Realist evaluation: seeking middle ground in a mixed-methods evaluation

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A perennial problem...

Common challenges in mixed methods research (Roelen & Camfield, 2015):
- Credibility
- Complexity
- Usability
A perennial problem...

Common challenges in mixed methods research (Roelen & Camfield, 2015):
- Credibility
- Complexity
- Usability

realist evaluation
Realist evaluation

- Theory-driven but recognise role of context and systems
- Instead of asking ‘what works’, asking ‘What works for whom in what circumstances and in what respects, and how?’
- Assume that programmes are theories, embedded in systems, involve humans as active agents and take place in open systems (Pawson and Tilley, 2004)

\[ C(\text{context}) + M(\text{mechanism}) = O(\text{outcome}) \]
Can **realist evaluation** offer a framework for mixed methods evaluation research that helps to overcome challenges of credibility, complexity and usability?
CASE STUDY

Chemen Lavi Miyò (CLM) - The Pathway to a Better Life

- Implemented by Fonkoze in Haiti
- Graduation model programme, based on BRAC’s CFPR-TUP
- Focused on economic strengthening of poor women and families
- Targeted at poor women with children

How can economic strengthening through comprehensive social protection promote childhood development and break the intergenerational cycle of poverty?
CASH TRANSFERS
ASSET TRANSFER
SAVINGS/CREDIT
TECHNICAL TRAINING
TAILORED COACHING

DIRECT AND INDIRECT INCOME EFFECTS
BEHAVIOURAL AND PSYCHOSOCIAL EFFECTS
TENSION BETWEEN PAID WORK AND CARE

NUTRITION
HEALTH
EARLY LEARNING
RESPONSIVE CAREGIVING
SECURITY AND SAFETY

GRADUATION PROGRAMME

NURTURING CARE
Quantitative research: impact of graduation programme on and child development, child care and child work.

Qualitative research: linkages between economic strengthening and child development.

MIXED METHODS RESEARCH
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department, Arrondissement</th>
<th>Commune</th>
<th>Neighbourhood</th>
<th># respondents</th>
<th># children &lt;18</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Treatment group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artibonite, Saint-Marc</td>
<td>La Chappelle</td>
<td>La Chappelle</td>
<td>300</td>
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<td>Centre, Mirebalais</td>
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<td>Mableux</td>
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<td>683</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Marche Kana</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>307</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total #N treatment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>631</td>
<td>1,892</td>
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<td><strong>Control group</strong></td>
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<td>Artibonite, Saint-Marc</td>
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<td>Desarmes</td>
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<td>917</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lascahobas</td>
<td>Savanette</td>
<td>Savanette</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>1,041</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total #N control</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>750</td>
<td>1,985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total #N</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,381</td>
<td>3,884</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**QUANTITATIVE DATA: COLLECTED MAY – JULY 2017**

**QUALITATIVE DATA: COLLECTED MARCH – MAY 2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighbourhood</th>
<th>Key informant interviews: CLM supervisors and case managers</th>
<th>Primary zone</th>
<th>Secondary zone</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group exercise: CLM members with child(ren) aged 0-5</td>
<td>Case studies: CLM members and husband/main caregiver with child(ren) aged 0-2</td>
<td>Group exercises: CLM members with children aged 3-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Case studies: CLM members with child(ren) aged 0-2</td>
<td>Group exercises: CLM members with children aged 0-2</td>
<td>Group exercises: Husband/main caregivers living with CLM members with children aged 0-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group exercises: CLM members with children aged 3-5</td>
<td>Group exercises: Husband/main caregivers living with CLM members with children aged 3-5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<th>Key informant interviews: CLM supervisors and case managers</th>
<th>Primary zone</th>
<th>Secondary zone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>La Chappelle</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mableux</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marche Kana</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total #N</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Key informant interviews: CLM supervisors and case managers.
Primary zone: Group exercises: CLM members with child(ren) aged 0-5.
Secondary zone: Case studies: CLM members and husband/main caregiver with child(ren) aged 0-2.

Group exercises: CLM members with children aged 3-5.
DATA COLLECTION

Qualitative and participatory tools

- Key informant interviews
- Group discussions
- Community mapping
- Family and social capital mapping
- Seasonal calendar
- Daily activity clock
- Body map
- Childhood aspirations exercise
- Practices interview
- CLM programme ranking
- Participant observation
To what extent and how does the engagement in paid work contribute to or conflict with unpaid care work, and nurturing care for children?

>> more economic resources allows for better diet, less stress in the household and improved relations (Bastagli et al. 2016; Attah et al. 2016; Roelen et al. 2017)

>> greater engagement in paid work increases combined burden of paid and unpaid work on women and reinforces drudgery (Chopra and Zambelli 2018)
## NURTURING CARE: CARE PRACTICES AND INTERACTION WITH PAID WORK

### OUTCOME

#### Time spent on care work on typical day

- No time (0 hours): 9%
- Little time (0-2 hours): 37%
- Less than half a day (2-4 hours): 15%
- Roughly half a day (4-5 hours): 19%
- Almost the whole day (5-7 hours): 8%
- The whole day (more than 7 hours): 6%

#### Time spent on paid work on a typical day - CLM members

- No time (0 hours): 4%
- Little time (0-2 hours): 15%
- Less than half a day (2-4 hours): 19%
- Roughly half a day (4-5 hours): 12%
- Almost the whole day (5-7 hours): 14%
- The whole day (more than 7 hours): 19%

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you feel that you have enough time to undertake all your chores and work?</th>
<th>CLM members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always enough</td>
<td>43.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly enough</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes enough and sometimes insufficient</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly insufficient</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always insufficient</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Effects of paid work on children?

“When I go work in town, the child (3-5 years) is sad because I don’t live with them. When I go to the market they are sad as well because they spend the whole day without seeing me, they don’t eat well, they stay dirty, they play with dirty things. The younger one gets dirty the most because he plays with everything, he doesn’t know things yet”.

[MBCSCLM5-1]
Imagine a woman who is going to become a mother for the first time. What advice would you give her? [LCFGSPOUSE2-1]

**Letoi:** “She should always go to the hospital and look after herself: she shouldn’t eat food anyone else has prepared, because there are people in this country who don’t like other people. My wife got pregnant. Someone looked at her, and as soon as she got home, she found there was a problem.”

**Jesner:** “I know a woman who was pinched by someone and then, in the evening, she started bleeding heavily and she lost the baby.”

“Dangers of Magic”: In five days post-partum, there are a number of visiting restrictions to prevent consequences of ‘negative magic’, either intentionally or unintentionally (Alvarez & Murray, 1981).

“One of the things that is responsible for the fact that often very young children are looking after other younger ones is because they don’t trust other people, like my neighbours are friendly but if they had the opportunity they would do something to the child.”

“In a training a women came with a boy less than 1 year old so she gave me the challenge because she was participating so I carried the child around but I also had work to do so I gave the child to another CLM member and the mother was very angry because I didn’t have the right to give the child to that person... There’s a belief in Haiti that attention that a stranger pays to the child that can make the child sick, so Haitians don’t want anyone to compliment their children.” [LCKICS]
Conclusion

Can **realist evaluation** offer a framework for mixed methods evaluation research that helps to overcome challenges of **credibility**, **complexity** and **usability**?

\[ \text{C(ontext)} + \text{M(echanism)} = \text{O(utcome)} \]

- **credibility**: offers a framework for valuing methods from different epistemological backgrounds, giving credence to each in their own right and highlighting the strength of their combination
- **complexity**: gives space for openness and messiness, both in terms of lived realities but also in relation to process of data collection
- **usability**: may offer an organising framework that provides structure and intuitive logic