STUCK IN THE MIDDLE WITH YOU

Building Bridges for Qualitative Social Science and Humanities Researchers

IASSIST 2017 | THURSDAY | 25 MAY 2017 | F2 SESSION @ 16:00 – 17:15 | BIG 12 ROOM

Hello, I'm Mandy Swygart-Hobaugh, and welcome to our session, "Stuck in the Middle with You: Building Bridges for Qualitative Social Science and Humanities Researchers." First all of the panelists will present, and then we'll hold questions and discussion until the end.

This session is sponsored by the Qualitative Social Science and Humanities Data Interest Group (QSSHDIG), formed this past year and co-chaired by myself and fellow panelist, Lynda Kellam, and of which our other panelists are members. Here is our basic charge, and if you'd like to learn more about our activities or to join, please talk with Lynda or me. As you'll soon see, all of our panelists' presentations directly relate to this charge.

First let me introduce our panelists:

- I, MANDY, work at the Georgia State University Library as the Team Leader for Research Data Services, the Sociology and Data Services librarian, and the campus trainer for NVivo qualitative analysis software. In addition to my MLS I have a PhD in Sociology, specializing in qualitative research.

- LYNDA is the Assistant Director of International & Global Studies and the Data Services and Government Information Librarian at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) University Libraries. She provides research assistance and instructional support for data sources, supports research data management efforts on campus, and serves as liaison to the Departments of Political Science, History, and Peace & Conflict Studies. She has an MA in Political Science from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, an MLIS from UNC Greensboro, and is a PhD student in the Department of History at UNC Greensboro.

- LOUISE is Associate Director at the UK Data Archive at the University of Essex and currently leads the UK Data Service's Collections Development team. She works closely with data producers from all sectors to ensure that high quality data are created and acquired. Louise actively researches and publishes regularly in books and journals on key aspects of management, sharing, and reuse of social science data, and has directed research awards in this area. She was instrumental in helping operationalise the ESRC's Research Data Policy from 1995 and extending this to accommodate qualitative data. She acts as a consultant for qualitative data archives setting up round the world, and is currently working on enabling the UKDS to scale up for managing big data.

- SEBASTIAN and DESSI are both with the Qualitative Data Repository, hosted by the Moynihan Institute of Global Affairs at Syracuse University's Maxwell School. **SEBASTIAN** is the Associate Director of the Qualitative Data Repository (QDR) at Syracuse University. His main research interests are in qualitative data management and the integration of data tools into scholarly workflows. He is an active contributor to several scholarly open source projects, including Zotero and the Citation Style Language, as well as a founding editor of the emerging Author Carpentry series of lessons. He holds a PhD in Political Science from Northwestern University. **DESSI** has served as a fellow and consultant at the, since its establishment in 2012. In that capacity, she has assisted in shaping the repository's policies, acquisitions outreach, curatorial support for depositors (including dealing with human participants and copyright constraints), and the processing and publication of all commissioned pilot projects. A political scientist by training, Dessi's related interests are in educating social science researchers more broadly in good data practices, starting in the research planning stages.

Bridge b/t Qualitative and Humanities Research?

"**Qualitative researchers** study things in their natural setting [including 'artifacts, cultural text and productions; observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts'], attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin and Lincoln 2005).

"**The humanities** are the study of the meaning humans attribute to their experience through analysis and interpretation of the products of that experience, be they conceptual, cultural, or physical artifacts" (Costantino 2008).

Denzin, Norman K., and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds. 2005. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 3-4.
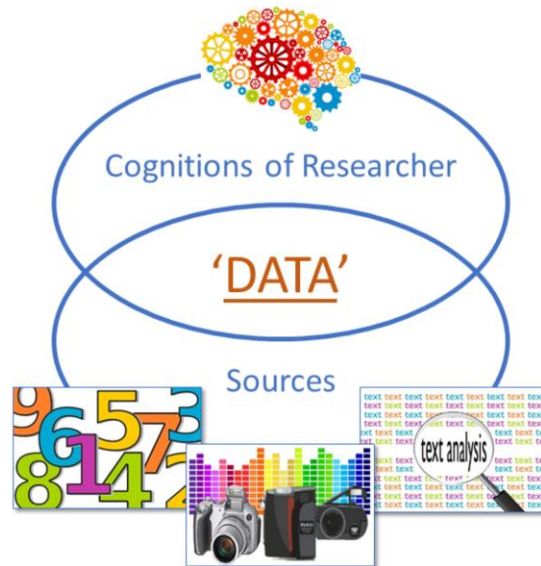Costantino, Tracie E. 2008. "Humanities, Qualitative Research in." In *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, edited by Lisa Given. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications. doi:10.4135/9781412963909.n202.

How can we bridge qualitative and humanities research?

Here is a brief definition from Denzin and Lincoln of what it means to do qualitative research and here is one from Costantino re: what it means to do research in the humanities. As you can see, they are extremely similar – both involve the study of how people attribute meaning to their experiences, and how researchers interpret or extract that meaning-making from source materials typically of a textual, audio, or visual nature.

But are they 'data'?

Cognitions of Researcher

'DATA'

GSU Emeritus Sociology Professor
Dr. Ralph LaRossa:

Sources

LaRossa, Ralph, and Mandy Swygart-Hobaugh. "The Logics and Logistics of Qualitative Research: A Framework for Exploring Concepts, Dimensions, and Relationships in Qualitative Data using NVivo Research Software." Presentation at Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA, 2015; October 21, 2015; October 19, 2016.

But are the source materials analyzed by qualitative and humanities researchers 'data'?

In a presentation myself and emeritus sociology professor Dr. Ralph LaRossa regularly do on Georgia State University's campus about the methods of doing theory-driven qualitative data analysis and the mechanics of using NVivo qualitative research software to do that analysis, Dr. LaRossa offers a discussion and diagram that I've adapted slightly to illustrate how we can conceptualize qualitative and humanities researchers' work as involving 'data'. Research involves examining sources: Those sources can be numerical (for statistical or quantitative researchers), but they could also be textual or audiovisual sources for qualitative and humanities researchers. Those sources become 'data' by the nature of the researcher examining and interpreting them, guided by their particular analytical or theoretical framework and their cognitions. Most social science qualitative researchers are comfortable with calling the source materials they work with 'data.' But even if humanities researchers prefer to call their source materials 'primary sources' in the case of historians, or 'texts' in the case of literary theorists, or a 'corpus' in the case of linguistics researchers, in a broader sense we can conceptualize them as 'data' because the research all involves the intersection of SOURCES and ANALYSIS/INTERPRETATION.

RDS Support for Qual/Hum Researchers?

"Qualitative researchers need just as much if not more support than quantitative researchers. These researchers… may need an introduction to these tools [such as NVivo, Atlas.ti, Dedoose, ArcGIS and other visualization capabilities] as well as training on how to use them. Moreover, data management is just as important for qualitative researchers, many of whom may not think of their research products as 'data' and therefore requiring management and/or planning."

CHALLENGES: Demonstrating RIGOR and TRANSPARENCY

Swygart-Hobaugh, Mandy. 2016. "Qualitative Research and Data Support: The Jan Brady of Social Sciences Data Services?" In *Databrarianship: The Academic Data Librarian in Theory and Practice*, edited by Lynda Kellam and Kristi Thompson, 153–78. Chicago, IL: ACRL, 169.

So how does this notion that qualitative and humanities researchers have 'data' translate to research data services support?

This quote is from an answer to an open-ended question in a survey I conducted. As it implies, qualitative researchers – and, by proxy, humanities researchers – have research support needs for training on potential tools or processes to efficiently and rigorously document, analyze, and manage their data which may not be met presently, in part because they may not think of their research as involving 'data' in the first place. Moreover, in the past they may not have been pressured or required to share their source materials and analysis documentation for the purposes of demonstrating rigor and transparency. But, just as quantitative and hard-science researchers are increasingly facing these challenges, so are qualitative and humanities researchers. And, due to the diversity and the typically unstructured nature of qualitative and humanities data sources and analysis approaches, these challenges are perhaps even more daunting.

Panelists re: Support for Qual/Hum Researchers

LYNDA – efforts to introduce historians to the notion of 'data management' as an important component of their research process.

LOUISE – common and bridging ways of capturing, presenting, and documenting oral history data that meet the needs of both qualitative and humanities researchers.

SEBASTIAN & DESSI – concerns voiced by qualitative political science researchers re: meeting the American Political Science Association's Data Access and Research Transparency (DA-RT) requirements as required for journal publication, and solutions the QDR has developed for addressing those concerns.

So, today our panelists will discuss what they've been doing to support qualitative and humanities researchers in response to these challenges.

Lynda will discuss her efforts to introduce historians to the notion of 'data management' as an important component of their research process.

Louise will discuss the common and bridging ways of capturing, presenting, and documenting oral history data that meet the needs of both qualitative and humanities researchers.

And Sebastian and Dessi will discuss the concerns voiced by qualitative political science researchers re: meeting the American Political Science Association's Data Access and Research Transparency (DA-RT) requirements as required for journal publication, and solutions the QDR has developed for addressing those concerns.

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