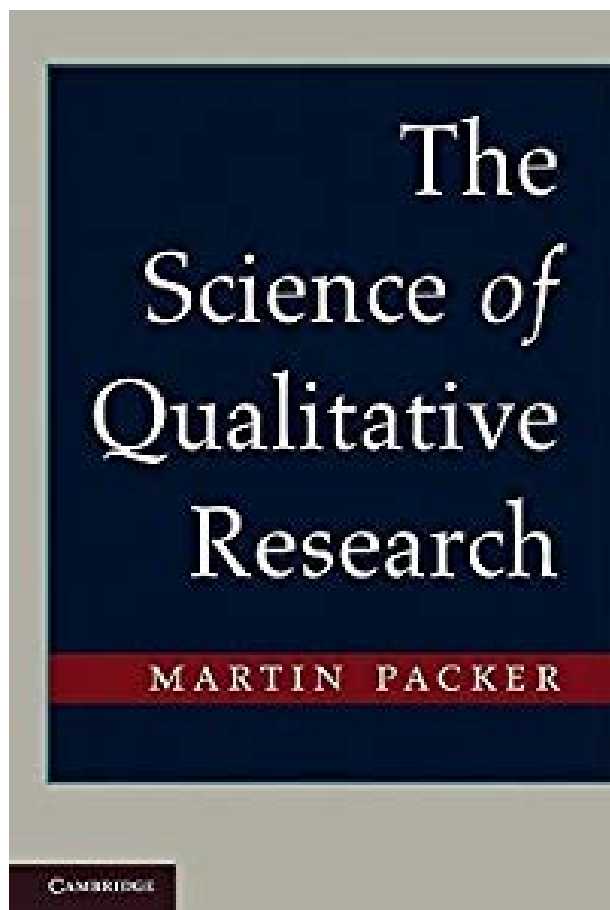


The Science of Qualitative Research



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This book is a unique examination of qualitative research in the social sciences, raising and answering the question of why we do this kind of investigation. Rather than offering advice on how to conduct qualitative research, it explores the multiple roots of qualitative research - including phenomenology, hermeneutics, and critical theory - in order to diagnose the current state of play and recommend an alternative. The diagnosis is that much qualitative research today continues to employ the mind-world dualism that is typical of traditional experimental investigation. The recommendation is that we focus on constitution: the relationship of mutual formation between a form of life and its members. Michel Foucault's program for "a historical ontology of ourselves" provides the basis for a fresh approach to investigation. The basic tools of qualitative research - interviews, ethnographic fieldwork, and analysis of discourse - are re-forged in order to articulate how our way of living makes us who we are, and so empower us to change this form of life.