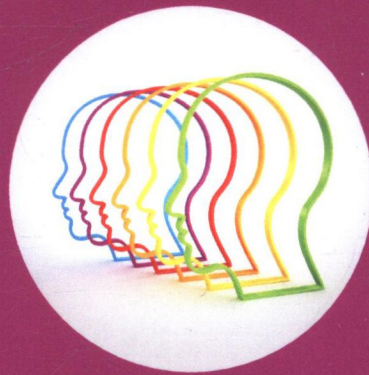


SOCIAL RESEARCH METHODS BY EXAMPLE

APPLICATIONS IN THE MODERN WORLD

Yasemin Besen-Cassino and Dan Cassino



"Besen-Cassino and Cassino have found a way to introduce us to the attraction and exhilaration of social research in the most direct and authentic way—by walking us through real studies of real social situations. Their accounts of how the most imaginative and successful social scientists have engaged with complex and intriguing situations make this work a page-turner, drawing the reader willingly into the challenges of social inquiry."

James B. Rule, *Center for the Study of Law and Society, University of California, Berkeley*

"This is the research methods book I was waiting for! What differentiates this book is how it uses concrete, easy-to-follow examples to illustrate every aspect of research methods from hypothesis development to dissemination."

Selcuk R. Sirin, *J. K. Javits Professor, New York University*

Social Research Methods by Example shows students how researchers carry out work on the cutting edge of social science. The authors illustrate every point through engaging, thought-provoking examples from real research. The language is jargon-free, making research methods less intimidating and more relatable. The text is divided into three major sections, the first of which introduces students to the principles of research through examples from various fields. The second section walks students through the major types of social science research, with each chapter focusing on a different technique. The third section shows students how to carry out basic quantitative data analysis in SPSS. The final chapter shows how technological advances have changed the way researchers are working, and looks at the direction of social science research in the future.

Social Research Methods by Example not only introduces students to the principles of social science research, but gives them a toolbox to carry out their own. By the time they are finished with the book, students will be conversant with many of the most important studies in the history of social science. They will understand not only how to conduct research, but also how the field has evolved over time.

Yasemin Besen-Cassino is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Montclair State University, in New Jersey. She is the author of *Consuming Work: Youth Labor in America* (2014). Her work focuses on gender, work, and youth. Her work has appeared in many academic journals as well as popular outlets such as BBC4. She is currently serving as the Book Review Editor of *Gender & Society*.

Dan Cassino is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Fairleigh Dickinson University, in Madison, New Jersey. He is the author of *Fox News and American Politics*, and the coauthor, with Yasemin Besen-Cassino, of *Consuming Politics: Jon Stewart, Branding and the Youth Vote in America*. His work has appeared in academic journals, popular outlets including *Newsweek* and *The Harvard Business Review*, as well as in frequent television and radio appearances. He received his PhD from Stony Brook University in 2005, and did post-doctoral work at Princeton before coming to Fairleigh Dickinson.

SOCIAL SCIENCE / RESEARCH

Cover image: © Shutterstock/Bulatnikov

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
www.routledge.com

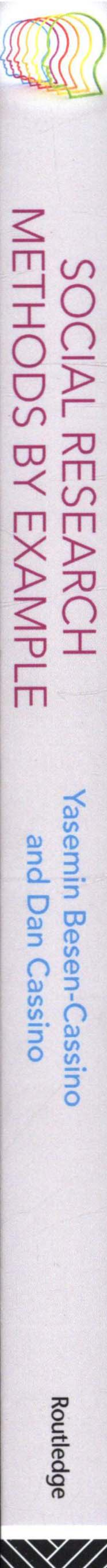
Routledge titles are available as eBook editions in a range of digital formats

an informa business

ISBN 978-0-415-79091-8



9 780415 790918



SOCIAL RESEARCH METHODS BY EXAMPLE

Yasemin Besen-Cassino
and Dan Cassino

Routledge

Social Research Methods by Example

Applications in the Modern World

Yasemin Besen-Cassino & Dan Cassino

First published 2018
by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

and by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2018 Taylor & Francis

The right of Yasemin Besen-Cassino & Dan Cassino to be identified as authors of this work has been asserted by them in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Besen-Cassino, Yasemin, author. | Cassino, Dan, 1980– author.

Title: Social research methods by example : applications in the modern world /
Yasemin Besen-Cassino & Dan Cassino.

Description: New York, NY : Routledge, 2017. | Includes bibliographical
references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2016043212 | ISBN 9780415790901 (hardcover : alk. paper) |
ISBN 9780415790918 (pbk. : alk. paper) | ISBN 9781315212791 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Social sciences--Methodology. | Social sciences--Research.

Classification: LCC H61 .B47335 2017 | DDC 300.72/1--dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2016043212>

ISBN: 978-0-415-79090-1 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-0-415-79091-8 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-315-21279-1 (ebk)

Typeset in Bembo by
Servis Filmsetting Ltd, Stockport, Cheshire



Printed and bound in the United States of America by Sheridan

Social Research Methods by Example

Social Research Methods by Example shows students how researchers carry out work on the cutting edge of social science. The authors illustrate every point through engaging, thought-provoking examples from real research. The language is jargon-free, making research methods less intimidating and more relatable. The text is divided into three major sections, the first of which introduces students to the principles of research through examples from various fields. The second section walks students through the major types of social science research, with each chapter focusing on a different technique. The third section shows students how to carry out basic quantitative data analysis in SPSS. The final chapter shows how technological advances have changed the way researchers are working, and looks at the direction of social science research in the future.

Social Research Methods by Example not only introduces students to the principles of social science research, but gives them a toolbox to carry out their own. By the time they are finished with the book, students will be conversant with many of the most important studies in the history of social science. They will understand not only how to conduct research, but also how the field has evolved over time.

Yasemin Besen-Cassino is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Montclair State University, in New Jersey. She is the author of *Consuming Work: Youth Labor in America* (Temple University Press 2014). Her work focuses on gender, work, and youth. Her work has appeared in many academic journals as well as popular outlets such as BBC4. She is currently serving as the Book Review Editor of *Gender & Society*.

Dan Cassino is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Fairleigh Dickinson University, in Madison, New Jersey. He is the author of *Fox News and American Politics*, and the coauthor, with Yasemin Besen-Cassino, of *Consuming Politics: Jon Stewart, Branding and the Youth Vote in America*. His work has appeared in academic journals, popular outlets including *Newsweek* and *The Harvard Business Review*, as well as in frequent television and radio appearances. He received his PhD from Stony Brook University in 2005, and did post-doctoral work at Princeton before coming to Fairleigh Dickinson.

Besen-Cassino and Cassino have found a way to introduce us to the attraction and exhilaration of social research in the most direct and authentic way—by walking us through real studies of real social situations. Their accounts of how the most imaginative and successful social scientists have engaged with complex and intriguing situations make this work a page-turner, drawing the reader willingly into the challenges of social inquiry.

James B. Rule, *Center for the Study of Law and Society,
University of California, Berkeley*

This is the research methods book I was waiting for! What differentiates this book is how it uses concrete, easy-to-follow examples to illustrate every aspect of research methods from hypothesis development to dissemination.

Selcuk R. Sirin, *J. K. Javits Professor, New York University*

Preface

The text you're holding is different from any other social science research methods book on the market. Unlike research methods that tell students about research, this text shows students how real researchers carry out work on the cutting edge of social science, showing how social science works, rather than just telling. Each chapter consists of a number of case studies, which describe the methods and findings of new, classic, or interesting work in the social sciences, and the text then uses these examples to illustrate the concepts that students need to master in order to analyze studies, and carry out their own research. For the instructor, these chapters can function as lecture notes, introducing the students to the craft of research through interesting and thought-provoking examples. The examples come from a wide range of disciplines including sociology, political science, women and gender studies, psychology, and criminology. It is, therefore, an interdisciplinary textbook that will appeal to a wide range of students.

For the students, rather than dry theoretical instruction, this textbook will illustrate every point through engaging, colorful, and thought-provoking examples. Rather than abstract ideas, each concept, technique, or idea is demonstrated through real life, not made up for class research. While other texts resort to examples from biology and other physical sciences, everything in this text is drawn from the social sciences, and nearly all of it is research that students could conceivably carry out themselves. The language is jargon-free and accessible, making research methods less intimidating and more relatable.

The text is divided into three major sections. In the first, comprised of the first five chapters, students are introduced to the general principles of social science research through examples from various fields, and encompassing the range of social science techniques, from ethnography, survey analysis, experiments, and interviews. The second section, running from chapters six through eleven, shows students how to carry out the major types of social science research, with each chapter focusing on a different technique. The third section, in chapters twelve and thirteen, go in-depth to show students how to carry out basic quantitative data analysis in SPSS. The final chapter shows how advances in technology have changed the way in which researchers are working, the types of questions that they can answer, and gives some idea of the direction of social science research going forward.

The first chapter introduces the students to the concept behind social research. In this chapter, we focus on the central components of social research. This chapter shows how to think like a social scientist and how to approach the

scientific process. Students are shown why it's necessary to carry out rigorous social scientific research in order to understand human behavior and society, and how social science allows researchers to do so. Key ideas include the scientific process, dependent and independent variables, and levels of measurement.

Chapter 2 shows how social scientists move from abstract ideas and social problems to variables that can be measured in the real world. Unlike biologists or chemists, social scientists deal with abstract concepts, like racism or body image, requiring that they find ingenious ways to turn theoretical constructs into things that can actually be observed. In this chapter, we also introduce the concept of validity, in its many forms, as a way of talking about the potential problems that can arise from flawed measurements of a concept.

Chapter 3 introduces the idea of ethical research practices. Before we delve into how social science researchers actually collect data, we review the rules and guidelines of ethical research practices, in part by tracing the decisions made by researchers who have violated those rules. Because, as social scientists, we make use of human participants, it's vital that we treat them with respect, and acknowledge their role as partners in the research process. As with the other chapters, there's a focus on the logistics of the process, as we show how researchers do everything from designing a consent form, to determining the proper amount of monetary incentives for a study, to navigating the ethics board application process.

Chapter 4 reviews the essential role of theories in social sciences. Theories are never right or wrong but are simply different ways of looking at the social world: different lenses to study social phenomena. The choice of the lens leads the researcher to highlight different aspects of the social world. In addition, the cross-sectional nature of much of the research carried out in the social sciences means that theory becomes one of the major ways in which researchers establish causality. In addition to showing students how theory plays into the research process, we also review the major theoretical perspectives used in modern social science, and show how the use of those theoretical perspectives shapes the decisions made by the researcher.

The fifth chapter turns to the last step of the research process before the start of data collection: the literature review process. In this chapter we explore the most effective ways to utilize library and electronic sources to find the academic journal articles and books necessary to ground research in the existing findings. The chapters also show students how to write and organize existing research using different organizational techniques, and reviews different methods of citations. Again, the focus is on how to actually carry out the process: the chapter includes guides on how to use popular platforms like J-Stor and Google Scholar to find the articles needed to build up the literature review.

Chapter 6 begins the second part of the book, in which we turn to specific research methods, starting with qualitative techniques. In this chapter, we start with one of the most important qualitative techniques: ethnographies. We show students how researchers can give up their own lives to immerse themselves in the field and walk in someone else's shoes to capture their lived experience and understand from their perspective. We also show how nonparticipant ethnographers can go into the field to systematically observe how others live,

from how workers at a coffee shop spend their time, to the experiences of college freshmen, to whether parents buckle their children into grocery store shopping carts. We review relative advantages and disadvantages of participant and non-participant observations, focus on different techniques of taking fieldnotes, as well as techniques to allow the researcher to be accepted by the people they meet in the field.

Chapter 7 continues the discussion of qualitative methods and focuses on conducting in-depth, qualitative interviews, and focus groups. In this chapter, we focus on writing effective questions for semi-structured, in-depth interviews, and show how the responses to these questions can reveal things that no other social techniques can show. In addition to formulating the questions, we also discuss techniques to conduct face-to-face interviews and discuss interview techniques.

Chapter 8 begins the transition from qualitative to quantitative research, by showing students how to carry out rigorous content analysis research. Examples of research show students how books, television shows, advertisements, movies, and music can be used as data sources to tell researchers about everything from informal norms of criminals to how students structure “friends with benefits” relationships. In this chapter, we show how students can systematically analyze such secondary sources and provide evidence.

In Chapter 9, we show students how to design and run experiments. The examples used here show the students how to design an experimental study, from the basics to more advanced designs, like the gold standard Solomon 4 group. This chapter also includes a special focus on the ethical and logistical challenges facing researchers who make use of experimental designs, and the benefits, such as an increased ability to show cause and effect, that result from their proper use.

Chapter 10 begins our discussion of survey research. In this chapter, we focus on writing survey items, and explore how items can be phrased in order to get at the real attitudes held by the people answering them. We also show the different types of survey questions that can be utilized to offer both visual interest and capture the most honest and complete answers. Finally, this chapter explores the relative advantages and disadvantages of using various survey techniques and different levels of measurement for each question.

Of course, it's not enough to write survey items: they also have to be administered. Chapter 11 focuses on the various ways in which researchers get the items that they write to respondents, from mail surveys to telephone surveys to online studies. The chapter also explores the costs and benefits of each of the main techniques for administering surveys, and the potential pitfalls that come from them. We also discuss sampling techniques, and show students how researchers recruit participants to ensure the representative samples.

The third section of the book begins in Chapter 12, which looks at basic univariate data analysis, showing both the principles of how to carry it out, and the logistics of actually doing the analyses using SPSS. Students learn not only why researchers do these analyses, but how to input a survey into SPSS, how to understand an imported dataset, and how to calculate measures of central tendency, dispersion, frequencies as well as graphs.

While Chapter 12 focuses on descriptive statistics, Chapter 13 moves into more advanced statistical methods, including calculation of margins of error and regression analysis. Once students have collected data using the techniques discussed in previous chapters, they need to analyze it, and this chapter gives them the tools that they need to explore the relationships between two or more variables. We explore statistical techniques such as correlations, bivariate and multivariate regression, and show how to do them in SPSS.

The last chapter, Chapter 14, aims to give a flavor of the future of research methods. Just as society is changing constantly, so is social science research. In this chapter, we review some of the newest and most cutting-edge research we see in social sciences today. As we discuss these emerging new studies, we also focus on some of the future directions for research methods and important methodological and ethical questions that rise from these new directions.

Overall, the goal is to introduce students not just to the principles of social science research, but to give them a toolbox to actually carry the research out. By the time that they are done with the book, students will have learned not only how to do research, but seen the evolution of the field over time, and be conversant with many of the most important studies in the history of social science. Writing this text has been both enjoyable and a learning experience for us, as we explore sides of social science that we otherwise would never see, and it's our hope that it will be just as enjoyable for you.

Yasemin Besen-Cassino
Dan Cassino
August, 2016

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank our methods professors over the years: Ferhunde Ozbay, Timothy Moran, Stanley Feldman, Matthew Lebo, and Kris Kanthak. We would like to thank Edip and Zeynep Besen for all their support during the writing of the book. We would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their valuable feedback throughout the project. Montclair State University's Distinguished Scholar Program provided a one-semester leave for the completion of this project—to them we are grateful. Finally we would like to thank the editorial team at Routledge and our editor Samantha Barbaro for her vision and her support of this project.

Brief Contents

<i>Preface</i>	xi
1 Introduction to Research Methods.....	1
2 Research Questions and Operationalization.....	21
3 Research Ethics.....	45
4 Theory and Paradigms.....	73
5 Literature Reviews.....	95
6 Qualitative Research I.....	115
7 Qualitative Research II	137
8 Content Analysis	157
9 Experiments.....	195
10 Designing Surveys.....	237
11 Administering Surveys.....	277
12 Quantitative Methods I	311
13 Quantitative Methods II.....	345
14 Frontiers in Social Research	383
<i>Bibliography</i>	397
<i>Glossary/Index</i>	404

Detailed Contents

Preface xi

1 Introduction to Research Methods..... 1

Learning Objectives 1

Effects of Society: Why our Environment Matters! 2

Thinking through Variables: How Researchers Work 3

The Scientific Method..... 8

Causality and Spuriousness..... 11

Types of Variables and Levels of Measurement 15

Summary 19

2 Research Questions and Operationalization 21

Learning Objectives 21

Measuring Concepts 22

Operationalization: Transforming Abstract Concepts into
Measurable Concepts..... 25

Validity 28

Criterion Validity 30

Internal Validity 33

Reliability..... 38

Summary 43

3 Research Ethics 45

Learning Objectives 45

Laud Humphreys—The Tearoom Trade (1970)..... 46

The Belmont Report..... 47

The No Harm Rule 49

Institutional Review Boards (IRBs)..... 51

Informed Consent 52

Anonymity and Confidentiality..... 54

Coercion 57

Deception in Research and Debriefing 58

Use of Vulnerable Populations 61

Animal Ethics 63

Putting It All Together..... 67

Further Case Studies	70
Summary	72
4 Theory and Paradigms	73
Learning Objectives	73
The Importance of Theory	74
Nature or Nurture? Biology or Society?	76
Structural Functionalism	77
Conflict Theory	79
Feminist Theory	80
Critical Race Theory	84
Symbolic Interactionism	85
Rational Choice Theory	88
Ethnomethodology	90
Summary	92
5 Literature Reviews	95
Learning Objectives	95
Why Literature Reviews?	96
The Peer-Review Process	96
Sources for Literature Reviews	97
Finding Sources: The Branching Method	103
Common Online Portals	104
Research Reading: How to Read a Journal Article	106
Writing the Literature Review	107
Citations	110
Plagiarism	111
Summary	113
6 Qualitative Research I	115
Learning Objectives	115
Introduction to Ethnography	116
Participant versus Nonparticipant Research	119
Reactivity	121
The Logistics of Ethnography	125
Structured Observations	129
Advantages and Disadvantages of Ethnographies	131
Further Case Studies	132
Summary	134
7 Qualitative Research II	137
Learning Objectives	137
In-Depth Qualitative Interviews	138
Capturing the Voices of the Underprivileged	141
Structuring the Interview	142

Interview Logistics.....	145
Advantages and Disadvantages.....	147
Focus Groups.....	148
Why Focus Groups?.....	150
Focus Group Composition.....	152
Advantages and Disadvantages of Focus Groups.....	154
Summary.....	156
8 Content Analysis.....	157
Learning Objectives.....	157
Studying Statements.....	158
Content Analysis and Validity.....	161
Dictionaries and Replication.....	166
Computerized Content Analysis.....	169
Context Units.....	172
Interrater Reliability.....	175
Analysis of Historical Data.....	180
Ethical Concerns.....	183
Advantages and Disadvantages of Content Analysis.....	187
Additional Examples.....	189
Summary.....	192
9 Experiments.....	195
Learning Objectives.....	195
Isolating Causality.....	196
Classical Experimental Design.....	198
The Importance of Group Assignments.....	198
The Importance of Proper Experimental Design.....	202
Stimulus Pretesting.....	205
Designs to Control for Participant Pretesting.....	208
Filler Tasks.....	212
Blind and Double-Blind Studies.....	215
Manipulation Checks.....	217
Field Experiments.....	219
Deception in Experiments.....	222
External Validity of Experiments.....	224
Natural Experiments.....	227
Threats to Internal Validity: What Can Go Wrong?.....	230
Advantages and Disadvantages of Experimental Methods.....	234
Further Experimental Studies.....	234
Summary.....	235
10 Designing Surveys.....	237
Learning Objectives.....	237
What Surveys Tell Us.....	238