

MUNI  
FSS

# ***QUALITATIVE METHODS IMPLEMENTATION:***

## ***In-Depth Interview***

SOCB2506:  
APPLYING SOCIOLOGY - QUALITATIVE METHODS

6<sup>th</sup> of  
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## BRIEF REMINDER

- There are different research programs in qualitative research, which have different issues of research, specific methods and theoretical backgrounds. *Examples may be grounded theory research or discourse analysis, which have different interests and methodological principles, but are both prominent in qualitative research.*
- We can see differences in what is understood as qualitative research in the US, in the UK, or for example in Germany (see Knoblauch et al., 2005, or such a comparative view on qualitative research in different countries). *The first proliferation of course is also relevant inside each of these national traditions. The Denzin and Lincoln definition and their handbook, for example, basically represent the discussion in the US.*
- We find different discourses about qualitative research in different disciplines. *Qualitative researchers in psychology have specific interests and problems, as do their colleagues in sociology for example, but both are not necessarily the same.*
- We see a growing diversity of area-specific discourses about qualitative research. *Examples are contracted qualitative research in health sciences or in management or in evaluation. These areas have their special needs and limitations, which are different from, for example, university research in the context of master or doctoral theses or in the context of 'basic' research.*

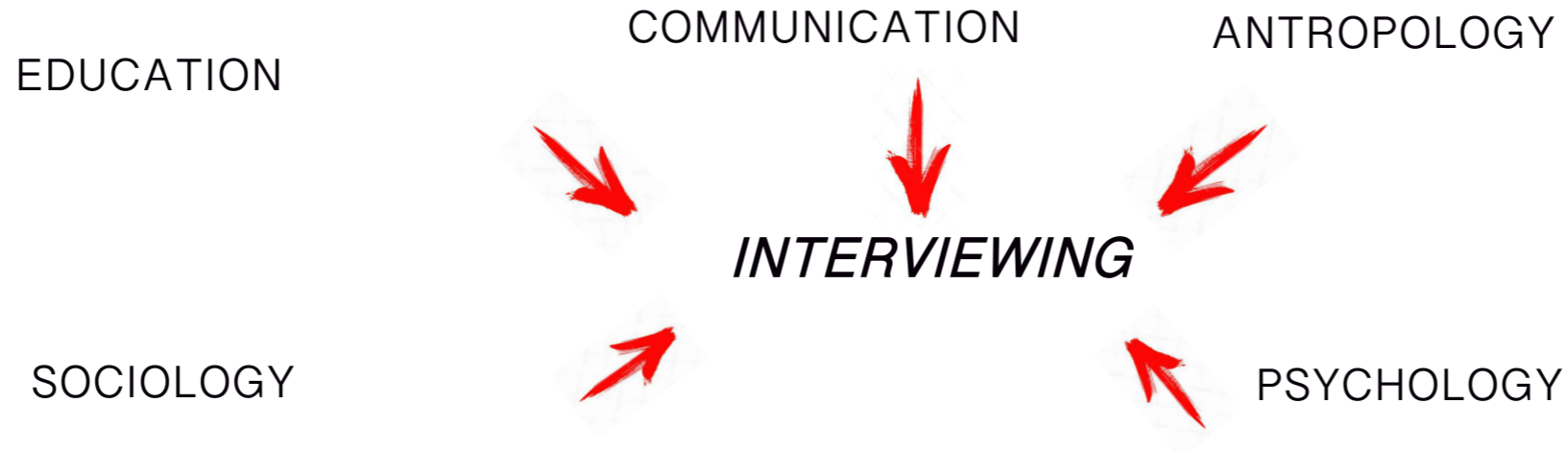
U.Flick "Designing qualitative research" SAGE  
Publications, Ltd. 2007

# IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS



Interview has become one of the most common ways of producing knowledge in the human and social sciences.

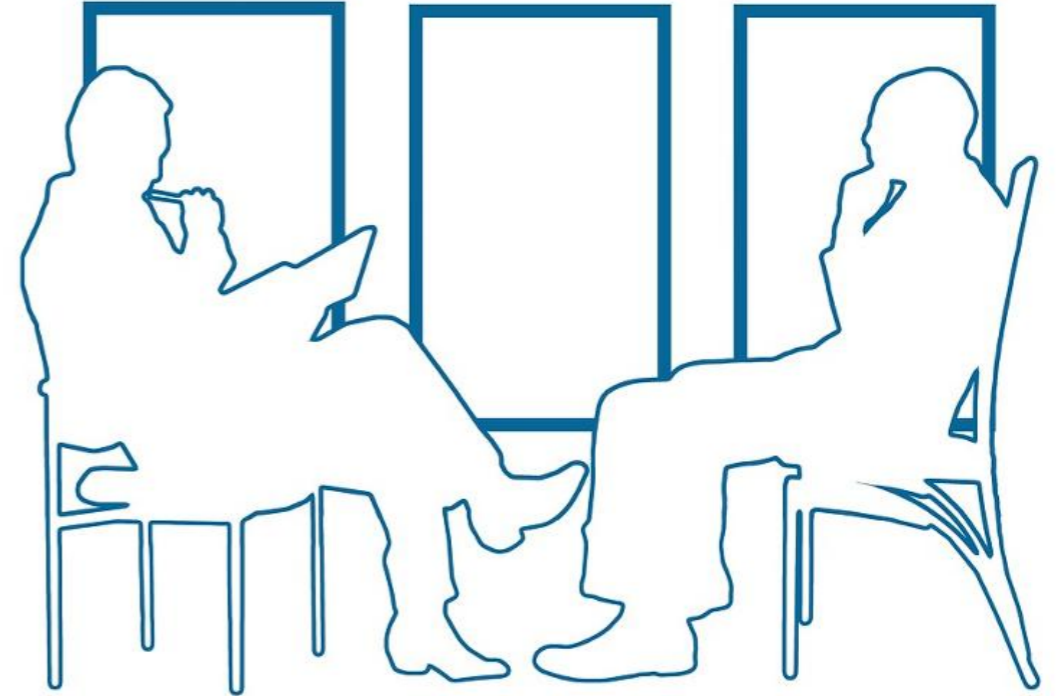
*Svend Brinkmann, Interview, The Sage Book on Qualitative Research*



# IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

**//** In a classic text, Maccoby and Maccoby (1954) defined the interview as **“a face-to-face verbal exchange, in which one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information or expressions of opinion or belief from another person or persons”** (p. 449).

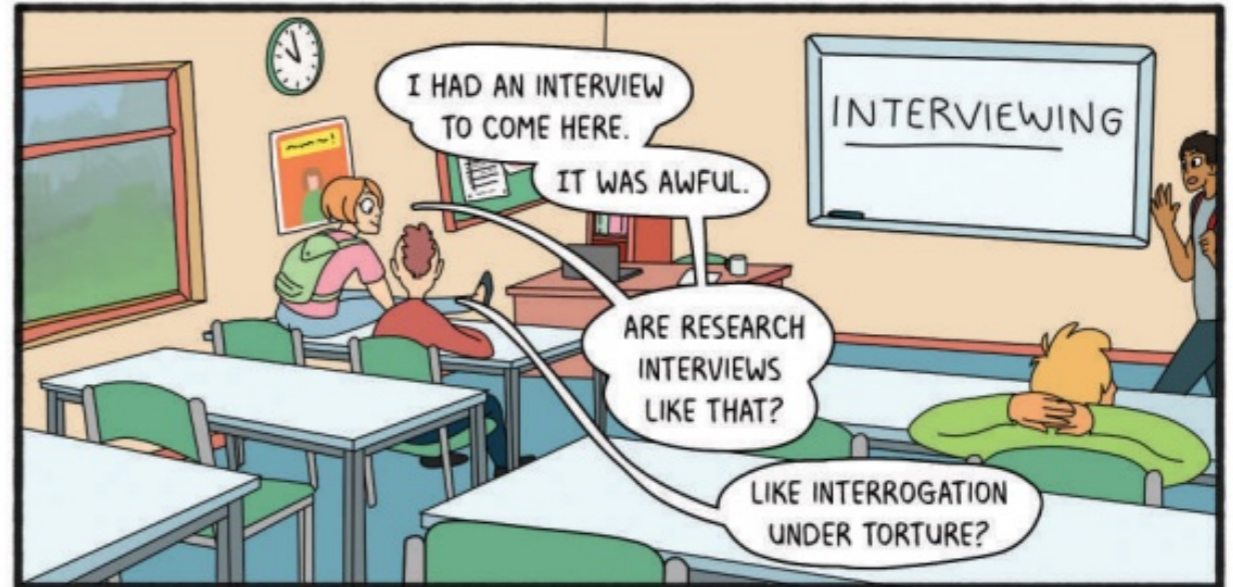
Many forms of interview are conducted today mediated by the telephone (Shuy, 2002) or the Internet (James & Busher, 2012). These have the advantage that they make possible interviewing people who are far away and perhaps situated in locations that are inaccessible or even dangerous, but this chapter focuses on interviews with embodied presence, which enable interpersonal contact, context sensitivity, and conversational flexibility to the fullest extent.



# When are In-Depth Interviews Appropriate?

In-depth interviews are useful when you want detailed information about a person's thoughts and behaviors or want to explore new issues in depth.

Interviews are used independently or complimentary to provide context to other data (such as outcome data), offering a more complete picture of what happened in the field and why.



# What are the Advantages and Limitations of In-Depth Interviews?

The primary advantage of in-depth interviews **is that they provide much more detailed information than what is available through other data collection methods**, such as surveys. They also may provide a more relaxed atmosphere in which to collect information—people may feel more comfortable having a conversation with you about their program as opposed to filling out a survey. However, there are a few limitations and pitfalls, each of which is described below.

**Prone to bias:** Every effort should be made to design a data collection effort, create instruments, and conduct interviews to allow for minimal bias.

**Can be time-intensive:** Interviews can be a time-intensive evaluation activity because of the time it takes to conduct interviews, transcribe them, and analyze the results. In planning your data collection effort, care must be taken to include time for transcription and analysis of this detailed data.

**Interviewer must be appropriately trained in interviewing techniques:** To provide the most detailed and rich data from an interviewee, the interviewer must make that person comfortable and appear interested in what they are saying. They must also be sure to use effective interview techniques, such as avoiding yes/no and leading questions, using appropriate body language, and keeping their personal opinions in check.

**Not generalizable:** When in-depth interviews are conducted, generalizations about the results are usually not able to be made because small samples are chosen and random sampling methods are not used. In-depth interviews however, provide valuable information, particularly when supplementing other methods of data collection. *It should be noted that the general rule on sample size for interviews is that when the same stories, themes, issues, and topics are emerging from the interviewees, then a sufficient sample size has been reached.*

# What is the Process for Conducting In-Depth Interviews?

The process for conducting in-depth interviews follows the same general process as is followed for other research: plan, develop instruments, collect data, analyze data, and disseminate findings. More detailed steps are given below.

## 1. *Plan*

- Identify respondents who will be involved (design a sample).
- Identify what information is needed and from whom (if there are 2 and more sources of information).
- List stakeholders to be interviewed. Determine sample if necessary.
- Ensure research will follow international and national ethical research standards, including review by ethical research committees.

# TOOLS

## 2. *Develop Instruments*

- Develop an interview protocol—the rules that guide the administration and implementation of the interviews. Put simply, these are the instructions that are followed for each interview, to ensure consistency between interviews, and thus increase the reliability of the findings. The following instructions for the interviewer should be included in the protocol:

What to say to interviewees when setting up the interview;

What to say to interviewees when beginning the interview, including ensuring informed consent and confidentiality of the interviewee (see Appendix 1 for an example);

What to say to interviewees in concluding the interview;

What to do during the interview (Example: Take notes? Audiotape? Both?); and

What to do following the interview (Example: Fill in notes? Check audiotape for clarity? Summarize key information for each? Submit written findings?).

- Develop an interview guide that lists the questions or issues to be explored during the interview and includes an informed consent form. There should be no more than 15 main questions to guide the interview, and probes should be included where helpful (see “Interview Question Tips”).
- Where necessary, translate guides into local languages and test the translation.

### *Interview Question Tips*

- Questions should be open-ended rather than closed-ended. For example, instead of asking “Do you know about the clinic’s services?” ask “Please describe the clinic’s services.”
- You should ask factual question before opinion questions. For example, ask, “What activities were conducted?” before asking, “What did you think of the activities?”
- Use probes as needed. These include:
  - Would you give me an example?
  - Can you elaborate on that idea?
  - Would you explain that further?
  - I’m not sure I understand what you’re saying.
  - Is there anything else?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4UKwd0KExc>



**PRACTICE:** choose the question from the list or create your own. Write/re-write the question to make it the subject of qualitative inquiry. Follow the scheme: conceptualization, instrumentatization, sample (?)

1 *Is right now a better world than the past?*

3 *How can we be "ourselves" in a world full of excessive consumerism?*

5 *Does society need a real crisis to get itself back together?*

2 *Can empathy save the world?*

4 *Are we as divided and fragmented as a society as we're being told?*

6 *Is a jobless person considered a burden to society?*

