

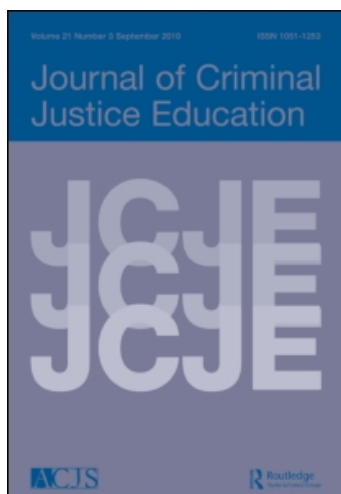
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Moving Beyond our Methodological Default: A Case for Mixed Methods

John J. Brent and Peter B. Kraska

Within criminal justice/criminology exists a host of available research methods that generally default along qualitative and quantitative lines. Studying crime and justice phenomena, then, generally involves choosing one approach or the other. Although this binary tradition of *qualitative vs. quantitative* has predominated, our field's methodological infrastructure has recently demonstrated a willingness to adopt more inclusive practices. The purpose of this study is to discuss the nascent yet probable transformation of re-orienting our field toward a new paradigm of inclusiveness that acknowledges the use of mixed methods research as being both legitimate and beneficial. This paper examines the role methodological exclusivism has had in delaying an appreciation of both paradigms as credible in their own right and even compatible under certain circumstances. In addition, this effort uncovers the increasingly yet little recognized presence of mixed methods research in our field and illuminates that this approach can be used to conduct rigorous multi-dimensional research.

At their heart, research methods are designed to produce credible and accurate knowledge. They assist researchers in shedding empirical light on complex phenomena by providing avenues to best examine and investigate an object under study—attempting to answer that ever elusive question, “what is really the case?” They also define parameters for the systematic collection of data, provide researchers with ethical boundaries, and guide scholarly activity. Despite these myriad functions, the social sciences, including the discipline of criminology, have struggled with the issue of which method or methodological paradigm is most proper.

Crime and criminal justice studies has embedded under this surface, then, with what Roth (1987) refers to as *methodological exclusivism*: an ideological orientation that presumes a single paradigm for generating credible and legitimate scholarship. These conditions have consequently meant the construction of rigid methodological boundaries that maintain the opposition between qualitative and quantitative paradigms. Instead of utilizing a multi-faceted

approach to conducting research, these boundaries eschew any methodological tools that fall beyond their territory. This traditional perspective of “quants versus quals” is, as Kraska and Neuman argue, both greatly “unnecessary and inhibiting” (2008, p. 463).

Situating methodologies in stark opposition, as Wolcott writes, “does a great disservice by detracting from the contribution to be made by each, including what each can contribute to the other” (2002, 99). Fortunately, other scholars have noticed that the exclusionary mindset that situated the quantitative paradigm as dominant over the last 40 years might be changing, allowing for a new outlook that permits greater methodological diversity and compatibility (Creswell 1994; Datta 1994; Denzin 1978, 1989; Greene 2001, 2007; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004; Kraska and Neuman 2008; Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003). The purpose of this study is to examine this nascent yet probable transformation in criminal justice/criminology. The long-range purpose is to begin re-orienting our field toward a paradigm of inclusiveness that acknowledges the use of mixed methods research as being legitimate and beneficial.

To achieve this goal, this study first discusses and critiques the conditions promoting the assumption that criminological research should default along quantitative and qualitative approaches. Second, it deconstructs the circumstances that have maintained separation by keeping at bay “conflicting” methodologies. Third, it outlines the mounting philosophical stance of pragmatism that favors principles of inclusion and compatibility. These principles, in turn, have facilitated favorable conditions that have increased the use of mixed methods research within our discipline. The fourth section addresses the considerations and implications of approaching mixed methods research as being both constructive and advantageous. Finally, it presents a recent scholarship conducted by the authors that used a mixed methods approach. This effort concludes by discussing the benefits of legitimizing mixed methods research within crime and justice studies for our scholarship, disciplinary direction, and redirecting of our pedagogical compass.

Crime and Criminal Justice Studies’ Methodological Default

Our discipline has a well-established, albeit contending, set of research methods available for its use. Our relatively young field of study is replete with rigorous research and excellent scholarship that has explored crime and justice phenomena by enlisting these methodological means. The concern here is not the methodological quality of scholarship but, rather, that our field—with some noteworthy exceptions—presumes by default that research should be conducted using either a qualitative or quantitative approach.

Originating in the fundamental assumptions of each paradigm, a divide has arisen that travels beyond philosophical and epistemological debate. Reflecting this divide, our discipline has also experienced a methodological separation that runs throughout and within the research community. Numerous researchers

have documented and commented on this divide (Buckler 2008; Kleck, Tark, and Bellows 2006; Pratt 2010; Tewksbury, Dabney, and Copes 2010; Tewksbury, DeMichele, and Miller 2005). Others have noted the near singular focus on quantitative methods in doctoral programs (DiChristina 1997; Ferrell, Young, and Hayward 2008; Sullivan and Maxfield 2003) and the lack of qualitative exposure in criminal justice and criminological curricula (Buckler 2008; DiChristina 1997; Sever 2001). While the issue of methodological *intentional* bias remains controversial, this divide reflects and further reinforces the notion that these approaches are, and remain, mutually exclusive paradigms. Perhaps, Pratt in a recent introduction to a special journal issue on quantitative methods sums up the divide best:

There has long been a power struggle between quantitative and qualitative approaches to criminal justice and criminological research (DiChristina 1997). While this debate is certainly not limited to our discipline, it has certainly infected it. Indeed, opposing camps have emerged, with fierce loyalties and allegiances to their own peer-reviewed journals, and terms like "quantoids"—a label that is meant to be both pejorative and a badge of honor depending on which side one is on—have even been coined (Worrall 2000). (2010, p. 103)

Overall, it is the quantitative approach that has established clear dominance within criminology's methodological infrastructure over the last 40 years, thus establishing qualitative research as the minority in the field (Tewksbury et al., 2010). Worrall (2000) and others have noted that our field has oftentimes gravitated toward quantitative techniques given its focus on prediction, construction of solid measurements, and generalizability. Although less exclusive attitudes seem to be taking hold, our leading method textbooks still focus predominantly on quantitative methodologies, with qualitative research receiving considerably less attention (generally one cursory chapter; Sever 2001). Moreover, most doctoral programs train future academics to conduct quantitative methods exclusively; although a few are beginning to offer a qualitative methods course in their curricula (Buckler 2008). As a result, criminal justice/criminology students are generally not exposed substantively to the qualitative approach and are socialized into thinking that a researcher must self-identify with either one paradigm or the other—an assumption that often carries over into academic professional identities.

The quantitative/qualitative divide, then, has become the dominant binary model in our field, which "effectively marginalizes the methodological diversity within them" (Giddens 2006, p. 195). However, there is a third way that "requires our field to change its traditional exclusionary way of thinking about qualitative and quantitative approaches" (Kraska and Neuman 2008, p. 461). It is in this context that discussing a mixed methods approach—a third choice that emphasizes inclusion and compatibility—is quite different from our historical precedent.

Why Not Mixed Methods Research?

Historical Context and Incompatibility

Our field's discussion over methodological standards is neither new nor unique. The qualitative-quantitative divide is far from contemporary, as it has historical roots dating back to the late nineteenth century. Situating itself in the development of early sociological thought, this debate has taken place on epistemological, philosophical, and methodological grounds (Popper 1972). Generally accepted as criminology's forerunner, sociology has long struggled over whether to value alternative approaches to inquiry that fall beyond the boundaries of the natural science model (Kraska 2008; Tewksbury et al. 2005). As a result of this epistemological dispute, two dominant schools of thought developed that have influenced crime and justice studies (see Higgins 2009).

Widely adopted by Columbia during the nineteenth century, the first emulates the work of Comte and Durkheim where the use of experiments, objectivity, exact measures, hypothesis testing, and quantitative methods are paramount. Positivism or the positive social sciences (PSS), thus, became a paradigm for "combining deductive logic with precise empirical observations in order to discover and confirm a set of probabilistic causal laws that can be used to predict general patterns of human activity" (Kraska and Neuman 2008; see also Halfpenny 1982). The philosophical force driving PSS is scientific explanation; to discover and document universal causal laws in human behavior. Consequentially, this tradition sees the nature of "reality" as being empirically evident—existing independently from the social world and capable of discovery. Here, scientific knowledge using precise measurements and neutral observations is seen as being superior to all other forms. This paradigm assumes that "truth" and "good evidence" should emanate from deductively testing objective facts and that replication should support any prior findings. In order to remain objective, science, then, must stress the importance of being value free.

However, during that same time, the University of Chicago espoused the interpretive social sciences (ISS) which began making noteworthy contributions to criminology's development. Drawing from Dilthey and Weber, ISS became an inductive paradigm that "emphasizes the systematic analysis and detailed study of people and text in order to arrive at understandings and how interpretations of how people construct and maintain meaning within their social worlds" (Kraska and Neuman 2008, p. 74). Departing from PSS, this approach stresses the importance of an empathetic understanding or *Verstehen*, subjectivity, reflexivity, grounded theory, and qualitative methods (see Glaser and Strauss 1967). The philosophical underpinning of ISS is to acquire an in-depth understanding of other people, appreciate the wider diversity of lived human experience, and better acknowledge shared humanity. In contrast to positivism, this research tradition interprets "reality" as a social or human construct. Accordingly, this paradigm places great significance in understanding social meaning in

its context and arrives at *Verstehen*. "Truth" and "good evidence" do not originate from testing objective facts; instead, they can be discovered and understood only within their specific cultural context. Here, value and value positions become unavoidable in social inquiry.

As a result of the interpretive school's direct challenge and sovereign break from positivism, conflicting philosophical and methodological foundations have hindered the use of mixed methods research. More specifically, many scholars note the *incompatibility thesis* that prevents the mixing of qualitative and quantitative methods. This position holds that "positivist and interpretive paradigms underlie quantitative and qualitative methods, respectively; the two kinds of paradigms are incompatible; therefore, the two kinds of methods are incompatible" (Howe 1988, p. 10). Proponents of this thesis often point to the contrasting notions of reality, truth, and good evidence that formulate each paradigm's methodological toolbox that renders them contradictory. In brief, this position asserts that the fundamental differences between qualitative and quantitative methodologies render them incapable of coexisting with one another in a single study (Howe 1988, 1992; Guba 1987; Guba and Lincoln 1982; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004; Smith 1983a, 1983b; Smith and Heshusius 1986).

Academic Politics

It is important to clarify, however, that the qualitative-quantitative divide is as much a consequence of academic politics as it is the product of philosophical and methodological debate. Exclusive academic ideologies coupled with political territory buttress the seeming inherent incompatibilities between qualitative and quantitative methods. This point however needs further clarification.

The development of an exclusivist position on research in crime and justice studies is a common pattern in organizational dynamics: as a young organization attempts to establish its identity (who it is, what it does, and why it does what it does), differing factions within that organization vie for power, carve out territory, and establish their own identity. Conflicts and power struggles erupt between factions, each attempting to reconstruct the organization's institutional identity in their own image. The factions tend to dismiss, if not outright malign, the views and activities of rival factions in an effort to discredit them. The objective is to dominate, marginalize and, if possible, eliminate the competition—blinding them to the potential worth and benefits of the other factions' views and activities. Sharp lines are drawn around the differing factions' supposedly distinct positions and ideas (Morgan 2006).

Such has certainly been the case in our field. Using the scenario above, we can simply replace "organization" with "crime and justice studies", and "factions" with "qualitative versus quantitative approaches." With each faction—the *quants* and *quals*—adopting a type of binary or exclusionary logic, our methodological choices are limited to either one or the other approach,

with both camps viewing each other's as inferior. Tewksbury and colleagues' analogy of "political mud-slinging" is helpful as they state "this debate has fostered a series of extreme criticisms from each side, allowing defense of one position by pointing to the weaknesses of the other (2005, p. 267). Through this lens, a dismissive and exclusive mentality has predominated—more for political reasons than intellectual.

This exclusive position corresponds with sustaining a sort of *purity*—"the need to avoid mixing things that do not go together, and especially mixing the morally doubtful with the virtuous" (Hammersley 2000, p. 125). Maintaining methodological purity may, then, refer to "an emphasis on the need to meet high methodological standards, and a resistance to deviation from those standards" (Hammersley 2000, p. 125). However, purism can serve as an ideological mask that conceals political motivations and reifies a dominant position. Hammersley argues that methodological purism, while seeming concerned with rigorous standards on the surface, ultimately advances the political interests of its promoters or those whom 'purist' principles serve. This is certainly the position of those advancing the area of study known as "cultural criminology" (see Ferrell, Hayward, Morrihan, and Presdee 2004; Ferrell et al. 2008), as well as many feminist scholars (see Harding 1987; Reinharz and Davidman 1992).

Roth (1987) refers to this mindset as *methodological exclusivism*; an ideology that presumes that there is just one proper method of producing credible and worthwhile knowledge. Scholars such as Collins argue that confusion and conflict arise from overly rigid and exclusive definitions of what science is to be. He states that "Modern philosophy of science does not destroy sociological science; it does not say that science is impossible, but gives us a more flexible picture of what science is" (1989, p. 134). In that same vein—although Roth acknowledges and articulates, with precision the inherent philosophical differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches—he ultimately argues that these differences do not render them incompatible, just merely different.

Beyond Conflict and Exclusion

Swinging of the Methodological Pendulum

The resurgence in use and acceptance of qualitative research over the last 15 years has moved the methodological pendulum. Whereas the pendulum has been settled on the quantitative pole for some time, the gaining influence of qualitative work has loosened it from its mooring. Although this is certainly a positive development from our perspective, researchers documenting the presence of qualitative work consistently find that qualitative methods are still only used in 4.5% to 12.1% of our discipline's journal articles (Buckler 2008; Kleck et al. 2006; Tewksbury et al. 2005; Tewksbury et al. 2010). Of course, one might assume that the reaction to the movement of the pendulum would be intensified conflict. However, just as nearly every other social science discipline

has already experienced over the last two decades, the third option of mixing quantitative and qualitative methods is quietly emerging.

Criminology has recently demonstrated a willingness to entertain and embrace this third way. This is evident in the recent publications that mix qualitative and quantitative methods, the recent inclusion in many graduate programs of both required and elective qualitative based courses, and the willingness of leading quantitative researchers to employ qualitative methods within their positivist-based studies to bolster their work (see Kraska and Neuman 2008). In fact, according to Creswell and Clarke (2006; see also Creswell, Shope, Clark, and Green 2006)—leading figures in the mixed methods movement—our discipline may be on the cutting edge of producing research that mixes qualitative and quantitative data.

These changes appear to be slowly eroding the ideology of methodological exclusivism, potentially signaling a shift toward methodological tolerance, diversity, and pluralism. Although the process is nowhere near complete, and nor is its trajectory certain, our disciplinary identity may be reconfiguring itself to embrace a paradigm of methodological inclusion and pluralism rather than exclusion.

Pragmatic Underpinnings

As mentioned earlier, mixing qualitative and quantitative methods requires a more inclusive and compatible orientation that abandons traditional dogmas. While sensitive to differences, this approach also assumes that mixing methodologies will, in the end, yield more complete knowledge than any single method—or *monomethod*—might alone. Given this, mixed methods research has often been coupled with the philosophy of pragmatism (Datta 1997a, 1997b; Greene and Caracelli 2003; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004; Reichardt and Cook 1979; Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003). Mixed methods research, thus, views both methodological goals as worth pursuing and that, when combined, each will ultimately advance one another.

Mixed methods research should, as Johnson and Onwuegbuzie argue, “use a method and philosophy that attempt to fit together the insights provided by qualitative and quantitative research into a workable solution” (2004, p. 16). This Kuhnian call for a new paradigm evoked the pragmatic tradition in attempts to move toward methodological pluralism (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). By arguing that paradigms may be combined effectively to better create informed practice, this call was to increase communication and efforts among researchers from differing camps (Maxcy 2003). While methodological exclusivism has prospered, a key feature of pragmatism is to uncover practical solutions that alleviate traditional paradigmatic dualisms. Creswell argues that the pragmatic philosophy has “argued that a false dichotomy existed between qualitative and quantitative approaches and that researchers should make the most efficient use of both paradigms in understanding social phenomena” (1994,

p. 176). Adopting a pragmatic orientation rejects the thesis of methodological incompatibility.

Johnson and Christensen's fundamental principle of mixed methods research is instructive: researchers should collect and analyze "multiple sets of data using different approaches and methods in such a way that the resulting mixture or combination has complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses" (2007, p. 51). In other words, mixing quantitative and qualitative methods draws on the strengths of each while minimizing their weaknesses. Collecting comprehensive data using differing methods and perspectives coincides with the general premise that viewing a phenomenon through more than one theoretical and/or methodological lens yields a more complete picture of our object of study. As Norman K. Denzin said:

The bias inherent in any particular data source, investigators, and particularly method will be cancelled out when used in conjunction with other data sources, investigators and methods ... The result will be a convergence upon the truth about some social phenomena. (1978, p. 14)

In sum, studying our object from differing angles and attempting to answer differing questions aligned with both interpretive and positivist approaches allows for a more holistic and rigorous answer to that fundamental scientific question that should interest all scholars, "what is really the case?"

Utilizing Mixed Methods

Having discussed the background of mixed methods research and the methodological conditions to which it finds itself, we are better able to address its utility and criticisms.

Weighing in: Advantages and Disadvantages of Mixed Methods

Numerous scholars throughout the social sciences have advocated a mixed methods approach and touted its advantages (Creswell 1994; Greene 2001, 2007; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004; Kraska 2008; Kraska and Neuman 2008; Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998, 2003). As noted above, the most common stated advantage is that it utilizes the strengths of one method to overcome weaknesses in the other. Although seemingly straightforward, this deduction builds from other advantages worthy of discussion.

To begin, qualitative information such as words, pictures, and narratives can add meaning and depth to quantitative data. Likewise, quantitative data have the ability of enhancing clarity and precision to collected words, pictures, and narratives. Second, employing a mixed methods approach unbinds a researcher from a monomethod approach, thus, increasing their ability to accurately

answer a wider range of research questions. Third, it can increase the specificity and generalizability of results by drawing from both methodological approaches. Mixing qualitative and quantitative techniques also has the potential to enhance validity and reliability, resulting in stronger evidence through convergence of collected data and findings. Lastly, examining an object of study by triangulating research methods allows for more complete knowledge—uncovering significant insights that monomethod research could overlook or miss completely (see Jick 1979).

Whether examining mixed methods research holistically or determining its suitability for a research topic, it is important to also consider its disadvantages. The first concerns researcher limitations. While some are uncomfortable with numbers and statistics, others may be ineffectual at achieving an empathetic understanding. For that reason, this approach requires a researcher to be adept and competent in properly engaging in and mixing multiple methodologies. Becoming well versed in both paradigms and their respective methods can be more challenging.

In that same thread, carrying out multiple methods, especially if employed concurrently, can be difficult to administer. This approach may necessitate additional researchers, more resources, and further safeguards, making it potentially more expensive and time-consuming. Another disadvantage is that methodological purists may criticize those who conduct mixed methods research for not operating within either qualitative or quantitative boundaries. Finally, particulars of the mixed methods approach remain unclear given that most revolve around the philosophical and methodological difficulties of pragmatism.

Mixing Methods

Another consideration is whether this approach is suitable for a given research topic; and if it is, how should qualitative and quantitative methods be integrated with one another? Mixed methods research is “a class of research where quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques are used in a single study, or series of studies, examining a particular object of study” (Kraska and Neuman 2008, p. 457; for an overview of mixed methods research definitions, see Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner 2007). The central premise of mixing methodologies, according to Creswell and Clark, is “that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone” (2006, p. 5). Kraska and Neuman (2008) demonstrate that these two approaches can be integrated in a number of ways in order to best answer the research question. As seen in Figure 1, we can conceptualize mixed methods research on a three-part continuum.

Briefly, there is pure qualitative research at one end of the continuum, pure quantitative research on the other, and fully integrated mixed methods in the middle. Mixing qualitative and quantitative methods usually involves one of three approaches: (1) a predominantly quantitative study that employs

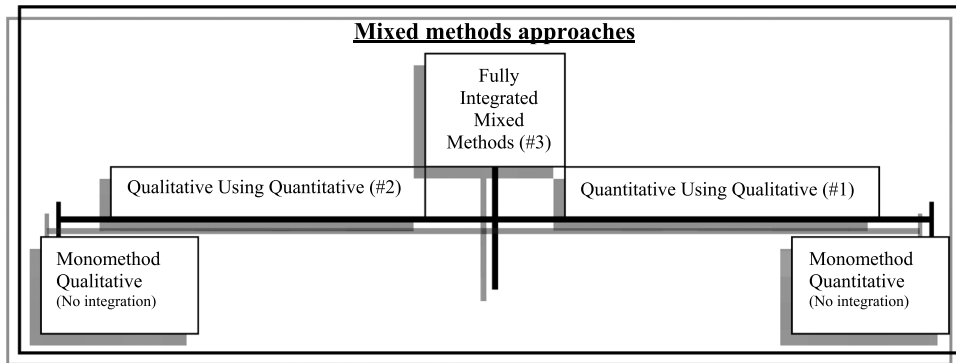


Figure 1 Mixed methods approaches on a continuum¹.

¹Found in Kraska and Neuman (2008) *Crime and Justice Research Methods*. Allyn and Bacon.

qualitative data and analysis to shed additional light on their quantitative findings, (2) a predominantly qualitative that study employs quantitative data and analysis to bolster their qualitative findings, or (3) both quantitative and qualitative data and analysis are used in a fully integrated fashion. One of the key decisions for the mixed methods researcher, then, becomes whether the research question emphasizes a positivist approach over the interpretive, *visa versa*, or treats them as equal.

Mixed Methods Research as an Unrecognized Presence

Mixed Methods in Crime and Criminal Justice Studies

If criminological methods refer primarily to the binary positioning of qualitative and quantitative methods, this exclusivist orientation—which polices and regulates academic territory—could hinder the legitimating of mixed methods research. As already established, the label of mixed methods is associated with a “middle-ground” that is methodologically and politically vulnerable to qualitative and quantitative allegiances. Accordingly, mixed methods research is likely to experience resistance not from one side of the methodological pendulum (as do the other paradigms), but from both. Despite a lack of recognition of its presence, there exists a body of scholarship which has utilized this third way in attempts to study and better understand criminal justice phenomena.

Gainey, Steen, and Engen (2005) provide an excellent example of a study that drew primarily from quantitative data while using qualitative techniques to offer much needed context (Approach 1 illustrated above). Their purpose was to examine and describe which drug offenders received alternative sanctions for drug offenses, which did not, and why. This study’s model incorporated quantitative data of 25,028 felony drug arrests over a three-year period along with 23 field interviews that included prosecutors, defense attorneys, and

judges. By combining secondary data analysis with qualitative field interviews, Gainey and colleagues uncovered some interesting complimentary findings. For example, they found that the high rate of offenders receiving some alternative sanction was likely motivated by legislative penalties that the courtroom workgroup felt to be too harsh. This particular finding would have been difficult to discover using a monomethod approach.

Torre and Fine's (2005) study on the impact that college has on women housed in maximum security facilities provides an excellent example of a predominantly qualitative study employing quantitative methods (Approach 2 illustrated above). While primarily qualitative, the authors also conducted survey research and collected recidivism data on 274 women. The study documents the broad benefits that providing higher educational opportunities to women prisoners has on their family life, the children of inmates, recidivism rates, and society-at-large.

Another notable instance of mixed methods research is Logan, Shannon, and Walker's (2005) study that examined the characteristics of the protective order process for domestic violence situations occurring in both rural and urban areas. In a near fully integrated fashion (Approach 3 illustrated above), they were able to arrive at a comprehensive and multi-perspective view of the phenomenon by utilizing an array of qualitative and quantitative sources including: Emergency Protective Order and Domestic Violence Order data, daily court dockets, semi-structured interview, focus groups, and in-depth interviews. The authors found that rural women experience unique and in some ways significantly worse domestic violence problems than do women living in urban areas. They also discovered that criminal justice measures such as protective orders are implemented more poorly in rural areas—a finding the authors saw stemming from the culture and legal system existing in rural communities.

Indeed, there are a host of additional studies, even classics in our discipline, that have utilized a mixed methods approach. Indeed, some of our field's most well-known projects have combined methodologies; cornerstone works such as Shaw and McKay (1942, 1969), Short and Strodtbeck (1965), and Sampson and Groves (1989). These examples highlight the utility of mixing qualitative and quantitative data and analysis within criminology/criminal justice studies. Although mixed methods research is not new to the field, Tewksbury and colleagues (2005, p. 274) found that only 1.4% of all articles in criminal justice's top five journals between 1998 and 2002 incorporate some form of mixed methods research.

Uncovering the Late-Modern Steroid Marketplace

We (the authors) recently completed our own mixed methods study (Kraska, Bussard, and Brent 2010). The purpose in discussing this piece is to provide another tangible and a little more detailed example of mixed methods research in practice. However, this presentation does not suffice as any sort of guide on

how to conduct mixed methods work; fortunately there are comprehensive books that lay the thinking and process out in great detail (Creswell 1994; Greene 2007; Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003).

Aside from producing new knowledge about an intriguing criminological phenomenon, one of our objectives in this piece was to demonstrate the utility and promise of the third way. This study provides the social sciences with the first real research on steroid trafficking and uncovers a theoretically fascinating trafficking scheme. We employed a sequential mixed model design which included both ethnographic field research and quantitative content analysis. We attempted to link the micro-interactive qualitative findings with broader-based findings produced by the quantitative component.

Figure 2 illustrates the thinking and process involved in conducting both ethnography and a content analysis within a single study. As noted in the box labeled "Purpose/Question," each method attempts to answer a different research question. The qualitative component provides an in-depth and theoretically informed description of the grounded reality of Internet-based steroid trafficking. The content analysis by contrast attempts to determine the extent to which our micro-interactive findings might be indicative of a larger phenomenon (hence using positivist social science to bolster "generalizability"). By linking the micro-phenomenon with macro-trends, we can then credibly

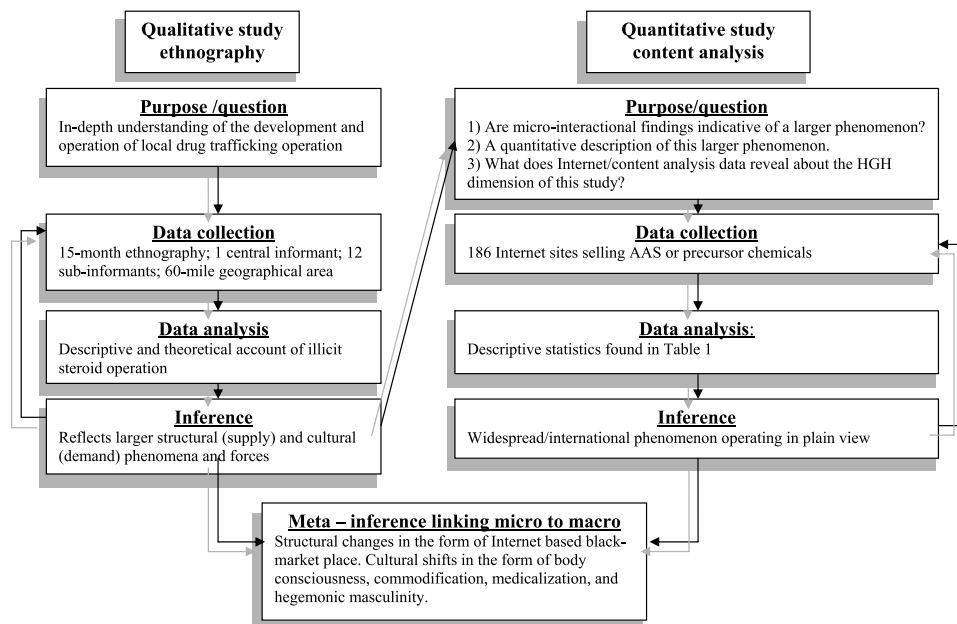


Figure 2 Visual representation of sequential mixed methods approach¹.

¹Modified from work found in: Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003). The past and future of mixed methods research: From data triangulation to mixed model designs. In Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003). *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research*. London: Sage.

explore the likely macro-theoretical and structural forces that would help explain the popularity of body and performance enhancing drugs.

The first method presented in this piece, therefore, was 15 months of ethnographic field research lasting from 2005 through the first four months of 2006. Fieldwork initiated at a commercial gym where several nationally recognized bodybuilders trained, including "Mike," the study's primary informant. Research sites quickly expanded to include the central informant's home, local bars, and several strength and bodybuilding competitions. Additional contacts were made through snowball sampling—resulting in a study group of 12 participants, consisting of 2 women and 10 men; and another fifty-three additional individuals were also included in lesser roles. Research was conducted through direct observations and numerous informal interviews that were initially pre-arranged and face-to-face, but developed into more informal and semi-structured settings.

This ethnography pointed to a society gripped by a culture preoccupied with health and body aesthetics, which certainly fueled a demand for this growing illicit steroid market. Numerous informants frequently discussed their goals of "being ripped/shredded/massive," "looking scary," "being crazy strong," and "wanting the ultimate body." Unexpectedly, these ethnographic data also revealed an interesting trafficking scheme where the primary informant established an apartment-based manufacturing operation by converting raw steroid compounds ordered off the Internet (from China) into more potent injectable solutions. Armed with an in-depth understanding of the infrastructure, nomenclature, and operations of the underground steroid marketplace, the authors then attempted to collect quantitative data that would indicate whether these micro-level data were reflective of a larger macro-level phenomenon.

As described above, a key element exposed by the ethnography was the central role the Internet plays in obtaining, manufacturing, and distributing steroids. Given this, the second method within this mixed methods study was a quantitative content analysis of websites that supplied anabolic androgenic steroids (AAS). A total of 230 illicit Internet sites were located that purported to have and sell AAS or human growth hormone—186 of these sites were both appropriate and functional for coding. While this of course is not an exhaustive sample of illicit Internet sites, the authors quickly discovered how deeply underground one can go into this maze of encrypted communications, sites preserved for only trusted clients, and sites that sell AAS materials without any indication. Of course, infiltrating this underground network would not have been possible without the knowledge gained from our field research.

Differing levels of contact were established with each of the 186 Internet sites to ensure they were active and willing to sell AAS-related products. Due to ethical constraints, this never involved actually purchasing these illicit materials, but did include email correspondence about costs, products, methods of payment, etc. The coded variables included: site name, IP address, usable contact information, products sold, ease of access to site, how the business was

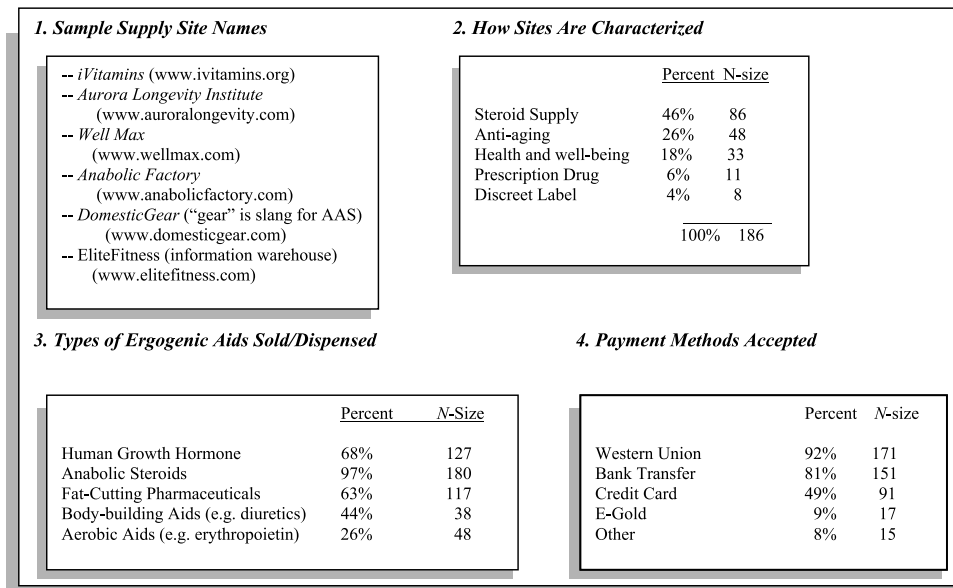


Figure 3 Content analysis finding overview¹.

¹Found in Kraska, Bussard, and Brent (2010). Trafficking in bodily perfection: Examining the late-modern steroid marketplace and its criminalization. *Justice Quarterly*.

characterized, number of pages included within website, accepted payment methods, and shipping methods. Figure 3 provides some of the more important descriptive findings. These data were a clear indicator of an expansive on-line steroid marketplace—thereby providing a measure of reliability to our ethnographic findings.

As noted earlier, combining methodologies provides us with the legitimate means to situate our micro-level data within the larger structural-cultural forces driving this phenomenon. Consequently, we were able to illustrate the massive market and growth potential of the illicit AAS industry. The structural dimension illuminated a rapidly developing late-modern supply apparatus: a globalized yet decentralized marketplace allowing a lone individual to learn the tactical knowledge and obtain necessary materials to establish a functioning pharmaceutical lab. On the other hand, the cultural milieu fueled this illicit marketplace by cultivating micro-motivations geared toward enhancing one's bodily appearance and/or performance; certainly occurring within conditions that place a premium on body aesthetics.

Utilizing a mixed model approach allowed the authors to contextualize this emerging phenomenon as well as unpack its situated meaning and social significance. The importance in mixing methods for this study is that it helped shed additional quantitative light on initial ethnographic findings so as to add to their larger significance. Also, the ethnographic fieldwork helped develop a substantive understanding by presenting the "context" essential for uncovering the meaning of quantitative data. By mixing qualitative and quantitative research,

this model was effective in exploring in more depth and from different angles the late-modern steroid marketplace—an end that monomethod research could not accomplish.

Conclusion: Beyond Exclusivism and Toward Inclusivity

Reorienting our field toward approaching mixed methods research as being legitimate and beneficial should be fairly simple given its utility for studying crime and justice phenomena. It is likely, however, that tradition and political interests will construct additional barriers that hinder this process. As stated earlier, for both intellectual and political reasons, our field of study has established a methodological infrastructure that defaults among qualitative and quantitative lines.

As discussed in aforementioned sections, mixed methods research has become for most other social science disciplines a solution to this paradigm conflict that has existed since the 1960s (Gage 1989; Giddens 2006, 2007; Hammersley 1992). However, mixed methods research does have its critics, and some have argued that this “third methodological movement” is fraught with serious implications and unintended consequences (Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Freshwater 2007; Giddens 2006, 2007; Howe 2004). These potential consequences, as Freshwater states, “may undermine and contradict the very foundations upon which the method is based” (2007, p. 145).

Giddens (2007) posits that this epistemological middle—despite its seeming utility—is loaded with theoretical, methodological, and political issues. Alongside these complexities, mixed methods research still operates on the qualitative-quantitative divide that further reifies traditional methodological labels. These labels signify a dichotomous relationship that “makes clear who has the power and who is benefiting within certain relationships and situations” (Giddens 2006, p. 198). Trenched in the guise of inclusiveness and compatibility, mixed methods may “serve as a cover for the continuing hegemony of positivism,” which would further marginalize non-positivistic research (Giddens 2006, 2007). The primary concern is that mixed methods research has become a “Trojan Horse” for a “pragmatic post-positivism” that would systematically subsume qualitative research in the service of quantitative studies (Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Freshwater 2007; Giddens 2006, 2007; Howe 2004).

According to Howe (2004), the uncritical adoption of mixed methods has shut down an important methodological conversation. The tendency for researchers to adopt this approach uncritically has contributed to a sort of *methodological imperialism*; a condition in which one “paradigm” takes a superior position able to overcome the other (Freshwater 2007; Howe 1992). Here, this “third approach” may provide positivism with another opportunity to push qualitative research to a secondary, more auxiliary status—thereby sustaining conditions that place quantitative methodologies at the “top of the methodological hierarchy” (Howe 2004, p. 53). Put briefly, the concern is that the epistemological

foundations of mixed methods research create prolific grounds for positivism and quantitative methods which, in turn, sideline interpretive and qualitative research.

Creswell et al. (2006) disagree. By drawing from an extensive literature, they reject the notion that mixed methods privileges more positivistic research and pushes qualitative research to an auxiliary or secondary position. They also contest those who argue that mixed methods research does not employ critical interpretive approaches to qualitative research. The research reviewed above on steroid trafficking corroborates Creswell's view in that this study uses quantitative methods to bolster a critical ethnographic approach.

Aside from entering the mixed methods debate, Creswell and others effectively demonstrate that the rigorous production of scholarship using mixed methods research has become, more recently, a part of criminology and criminal justice. It is well documented that mixed methods research is becoming a key component within this once traditionally exclusive infrastructure (Creswell 1994; Greene 2001, 2007; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004; Kraska 2008; Kraska and Neuman 2008; Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998, 2003). However, the conditions that have initiated inclusivity must also bring to attention that our field is rich with opportunities that can utilize this third methodological approach.

The argument for mixed methods as being methodologically legitimate has been made repeatedly as scholars attempt to shift exclusive ideologies toward inclusive principles (Creswell 1994; Greene 2001, 2007; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004; Kraska 2008; Kraska and Neuman 2008; Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998, 2003). This approach requires that our field abandon the incompatibility thesis and dismissive thinking. Our research objectives, and not methodological preference, should guide method selection—whether qualitative, quantitative, or both. This pragmatic movement not only upends the deep tradition of exclusionary and dismissive thinking, it can also yield practical advantages. Mixing methodologies harbors potential to produce a broad and diverse body of credible scholarship.

The ultimate goal of examining the mixed methods approach is to change the status quo. In our view this movement is essential for redirecting our field's pedagogical compass toward inclusion and compatibility. Debating quantitative versus qualitative ultimately implies that one is superior while the other is misguided. A more conducive avenue would be to examine differences for purpose of comparison and to illuminate their compatible and mutually reinforcing qualities. This approach harbors better potential to legitimize and clarify both valued traditions. Criminology and criminal justice students, especially those in graduate programs, should have a firm command over our field's entire methodological offerings in order to more competently and completely produce knowledge about our field's most pressing questions.

Fortunately, there are clear signs that crime and justice studies appear to be maturing beyond the tradition of methodological exclusivism, and are seeking out the third way. This growing inclination signals the extent to which more inclusive and pragmatic attitudes are beginning to become institutionalized

within criminological scholarship. Perhaps someday the crime and justice research community won't question why someone mixed quantitative and qualitative methods but, rather, why they did not.

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