

# Mixed Methods For Poverty Analysis

- Vijayendra Rao's Notes



# Purely Qualitative

e.g.: Beneficiary Assessments

## **Methods:**

- PRA/PPA, Focus Groups Discussions

## **Problems:**

- Non-representative
- Lack of Counterfactuals, causality is unclear
- Small Samples

## **Advantages**

- Open-Ended
- Allowing the “Poor” to Assess Themselves
- Context, History

# Purely Quantitative

## **Problems:**

- Structured Questions
- “Top-Down”
- Reflect Biases of Researcher

## **Advantages:**

- Large Samples
- Representative Samples
- Clear Methods for Inferring Causality

# Mixed Methods

- Take Best of Both Worlds - Advantages
  - 1) Quantitative Questions Informed by Qualitative Investigation.
  - 2) Hypotheses Generated by Qualitative tested for Generalizability by Quantitative.
  - 3) Depth supplemented by breadth – “thick” understanding with generalizability.
  - 4) History, Context, Process *and* Identifying Causal Links

# Mixed Methods – Problems

High Cost

Time Consuming

Large Teams – Coordination Problems

Usually poorly done – more research required  
to understand how methods compare

# COURSE OUTLINE

- Matching Data to Methods
- Various Types of Qualitative Methods
  - In-Depth Interviews, Focus Groups, PRA/PPA
- Mixed Methods
  - Comparative Method – Sociology, Political Science
  - Participatory Econometrics

# COURSE OUTLINE (Cont.)

- Examples of Integrated Analysis
  - Subjective Welfare in India
  - Price Discrimination and Inequality
  - Jamaica Social Fund Evaluation
  - Guatemala. St. Lucia Poverty Assessments
  - Interactive Session
    - Propose Topics
      - » Quant., Qual, Mixed Ways of Dealing with it
      - » Discussion

# PARTICIPATION

- Allowing “beneficiaries” to both inform the analysis and analyze themselves
- Fosters dialogue rather than extracts information
- Instrumental vs. transformative participation

# Participatory Methods

RRA – Outsiders Learn in Cost-Effective ways that reflect grounded experience - Instrumental

PRA – “Beneficiaries” learn about *themselves* in a way that leads to change – Transformative, Demand Driven

PPA – RRA that focuses on Poverty

# KEY METHODS

Semi-Structured Interviews

FGD with homogenous or mixed groups

Maps, Models and Diagrams

Ranking and Scoring

Oral Histories

Drama, Games, Role Play

# REPRESENTATIVENESS OF RRA

WE GET AN IDEA OF THE “AVERAGE”  
“REPRESENTATIVE” UNIT BY  
ENCOURAGING DEBATE AND  
DIALOGUE WITHIN THE GROUP.

**THEREFORE - ROLE OF THE  
FACILITATOR IS KEY**

# **MAPPING, DIAGRAMMING**

**Agroecosystems in Zomba**

**Flow Diagram of Causes of Hunger**

**Seasonal Calender of Women's Work**

**Venn Diagram of Decision Makers**

# **RANKING AND SCORING**

**Coping Strategies in Times of Crisis**

**Types of Crops and Effect on Well-Being**

**Village Map with Wealth Ranking**

**Illness Matrix – Street Children, Nepal**

# **POTENTIAL PROBLEMS**

- **Selection of Respondents – tends to favor elite and beneficiaries**
- **Poor facilitators – delegation of work**
- **Cookie Cutter Approach rather than grounded creativity**
- **Overuse – “Tyranny of Participation”**

# FURTHER READING

- Robert Chambers, *Whose Reality Counts?*, Intermediate Technology Publications
- Robert Chambers, “The Best of Both Worlds,” in Kanbur Book on Q&Q
- Britha Mikkelson, *Methods For Development Work and Research*, Sage
- Deepa Narayan, *Towards Participatory Research*, World Bank

# **“PARTICIPATORY ECONOMETRICS”**

## **Problems with Quantitative**

- Hypotheses Derived by Navel Staring**
- Tends to replicate existing stereotypes**
- Slow, Stultifying Technology - No “surprises”**
- Disconnect between analyzer and analyst**
- Lack of Context**

# **Problems with Qualitative**

**Poor sense of Generalizability**

**Poor sense of variability/heterogeneity**

**Selection Problems**

**Poor Quantitative Understanding –  
Measurability**

**How does an economist deal with “stories”?**

# **ONE SOLUTION**

- **Integrate the Spirit of Participation with Econometrics**
  - 1) **The econometrician both collects the data and analyzes it**
  - 2) **Goes into the field with an open mind.**
  - 3) **Allows the respondents to participate in the analysis**
  - 4) **Actively integrates qualitative and quantitative findings into research report.**

# HOW?

## 1) “Classical” – Sequential

- A. Use PRA/PPA, FGD, in-depth interviews to get a participatory understanding of issues.
- B. Construct a survey instrument that integrates understandings from the field.
- C. Derive hypothesis from qualitative work and test with survey data. May add intermediate step of constructing theoretical models.

# Examples

**Delhi – Urban Poverty**

**Jamaica – Social Funds**

**Panchayats in India**

- **De jure vs. De facto**
- **RRAs for Quantitative Data**
- **Role of Gram Sabha, Public Audit**
- **Essential role of fiscal decentralization**
- **“Rakshasa Rajya” vs. “Ram Rajya”**

## **2) “Bayesian” or Iterative**

- A. Similar to “Classical” Method, but involves returning to the field to clear questions, anomalies, etc.**
- B. Treat Qualitative Findings as a Bayesian Prior that is updated with quantitative investigation.**

# Examples

## Potters Project

- **Started as Study of Marriage Markets**
- **Domestic Violence**
- **2 Observations – Prices, Festivals**
- **4 repeat visits**

# **What Qualitative Work adds to Econometrics**

- **Hypothesis grounded in the reality of the poor**
- **Can Conversation take the Con out of Econometrics?**
- **Cross-Checking Findings**
- **Understanding Causal Connections**
- **Locating Functional Forms**
- **Finding Instruments – Natural Experiments**
- **Understanding the Nature of Measurement Error - Having Tea with an Outlier**
- **CONTEXT**

## FURTHER READING

- Pranab Bardhan K. and Ashok Rudra, "Interlinkage of Land, Labour and Credit Relations: An Analysis of Village Survey Data in East India," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 13, February 1978
- Christopher J. Bliss and Nicholas H. Stern, *Palanpur: The Economy of an Indian Village*, Oxford University Press, 1982
- Francis Bloch and Vijayendra Rao (2002), "Terror as a Bargaining Instrument: A Case Study of Dowry Violence in Rural India," *American Economic Review*, (forthcoming)
- Robert Chambers, (1997), *Whose Reality Counts: Putting the First Last*, ITDG Publishing.
- Scarlett Epstein (1962) *Economic Development and Social Change in South India*, University of Manchester Press
- Ravi Kanbur,(2001), "Q-Squared? A Commentary on Qualitative and Quantitative Poverty Appraisal," this volume.
- Ed Leamer, (1983) Let's take the Con out of Econometrics. *American Economic Review* Vol. **23**(1), Pp:31-43
- Vijayendra Rao, "Celebrations as Social Investments: Festival Expenditures, Unit Price Variation and Social Status in Rural India," *Journal of Development Studies*, October 2001 Further Reading Cont.
- \_\_\_\_\_, **"Experiments with Participatory Econometrics in India: Can Conversation Take the Con out of Econometrics?"** Forthcoming in *Qual-Quant: Qualitative and Quantitative Poverty Appraisal- Complementarities, Tensions and the Way Forward*, Permanent Black Publishers, 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_ "Can Economics Mediate the Link Between Anthropology and Demography?" *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 23 #4, Pp:833-38, December 1997
- \_\_\_\_\_ "Price Heterogeneity and Real Inequality: A Case-Study of Poverty and Prices in Rural South India" *Review of Income and Wealth*, Series 46 #2, Pp: 201-212, June 2000
- \_\_\_\_\_ "Wife-Abuse, Its Causes and Its Impact on Intra-Household Resource Allocation in Rural Karnataka: A "Participatory" Econometric Analysis," in *Gender, Population, and Development*, M.Krishnaraj, R.Sudarshan, A.Sharif (ed.), Oxford University Press, 1998
- Martin Ravallion (2001), "How Can Qualitative Methods Help in Measuring Poverty," Forthcoming in *Qual-Quant: Qualitative and Quantitative Poverty Appraisal- Complementarities, Tensions and the Way Forward*, Permanent Black Publishers, 2002.
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