

# An Introduction to Qualitative Inquiry

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# Qualitative Inquiry

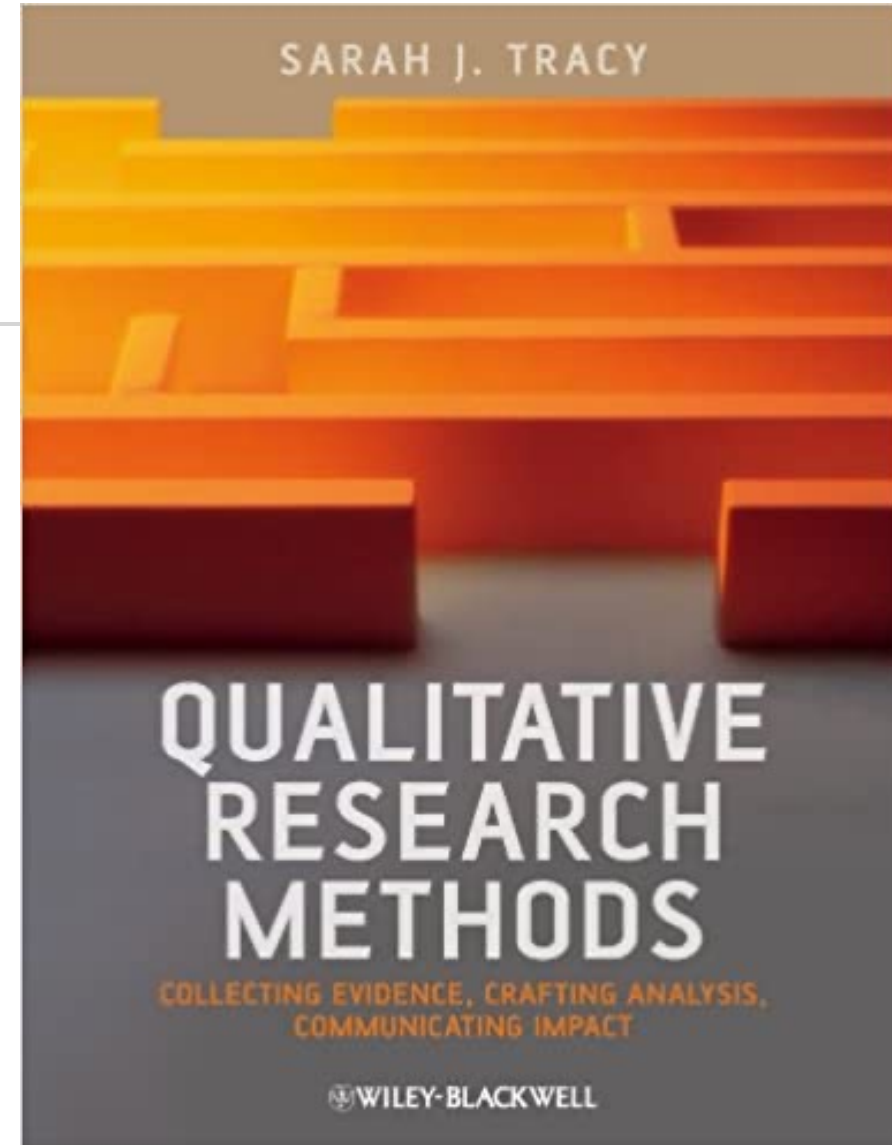
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- Aims to 'better understand'
  - Gain deeper insights, meaning-making, multifaceted interpretations
  - 'How' and 'why' explanations
  - Non-numerical representations \*
  - Sample size & sampling techniques vary
  - Illuminate multiple perspectives
  - Interactive (researcher-participant)

# Qualitative Inquiry

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- Three core qualitative concepts
  1. Self-reflexivity
  2. Context
  3. Thick description
- "The researcher is the instrument"



# Popular Paradigm

- Interpretivist
  - Ontology: socially constructed
  - Epistemology: produced, value-laden, subjective, co-created
  - Inductive nature
- Other paradigms are applicable, too
  - Postpositivist, critical, etc.
- Generalization is not the goal
  - Rather, better understanding & “making sense”
  - Can have “transferability” across studies
    - Remember, *context* is a core feature of qualitative inquiry...
    - Data must stay grounded in the context it emerged from

# Characteristics of the Qualitative Research Process

- Bricolage
  - Weaving together representations that are fitted within the specifics of a complex context
  - Like quilting
  - Multiple perspectives
  - Requires flexibility and creativity
  - Time consuming – don't underestimate this!
    - *"How long does it take?"*
    - It depends...
- *Sensitizing* concepts
  - Starting 'lenses' for qualitative research
  - *A guide* as to where to start; not strict *a priori*
  - Perception deepens along the way
  - May need to revisit literature during research process



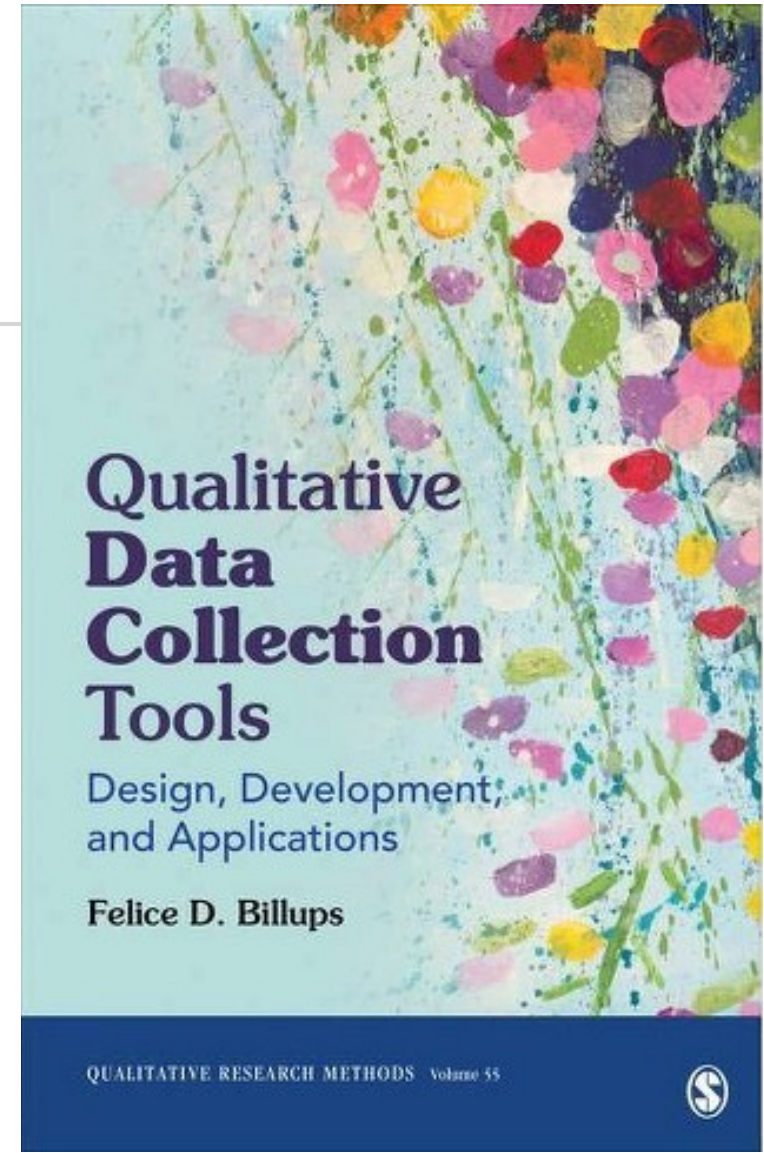
# Deductive & Inductive

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- Deductive reasoning
  - Begin with theory > develop RQs/Hs > conduct research > evidence to (dis)confirm theory
  - *Etic* understandings
- Inductive reasoning
  - Observe > contextualize patterns > make tentative claims > draw conclusions to build theory
  - *Emic* understandings
- Qualitative research can work with both
  - However, inductive/emic is often more prevalent

# Common Approaches

- Ethnography
- Case Studies
- Phenomenology
- Grounded Theory
- Conversation Analysis (“interaction analysis”)
- Discourse Analysis
- Qualitative Content Analysis
- General multi-method studies (e.g., interview, observation, follow ups)



# Choices to Consider

- What are your “data” ?  
(text, observation, photo, drawing, dance, etc.)
- Negotiating access to your research scene / participants
- Sampling & sample size
  - n=1 vs. n=30
- Appropriate method/ology
- Analysis software
  - ATLAS.ti, NVivo, etc.
  - Does not ‘analyze’ for you  
(remember, the ‘researcher is the instrument’)
- Recording (audio vs. video) & transcription
  - Manually? Plan accordingly...
  - [REV.com](https://www.rev.com) (paid-for-services)
  - [Otter.ai](https://otter.ai) app/software
- Self-reflexivity practices



# Resources

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- Research Design & Data Analysis Lab:  
<https://www.uttyler.edu/research/ors-research-design-data-analysis-lab/>
- Schedule a consultant appointment with me for qualitative questions:  
<https://www.uttyler.edu/research/ors-research-design-data-analysis-lab/ors-research-design-data-analysis-lab-consultants/>
- Others: Quantitative, academic writing, surveys, etc.

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