

Constructing Frames: Goffman, Bateson, and Frame Analysis as a Neglected Part of Social Construction Theory

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Friday 21 March at 4:00 pm
Richardson 6N4

Theoretical concepts have histories, and taking the time to sort out their history can provide renewed and expanded understanding of the concept. Frames have been widely used within communication generally, and Media Studies in particular. At least some authors still credit Erving Goffman's book *Frame Analysis* as their initial resource. Goffman, however, did not claim originality, but acknowledges prior use of the concept by Gregory Bateson. This presentation will summarize why Bateson originally introduced frames and how he used the concept, and then review Goffman's elaboration in order to refresh our use of the term. Rather than narrow and flatten our understanding of framing, it would be productive to return to the complexity Bateson and Goffman originally proposed. Although not typically addressed as part of social construction theory, frames are particularly useful in that context. Meaning making is one of the key concerns of social construction theory, and frames are among the basic structures humans use to make meaning.

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