

社会学经典教材影印丛书

社会研究 方法基础

第3版

[美] 艾尔·巴比 (Earl Babbie) 著

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SOCIAL RESEARCH THIRD EDITION



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THE BASICS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

Third Edition

Earl Babbie

Chapman University



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出版说明

我们引进这套丛书的目的是介绍当前国外社会学理论和方法,使我国的读者能够直接阅读到西方学者撰写的社会学教材。

需要重申的是,作者本人的观点和结论有些值得商榷,甚至是不可取的,对此我们提请读者加以甄别,书中的观点均不代表我们出版社。

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2004年4月16日

社会学经典教材影印丛书

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导 读

杨伯淑

这是一本系统介绍实证类(Empirical)社会学研究方法的本科教材。

一般说来,社会科学探索的主要目的在于回答“是什么”和“为什么”,而不是应该如何。这也是社会科学与人文学科之间的重要区别之一。艾尔·巴比(Earl Babbie)这本《社会研究方法基础》(The Basics of Social Research)就是告诉我们该如何回答“是什么”和“为什么”的一本书。该书脱胎于作者久负盛名的《社会研究方法》(The Practice of Social Research)。如果说新版《社会研究方法》凝聚了作者三十余年的心血,那么《社会研究方法基础》的第三版则是作者三十余年心血的精华。同样重要的是,这本书反映了社会科学世界里方法论的最新发展趋势。

不管人们对后现代理念是如何的嗤之以鼻,事实上它已经到了不能被忽略的地步。社会科学之所以诞生并能够得以发展,是因为它建筑在“社会现实”不但存在而且是可以理解的这样一种假定上。但持后现代观念的学者却告诉我们并不存在这样的现实。所有的“真实”(Real)只不过是让我们的观点得以贯穿的意图像罢了(p. 10)。也就是说,根本就没有什么“客观”现实可供观察。《社会研究方法基础》没有回避这种对社会科学釜底抽薪式的最新挑战。作为一个数十年一直从事实证方法教学和研究的社会学家,巴比对此做出的解释不但展示了他的胸怀及对方法论的娴熟驾驭能力,而且使得他这本具有经典性质的本科教材更加优雅。细心的读者可以体会出,该书绝不仅仅是数据搜集(Methods)和分析技术(巧)的演示。事实上,这也是该书与其他介绍研究方法的教科书的根本区别。

北美的社会科学家一直在纯研究和应用研究这两极之间徘徊。进行纯研究的学者讲究的是“为知识而知识”。那些侧重于应用研究的则以改善人们现实生活的质量为本目的。这些区别同样反映在他们所选择和使用的方法上。自上世纪末,北美的社会学界又开始关注应用型的研究及重新肯定定性研究。《社会研究方法基础》第三版以增补的方式对这些趋势做出了及时的反应。但相关增补不但丝毫没有损害到该书的学术品味,而且因和现实生活的联系进一步紧密而使得可读性得到了加强。然而,具体到我国的相关学科,特别是对于像传播学这类引进历史较短的交叉学科来说,以中国本土

为核心关注对象的系统知识积累显得格外重要。也就是说,具体到学科建设,真正能够构筑起学术殿堂的是基于范式(Paradigm)的知识的系统积累。就研究方法而言,这正是该书的长处。无论是对定性还是对定量方法的介绍和展示,都显示出作者独具匠心的学术敏感性。

反过来说,纯研究和应用研究也没有必要成为相互排斥的两极。实际上,前者的繁荣正是后者得以真正发展的基础。同样,定量和定性研究之间也不存在不可调和的矛盾。巴比在《社会研究方法基础》中通过对“扎根理论”(Grounded Theory)这一方法的介绍强调了定性和定量分析之间的纽带。此外,该书对涉及国际间的比较历史研究方法(Comparative and Historical Research)给予了持续关注。而比较历史研究就是既需要采用定量研究方法也需要进行定性分析的学科分支。社会科学家需要研究本土的社会现象和社会发展规律。考虑到我国由参与全球化以及追求现代化所出现的社会变革,这种研究必然会涉及对世界上其他社会的分析与比较。这是使我国相关学科的学生从本科就开始了解比较历史研究方法的现实意义。“他山之石,可以攻玉。”《社会研究方法基础》第三版的相关章节所介绍的西方比较历史研究的典型范例非常值得我们深思和借鉴。

本科生的教材写作绝非易事。从大处说,在这本四百多页(正文)的书中,巴比列出的参阅文献就达三百余部(篇)专著或研究论文。这应该得到珍视。从小处讲,作者在该书中结合所讨论的内容不失时机地介绍了西方的相关学术网站。这种友善的做法相信也会受到因特网时代的学生们的欢迎。当然,最能体现《社会研究方法基础》第三版特色的也许是作者新增的第15章——“阅读和写作社会学研究”。当你修初级方法课或第一次写研究报告的时候,就会体会到这一章的意义了。

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