

Sharing practice and exploring strategies for development

Summary of discussion group 3

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Enablers for an ethos of data sharing

The discussion started around the question what enablers for an ethos of data sharing could be identified. The archival process stands and falls with the cooperation of researchers. We gathered six issues that proved beneficial for raising the awareness of researchers about issues of data archiving and secondary use of qualitative data.

- 1) Feasibility study
- 2) Publications
- 3) Workshops, especially show case secondary analysis workshops that are thematically specialized and therefore address specific groups of researchers
- 4) Another possibility to show the gains of secondary analysis and therefore raise the awareness of and willingness for qualitative data archiving is to conduct a model study about secondary analysis of qualitative research data. The aim is to use prominent national data sets to heighten the visibility and impact of such a model study.
- 5) Personal contact and interviews with researchers helped to overcome researcher's resistances
- 6) Using archived data sets as teaching materials may help to spread knowledge about and acceptance of data archiving

Effectiveness of existing models of sharing data

Concerning the effectiveness of existing models of data sharing and archiving, we mainly talked about the pros and cons of decentralized archives.

- Decentralized archive - pros:
 - o They allow a more specialized use of the data
 - o The work already done, does not have to be reproduced all over again
- Decentralized archive - cons:
 - o Competition between archives about funding resources
 - o Great effort to introduce common centralized standards

Furthermore we discussed the pros and cons of joining qualitative and quantitative archives. The arguments for an inclusive archive design clearly outweighed the ones opting for a separation, although it was mentioned that this decision depends on the circumstances in the single countries.

- Use of existing infrastructure
- The differentiation and barrier between qualitative and quantitative should not be facilitated and exaggerated by building up two different infrastructures. Nevertheless it is a problem

when the qualitative part of the data archive is seen as “the weak cousin” of the quantitative part.

- Possibility to link data sets
- Mixed methods data sets can also be archived/ can be archived together

How to get an archive started?

Some countries start the qualitative archive project from nothing; some countries already possess varying degrees of infrastructure. But for every one of us the task is not just building up an archive. In comparison to a traditional archive a social science data archive has to add value to the data.

- Building a community of users

We have to build a community of users and work closely with researchers.

- Integration of archiving and research

A good way for a start is to incorporate the idea of archiving into the research process. Researchers want to see some kind of reward for archiving their data or at least they do not want to spend extra money and time for archival tasks. Therefore it might be a practical solution to include archival tasks in the funding scheme of (especially large) projects and to make it a precondition for new project proposals that they account for a need for new research and prove that there is no existing data already available in an archive.

- Cooperation with traditional archivists

It might also be helpful to work in close cooperation with archivists from traditional archives to learn what has to be done technically to manage the data.

- Feasibility Study

A Feasibility Study might be helpful to attract researcher’s attention and to get a measure of the resources available and possibilities of starting a qualitative archive project.

A European wide network?

A European wide network offers a range of benefits for the national members:

- The credibility gained through a network would be beneficial and lend strength to the work we do on a national level.
- The network would help in the development of common standards and best practices
- Shared information technologies and skills
- Smaller and lesser developed archives may draw on the experiences from more established archives and not try to invent the wheel anew
- Some of the members of lesser developed archives stated the hope that a “big brother/sister program” would help the smaller archives to climb aboard and start the archiving business.