Examining population change using Q Methodology

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About ‘Q’ method

• Innovative: Q method is seldom used in migration
  Established: is a logic of enquiry (developed 1930s)
• Economical: instrumental basis is the Q-sort technique – requires few participants / good software
• Balanced – both qualitative and qualitative skills required
• Purposive: is designed to reveal subjective structures, attitudes and perspectives
12 step Q process

• Identify the research question
• Explore the concourse (all of the ‘talk’ on the subject)
• Generate statements from the concourse (selection of representative statements from the concourse)
• Establish the Q sample (x statements)
• Generate the Q-sort (cards and matrix)
12 step Q process cont.

- Recruit participants
- Administer the Q sort (one to one or small group setting)
- Collate data and enter data using Q Method Software
- Perform PCA and varimax rotations
- Workshop interpretation of factors & factor scores
- Write up findings and interpretations
- Final QA and peer review
Sampling from the concourse

Develop a matrix of themes / ideas

- Matrix 1
- Matrix 2

Test for representativeness

- Do all the selected terms fit the categories in the matrix?
- Is the sample comprehensive? - do all the themes get ‘balanced’ coverage?
- Does the sample capture a range of opinion - weak and strong / for and against?
Forced sort Q procedure
The challenges of Q

- Working across regions
  - Linguistic distinctions
  - Urban/rural divide

- Working cross-culturally
  - Linguistic distinctions
  - Capturing diversity

- Developing the ‘conditions of instruction’
Heightened awareness

• Talking; thinking; reflecting; challenging …
• Benefits of conversations generated through dual household participation
• Experiential (inter-regional) accounts of population change
• Located in the life span (not just the present)
• Located in the realm of ideas
• More than talk – a bodily, tactile engagement
Research relationships

• Between researcher and participant
  – Breaks down barriers
  – Fosters a connective space
  – Fosters a reflexive space

• Between participants and community-based ideas
  – Making sense of newcomers and locals
  – Fosters processual sense-making - positioning the ‘other’

• Within participants
  – Locates the participant ... across their life span
  – An embodied activity
Concluding comments

• Bridging the gap between quant and qual
• Not just more information, but a different kind of information
• Bodily research practice
• Active process of making meaning
• Iterative dialogic process
• Embodied practice