of Israeli Prime Ministers, over a period of 9 years (between 2001 and 2009), which were delivered in the Israeli Parliament (Knesset). The author conducted a computerized search in the speech archive that includes addresses of the PMs and constructed a corpus, which was then used as a database. The corpus included speeches by the two selected Prime Ministers, namely Ariel Sharon (2001 – 2005) and Ehud Olmert (2006 – 2009). Her computerized search revealed 274 instances of the word "memory", which was determined as the keyword to identify relevant speeches. All those references were then carefully studied and read in order to determine the context. This resulted in identifying 103 references of the phrase "collective memory" which were distributed among 64 speeches. In this count, the author also included synonyms such as "national memory", "public's memory", "people's memories", etc. Once the data was broadly selected, the author performed a two-stage analysis to determine the actual topics of the speeches. In the first stage, the context in which national events evoked the mention of collective memory was analyzed. In the second stage, specific content included in the mentions was studied.

Discussion: Although the author mentions the Cultural approach to the CDA, she gives no detailed account on how this approach differs from traditional CDA or what its benefits are. One of the possible justifications for employing cultural approach is the study of cultural context of the PMs' speeches and their cultural significance. We also found that in the article there is no explicit elaboration as to why this particular methodological framework was selected and how it contributes to the overall analysis.

3.6 Digital History and Topic Modelling

We have shown that historians gather their data mostly from historical archives and feel "much more confident when using traditional sources in printed format, since they believe to have better access to the historical data required for their research" (Torou, 2009). Guldi (2019) believes that digital methods can help researchers land material for historical synthesis that "builds upon the insights of foregoing historians while potentially illuminating new directions for further research". Some authors (Piersma et al., 2014) regard these methods as the Digital Approach or Digital History, the main function of which is to enable historians use advanced search engines in order to explore large quantities of data.

Topic modelling is capable of scanning a large set of documents within which it detects word and phrase patterns and automatically clusters them into groups according to their meaning. As Guldi (2019) shows, topic modelling has been effectively used in history to identify patterns of historical interest in academic sources and has in combination with discourse studies proven to be useful for historical analysis.

Today, several software packages exist which can be used in a pre-existing database of digitalized texts. This, and the fact that digital methods, such as text mining and topic modelling are becoming increasingly used in historical research of parliamentary discourse, underlines the importance of digitizing historical parliamentary records, and not only enable but also encourage historians to start using them as one of the primary sources of data for their research.

3.6.1 Topic Modelling and Historical Change

Research problem: The aim of Guldi's (2019) article is to research the parliamentary discourse on 19th century British empire infrastructure projects, such as the drainage of the River Shannon in 1860, as well as parliamentary argument of the telegraph connection between England and India.

Research method: The author uses dynamic topic modelling which allowed her to generalize about the discourse on a diachronic dataset, observing trends in different time periods.

Data collection: The data for her research consisted of parliamentary debates in the British parliament in 19th century, gathered from Hansard, the official database of all UK parliamentary debates. The author focused on several topics connected to the infrastructure and employed approximately the same data collection and analysis in all of them. The entire Hansard database was subjected to topic modeling, resulting in a set of words used by MPs most indicative of their discussions a certain topic. The author experimented with using on the one hand debate as a document and then also a speech as a document. In addition, she also experimented with degrees of granularity for analysis, asking the computer to return either 4, 10, 100, 500 or 1000 topics. She obtained most informative results with 500 topics as the search returned fairly specific words which were interesting for further analysis.

Discussion: Guldi shows how topic modelling can be implemented into research and analysis of historical data. Topic modelling is becoming increasingly popular in historical research and is frequently used not only on national but also international level (e.g., when researching debates in the European parliament). It is important to note that topic modelling must always be complemented by an objective analysis and critical skills of the researcher when interpreting the results of topic modelling.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This literature review shows the most common methods and approaches that (political) historians use in their research of parliamentary discourse as well as tries to understand what kind of data and information historians are looking for and which sources they use. We can confirm observations from Torou et al. (2009) that either printed or

digitized sources of primary and secondary documents are used in historical research, with digitized sources (transcriptions, text documents, and corpora) becoming increasingly more popular. This makes historical research community a potentially important user group of the ParlaMint corpora.

This literature review shows how the majority of researchers of political history collect data on their own, using techniques and methods which are often time-consuming and demand a lot of manual work. Such work could be made much more research-friendly and efficient if historical parliamentary corpora were developed, annotated, and documented. They would present a database of collected parliamentary records of the past and would be a useful source of historical parliamentary records which would be an invaluable extension of the ParlaMint project.

Our first aim should therefore be to provide historians with tutorials, workshops and showcases on how to use corpora, corpora data, and the main corpus-analytical techniques. Rich and user-friendly documentation on how the ParlaMint data is gathered, processed, and annotated is to be made available to the historians in addition to offering quick user manuals which would show the basic use of concordancers for historians to learn how to effectively use corpora.

Then, we should encourage them to develop and use their own corpora and datasets for the historical periods they are interested in using the same encoding standards. In this endeavor, we agree with Kytö (2010) that compilers of the data should document their compilation decisions in clear terms in user guides, corpus manuals, and training materials which need to accompany the release versions of the corpora, since it would be impossible for end-users to find information about the background of the texts which are included in the historical corpora without them.

The ParlaMint community should also focus on the implementation of the tagging of the digital repository contents with complete and structured metadata. Some historians (Torou et al. 2009) note that the information which is typically used in research queries by historians (such as the author, topic of the item, date of creation, the period to which the content refers, etc.) should be available as metadata. The availability and reliability of metadata is extremely important since historians often rely on the additional data and information about a certain historical source.

Marjanen (personal communication, 2022) points out that historians researching parliamentary discourse are highly interested in the use of rhetoric, the uses of voice and practices of negotiation and debate. One of the key interests for them is identifying who talked, which makes the availability of any metadata about the MPs of vital importance. According to Marjanen, there are also some historians who together with traditional sources, use audio and video recordings from parliament to study non-verbal elements in parliamentary discourse. He points out that with digitized sources, keyword search has made material much more accessible though many historians are often interested in something broader than keyword search. They focus on the entirety of speeches or discourse related to a certain topic since keyword search often does not produce enough relevant results. Historians are used to finding these

“discourses” on their own but if the process of searching for relevant sources was made easier for them, it would definitely be welcomed.

An increasing availability of the digitized sources appears to be setting an interesting trend. In addition to more and more sources and documents becoming digitized and made available through electronic libraries, various digital research tools and approaches are becoming available, making historical research often very digital. Therefore, political historians nowadays already employ digital approaches and tools to analyze parliamentary data and these approaches allow them to gather and analyze data in a faster, more efficient, and less time-consuming manner. However, the development of parliamentary historical corpora could potentially reshape the entire process of historical research and offer new understanding of the parliamentary data. As Blaxill (2013) shows, the combined approaches of close manual analysis and selective quantification simplify the research as well as facilitate numerical comparison and contextualization.

The argument we want to put forward with this literature review is not that current qualitative historical research of political debates and parliamentary discourse should be completely replaced by more quantitative corpus-assisted approaches, but rather that corpora could be effectively used alongside the traditional qualitative historical analysis. We treat corpora as potentially powerful tools which would not only simplify data collection and generate relevant results much more effortlessly, but also effectively reduce and minimize potential research bias that might be present in the analysis of historical data.

This review also shows the need for more systematic, transparent, and replicable quantitative and qualitative analysis, which makes corpus-assisted approaches ideally suited for historical research of parliamentary discourse. The immediate usefulness of the ParlaMint corpora is also clearly confirmed by this review and it emphasizes the need for further enrichment and the addition of the historical data to the current ParlaMint database.

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