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Session 3 – **Utilizing a mixed methods approach to analysis**

Led by Mycal Cohen, Urban Institute

Notes by Sara McTarnaghan

**Summary:** Qualitative data collection can add a lot to our analysis; reinforcing, challenging or driving our quantitative work. But often it seems as though qualitative data is used only to add color to quantitative findings. This would be a discussion of how folks are integrating their qualitative and quantitate data collection and analysis.

**Participants:** Mycal cohen, Sara McTarnaghan, Louise Carter, Jessie Partridge, Alejandro Acero, Jessica Rosenthal, Sara Mctarnaghan, Nate Ron-Ferguson, Sarin Adhikari, Dan Brown, Katie Pritchard

Minutes

**Mycal:** This session was motivated by a recent project experience where we collected data from over 100 interviews at the same time as the quantitative data analysis. Felt we could have done a better job bridging the two analytical efforts and elevating findings from qualitative research, not just using as anecdotes to support findings. Curious to learn from you all about the ways you approach mixed-methods research in your work?

**Unai:** Was it happening at the same time (qualitative and quantitative)? One way to connect them is for both processes to be iterative. For example, do qualitative work to define indicators for quant analysis.

**Shakrukh:** mixed-methods studies should complement each-other. Brining data into conversation with each other.

**Sarin:** Normally we assume that quantitative comes first and then we test with qualitative comes after. In a new project, we tried out a reverse to collect qualitative information which helped us narrow down variables when we were developing our models.

**Jessie**: interested in doing more qualitative research. Isn’t something that we have really done a lot of. How do folks get started either in setting up a qualitative project or mixed methods? Most exciting was a PAR research project - qualitative arm worked with community members in 9 neighborhoods to develop, conduct and do analysis. Results of analysis that the community residents found we wouldn’t have had a way to look for in quantitative research.

Looking at TOD and effect of health outcomes. I helped pick through quantitative methods which neighborhoods we are going to use, pulled statistics, modeling coming up. Folks doing PAR research, resident researchers were really interested in questions about connection to community, ownership of community, interesting finding that they came to in terms of well-being and qualitative of life, household income less important were less relevant.

**Lousie**: when we first started Communities Count 20 years ago; 2 years to do research design with community; we had to devise our own survey, we don’t have any way of tracking the things that people care about. There are a few more things that we can track now. As researchers, we are often so interested in looking under the lamppost when the things that we care about aren’t even illuminated.

**Unai**: We have an experience with the neighborhood action plans, 10% input from community, meet with neighborhoods at least once a month, promote meetings and then gather input about major challenges and what are they proud of, might see an asset as something you have never though off. Partnerships with community development corps. University of Pittsburgh and relationship with librarians was really inspiring. Good place to try to get that indicator. They get the feedback. Something like that would be really helpful to create mix methods approx., categorize the data that is being collected.

**Mychal**: when do you have qualitative information coming in from other sources, how to weave together?

**Shakrukh**: We use open ended questions on surveys for people to add context

**Sarin**: In our case we would ask to look for detailed instruments and assumptions they have used when building that instrument, brief profile of people they have collected. Who was doing the survey, where the survey was done what was the profile of the community? Trying to develop method that is sustainable over long period of time – in form of census – when we want to track the same sample over time; if anyone has done something like that.

**Lousie**: How to get people who are so invested in the answer to your question that they are committed to repeat data collection?

**Jessie**: that is what we are trying to do, having community involved in question design phase.

**Sarin**: we tried to use some technology, with businesses its ok. But going down at community email, some community members don’t use technology, really difficult to use any form of technology. We tried with community leaders. But then we lost track of the leaders themselves. And people they are connected to.

Enrichment project, bring folks into a nice hotel and, this is our third year, most of the participants themselves are the community leaders themselves, our breakfast is not good enough to track them anymore.

**Unai**: one of my co-workers Kelly presented a project that is tracking adults and kids in same households for long period of time. United way outsourced making sure that the organizations are updating the data. Should be able to replicate.

**Katie**: We work mostly with neighborhood plans and neighborhood organizations; neighborhood organizers are intermediaries and have some sense, mostly young white college educated good heartened women who don’t look like the neighborhood, not speaking for them. Tried to get residents recruited, trained and paid for doing the outreach. Ownership of it only comes with people from the neighborhood who truly are going to stay in the neighborhood and their notion. No data without stories and no data without stories. Try to play up examples. Neighborhood profiles – mostly say our boundaries are wrong, the # of people with 2 vehicles one of the vehicles is up on bricks or can’t be used. Weight of evidence. Complementariness. We have been pretty successful in training cadres of people and getting them certified and owning it – we get way better response rates. It is important to question the assumption – about lack of accessibility of smartphones. We work really hard at authentic engagement.

**Lousie**: I’m thinking about my own neighborhood – people who show up for meetings aren’t necessarily representative, but a lot of them are really intentional about communicating back and forth with those who are less likely to attend.

**Katie**: cultural anthropologist by training, first rule is that first group of people not being more representative.

**Jessie**: importance of being involved in survey analysis; wanted to collect representative sample, but oversampled higher need, had to adjust their methods to make that possible.

**Katie**: one thing that we do routinely that is helpful is that the first part of sample is more convenience samples, then compare that to the rest of the population. See where we need to more outreach for underrepresented.

**Mycal**: how to get feedback back out from that dissemination process, folks who are center points for the community, flow back 🡪 both electronic, run into someone on the street, more people end up showing up at church at end of the block – because of that little face time encounter, makes me feel more generous with my time.

**Katie:** that one of most controversial, end up honoraria, in my list of priorities, food, transportation and childcare, nighttime meetings or Saturdays, availability or accessibility.

Taking away practical barriers first. Trying to make it as discretionary as possible. We make an arrangement with the organization that they work with. Big project on fatherhood, their populations are all different – so we let organization determine. X # of people for focus group. It takes that transaction out of research.

**Jessie**: meeting participation; and making the meetings fun and interactive, community engagement piece and hosting meetings that are really active.

**Mycal**: PAR, input about research from community?

**Greg**: Amanda lovely, artist in residence in twin cities, popsicle cart and she goes out to community and while people are having a popsicle they fill out a survey.

**Jessie**: pictures of different design interventions and have people write down which ones they find the best.

**Katie**: no wrong door approach, everyone has a different approach and input – turnout perspective is more rewarding.

**Greg**: CDC organized a teen survey council, faculty nominated students from area high schools. Incredibly positive experience.

**Unai**: Indiana, **my community, my vision**, every year between 5 and 7 communities’ partners with high school. Develop vision of community, master plans and action plans for community – quite a big impact on the projects that the planning departments fund. 4th or 5th year. Careful which organization you choose within the high school. Fully developed by high schoolers. Faculty member responsible for organizing this, at minimum one planner from the community – meet with mayors of the city. State puts call for cities that want to participate – planning departments nominate high schools. They get funding for all the meetings.

**Katie**: if we were doing a neighborhood plan, respond or react, bring them the data, generate the story that comes from that. Start with the story and then go back and find the data. We do a lot of outcome work, success story may or may not be at all representative. Nobody has problem talking about success, then follow with the data. Probably one of our best ways to do it and start the story based on the success.

**Mychal**: what is the process when the data contradicts the story?

**Katie**: I think of it is an opportunity to think about why we shouldn’t be basing anything, building data culture and data awareness.

**Jessie**: what about opposite, when the data doesn’t reflect the stories. What people think of as assets. On our website there is an example of a resident developed asset inventory, controversial, neighborhood school, drive by churches, I would never put a check cashing place but that is really high on the list. Conversation and then reconciling it.

**Louise**: we have a lot of pushback recently, maybe your quantitative data is broadly representative, but doesn’t speak to one persons experience.

**Katie**: the other thing is attitudnal – research can be traumatizing, coming as a learned, bi-directional learning, you have insights that I will never, building data culture and data literacy. Discover the

**Systems**: nvivo;

**Reports**: western states arts federation – creative vitality index; dashboard as well.

**Katie**: multiple coders, iterative process,

If you do it on a small question a word cloud, building capacity and seeing something quickly.

**Deb**: Great tool for when I was presenting my research. You don’t need a key for a work cloud

**Lousie**: communicating back to the people that you got the research from.