QUALITATIVE DATA & INTERVIEWING: MAKING SENSE OUT OF ALL THAT DATA
Your data collection approach

What do you plan to use for your planning report?

- Secondary data?
- Primary data collection?
  - Surveys?
  - Interviews?
  - Focus groups?
  - Observations?
- Other?
- What concerns do you have regarding your data collection methods?
What is Qualitative Data?

- Various types of data sources
  - Open-ended questions/comments on surveys
  - Interviews (individual & focus group)
  - Documents, reports, articles
  - Observations (e.g. field notes)
What types of things do we observe?

- Formal & informal patterns of interaction
  - Among people
  - People within their environment
- Ways people organize themselves
- Informal or formal rules in operation
- Recurring events
- “Down time” when things don’t happen
- Sequence of events
- Differences in what happens at various times
- Unplanned activities
Styles of observation

- Unstructured observation – describing what occurs. Researcher usually doesn’t have a preconceived idea about what would occur.
- Semi-Structured observation [using a checklist to record what you have found]. Requires that you have an idea about what will be found.
- Structured observation. Starting with an operational definition of what you want to measure – and counting only the behavior or situation that “fits” the definition.
Researchers record what they see, hear, smell, and taste using:

- Field notes. Written record of what is observed, impressions, reactions, and hypotheses about what has happened.
- Photos of people and setting may be added to analysis.
- Audio-tape and video-tape are also used to document what researchers find.
How to record field notes

- Record what one observes during observation.
- Expand on notes after the observation.
  - Complete your sentences – add description.
- Write a narrative [several paragraphs] that describes what you saw in detail.
  - Narratives are also called “thick description” and in most qualitative research also include information on researcher reactions and interpretation.
Other things to help with observations

- Tables
- Checklists
- Diagrams and maps
What to include in field notes

- Where you observed
- When you observed (e.g., time of day, day of week, month of year)
- Who was there or not there
- What happened/what events took place
Provide details

- Use descriptive adjectives
- Use action verbs
- Avoid making judgments about what you see
- Be as specific as you can!
From Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector’s Field Guide published by Family Health International, What to observe, p. 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Includes</th>
<th>Researcher should note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>Clothing, age, gender physical appearance.</td>
<td>Anything that might indicate membership in groups or in sub-populations of interest to the study, such as profession, social status, socioeconomic class, religion, or ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Behavior and Interactions</td>
<td>Who speaks to whom and for how long; who initiates interaction; language, dialect spoken, tone of voice.</td>
<td>Gender, age, ethnicity, and profession of speakers; dynamics of interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical behavior and gestures</td>
<td>What people do, who does what, who interacts with whom, who is not interacting</td>
<td>How people use their bodies and voices to communicate different emotions; what individuals’ behaviors indicate about their feelings toward one another, their social rank, or their profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal space</td>
<td>How close people stand to one another</td>
<td>What individuals’ preferences concerning personal space suggest about their relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human traffic</td>
<td>People who enter, leave, and spend time at the observation site</td>
<td>Where people enter and exit; how long they stay; who they are (ethnicity, age, gender); whether they are alone or accompanied; number of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who stand out</td>
<td>Identification of people who receive a lot of attention from others</td>
<td>The characteristics of these individuals; what differentiates them from others; whether people consult them or they approach other people; whether they seem to be strangers or well known by others present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interviews

- Contrasted with surveys, the qualitative interview is based on a set of topics to be discussed in depth rather than based on the use of standardized questions.
- Practice interview ahead of time, with a friend or colleague
- Interviews should be less than one hour in length
Qualitative Interviews

- Recording Observations
  - Rely as little as possible upon memory.
  - Ask to record, if feasible.
  - Note taking
    - Raw Data
    - Interpretation
    - Personal
Focus Groups

- A group of subjects interviewed together, prompting a discussion.
- Collections of 12-15 individuals who discuss topics as a group.

Group level data

- Advantages: real-life data, flexible, high degree of face validity, fast, inexpensive
- Disadvantages: not representative, little interviewer control, difficult analysis, interviewer/moderator skills, difficult logistically
Stages in complete interviewing process

1. Thematizing
2. Designing
3. Interviewing
4. Transcribing
5. Analyzing
6. Verifying
7. Reporting
Interview tips

- Contact interviewee
- Draft your questions
- Allow space for note taking
- Practice
- As appropriate, email interview questions ahead of time
- Allow ample time to transcribe interview notes afterwards
- Bring along a recording device as needed
Lessons on Interviewing

- How to interview: Qualitative interview #1
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4UKwd0KExc

- As you watch...what are some of the problems you observe with the interviewer?
- How could this interview be improved?
Lessons on Interviewing

- How to interview: Qualitative interview #2
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNM TJTnrTQQ
After the interview

- As soon as you can, write down everything
- Transcribe your notes
- Seek out clarification if needed from interviewee
- Send a thank you note to your interviewee
- Start the analytic process
Analyzing Qualitative Data

- Analysis & interpretation are required to bring order and understanding
- Process depends on:
  - The questions you want to answer
  - The needs of those who will use the information (i.e., your audience)
  - Your resources
  - One approach: content analysis
Making sense of the data

- Get to know your data
- Focus the analysis
  - what are your key questions
  - focus by question/topic
  - focus by case (e.g. specific city) /group (e.g. planning staff)
- Categorize information
  - identify themes/patterns
  - organize into categories
Coding/Creating Categories

- Preset categories (a priori codes)
  - identify in advance, then search data for these topics (may come from theory, lit reviews)

- Emergent categories (grounded codes)
  - categories come from working with the data

- Combined approach

- Iterative process

- Build categories until no new themes or subcategories emerge

- Mutually exclusive
Example: Park Survey

- **Survey Question**: What are the main problems with your local park?
- **Responses**
  - mugging
  - cars go too fast
  - robberies
  - can’t see at night
  - feel uncomfortable
  - no lights
  - too many cars
  - crime
  - very dark
Code Responses

- mugging
- cars go too fast
- robberies
- can’t see at night
- feel uncomfortable
- no lights
- too many cars
- crime
- very dark

- Crime (CR)
- Traffic (TR)
- CR
- Lighting(L)
- CR
- L
- TR
- CR
- L
The Analysis Process, con’t

- Identify patterns/connections
  - within categories
  - “super” categories
  - relative importance
  - relationships

- Interpretation -- bringing it all together
Data Presentation

- Your data and style will inform this process
- Organize findings so readers get the key message

Possible approaches:
- Themes with supportive quotes
- By sub-groups (e.g. planners, community members)
- Case summaries (themes within a single case)
- Data matrix (quantifying qualitative data)
Using Quotes

- Can help convey key points, add emphasis
- Integrate carefully into text
  - Synthesize and interpret quotes along with other data
- Too many quotes drowns your voice
Quantifying Qualitative Data

- Can be helpful sometimes
  - tables & percentages, matrix, charts
    - data becomes more manageable
    - easy to convey findings

- Narrative
  - Over 75% of designers interviewed highlighted the importance of lighting...
## Ex: Tables & Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Surveys</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Document Analysis: affordable housing policies in big cities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Policy</th>
<th>LA</th>
<th>Boston</th>
<th>Dallas</th>
<th>Oakland</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusionary zoning</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density bonuses</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In lieu fees</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Housing</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reminders from Prof. Nixon

- Students need to watch Dr Nixon’s video on Completing the Candidacy Form (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUPA7aZrDN8). It's available on youtube -- if you lose the link, just google youtube Hilary nNxon and you get to her youtube channel.

- All students need to bring their completed Petition for Advancement to Candidacy to class next Monday. It needs to be in hard copy and signed. Here's a link to the form: http://www.sjsu.edu/gape/docs/candidacy.pdf but it is readily available on the GAPE website in their forms section.
Reminders from Prof. Nixon

- Students should watch the IRB tutorial videos. Link on the syllabus is wrong. Correct link is: [http://www.sjsu.edu/research/irb/irb-video-tutorials/index.html](http://www.sjsu.edu/research/irb/irb-video-tutorials/index.html)

- They also need to complete the IRB application form (link on syllabus is wrong. Correct link is: [http://www.sjsu.edu/research/docs/irb-application.pdf](http://www.sjsu.edu/research/docs/irb-application.pdf)) and bring a copy to class.

- You don't have to watch her "Analyzing Qualitative Data" video.
Reminders from Prof. Nixon

- Allow yourselves 1.5 hours to view the videos.
- **Prof. Nixon will be giving you a quiz at the beginning of the next class on the material covered in the video.**