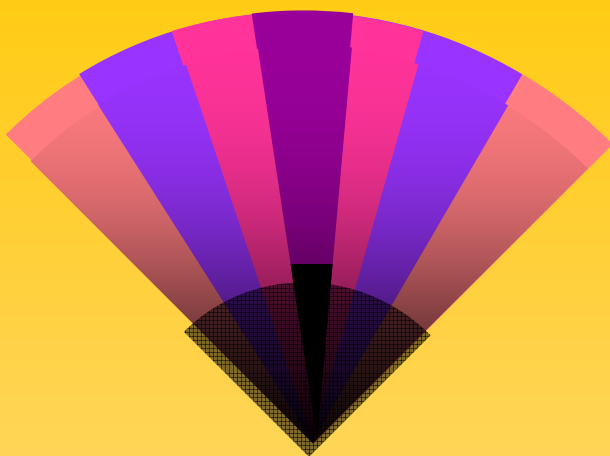


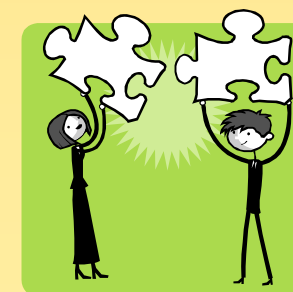
*Summer school: Socio-economic Tools
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Qualitative Interview

Semi-structured Interview guide

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AGENDA

✦ FUNCTION OF INTERVIEW

✦ TIPS ON INTERVIEW

✦ INTERVIEW GUIDE

✦ SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

✦ CONDUCTING A QUALITATIVE
INTERVIEW

✦ EXCERCISE



Different Approaches for Data Collection/Data Analysis

Experiment

Survey

Quasi-Experiment

Secondary Data Analysis

Content Analysis

Historical Comparative

Methods (Archival Analysis)

Participant Observation

Ethnography

Individual Qualitative
Interview

Textual Analysis

Focus Group Discussion

Del-Phi Method



Questions?

1. What is the function of Interview?
2. What does it do for us?
3. How do you define the concept of interview?
4. What do we collect by Interview?
5. What type of information can be gathered by interview?



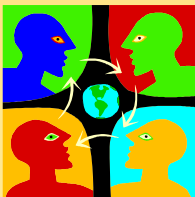
Definition of Interview

- ❖ Interviews are a systematic way of talking and listening to people.
- ❖ Interviews are another way to collect data from individuals through conversation.
- ❖ Interviews are a way to get knowledge from individuals.

Definition of Interview



- ❖ Interviews are **Process of gathering information**
- ❖ **Dynamic** Interviews are **Personal interaction between people**
- ❖ Interviews **Can be structured or semi-structured**





*Interview can gather Knowledge and Data
such as*

- ✦ Opinions, perceptions, stories: for that one may apply different approaches such as interview, focus groups, surveys...
- ✦ Only people can tell you what they think or believe.
 - ✦ But what people say they do is not necessarily what they actually do.



Collecting Data From People

- ❖ People may say what they think researcher wants to hear or what they believe is socially appropriate

**ONE MAY CALL IT RISK OF BIAS OR
“*SOCIAL DESIRABILITY RESPONSE*”**

- ❖ Especially true if asking about socially stigmatized or illegal behaviors.



Questions? Interviewer!

1. How the interviewer should present him or herself to the interviewee?
2. What type of personal problems may occur during the process of an interview ?
3. What are the delicate points that the interviewer has to consider during the process of interview?



Attitudes of a good Interviewer

- ✦ Interviewer is interested in hearing the person's story.
(listen. Do not rush in with question)
- ✦ Interviewer sets aside own biases and assumptions.
(acceptance with no value judgment or evaluation)
- ✦ Accept whatever they say with empathy and without judgment.
- ✦ Interviewer gathers meaning. information and explores them.



Attitudes of a good Interviewer

- ❖ The need to know yourself first is a critical step in the interview process.
- ❖ Why?
 - ❖ Your personal experiences and biases can have an impact on what you hear in the interviews.
 - ❖ Your education, emotions, and ethics can act as filters during the interview process.



Interviewer Skills

✦ Clarity of purpose

✦ Good communication skills

✦ The ability to establish rapport



Interviewer Skills

- ❖ Be aware of cultural norms: eye contact, direct questions, gender issues
- ❖ Be aware of body language or verbal cues:
 - ❖ You might think you are signaling that you are listening but interviewee might see them as clues to the “correct answer”



Question? Ethics!

- ? What are the ethical issues that the interviewer has to consider?

Ethical Issues



- ❖ Do no harm. Do no harm. Do no harm.
- ❖ Do not **force** people to participate in any study: they have the right to refuse to participate and to end their participation at any time.
- ❖ Obtain proper consents and agreements.
- ❖ Respect people's privacy rights.
- ❖ When you promise confidentiality, mean it.
- ❖ You may need to obtain human subjects approval.

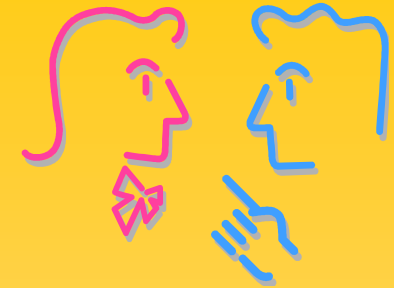


Question? Advantages!

- ? What are the best cultural and physical condition for conducting an interview?



Advantages: In-Person Interviews



- ❖ Interviews are most useful when:
 - ❖ Other methods, such as questionnaires, do not make sense
 - ❖ When literacy is an issue
 - ❖ When a personal interaction is desired
 - ❖ When questions are not too impersonal



Advantages: In-Person Interviews

- ❖ Interviews are most useful in cases:
 - ❖ When the survey is too complicated to ensure it can be completed correctly as a self-administered questionnaire.
 - ❖ At the beginning of a project when the issues and questions are still being determined.



Toolkit: In-person Interviews

- ❖ Can last one hour or more.
 - ❖ Allowing in-depth exploration of a topic.
 - ❖ Can cover more complex issues than a survey.
 - ❖ Note: public officials may not agree to spend an hour so you've better narrow the questions.
 - ❖ Interviewers will need to adjust the questions to fit the available time.
 - ❖ Some questions will have to be dropped.
 - ❖ It is possible to ask for additional time.



Toolkit: In-person Interviews

- ❖ Compared to structured surveys, interviews are forgiving of mistakes and more personal but can take longer.
- ❖ Interviews can be more expensive than surveys:
 - ❖ They require more staff time.



Question? Guidelines!

- ? Who are your informants?
- ? What are your purposes?
- ? What type of questions?



General Guidelines

- ✦ When gathering data from people:
 - ✦ Keep it simple, clear, easy, short
 - ✦ Respect respondents time and intelligence
 - ✦ Tell them how they were selected and why their participation is important



Developing the Interview Guide

- ❖ Define purpose

- ❖ Link to your research objectives

- ❖ Do not ask irrelevant questions

- ❖ Time constraints force choices

- ❖ Essential versus nice to know

- ❖ Decide degree of structure required

- ❖ Interviews can be highly structured, semi-structured or a combination



Developing the Interview Guide

- ❖ Draft interview questions

- ❖ Sequence questions so they flow smoothly from question to question
- ❖ Start with easy questions, move to the heart of the interview and end with demographic questions
- ❖ Balance: if you ask about what they think are the major supports, follow with what they think are the major barriers



Question? How to conduct an interview?

- ? What are the precondition of conducting an interview on the basis of time, place, equipment, question (s), plans...?

Conducting Interviews



Let interviewees know:

- Why they are being interviewed
- How they were selected
- How the data will be used
- Whether it is confidential
- How long the interview will take
- Whether you might want to talk to them again



Conducting Interviews

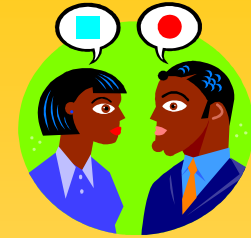
- ✦ Try to pick time and place that is quiet and free of distractions.
- ✦ Ideally, have a second person help to take notes.
- ✦ Tape recording: get permission.
 - ✦ Might be asked before setting the appointment.
 - ✦ Test equipment before the interview
 - ✦ Have a plan B in case of technology glitch



Conducting Interviews

- ❖ Stick to your interview guide
 - ❖ If asking close-ended questions, ask exactly the way written
 - ❖ Have a prepared answer for likely questions and requests for clarifications
 - ❖ Pre-tests can help identify likely questions

Conducting Interviews



- ✦ If asking open-ended questions, go with the flow of the interview guide, not too directive
- ✦ Sometimes people do not want to answer a question; Respect that and move to next question
- ✦ Sometimes people may answer questions before you ask
- ✦ If you think you got the answer, you can confirm or skip the question



Conducting Interviews

- ✦ Take good notes without distracting from the conversation.
 - ✦ Write while maintaining eye contact.
 - ✦ Write key words or phrases, not verbatim (details).
 - ✦ But if someone is saying something you want to capture, it is OK to ask them to repeat it or to finish what you are writing before asking the next question—especially if you are not taping the interview.



Conducting Interviews

- ❖ Share interview questions ahead of time.
 - ❖ No surprises, no “gotcha” and complicated games
 - ❖ Especially when interviewing public officials
- ❖ Offer to share a summary of what you understand from the interview.
 - ❖ This might be especially useful to give the interviewee (especially a high ranking official) a greater feeling of control.
 - ❖ It might also provide more information.
- ❖ Thank you note afterwards.

Writing Up the Interview



- ✦ Every word is valuable.
- ✦ Take time to write up your notes as carefully and in-depth as possible.
- ✦ It is best to do at least a brief clean-up of notes immediately afterwards (leave an hour between interviews).
- ✦ Write up full notes within a day of the interview: memory decay sets in quickly.



Question? Semi-structured Interview!

- ? What do we know about the semi-structured interview?
- ? Its wording?
- ? Its function?
- ? And ...?



Semi-structured and structured interview

❖ Interviews may be semi-structured or structured.

The structured interview:

Plans out specific questions.

Adheres to the format strictly.

Uses closed questions as the core.

The semi-structured interview:

Plans out questions, but provides flexibility for the interview.

Allows branching based on interviewee response.



Semi-structured Interviews

- ❖ Semi-structured interviews are non-standardized and are frequently used in qualitative analysis.
- ❖ The interviewer does not do the research to test a specific hypothesis (David, & Sutton, 2004, p. 87).
- ❖ The researcher has a list of key themes, issues, and questions to be covered.
- ❖ In this type of interview the order of the questions can be changed depending on the direction of the interview.
- ❖ An interview guide is also used, but additional questions can be asked.



Semi-structured Interviews:

- ✦ The order in which the various topics are dealt with and the wording of the questions are left to the interviewer's discretion or decision.
- ✦ Within each topic, the interviewer is free
 - ✦ to conduct the conversation as s/he thinks fit.
 - ✦ to ask the questions s/he deems appropriate in the words s/he considers best.
 - ✦ to give explanation and ask for clarification if the answer is not clear.
 - ✦ to prompt the discretion.

Advantages of Open-Ended Questions:



- ✦ Captures participants views in their own words
- ✦ Enables clarification of questions if participant does not understand
- ✦ Used in focus groups
- ✦ Often useful in the early phases of a research project when researchers are not sure what it is they want to know and/or how to ask the questions



Open-Ended Questions

- ✧ Open-ended questions provides the interviewee the option to give you a variety of answers for one question.
- ✧ Some of the benefits include:
 - ✧ Provides a great amount of detail.
 - ✧ It is spontaneous.
 - ✧ Makes the interview more interesting.
- ✧ Some of the disadvantages include:
 - ✧ Questions may result in unnecessary information.
 - ✧ The interviewer may lose control of the interview.
 - ✧ May be perceived as a fishing expedition with no real objective.



Types of Questions

Open-ended questions vs. Close-ended question

Open-ended

- “How would you describe the performance of the new “Agriculture Development Team (ADT)”

Closed-ended

- “Do you think the new ADT is doing a good job?”

Probes (deeping down)

Probes can be considered as type of questions that allow the interviewee to further expand on their earlier comments.

- “Can you elaborate on what you mean by . . .”
- “Why is that so?”



Probes

- ❖ Probes offer another option to collect information.
- ❖ Probes are used to gain a deeper understanding.
- ❖ Common probes include asking:
 - ❖ “Why?”
 - ❖ “Can you provide an example?”
 - ❖ “Can you provide a step by step explanation of ...?”



Conducting a qualitative interview: Prompts (aid)

✦ Encourage elaboration:

✦ -“Can you tell me a bit more”.

✦ -“I am not sure I quite understand”.

✦ Return to earlier points.

✦ -“you said...may I ask you a bit more about that?”

✦ Give permission.

✦ -“Some people say that...”

✦ Encourage reticent respondents to talk.

✦ -“I am interested in our views, there are no right or wrong answers”.

EXERCISE





Option: Semi-structured Question

✿ In what ways, if at any, has this workshop been useful to you?

✿ You answer in your own words.

✿ Sometimes it is set by first asking a Yes or No question and then followed up with a probe: “can you tell me more” kind of probe.

✿ Did you find the workshop useful?

✿ If yes, “what was most useful?”

✿ If no: “what would have made it useful to you?”

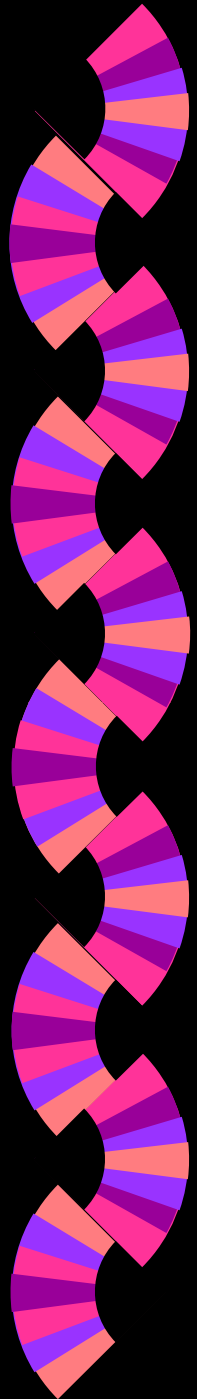
EXERCISE





Exercise

- ✦ Develop a short interview guide to find out about the people in the class: who they are and why they are taking this class?
- ✦ Individually, write up 5 open-ended questions
- ✦ Form pairs and interview each other
- ✦ Write up your notes and turn them at the next class
- ✦ Discussion: what questions were the same?
What questions were different?



Focus Groups



Toolkit: Focus Groups

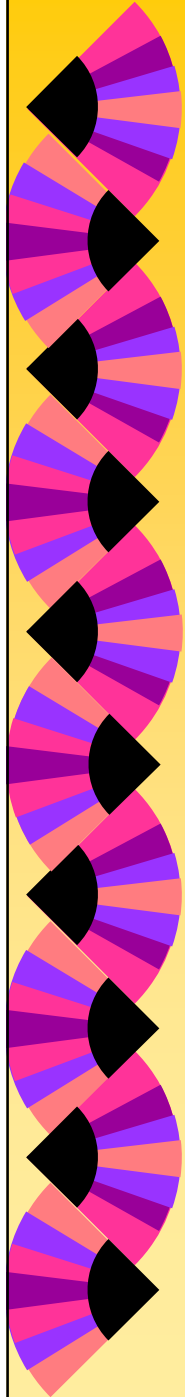


- ❖ A small group of people are brought together to discuss specific topics of interest to the researchers.
- ❖ The group process tends to elicit more information than individual interviews because there is cross-conversation and discussion.
 - ❖ Different views can be explored.



❖ Focus groups

- ❖ Focus groups are **Dynamic process of gathering information**
- ❖ Focus group is a **Small group interaction (6-12 people)**
- ❖ Focus groups can be **Semi-structured**



Elements of Focus Groups



- ✦ Small groups (6-12 people)
- ✦ Comfortable environment
- ✦ Good facilitation essential
- ✦ Facilitator and note-taker
- ✦ Tape record if possible
- ✦ Ask few open-ended questions
- ✦ How many? Until no new themes emerge
- ✦ Food, incentives, childcare



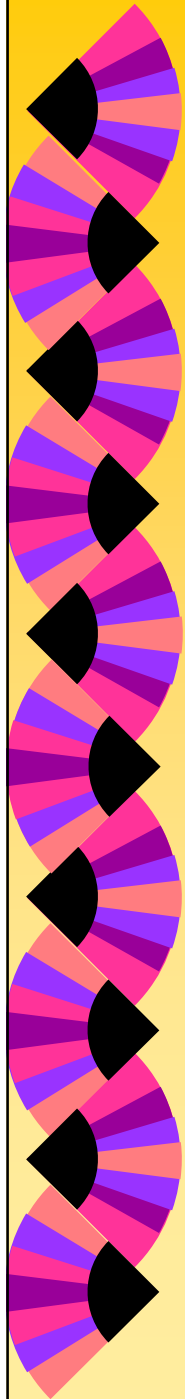
Selection of Participants

- ✦ Overall, they should reflect diverse constituencies and views.
- ✦ Unbiased, choices should make sense
- ✦ But individual focus groups may have to be homogeneous.
 - ✦ Mixing gender, race, or social class may be an issue.
 - ✦ Mixing managers with staff may be an issue.
 - ✦ Mixing clients with staff may be an issue.
- ✦ Cultural norms are important.

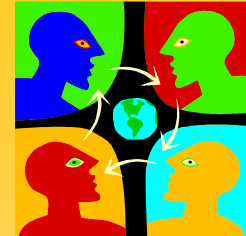


How Many Focus Groups?

- ❖ No rules: face validity matters
- ❖ Generally, do until no new issues emerge or common themes are consistent (usually occurs between 3-6 focus groups).
- ❖ However, researchers may want to include more groups to ensure that all groups or areas were included.
 - ❖ As part of civic engagement project or organizational development intervention



Arrange Logistics



❖ Time

❖ Clear starting and stopping times

❖ Typically 1 to 2 hours

❖ Place

❖ Neutral

❖ Accessible

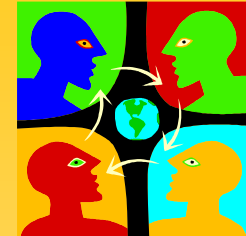
❖ Food

❖ Transportation

❖ Reimbursement for time



Process:



✦ Introduction:

- ✦ Purpose of focus groups
- ✦ Sponsor
- ✦ Why they were selected
- ✦ How the information will be used
- ✦ The ground rules
- ✦ Overview of the process
- ✦ If tape recording, explain why

Ground Rules



- ✦ “What is said here, stays here.”
- ✦ Everyone is encouraged to participate but not everyone has to answer every question.
- ✦ Respect different viewpoints.
- ✦ There are no right or wrong answers.
- ✦ Only one person speaks at a time.



Example of Focus Group Questions

- ✦ What did you learn from the new Agricultural Development Program (ADP) that is most helpful to you in your job?
- ✦ What were the greatest challenges in applying your ADP knowledge?
- ✦ What should the ADP program teach so that the participants are prepared to meet the current challenges in public administration?



Facilitator/moderator



- ✦ Know the script so focus group appears conversational.
- ✦ Do not read the script.
- ✦ Make sure everyone is heard.
 - ✦ Ask: “What do other people think?”
 - ✦ Ask: “We have heard from a few people, do others have the same views or different views?”



Skilled Facilitation



- ✧ Active listening.
- ✧ Accepting all views while managing differences of opinion.
 - ✧ “So we have different perspectives.”
- ✧ Probing for elaboration.
 - ✧ “Tell me more.”

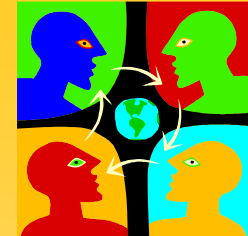


Skilled Facilitation



- ✧ Managing time.
 - ✧ Closing off discussion and moving to next topic.
- ✧ Invisible: say as little as possible
 - ✧ Let conversation flow across the table with minimal direction.
- ✧ Keeps your personal views outside the room.
 - ✧ Leave ego at the door.

Process:



- ✦ Have participants introduce themselves.
- ✦ First question: easy, ice-breaker.
- ✦ Ask main questions: the heart of the research.
- ✦ Last questions:
 - ✦ Summary question: “What is the most important thing that was said here that we should take with us?”
 - ✦ Some facilitators put answers on flip charts
 - ✦ Ask: “Any last comments?”

Focus Groups: Initial Write-ups



- ✦ Do not over schedule: 2 focus groups per day is plenty for one moderator
- ✦ Build in time to do the initial write-up
- ✦ Write up your impressions immediately after focus group: major issues and major points of discussion.
- ✦ You may also want to capture anything unusual that happened during the focus group.
- ✦ Compare with your partner.



Working With Audio-Tapes

- ❖ Ideally, the focus group tape will be transcribed verbatim.
 - ❖ These transcripts are the datasets
- ❖ However, if verbatim transcription is not possible, listen to the tape afterwards while writing in-depth notes.
 - ❖ You will be surprised how much you did not hear during the actual focus group.

Exercise: Focus Group



- ✦ You have been asked to design a focus group to learn what voters in your home town think are important characteristics that the next mayor should have and what is important to them in terms of voting.
- ✦ Working in small groups, develop 5 questions that would be appropriate for a focus group.
- ✦ Share with class.



Focus Groups

Advantages:

- Relatively quick
- May be less expensive (staff time) than in-depth interviews
- Provides flexibility to make changes in process
- Can examine different perspectives
- Fun!!

Focus Groups



❖ Disadvantages:

- ❖ May be expensive when calculated on a per person basis
- ❖ Have to control dominant talkers
- ❖ Can't do quantitative analysis
- ❖ Analysis: can be time consuming
- ❖ Risk of interpretation bias

Variation: Expert Panels



✦ Sometimes the use of experts is the best data collection approach given limited time and/or resources.

✦ Expert Panels: face-to-face interaction.



Who Are Experts?



- ❖ Managers and Administrators
- ❖ Front-line delivery staff
- ❖ Current and former clients
- ❖ Citizens
- ❖ Stakeholders
- ❖ Policy experts
- ❖ Donors/funders
- ❖ Researchers in the field

Selecting Experts



❖ Possible criteria

- ❖ Recognized expert
- ❖ Areas of expertise
- ❖ Diverse perspectives
- ❖ Diverse political views
- ❖ Diverse technical expertise



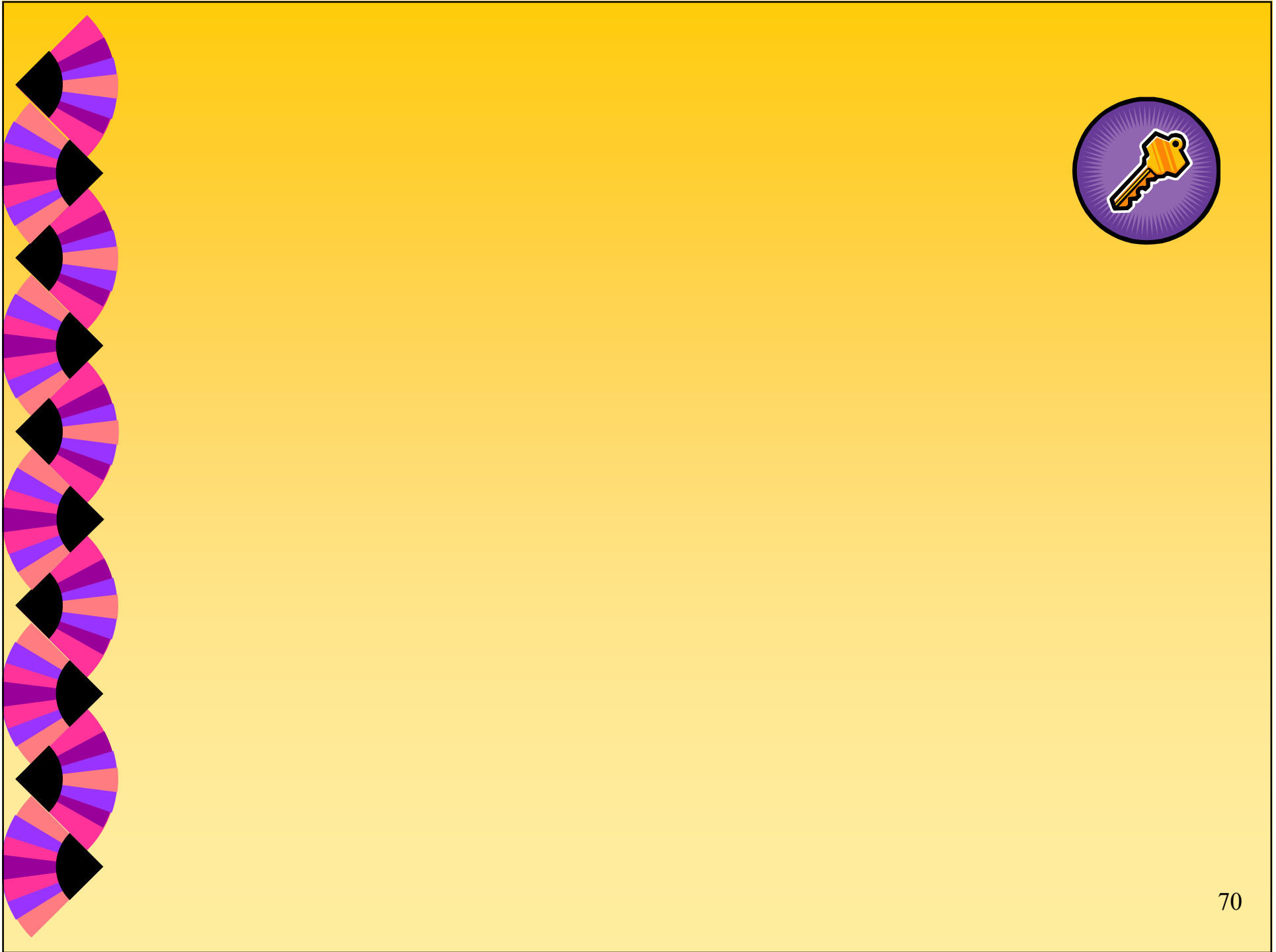
Selecting Experts

- ✦ State rationale for selection
- ✦ Selection choices should have face validity:
 - ✦ Would a reasonable person think this group credible to offer opinions and recommendations given the issue being examined?



Use of Expert Panels

- ❖ As focus groups
- ❖ As group interview (where everyone answers every question).
- ❖ As a forum where each expert makes a formal presentation
 - ❖ Questions, answers, dialogue follow
- ❖ As advisory to plan a research project
- ❖ As advisory to interpret research results



Expert Panels



- ✦ It may be the best approach given time and resource constraints: this is a quick way to gather data
- ✦ Some expense in bringing them together
 - ✦ Time and Travel
- ✦ Credibility: based on the “expertness” and balance of the panel



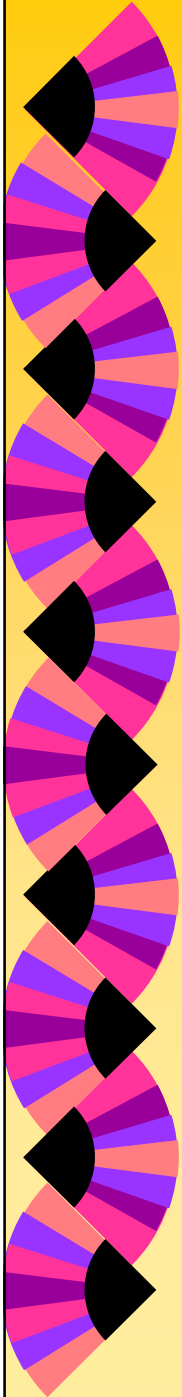
Combining Approaches

- ✦ Ask a few close-ended questions in an interview.
- ✦ Include a survey at end of focus groups
- ✦ Do focus groups to help develop survey questions.
- ✦ Do focus groups to explore findings from a survey.



Face-Face Data Collection

Listening and being truly present is harder
than it might appear





Discussion:

- Under what circumstance would you choose to use, interviews or focus groups?



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