

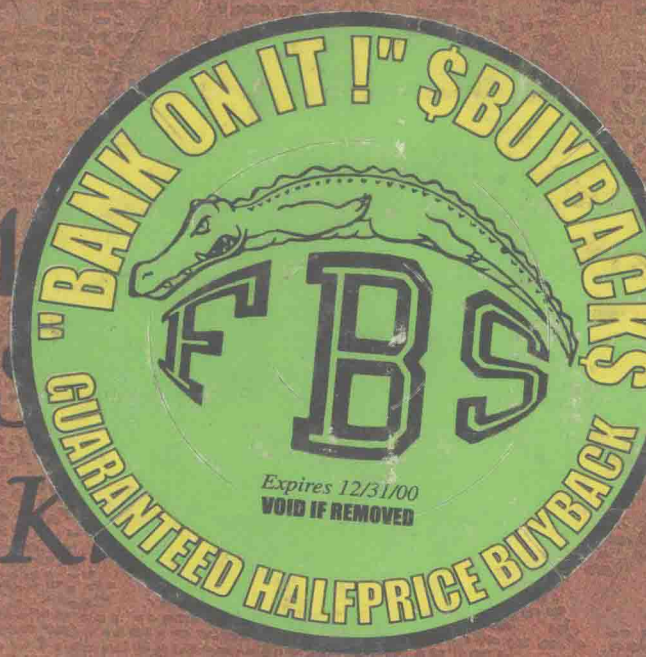
Sixth Edition

Research Methods in Social Relations

Charles M.

Eliot R. S.

Louise H. K.



SIXTH EDITION

Research Methods in Social Relations

Charles M. Judd

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

Eliot R. Smith

PURDUE UNIVERSITY

Louise H. Kidder

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY, PHILADELPHIA

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Preface

The Present and Past Editions

Research Methods in Social Relations has lived a long time and seen more generations of students than any of its authors or readers. It symbolizes tradition and change; it applies timeless issues of research design and measurement to changing methodologies and social concerns. It breaks some traditions and teaches readers to try new methods without losing sight of the old.

In this edition, we have reorganized and rewritten the text to underline a clear separation between the *logical* issues of forms of validity and types of research design (presented in the first part of the book) and the *practical* issues of the implementation of a concrete research project (the second and third parts of the book). We believe that this new organization is both logical and pedagogically sound, because the practical aspects of conducting research are always justified by their contributions to the validity of the research conclusions. The first part retains an emphasis on the search for plausible rival hypotheses, and the logical roles played by research design and sampling in ruling out such threats to validity. In the second part, detailing the “nuts and bolts” practical aspects of research of various forms and in various settings, are the topics of scaling, practical issues of sampling, questionnaires and interviews, and a new chapter on laboratory research. The third section of the book includes three chapters on the special considerations involved when research is conducted in natural settings. Finally, the fourth and fifth sections consider the analysis of data, the communication of research results, and the ethics of research.

Besides revising, reorganizing, and updating, we have added two major new chapters to this edition. Previous editions of the text contained no material on laboratory research comparable to their detailed descriptions of procedures for surveys, observational research, or participant observation. Given the importance of the laboratory in social psychology, communication, and other fields, we have written a new chapter on the practical aspects of laboratory research (e.g., how to randomly assign subjects, con-

struct a plausible cover story, validate manipulations and dependent measures). In addition, new methods for quantitatively combining and summarizing research results across studies have been intensively developed in recent years. A new chapter on *meta-analysis*, written by Brian Mullen and Norman Miller, will introduce students to these increasingly widely used methods.

Our goal remains true to the earlier editions: to describe multiple research strategies, multiple methods of measurement, and multiple techniques of data analysis—to allow the fullest exploration of social relations. We also maintain a commitment expressed by the earliest authors and by the sponsoring Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, a commitment to examine the place of values in social research. We do this both by the examples chosen to illustrate methodological issues and by the treatment of ethics in a chapter by Stuart Cook, one of the authors of the first edition.

Hybrid Vigor

Teachers and students who liked the earlier versions of *Research Methods in Social Relations* should find this edition even more to their liking. It has the hybrid vigor that comes from years of experimentation. It retains the eclectic quality of its predecessors, making it a book for social scientists at large. The methods we examine are applicable not just in social psychology or sociology, political science or management, health studies or education, but span all these fields. After all, the substantive social issues to which these methods can be applied, like the spread of the AIDS epidemic, racial and ethnic polarization in our own society and across the world, and human behaviors that endanger the global environment, also cross narrow disciplinary boundaries. We have tried to make the book useful for teachers and students in many programs and departments, to provide a textbook for social scientists from multiple disciplines. To paraphrase one of the techniques we discuss, ours is a “multitrait-multimethod” book.

Resourceful Skeptics

Beneath our eclectic emphasis on multiple methods are two currents that run consistently through the book. One concerns causal inferences. Social scientists often wish to but cannot make confident causal inferences, and we examine the elements of research design that make causal inference possible. The other current describes problems in measurement. We take the position that measurements always include a little more than intended and a little less than desired. Our concern with causal inference and measurement as omnipresent research problems is met by our prescription of multiple methods. We make available to the student multiple methods of measuring and observing—being a participant observer, constructing scales and questionnaires, performing laboratory studies, conducting interviews, and using archival data. The student should approach research problems with a skeptic’s eye, but should not despair that no method is perfect. Indeed none is, but multiple methods applied to the same research issue can

strengthen the conclusions beyond what could be achieved by any single method. Therefore we wish to supply students with a large and varied store of methods so that they become optimistic and resourceful skeptics.

Instructor's Manual

A new Instructor's Manual written by Mary Amanda Dew accompanies this edition. In it both new and seasoned instructors will find creative ideas for lectures and class exercises. The manual begins with the premise that it is impossible to learn to do research without having hands-on experience, so it provides *exercises* that can be done in class. To aid instructors with their lecture preparation, the manual provides a concise *summary* of each chapter and highlights the major points raised in the text. For each chapter the manual contains several *lecture topic suggestions*, some conceptual and some statistical. At the end of each chapter are *test questions*, short-answer as well as multiple-choice, including complete answers for both. The exercises and lecture suggestions add new ideas to enrich the course. The summaries and test questions emphasize the major ideas from the text.

Acknowledgements

A book is always the work of many hands and minds besides those of the authors. This edition of *Research Methods in Social Relations* has been improved by the work of many people. Brian Mullen and Norman Miller have contributed an excellent new chapter on meta-analysis. This technique is rarely if ever included in research methods texts today, but we predict that ten years from now, no book will omit it.

Reviewers who read the chapters greatly helped us to clarify our thinking and our writing. These people are Bettie M. Smolansky, Moravian College; Robert E. Clark, Midwestern State University; David F. Mitchell, University of North Carolina – Greenville; Philip A. Perrone, University of Wisconsin – Madison; Ellen Susman, Metropolitan State College; Martin L. Levin, Emory University; Gloria Cowan, California State – San Bernardino; Gregg L. Carter, Bryant College; Jacque E. Gibbons, Kansas State University. We are indebted to them for the improvements they helped us make, even though we were not able to do everything they suggested.

The Publications Committee of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues has overseen the development of this book throughout. The committee members whose terms overlapped with the preparation of this edition are Len Saxe and Len Bickman. We thank them for their advice, support, and friendship.

Finally, this book could not exist were it not for the people at Holt, Rinehart, and Winston who saw it through the editorial and production process, particularly Tina Oldham, Senior Editor, and Katherine Vardy, Project Editor. We thank them for their skill and their patience.

C.M.J., E.R.S., L.H.K.

Foreword

Social problems are not the sole province of any one discipline or even the social sciences in general. Novelists and journalists, as well as political and government officials, all deal with social problems. Social scientists do, however, have a unique perspective on social problems. The sometimes seemingly intractable problems of relations among individuals and groups can, in fact, be systematically analyzed. Despite important differences among social science disciplines, they have in common a particular way of collecting and analyzing information about social problems. This common perspective is what we refer to as the scientific method and is wonderfully described and detailed in this, the sixth edition of *Research Methods in Social Relations*.

The present edition of *Research Methods in Social Relations*, like its predecessors since 1951, is sponsored by the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI). SPSSI recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. It is a 3000-plus member organization of psychologists interested in improving relations among people by using and applying social research. Since its inception, SPSSI's goal has been to foster research on social problems by psychologists and others, and to disseminate research findings. SPSSI members are scientists and scientist/practitioners who are not content to see psychology exist solely as a theoretical field. They are committed to using psychology, in particular psychological research, to improve conditions in society. This book, whose earlier editions have been used by over a hundred thousand students, reflects SPSSI's commitment to research and its belief that research helps us understand and ameliorate some of society's most vexing social problems.

Authors of SPSSI publications donate their time to the organization and we are particularly grateful to Louise Kidder, Chick Judd, and Eliot Smith, who serve as authors for this volume. Each is an accomplished researcher and each has made important contributions to our knowledge of social relations. The authors are also master teachers. Their experience as researchers, joined with their pedagogic acumen, makes this a particularly substantive, as well as enjoyable text to read and use. This edition represents a thorough editing of the Fifth Edition (developed by Kidder and Judd). Most of the

structure of the earlier edition has been retained, but a substantial amount of additional information and many new research examples have been added. The authors tried not to tamper with a structure for the book that has been useful to students in psychology, sociology, anthropology and applied disciplines over many years.

One entirely new feature of this volume is the addition of a chapter on meta-analysis by Brian Mullen of Syracuse University. Meta-analytic techniques (used to synthesize and aggregate research results across studies) have become increasingly important. Social science students, increasingly, will not be able to read literature reviews without some familiarity with these techniques. Mullen has provided a very readable description of how meta-analysis works and how the “apples and oranges” of different studies may be combined to draw conclusions about research findings.

As Publications Co-Chair for SPSSI, it has been my pleasure and privilege to work on this project with the authors, along with our editor at Holt. On behalf of the members and officers of SPSSI, I encourage you to reward our efforts by learning about research—and using that knowledge to help us ameliorate the social problems that we now face and will have to deal with in the coming decades.

Leonard Saxe, Publications Co-Chair
Waltham, Massachusetts
March, 1990

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P A R T

ONE

Introduction

1

Acquiring Social Knowledge: Scientific and Ordinary Knowing

**The Place of Values in Social
Research**

**Contestability in Social and Physical
Sciences**


Ordinary Knowing

**Naive Hypotheses and Theories of
Social Relations**

**Sources of Support for Naive
Hypotheses**

Speculation and Logical Analysis
Authority
Consensus
Observation
Past Experience

Toward a Science of Social Relations



Gazing down at people from a tall building or a window of a low-flying airplane gives us a different view of humanity from that which we normally have. A crowded park or congested freeway feels different when we look at the crowds from afar. Somehow the distance gives us a sense of objectivity: We can observe without feeling the congestion ourselves. At the same time, much would be missed if we always observed from afar. We would miss the feelings, the excitement, and the crush and enthusiasm of the crowd if we never entered into it ourselves.

Social scientists observe people from various distances because different vantage points give different information about people, how they feel, act, and interact. Confining ourselves as social scientists to a single method or procedure limits what we can know. Some research methods allow the observer to be a participant in the group that is being observed. Other methods enable the observer to remain hidden or anonymous and to see from a distance. We will introduce these different methods in detail in subsequent chapters. To understand the methods of social scientific research, you must appreciate that there are multiple methods that give useful information primarily when used in combination. No one procedure or method can provide a complete description.

First, we will describe how social science is similar to and different from two other activities that you are already familiar with: physical science and ordinary knowing. Social science is similar to physical science in the logic of inquiry but different in the degree to which the objects (or subjects) under observation play an active role in the inquiry and raise questions about social values. Social science is similar to ordinary knowing in the quest to understand how people behave and relate to each other, but it is different in its systematic methods of inquiry.

We will elaborate on the following points in this chapter:

1. Social science can borrow the logic of physical science but must create different methods because the “things” we study are not inert objects but sentient beings and their interpersonal or social relations. When we study social relations among individuals or groups of people, we encounter their reactions to us as observers and we raise value-laden questions. The physical sciences also are not value-free, as Einstein pointed out when he discovered the formula for nuclear energy, but the place of values is more immediately apparent in the social sciences. Also the reactions of the observed to the observer must be taken into account.

2. Examining social relations scientifically sometimes appears to be “common sense” because most people observe and try to understand social relations daily in the process of ordinary knowing. We will show how social science differs from ordinary knowing in its deliberate search for sources of bias or invalidity.