



A QUALITATIVE RESEARCHER'S JOURNEY

Katherine Gregory, PhD, MS, MA

Chair, Associate Professor

Health Sciences Department

New York City College of Technology/CUNY

March 8, 2024



TODAY'S TALK

- Examples of my work
- Methodology and best practices
 - Observation, interviewing, sampling
- Why use qualitative data and mixed methods in your research?
 - To achieve what aim?
- Working with student researchers

QUALITY OF EVERYDAY LIFE FOR TRANSGENDERED SEX WORKERS

- Two-tiered system is reproducing inequalities
- Civil rights for undocumented sex workers
- Changing social conditions in the zone – safety, high-risk behavior
- State will pay for gender reassignment surgery
- State recognition of transgendered (monogamous) relationships
- Does legalization dignify and professionalize prostitution?

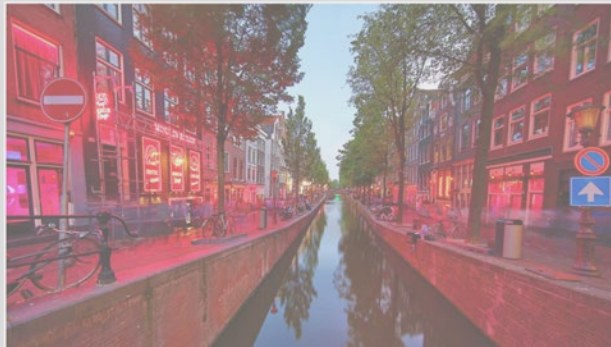
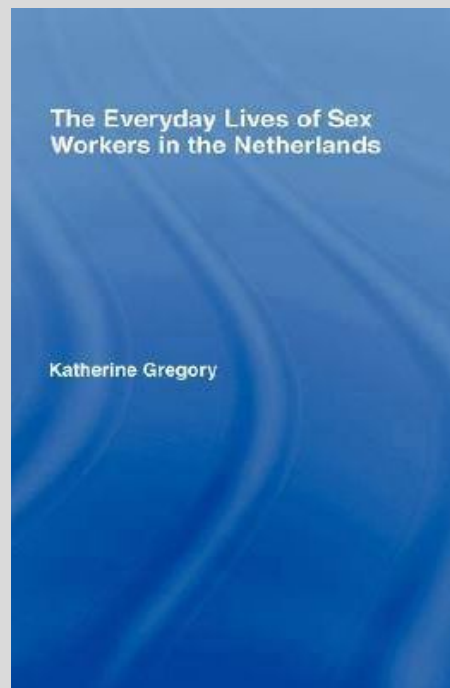


Photo: <https://theculturetrip.com/europe/the-netherlands/articles/a-brief-history-of-amsterdams-red-light-district/>

MONOGRAPH PUBLICATION




Gregory, K. (2005). *The Everyday Lives of Sex Workers in the Netherlands*, New York: Routledge



EARLIER ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS

- Gregory, K. (2010). In the Living Room: Transgendering in a Dutch Urban Streetwalking Zone. **Transgender Identities: Towards a Social Analysis of Gender Diversity**, Sally Hines and Tam Sanger (eds). New York; Routledge.
- Gregory, K. (2009). Confessions from at-risk-teens: Abstinence, the social construction of promiscuity, and the Oprah Winfrey Show. **Stories of Oprah: The Oprahfication of American Culture**, Kimberly Springer and Angela Cotton (eds). Oxford, MS: University of Mississippi Press.
- Gregory K. and Wood, E. (2009). Controlled Demolitions: The 9/11 Truth Movement on the Internet. **Internet Fictions**, Ingrid Hotz-Davies, Anton Kirchhofer and Sirpa Leppänen (eds), Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Scholars Press.
- Gregory, K. (2007). Drawing a virtual gun. **Open Fire: Understanding Global Gun Cultures**, Charles Springwood (ed), Oxford, U.K.: Berg Publishers.
- Gregory, K. (2005). Am I an Albanian American. **From Generation to Generation: Maintaining culture over time**, Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz (ed), Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.



5+ YEARS AS THE MEDIA EVALUATION RESEARCHER FOR NYC DOHMH

PI for Media Campaign Evaluation

- HIV Women of Color
- Breastfeeding
- Tobacco Control NPGP
- Portion Control
- Pouring on the Pounds II
- Meningitis Vaccination Email Messaging
- Excessive Drinking
- Dog Licensing
- Light Smokers
- Tobacco Control Child Focus
- Make New York Your Gym/Be Fit



DESIGNED, CONDUCTED & ANALYZED

- H1N1 Vaccination Clinic Exit Survey
- Excessive Drinking campaign concept testing 2010 focus groups
- Flu-related focus groups & telephone survey for federally funded media evaluation
- Street intercept & online surveys for the Pouring on the Pounds subway poster and viral video campaign
- Street intercept survey for The Bronx Knows HIV testing subway poster campaign
- Online evaluation survey for Teen MindSpace on MySpace.
- Excessive Drinking 2011 concept testing focus groups
- Moderate Vulnerable Populations and Emergency Preparedness
- Anti-Obesity campaign recall street intercept survey
- Bed Bug Control and Information Seeking Behavior usability lab sessions
- NYC Teen Site usability lab sessions
- Usability Test Office of Emergency Preparedness and Response internal and external sites
- Usability test Falls Prevention website
- Usability test the new DOHMH site
- Usability test Teen Reproductive mobile app
- TeenMindSpace Usability Lab sessions



DESIGNED, CONDUCTED & ANALYZED

- STD Clinic Patient Satisfaction Survey
- MSM HIV prevention focus groups
- Cervical Cancer prevention questionnaire
- Newborn Home Visiting survey
- WTC Health Registry Treatment Referral Program focus groups
- Lead Poisoning Prevention Landlord/Contractor focus groups
- Tobacco Control media campaign focus groups and in-depth interviews
- Bodega Retailer focus groups
- Community Resiliency and Recovery focus groups
- Stellar Farmers' Market focus groups
- Heat Emergency focus groups
- Meningitis Vaccination Exit Survey
- HIV Women of Color surveillance and concept testing
- HIV+ MSM surveillance and concept testing
- Falls Prevention Family Caregivers focus groups
- Gun Violence Prevention focus groups
- Dog Licensing focus groups
- New Mothers & Breastfeeding focus groups
- Portion Control concept testing
- Nurse Family Partnership program evaluation focus group and in-depth interviews

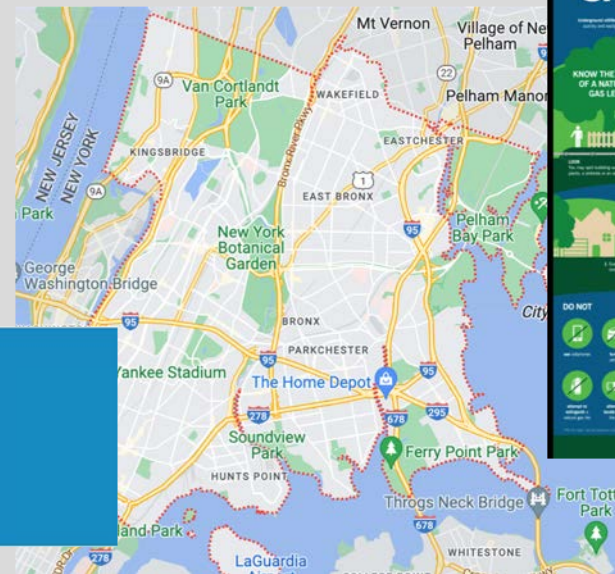
RECENT ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTER

- Gregory, K. (2020). The video camera spoiled my ethnography: a critical approach. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. Volume 5, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920963761>
- Gregory, K. (2020). Coding and Analysis: Deciding on Software Needs. *Becoming a Practitioner-Researcher: A Practical Guide for Information Professionals*, Lee Ann Fullington, Brandon K. West, and Frans Albarillo (eds) Chicago: ACRL publisher. <https://www.alastore.ala.org/content/reflections-practitioner-research-practical-guide-information-professionals>
- Gregory, K. (2019). Contestable Kinship: User Experience and Engagement on DTC Genetic Testing Sites. *New Genetics and Society*, 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14636778.2019.1677148>
- Gregory, K. (2019), Lessons of a Failed Study: Lone Researcher, Media Analysis, and the Limitations of Bracketing. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919842450>
- Gregory, K. (2018). Online Communication Settings and the Qualitative Research Process: Acclimating Students and Novice Researchers. *Qualitative Health Research*, 28 (10): 1610-1620. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732318776625>
- Kathryn Lane, MPH,¹Katherine Wheeler, MPH,¹Kizzy Charles-Guzman,MS,²Munerah Ahmed, MPH,²Micheline Blum, MA³, Katherine Gregory, PhD, MS, MA⁴, Nathan Graber, MD,² MPH, Nancy Clark, MA, CIH, CSP,²Thomas Matte, MD, MPH¹ (2014). Extreme Heat Awareness and Protective Behaviors in New York City. *Journal of Urban Health*.



MY CURRENT RESEARCH INTERESTS:

- Public health messaging & digital tech
- Social Aspects of genetics
- Optimization of faculty office hours
- Critical qualitative methods
- Health inequities



Notable genotypes	Magnitude	Repute	Summary
14000378G	10	Bad	BRCA1 (breast cancer) 5382T>C
Ru28942086G(T)	9	Bad	Deno's-Draoh syndrome
Ru28941779G(C,T)	9	Bad	Fraxler syndrome mutation
Ru28941779A(G)	9	Bad	Deno's-Draoh syndrome
Ru427067595C(C)	9	Bad	Hana syndrome
Ru637511037A(G)	9	Bad	early-onset Alzhimers disease
Ru63751088G(T)	9	Bad	Picks disease of the brain
Ru661(A,G)	9	Bad	early-onset Alzhimers disease
Ru661(A,G)	9	Bad	early-onset Alzhimers disease
Ru637513010A(C)	9	Bad	early-onset Alzhimers disease
Ru637512354G(C)	9	Bad	early-onset Alzhimers disease
Ru63751228G(T)	9	Bad	early-onset Alzhimers disease

<https://www.fdnfoudation.org/fdny-foundation-joins-coned-to-teach-new-yorkers-about-the-importance-of-natural-gas/>

SOCIAL IMPACT OF GENETICS ON IDENTITY AND HEALTH DIAGNOSTICS

- 13 in-depth interviews with consumers who have acquired their genetic data from direct-to-consumer companies
- Data scrape thread posts found on online sites, You-tube videos, and other web-based sites where consumers discuss their interest in genetic testing.
- Content analysis of newspaper and popular science coverage of gene editing incident.
- Interview genetic counselors

The screenshot shows the article page for "Contestable kinship: user experience and engagement on DTC genetic testing sites" by Katherine Gregory. The journal is "New Genetics and Society", Volume 38, Issue 4. The article has 88 views and 0 CrossRef citations to date. It was received on 25 Nov 2017, accepted on 25 Sep 2019, and published online on 15 Oct 2019. The page includes a navigation bar with options for Full Article, Figures & data, References, Citations, Metrics, Reprints & Permissions, and Get access. The abstract discusses the role of user-generated information in genetic testing and social media.

Journal
New Genetics and Society >
Critical Studies of Contemporary Biosciences
Volume 38, 2019 - Issue 4

Enter keywords, authors, DOI, ORCID

Articles

88 Views
0 CrossRef citations to date
0 Altmetric

Contestable kinship: user experience and engagement on DTC genetic testing sites
Katherine Gregory

Pages 387-409 | Received 25 Nov 2017, Accepted 25 Sep 2019, Published online: 15 Oct 2019

Download citation | <https://doi.org/10.1080/14636778.2019.1677148> | Check for updates

Full Article | Figures & data | References | Citations | Metrics | Reprints & Permissions | Get access

Select Language | Translator disclaimer

Abstract

Direct-to-consumer genetic testing products and their participatory social media outlets provide users with new ways to understand ancestral identity, build community around shared results, and conceptualize the role of genetic determinism in their lives. In this article, I explore of role of user-generated information constructed with results from direct-to-consumer genetic scanning services such as 23andme, GEDMatch, AncestryDNA, MyHeritage. In particular, this paper considers how social capital is accumulated and disseminated utilizing these participatory tools in the communication practices of users. Through the sharing of genealogical knowledge, historical expertise, communication technology skills, access to genealogical services, selective behaviors such as cooperation, trust building, and a reliable presence on these social networking sites are examined. Thus this article aims to examine consumer contact practices and information sharing of social capital in the form of familial origin narratives, genetic ancestry estimations, and how this communication shapes user interpretation of genetic results.

Keywords: Balkan Identity, social media tools, genetic kinship, direct-to-consumer genetic testing kits, participatory tools, user-generated information and social capital, autoethnography



OPTIMIZATION OF FACULTY OFFICE HOURS, CO-PI WITH PROVOST PAM BROWN AND DR. DIANA SAMAROO

- To understand how students utilize faculty office hours.
- To understand how faculty encourage students to attend office hours and how to engage students during their office hours
- Interviews took place before adjunct lecturers were given additional 15 hrs. for holding office hours.
- Before migration to online learning during the pandemic
- Mixed Methods
- Pre and Post surveys of students who were enrolled in a chemistry course, fall and spring semesters
- Interviews with faculty who taught the course.
- Interview students about their experience

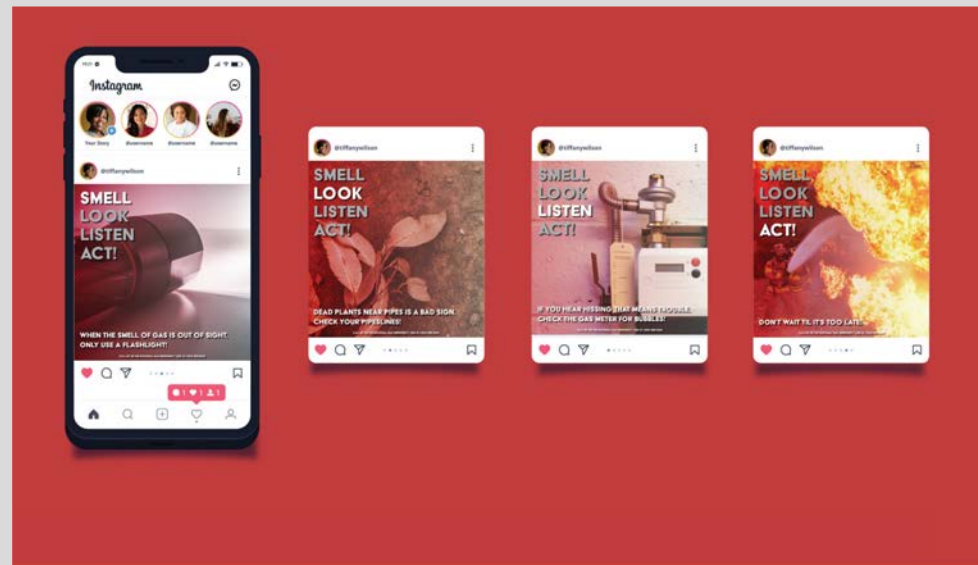
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, INTERVENTION BEHAVIOR AND THE PREVENTION OF GAS LEAKS IN NEW YORK CITY

- Con Edison Social and Behavioral Research Award program - \$33K
- Four neighborhood-based focus groups.
- To understand what kinds of messaging or information will motivate New Yorkers to intervene in the event they smell a gas odor.
- Intervention behavior is a challenge to validate.
- To understand the role of the “bystander effect” and health belief model play in decision making when a gas leak is suspected.
- Concept test digital creatives developed by COMM Design students in Design Team (COMD 4701).
- Feedback on the call to action identified in national campaigns.
- To understand public opinion about utilities’ brand strength and procedural expectations.
- Work with two student researchers.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, INTERVENTION BEHAVIOR AND THE PREVENTION OF GAS LEAKS IN NYC

- ❖ Recruited twenty-six participants for four distinct 90-minute focus groups, Fall 2022 on Zoom.



Artwork by Tiffany Wilson

TRUSTWORTHY INSTITUTIONS DURING AN EMERGENCY IN NEW YORK CITY

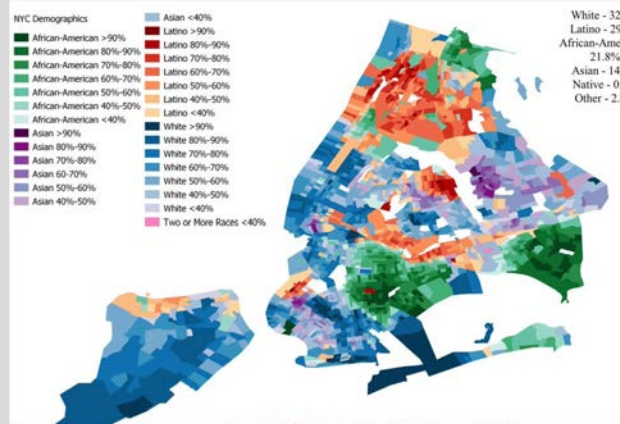
- Participants identified the Fire Department of New York (FDNY), Con Edison (utility company), cable news channel NY1, and the New York Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) as reliable sources.



<https://www.fdneyfoundation.org/holiday-safety-tips-from-the-fdney-foundation/>
<https://twitter.com/conedison/status/1035279827677454336>
<https://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs>

SLOWER EMERGENCY SERVICES IN LOWER INCOME NEIGHBORHOODS

- The majority of participants believe emergency services (NYPD, EMT, postal services, public transportation) are slower in the low-income neighborhoods, such as the South Bronx.



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:5_Boroughs_Labels_New_York_City_Map.svg

OMNIPRESENT POLICING AND SLEEP HEALTH IN THE BRONX

- Mixed methods (survey and focus groups)
- \$3,500 SRAB (Lehman College) & \$15,000 BRESI grant supported
- Four researchers
- Six or seven student researchers
- Survey recruitment in the Bronx (sample size 202)
- Four focus group sessions
- Student analysis and research posters based on student choice of questions to determine correlations

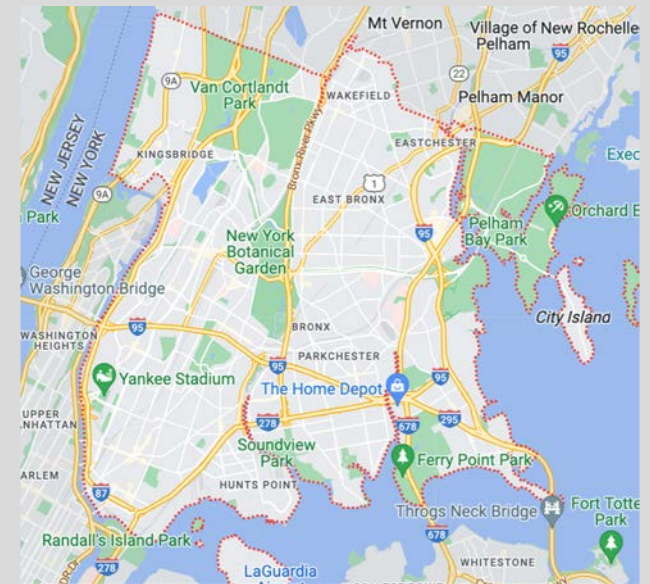


Image: Google maps



PUBLICATION SUBMISSIONS

**Associations of Self-Reported Neighborhood Crime Safety, Experiences of Crime, and
Sleep Outcomes among Bronx Residents**

Police Surveillance Technologies and Emotions

Characteristics of Quantitative	Characteristics of Qualitative
"Objective"	"Subjective"
Research Question: How many? Strength of association?	Research questions: What? Why?
"Hard" science	"Soft" science
Literature review must be done early in study	Literature review done as study progresses or afterwards
Test theory	Develops theory
One reality: focus is concise and narrow	Multiple realities: focus on complex and broad
Facts are value-free and unbiased	Facts are value-laden and biased
Reduction, control, precision	Discovery, description, understanding, shared interpretation
Measurable	Interpretive
Report statistical analysis. Basic analysis is numbers	Report rich narrative. Basic analysis words/ideas
Context free	Context dependent
Hypothesis	Research questions
Sample size = n	Sample size is not a concern, seeks "informal rich" sample

<https://www.pinterest.com/explore/qualitative-research/>

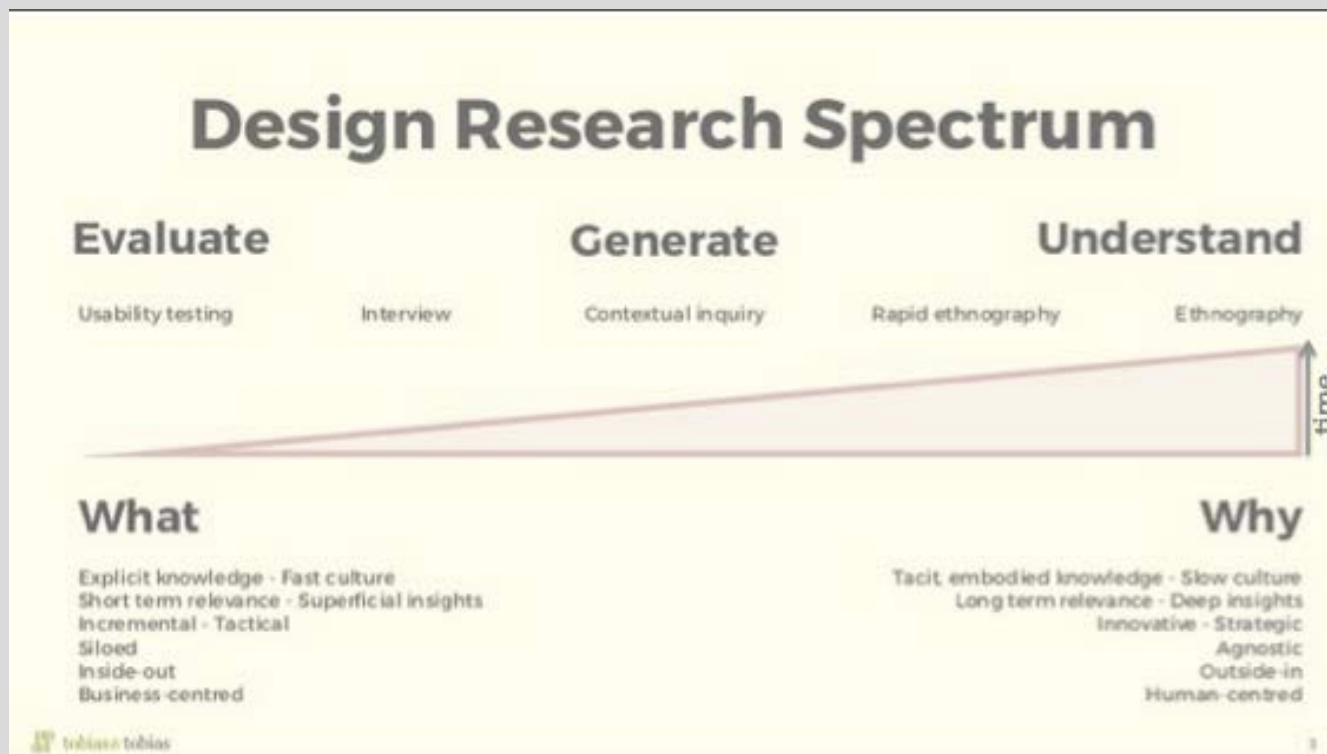


MULTIPLE METHODS

- Exploratory Research
- Formative/Summative Research
- Phenomenological Research
 - observation, focus groups, in-depth interview, ethnography, visual & textual analysis
- Descriptive Research
- Usability Testing
- Case Studies
- Applied Research
 - Evaluation, Research & Development, Participatory Action Research

3/8/24

DESIGN RESEARCH SPECTRUM





NEED TO CONSIDER

- Research Design
 - Methodology, research team, PI
- Sampling
 - Population, sample size, recruitment, screening, access, data saturation
- Timeline
- Budget
- Stakeholders
- Literature Review
 - What are the gaps in knowledge
 - What are my research questions?
- IRB and other ethical considerations
- What are your goals, outcomes?
 - Contributing to scholarship of discipline, policy, program initiatives, communication strategy, application



WHAT IS QUALITATIVE

- Look at settings and people *holistically*
- Descriptive data
 - Peoples' own written or oral words
 - Observable behavior.
- Inductive:
 - Researchers develop concepts, insights & understanding from patterns in the data.
 - Without preconceived models or hypotheses, theories.



WHAT IS QUALITATIVE

- Recognize that all perspectives are valuable.
- Try to be humanistic. Try not to reduce humans to statistical equations.
- First-hand knowledge
- All settings are worthy of study



WHAT IS QUALITATIVE

- Sensitive to researcher's role
 - Recognize researcher's own frame of reference
 - Try to set aside researcher's own beliefs and perspective
 - Self-Reflexivity



QUALITATIVE INFORMS THE CONTEXT IN WHICH LIFE OCCURS

- Helps to conceptualize issues from another's perspective
- How to understand an experience from the perspective of priority populations
- Tries to answer "why" and "how" of question rather than "how much" and "how many"
- Helps to build trust in the communities we study



COMMON WAYS TO MIX METHODOLOGIES

- Upon interpretation of *qualitative results* use quantitative data (socio-demographic data) related to study participants
- Qualitative phase could occur at the end quantitative study to *evaluate interpretation*
- Qualitative & quantitative techniques used independently from *different perspectives*



COMMON WAYS TO MIX METHODOLOGIES

- *Formative phase* (focus groups) could precede quantitative phase (household survey) to generate hypotheses.
- *Qualitative exit interviews* can be conducted with a sample of quantitative survey participants to check external validity



WHY USE QUALITATIVE DATA OR MIXED METHODS

- Contribute to disciplinary scholarship
- Informs policy
- Informs program initiatives
- Informs best practices for patient care/consumer interaction with organizations
- Informs communication strategies



RESEARCHERS MUST CONTEMPLATE THE FOLLOWING:

- What are we trying to find out?
 - Is it relevant? Is it important?
- Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?
 - Does the research seek to understand complex, subjective experiences or views of those being researched?
- How will we elicit narratives from participants?
- How will we interpret patterns?
- Do we have the means to reach insights into the human condition.



SOURCES

- Fretz R.I., Emerson R. M., Shaw L. (2011). *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. University of Chicago.
- Lofland J., and Lofland L.H. (1995). *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*. Wadsworth, University of California.
- Saldana, J. (2016). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (3rd edition) SAGE Publications.
- Seale C., Gobo G., Gubrium J.F., Silverman D., (edited by) (2004). *Qualitative Research Practice*. SAGE Publications.
- Ulin P.R., Robinson E. T., & Tolley E.E. (2005). *Qualitative Methods in Public Health*. Jossey-Bass.



THANK YOU!

katherine.gregory83@citytech.cuny.edu