

Call for Papers

Mixed methods in migration research: epistemological foundations, methodological challenges, practical applications

Journal of Mixed Methods Research – Special Issue

Guest editors: Rossalina Latcheva, Kenneth Horvath, Manfred Max Bergman

Deadline for abstract submission: 30 April 2014

Although mixed methods play an important role in the field of migration research, there has been very little discussion on the epistemological and methodological foundations, benefits, challenges, and implications of mixed methods research in migration research. This special issue aims to fill this gap. It discusses which special challenges arise for mixed methods in migration-related research fields, problems that need to be considered when applying existing epistemological and methodological approaches, and what general lessons for social science emerge from particular examples of migration research. In doing so, it partly draws on on-going methodological debates of both quantitative and qualitative migration research, but the primary aim is to identify and develop issues that are characteristic for mixed methods: how mixed methods help to understand the complexities of contemporary migration patterns, the respective function and value of quantitative and qualitative design components (which may partly differ from other research fields), challenges of integrating these components (e.g. in multi-national/multi-lingual research settings), and how to present complex findings (in a field marked by political interests and heated public/media debates).

The special issue is organised around three main themes – proposals may focus on any of the listed or similar issues:

1. *Discussion of epistemological and ontological foundations and their implications for researching migration-related phenomena:* What implications do different meta-theories (critical realism, pragmatism etc.) have for mixed methods approaches in migration research? Which are the crucial ontological aspects of migration-related phenomena and processes that lead to the need for mixing methods? What challenges and potentials does the field of migration research hold for meta-theoretical discussions?
2. *Evaluation of existing (even if implicit) mixed methods approaches in migration research and their theoretical underpinnings:* How are current research practices anchored in meta-theory? Are applications of mixed methods designs justified with regard to the investigated phenomenon? Which components – qualitative and quantitative – are used for what purpose? How is integration achieved, at which levels of analysis, in which phases of research? Can applicability of the chosen mixed-methods design be assured beyond the context of development and application? Are there any region-specific aspects to be considered?
3. *Identification of research interests that ask for mixed methods strategies:* Which current debates and research interests require mixed methods designs? In particular, what implications does the recent

"transnational turn" in migration research have? What are the advantages we may expect of mixed methods and what challenges arise? There are countless substantial starting points for this kind of discussion in the field of migration research, such as changing migration dynamics in various geographical areas, the interrelations between migration and social inequalities, political discourse and public opinion and their relevance for migration patterns, biographies and societal transformations, and problems related to researching groups that are hard to reach.

We explicitly encourage submissions with an interdisciplinary outlook. Proposals that substantiate their methodological argument with examples from concrete research projects are particularly welcome. However, the focus should be on methodological and epistemological reflection.

If you are interested in contributing to this special issue, please send an extended abstract of around 500 words to horvath@ph-karlsruhe.de by 30 April 2014.

Decisions will be communicated by 31 May 2014. Accepted authors will be asked to submit their full paper by 30 November 2014. All papers will undergo rigorous double-blind review by at least two experts. Please visit the JMMR homepage for manuscript guidelines and details of the reviewing process (http://www.uk.sagepub.com/journalsProdDesc.nav?prodId=Journal201775&ct_p=manuscriptSubmission). All full papers must follow the criteria mentioned there.