

METHODS OVERVIEW

THINK ABOUT YOUR RESEARCH QUESTION...

UNITS OF ANALYSIS

Units of Analysis: what or whom is being studied

- In social science research: usually individual people or groups

Can study individuals to learn about aggregate groups of people

Typical units of Analysis

- Individuals
- Groups
- Organizations
- Social Interactions
- Social Artifacts

SAMPLING

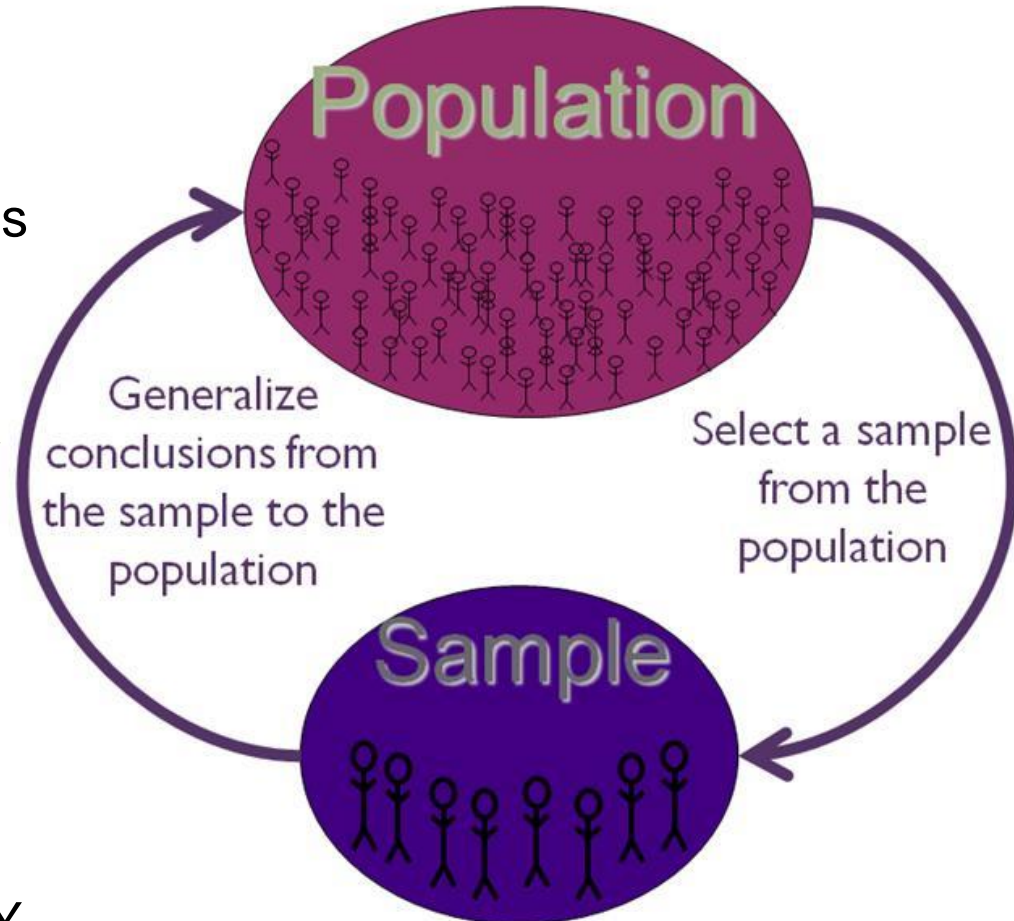
Population: group of people/events researchers are interested in researching

- Example: Transgender Inmates

Sample: smaller subject of people/groups/event used in order to conduct research

Sampling: assembling and reaching out to this smaller subset to conduct research

- Transgender inmates in the NY prison system



WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT SAMPLING?

Sampling = *how you find the people to be in your study*

1. Identify a research topic and question
2. Identify the unit of analysis & population
3. Identify the sample

Identifying the sample determines who will be in your study and determines how you will go about reaching them

SAMPLING

Must find Units of Analysis IRL

2 ways to sample

- **Probability Sampling – based on probability theory**
 - Random selection
 - Representativeness
- **Nonprobability Sampling:** used when sample is not selected randomly
 - Convenience Sampling
 - Purposive Sampling
 - Quota Sampling
 - Snowball Sampling
 - Expert Sampling



NONPROBABILITY SAMPLING

Convenience Sampling: Relying on available subjects

Purposive Sampling: Researcher selects sample based on their knowledge of population and purpose of the study

Quota Sampling: population is segmented into mutually exclusive subgroups and then a non-random set of observations is chosen from each subgroup to meet a predefined quota

Snowball sampling: identifying a few respondents that match the inclusion criteria for your study, and then ask them to recommend others

Expert Sampling/Selecting Informants: find an individual who is well-versed in the social phenomenon that you wish to study

DATA COLLECTION



- **Quantitative Data: Numerical data**

- That person has an IQ of 120.

- **Qualitative Data: Non-numerical data**

- That person is intelligent.

- **At first, most observations of the world are qualitative**

- Observations can be transformed into numbers
- **Quantification** makes our observations more explicit

Quantitative Data can be aggregated and compared more easily

- Statistical analysis uses quantitative data

• **Qualitative Data:** richer in meaning and detail, better explains intricate experiences

RESEARCH METHODS

- Data depends on the *method* you use to collect it
- Data type determines data analysis

Quantitative

- [Experiments]
- Surveys

Qualitative

- Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Grounded Theory
- Ethnography & Institutional Ethnography
- Ethnomethodology & Conversational Analysis
- Participatory Action Research (PAR)

Both

- Case Studies
- Unobtrusive methods
- Archival/Database Research
- Evaluation/Organizational Research
- Policy Research



DATA COLLECTION

- **Quantitative**

- Surveys
- Database information
- Field work
- Organizational data

- **Qualitative**

- Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Case Studies
- Field work/Notes/Observations
- Policies
- Organizational data

- Leads to → Quantitative vs. Qualitative Analysis

- **What is your research question?**
- **Who is your sample?**
- **How will you find them?**
- **What type of data might you collect? (Quant or Qual?)**