

Qualitative Methods

Political Science

Interviews, documents and observation in political research.

Methods and their cautions.

Methods

Elite interviews with decision-makers

Archival and documentary analysis

Participant observation

Focus groups

Discourse and content analysis

Cautions

Elites present self-serving accounts

Archives are selectively preserved

Access shapes what you can study

Researcher presence changes behaviour

Educational reference. Triangulate: an interview account checked against a contemporaneous document is far stronger than either alone.