

Variety in Qualitative Inquiry: Theoretical Orientations

Theoretical tradition	Foundational question:	Description	Guiding assumption	Primary method/researcher role
Ethnography	What is the culture of this group of people?	The notion of culture is central. Is devoted to describing ways of life of human kind, social scientific description of a people and the cultural basis of their people hood. Applied to the study of contemporary society and social problems.	Any human group of people interacting together for a period of time will evolve a culture. Culture is that collection of behavior patterns and beliefs that constitutes "standards for deciding what is, what can be, how one feels about it, what to do about it and how to go about doing it.	Participant observation in the tradition of anthropology. This means intensive fieldwork in which the investigator is immersed in the culture under study. Ethnographers report on their experiences on as participant observers. Virtual ethnographer- studying people connected through distributed electronic environments.
Autoethnography and Evocative forms of Inquiry	How des my own experience of this culture connect with and offer insights about this culture, situation, event, and/or way of life?	Focuses on the study of one's own culture and oneself as part of that culture and its many variations. Opposite end of ethnography in a qualitative continuum of approaches. When the ethnographer studies the culture of his own group, his/her own community, organization, the way of life the people like her/him, or his/her own cultural experiences.	Is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural. Auto ethnographers first gaze through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focusing outward on social and the cultural aspect of their personal experience; then, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations. Then you use your own experiences to garner insights into the larger culture or subculture of which you are part	Narratives shaped out of a writer's personal experiences within culture and addressed to academic and public audiences. As auto ethnographers move backward and forward, inward and outward, distinctions between the personal and cultural become blurred, sometimes beyond distinct recognition. Usually written in first-person voice. The auto ethnographer keeps self-awareness about and reporting of one's own experiences and introspections as a primary data source.
Truth and Reality-Oriented correspondence Theory: Positivist, Realist and Analytic induction Approaches	What's really going on in the real world? What can we establish with some degree of certainty? What are plausible explanations for verifiable patterns? What's the truth insofar as we can get it at it? How can we study a phenomenon so that our findings correspond, insofar as it's possible, to the real world?	Researchers and evaluators seek methods that yield correspondence with the real world, thus this is sometimes called a correspondence perspective.	There is a real world with verifiable patterns that can be observed and predicted– that reality exists and truth is worth striving for. Reality can be elusive and truth can be difficult to determine, but describing reality and determining truth are the appropriate goals of scientific inquiry. You may even generalize case study findings, depending on the cases selected and studied, to generate or to test theory, establish causality, or inform program improvement.	Use the language and concepts of mainstream science to design naturalistic studies, inform data gathering in the field, analyze results and judge the quality of qualitative findings. Therefore worrying about validity, reliability and objectivity. Researcher worries about how his/her values and preconceptions may affect what he/she sees, hears, and records in the field; wrestling with his/her values, try to make any biases explicit, take steps to mitigate their influence through rigorous field procedures, and discuss their possible influence in reporting findings. You include triangulation of data sources and analytical perspectives to increase the accuracy and credibility of findings.
Analytic induction		Offers a specific form of inductive analysis that begins deductively, by formulating propositions or hypotheses, and then examines a particular case in depth to determine if the facts of the case support the hypothesis. If it fits, another case is studied, and so forth, in the search for generalization. If a case does not support the hypothesis, that is, it is a negative case, the hypothesis is revised.		The aim is to explain a phenomenon satisfactorily using qualitative, case based inquiry.

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Realism		Realism focuses first on philosophy. Realist philosophy has been accepted as offering the foundation for a reality-oriented approach to evaluation research that includes qualitative inquiry.		
Social Construction and Constructivism	How have the people in this setting constructed reality? What are their reported perceptions, truths, explanations, beliefs and world view? What are the consequences of their construction for their behaviors and for those with whom they interact?	Constructivist study the multiple realities constructed by people and the implications of those constructions for their lives and interactions with others; constructing knowledge about reality, not constructing reality itself.	<p>Constructivism begins with the premise that the human world is different from the natural, physical world and therefore must be studied differently.</p> <p>Because human beings have evolved the capacity to interpret and construct reality—indeed, they cannot do otherwise— the world of human perception is not real in absolute sense, as the sun is real, but is made up and shaped by cultural and linguistic constructs.</p> <p>Constructionist assume that humans do not have direct access to a singular, stable, and fully knowable external reality. All of our understandings are contextually embedded, interpersonally forged, and necessarily limited.</p> <p>Primary assumptions of constructivism are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Truth is a matter of consensus among informed and sophisticated constructor, not of correspondence with objective reality. •Facts have no meaning except within some value framework, hence there cannot be an objective assessment of any proposition. •Causes and effects do not exist except by imputation •Phenomena can only be understood within the context in which they are studied; findings from one context cannot be generalized to another; neither problems nor solutions can be generalized from one setting to another •Data derived from constructivist inquiry have neither special status nor legitimation; they represent simply another construction to be taken into account in the move toward consensus. 	Data collected using open-ended interviews and observations, and then would examine the implication of different perceptions (or multiple realities) but would not pronounce which set of perceptions was right or more true or more real
Phenomenology	What is the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for this person or group of people?	A focus on exploring how human beings make sense of experience and transform experience into consciousness, both individually and shared meaning. Phenomenologist focus on how we put together the phenomena we experience in such a way as to make sense of the world and, in so doing, develop a worldview.	<p>Anything that presents itself to consciousness is potentially of interest to phenomenology, whether the object is real or imagined, empirically measurable or subjectively felt.</p> <p>Phenomenological reflection is not introspective but retrospective. Reflection on lived experience is always recollective; it is reflection on experience that is already passed or lived through.</p> <p>The phenomenon that is the focus if inquiry may be an emotion, a relationship, a program, an organization or a culture.</p> <p>We can only know what we experience by attending to perceptions and meanings that awaken our conscious awareness. Initially, all our understanding comes from sensory experience of phenomena, but that experience must be described, explicated and interpreted. Yet, descriptions of experience and interpretations are so intertwined that they often become one.</p> <p>What is important to know is what people experience and how they interpret the world.</p> <p>There is also an assumption that there is an essence or essences to shared experience. The essences are the core meaning mutually understood through a phenomenon commonly experienced. The experiences of different people are bracketed, analyzed, and compared to identify the essences of the phenomenon</p>	This requires methodologically, carefully and thoroughly capturing and describing how people experience some phenomenon— how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others. One must undertake in-depth interviews with people who have directly experienced the phenomenon of interest and participant observation; that they have lived experience as opposed to second hand experience. The only way for us to really know what another person experiences is to experience the phenomenon as directly as possible for ourselves.

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Heuristic inquiry	What is my experience of this phenomenon and the essential experience of other who also experience this phenomenon intensely	Heuristics is a form of phenomenological inquiry that brings to the fore the personal experience and insights of the researcher.	<p>The self of the researcher is present throughout the process and, while understanding the phenomenon with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge. Heuristic processes incorporate creative self-process and self discoveries.</p> <p>The researcher must have personal experience with and intense interest in the phenomenon under study</p> <p>Other co researchers who are part of the study must share an intensity of experience with the phenomenon.</p> <p>Focuses on intense human experiences, intense from the point of view if the investigator and coresearchers. It is the combination of personal experience and intensity that yields an understanding of the essence of the phenomenon.</p>	The rigor of heuristic inquiry comes from systematic observation of and dialogues with self and others, as well as depth interviewing of coresearchers.
Ethnomethodology	How do people make sense of their everyday activities so as to behave in socially acceptable ways?	<p>Focuses on the ordinary, the routine, the details of everyday life. Ethnomethodology studies the social order by combining a phenomenological sensibility with a paramount concern for every day social practice.</p> <p>As the name suggests, Ethnomethodology is a study of methods</p>	<p>They start from the no manipulative and unobtrusive strategies of most qualitative inquiry in employing ethnomethodological experiments. During these experiments, the researcher violates the scene and disrupts ordinary activity by doing something out of the ordinary.</p> <p>Ethnomethodologist also have special interest in observing naturally occurring experiments where people are thrust into new or unexpected situations that require them to make sense of what is happening, situations in which meaning is problematic.</p>	Ethnomethodologists elucidate what a complete stranger would have to learn to become a routinely functioning member of a group, program or culture. To do this, they conduct depth interview and undertake participant observation.
Symbolic interaction	What common set of symbols and understandings has emerged to give meaning to people's interactions?	<p>Symbolic interaction is a social psychological approach.</p> <p>A perspective that places great emphasis on the importance of meaning and interpretation as essential human process in reaction against behaviorism and mechanical stimulus-response psychology. People create shared meaning through their interactions, and those meanings become their reality</p>	<p>Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them.</p> <p>The meaning of things arises out of the social interaction one has with one's fellows</p> <p>The meanings of things are handled in and modified through an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he or she encounters.</p> <p>It has a distinct emphasis on the importance of symbols and the interpretative processes that undergird interactions as fundamental to understanding human behaviors.</p>	Only through close contact and direct interaction with people in open-minded naturalistic inquiry and inductive analysis could the symbolic interactionist come to understand the symbolic world of the people being studied.
Hermeneutics	What are the conditions under which a human act took place or a product was produced that make it possible to interpret its meanings?	Focuses on the problem of interpretation providing a theoretical framework for interpretive understanding, or meaning, with special attention to context and original purpose.	<p>What something means depends on the cultural context in which it was originally created as well as the cultural context within which it is subsequently interpreted.</p> <p>Understanding a human act or product, and hence all learning, is like interpreting a text.</p> <p>All interpretation occurs within a tradition</p> <p>Interpretation involves opening myself to a text and questioning it</p> <p>It must interpret a text in the light of my situation</p>	Hermeneutic researchers use qualitative methods to establish context an meaning for what people do. Offers a perspective for interpreting legends, stories, and their texts, especially biblical and legal texts

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Narratology or narrative analysis	What does this narrative or story reveal about the person and world from which it came? How can this narrative be interpreted so that it provides an understanding of and illuminates the life and culture that created it?	Narrative studies are also influenced by phenomenology's emphasis on understanding lived experience and perceptions of experience	The central idea of narrative analysis is that stories and narratives offer especially translucent windows into cultural and social meanings. Much of the methodological focus in narrative studies concerns the nature of interpretation. It takes at least four forms: Organizational research that is written in story like fashion Organizational research that collects organizational stories Organizational research that conceptualizes organizational life as story making and organizational theory as story reading A disciplinary reflection that takes the form of literary critique.	Narratology extends the idea of hermeneutics of analyzing text to include in-depth interview transcripts, life history narratives, historical memories and creative nonfiction
Ecological psychology	What is the relationship between human behavior and the environment?	Represents a different tradition and theoretical orientation because it makes different assumptions about what is important to understand about the human experience. The unit of analysis is primarily the individual, but also focuses on goal-directed behavior.	Developed drawn heavily on natural history field studies, seeing individuals and the environment as interdependent. Begins with pure, detailed descriptions of an individual in an environment, then observe streams of behavior that are subsequently analyzed in terms of presumed goal directed actions. Ecological psychologists also focus on delineating the central features of behavior settings, the particular constellations of places, things, and times that constitute a definitive environment.	While ecological psychologist begin with detailed, qualitative descriptions based on observations in natural environments, their coding schemes and analysis procedures are quantitative. Segments of goal-directed behavior and characteristics of behavior settings are coded numerically and analyzed statistically.
A systems perspective and systems theory	How and why does this system as a whole function as it does?	Holistic thinking is central to a systems perspective. A system is a whole that is both greater than and different from its parts. Indeed, a system cannot validly be divided into dependent parts as discrete entities of inquiry because the effects of the behavior of the parts on the whole depend on what is happening to other parts. The parts are so interconnected and interdependent that any simple cause-effect analysis distorts more than it illuminates.	A systems perspective is becoming increasingly important in dealing with and understanding real-world complexities, viewing things as whole entities embedded in context and still larger wholes; Some approaches to systems research lead directly to and depend heavily on qualitative inquiry A systems orientation can be very helpful in framing questions and later, making sense out of qualitative data. Changes in one part lead to changes among all parts and the system itself. Several elements central to a framing systems perspective are: is a team effort, is interdisciplinary, takes place in the field, is collaborative, is comprehensive, is inductive and exploratory, begins with qualitative description, is sensitive to context, is interactive, dynamic and process oriented. , is situational responsive and adaptive.	Synthetic thinking is required to explain system behavior where phenomenon is taken to be a part of a larger whole. A farming systems approach includes both qualitative and quantitative forms of inquiry. It includes direct observations, informal interviews, naturalistic fieldwork, and inductive analysis.
Chaos and Complexity Theory: Nonlinear Dynamics	What is the underlying order, if any, of disorderly phenomena?	Chaos research has developed as highly quantitative specialty requiring supercomputer calculations	Chaos theory challenges our need for order and prediction, even as it offers new ways to fulfill those needs. While much chaos research is highly mathematical, making sense of results seems to depend heavily on metaphors. The metaphors of chaos, complexity and nonlinear dynamics open up new possibilities for doing fieldwork in an understanding those setting that feel like walking through a maze whose walls rearrange themselves with every step you take.	At this point, complexity theory offers a new set of metaphors for thinking about what we observe, how we observe, and what we know as a result of our observations.

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Grounded Theory	What theory emerges from systematic comparative analysis and is grounded in fieldwork so as to explain what has been and is observed?	Grounded theory focuses on the process of generating theory rather than a particular theoretical content	<p>It emphasizes steps and procedures for connecting induction and deduction through the constant comparative method, comparing research sites, doing theoretical sampling, and testing emergent concepts with additional fieldwork.</p> <p>Grounded theory depends on methods that take the researcher into and close to the real world so that the results and findings are grounded in the empirical world.</p> <p>Grounded theory is meant to build theory rather than test theory. It strives to provide researchers with analytical tools for handling masses of raw data. It seeks to help qualitative analysts consider alternative meanings of phenomenon. It emphasizes being systematic and creative simultaneously. Finally it elucidates the concepts that are the building blocks of theory.</p>	<p>It has an emphasis on inductive strategies of theory development in contrast to theory generated by logical deduction from a priori assumptions.</p> <p>What grounded theory offers as a framework is a set of coding procedures to help provide some standardization and rigor to the analytical process.</p> <p>Grounded theory is a general method. It can be used on any data or combination of data.</p> <p>The researcher strives for objectivity</p>
Orientational Qualitative Inquiry: Feminist inquiry, Critical Theory and Queer theory	How is X perspective manifest in this phenomenon?	<p>Orientational qualitative inquiry eschews any pretense of open-mindedness in the search for grounded or emergent theory. Begins with a n explicit theoretical or ideological perspective that determines what conceptual framework will direct fieldwork and interpretation of findings.</p> <p>Queer theory is an orientational approach focused on sexual orientation</p> <p>Critical theory focuses on how injustice and subjugation shape people's experiences and understandings of the world.</p>	<p>The ideological orientation or perspective of the researcher determines the focus of inquiry.</p> <p>A feminist perspective presumes the importance of gender in human relationships and societal process and orients the study in that direction. Principles of this perspective include:</p> <p>A sense of connectedness and equality between researcher and researched</p> <p>Explicit acknowledging and valuing women's ways of knowing including integrating reason, emotion, intuition, experience and analytic thought</p> <p>Participatory processes that support consciousness-raising and researcher reflexivity</p> <p>Going beyond knowledge generation, beyond knowledge for its own sake, to engage in using knowledge or change, especially knowledge about women that will contribute to women's liberation and emancipation.</p>	<p>Feminist inquiry provides not only conceptual and analytical direction, but also methodological orientation in emphasizing participatory, collaborative, change oriented and empowering forms of inquiry.</p> <p>Such inquiry is aimed at confirmation and elucidation rather than discovery.</p>

Patton, M.Q. (2002). Qualitative research and Evaluation Methods. Chapter 3: Variety in Qualitative Inquiry: Theoretical Orientations. Third Edition. Sage Publications, Inc.

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1. How do the various perspectives or theoretical frameworks differ in what they might allow a researcher to learn in a setting? How are they alike? Could you use more than one framework in a study?

The theoretical frameworks differ mainly in the foundational question and in their guiding assumptions one shares. Also, they can be distinguished by answering these questions:

- a. What do we believe about the nature of reality?
- b. How do we know what we know?
- c. How should we study the world?
- d. What is worth knowing?
- e. What questions should we ask?
- f. How do we personally engage in inquiry?

They also differ the focus and on how they direct us to a particular aspect of human experience as especially deserving of attention in our attempt to make sense of the social world. Which framework to use will depend on the research question we are trying to answer. Some of them are alike in the ways they are seeking for the "truth"; or the theoretical perspective they are derived from.

Patton summarizes: "Ethnography focuses on culture, Ethnomethodology on everyday life, symbolic interactions on symbolic meanings in behavior, semiotics on signs, hermeneutics on interpretations, and phenomenology on lived experience.

I consider it is possible to use more than one framework if different questions are to be answered, or the same question wants to be answered at different levels (e.g. first using phenomenological framework and then heuristic inquiry). What is important is what Patton emphasizes at the end that what is required is that the researcher be very clear about the theoretical framework being used and the implications of that perspective on study focus, data collection, fieldwork and analysis.

He also summarizes that when researchers operate from different frameworks, their result will not be readily interpretable by or meaningful to each other. While the frameworks provide guidance and a basis for interaction among researchers operating within the same framework, the different theoretical frameworks constitute barriers that impede interaction across and among different perspectives. Each theoretical framework is a miniparadigm with its own internal logic and assumptions.

2. Discuss how you and Patton agree or disagree on the idea of pragmatism.

I agree with Patton in the sense that not all questions are theory based and that some concrete and practical questions need to be addressed. For example in the case of formative and summative evaluation, the focus is on effectiveness; in which we can use any method (statistics, interpretations, open-ended interviews, observations, etc) without having to consider the epistemology form which they have emerged