



**THIRD
EDITION**

METHODS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

Kenneth D. Bailey

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Methods of Social Research

To JNB and SJB

PREFACE TO THIRD EDITION

The response from readers of the first two editions has been most gratifying, and I wish to thank all of you. The chief task of this edition was updating. Chapter 14 required the most revision, as the interval between the second and third editions witnessed the demise of the computer card. The revamped chapter 14 discusses the current practice of entering data onto discs through computer terminals instead of punching it onto cards, as previously done.

Technological changes in computerization have also necessitated revision and updating in other chapters, such as the analysis of computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) in chapter 8. For the most part, this edition reflects, however, no dramatic changes since the second edition, but rather the slow and steady progress of a maturing discipline. The result is a volume that I hope displays the state of the art in social research methods during the latter part of the 1980s and will carry us into the 1990s.

The people who have aided in writing the three editions are too numerous for me to mention individually. I wish to take this opportunity to thank all of you, including the anonymous ones. Special thanks go to Mr. Charles O'Connell, who helped with the chores of revision, and to Ms. Joyce Seltzer, Senior Editor at The Free Press, for her excellent support at all stages of the project.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

In preparing this second edition I have had two major goals in mind. One was to move *Methods of Social Research* into the 1980s. The other was to remedy omissions from and errors in the earlier edition, a task that was greatly facilitated by the comments of a number of reviewers, readers, and friends.

Perhaps the most revolutionary development since the first edition is the amazingly rapid development of telephone interviewing. Telephone interviewing was a minor survey method in the mid- to late 1970s. As late as 1978 it was characterized by Dillman as a “stepchild” to the face-to-face interview, and was discussed as a relatively minor method (but with distinct advantages) in the first edition of this volume. By the early 1980s telephone interviewing had clearly become a major survey method. Thus it is discussed at length in chapter 8. An important related development is Dillman’s (1978) “Total Design Method” (TDM), which is utilized for both mailed questionnaires and telephone interviewing, and is discussed in chapter 7. Among the other areas which have seen rapid recent growth and thus received enlarged discussion in this edition are ethics (chapter 17) and applications—particularly evaluation research and social indicators (chapter 18).

In addition to these recent developments, a number of other topics have received extended coverage or revision, in some cases in response to reviewers’ or readers’ suggestions. Notable among the extended discussions are the discussion of social science as science (chapter 1), and the discussion of causality (chapter 3). As for revisions, chapter 9 (experiments) received the most extensive treatment. Following reviewers’ comments, chapter 9 now emphasizes random assignment to groups and factorial experimental designs more than did the first edition. Further, the discussion of semi-experimental designs has been greatly revised and updated. Scaling (formerly chapter 16) and statistics

Preface to Second Edition

(formerly chapter 15) were transposed at the request of several readers so that scaling is now discussed before statistics, and the statistics chapter has undergone substantial revision, including extended explanation and interpretation. Virtually all of the other chapters have received some degree of revision and extended discussion, and all of them have been updated as thoroughly as possible. As in the other chapters mentioned, this task was greatly facilitated by reader and reviewer comments.

I have benefited greatly from four very detailed reviews. Three of these were anonymous and were secured by The Free Press. The fourth was graciously supplied by Dr. Maureen McConaghy of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. I also owe special debts to Carollois Sturman and Ronald Watts, and particularly to K. Jill Kiecolt, who aided in the revision of several chapters. Also, a blanket debt is acknowledged to the many other colleagues, researchers, and students who provided suggestions or encouragement. Finally, special thanks go to Charles Smith and Kitty Moore of The Free Press for their excellent support at all stages of the project, and to Michael Sander of The Free Press for an excellent editorial job.

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

It seems customary to preface a book on social research methods by stating that the book focuses on the interrelationship between theory and research. The implication seems to be that this will make it clear and easy to read. Unfortunately, things are not so simple. While not de-emphasizing the need to integrate theory and research, I have made it my major objective to write a book that is comprehensive and detailed enough to be useful while plainly written enough to be readable. Students are too often faced either with a book too simple to prepare them for the complexities of the real world of social research, with all its myriad problems, or too complex and abstract to be understood.

I have attempted to integrate the various data collection techniques by discussing the advantages and disadvantages and assessing the reliability and validity of each. I hope that this common framework will allow the student to compare methods more easily and will illuminate the compatibility of otherwise apparently diverse methods, thus dispelling the all too common but erroneous tendency to view the presentation of several methods in a single volume as a “cafeteria” approach having little continuity or depth.

Chapter 1 presents an overview of the research process and some examples to illustrate alternative approaches to the same research problem. Chapter 2 deals with the selection of the research problem, including such issues as differing paradigms and the role of values in social research. Chapter 3 discusses social explanation and hypothesis construction. Chapter 4 is a limited discussion of measurement, necessary at this point because I wished to introduce the notions of reliability and validity of the various data-collection methods to follow. A more comprehensive treatment of measurement, including methods of attitude-scale construction, appears in chapter 16.

Preface to First Edition

Chapters 5 through 8 all deal directly or indirectly with survey research. Too many books provide only one chapter on surveys even though the bulk of sociological studies analyze data gathered by this method. Thus, to provide adequate coverage of this important method, I have devoted separate chapters to survey sampling (chapter 5), questionnaire construction (chapter 6), mailed questionnaires (chapter 7), and interview studies (chapter 8).

Chapters 9 through 13 deal with data-collection methods that serve as alternatives to survey research. The respective strengths and weaknesses of these techniques, including the survey, make them more suitable for certain types of research than for others. Chapter 9 discusses experiments, chapter 10 observational methods, chapter 11 ethnomethodology, chapter 12 document study, and chapter 13 simulation and games. The inclusion of chapter 11 makes this volume unique among social research texts, for ethnomethodology is a relatively new approach that is not so well understood by researchers as some of the other methods. I hope this volume will help readers to understand the relationship of ethnomethodology to the more familiar methods.

Chapters 14, 15, and 16 deal with the processing and analysis of data after they have been collected. Topics discussed include coding and reduction of data to ready them for punching on computer cards (chapter 14); analysis, presentation, and interpretation of data, including such topics as statistical analysis and presentation of data in tabular form (chapter 15); and a discussion of various methods of attitude-scale construction (chapter 16).

Chapters 17, 18, and 19 deal with nonmethodological topics of interest to researchers. Chapter 17 discusses ethics in social research. A subject once largely confined to medical experimentation, in recent years ethics has been increasingly emphasized in all social research including survey research, with the result that most studies, especially if funded through a university, must pass the review of an ethics or human subjects committee that frequently requires informed consent on the part of the subject. Chapter 18 discusses the application of social research in various social programs and court cases, notably the ones dealing with integration and busing. This too is a subject that is neglected in many social research books. Chapter 19 ends the book by returning full circle to the topic of theory construction, evaluation, and testing, presenting a discussion considerably more technical than the discussion in chapter 3.

I wish to thank Melvin Pollner for his careful reading of the chapter on ethnomethodology. His comments were very helpful. I also wish to thank Jill Kiecolt, who read the entire text and wrote the teacher's manual, and Linda Nilson and Susan Kataoka for advice on various chapters. The reactions of several students in my introductory social research methods classes, who received the bulk of the material in the form of lectures, were also very helpful. George Magee deserves much thanks for an excellent editorial job under great pressure. Finally, Charles Smith and Gladys Topkis, Free Press editors, were very helpful in all stages of the project.

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CONTENTS

<i>Preface to Third Edition</i>	xvii
<i>Preface to Second Edition</i>	xix
<i>Preface to First Edition</i>	xxi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xxiii

PART ONE Principles of Social Research

1	The Research Process	3
	Social Science as Science	6
	Stages of Social Research	10
	<i>Circularity • Replication</i>	
	Examples: Density Research	13
	<i>Stage 1: Choosing the Problem and Stating the Hypothesis •</i>	
	<i>Stage 2: Research Design • Stage 3: Gathering the Data • Stage</i>	
	<i>4: Coding and Analyzing the Data • Stage 5: Interpreting the</i>	
	<i>Results and Testing the Hypothesis</i>	
	Summary	18
2	Choosing the Research Problem	19
	Factors Affecting Problem Selection	20
	Examples of Current Research	21

Contents

Applied Versus Pure Research	22	
<i>Applied Research • Pure Research • Pure and Applied Research</i>		
Research Paradigms	24	
Values	26	
<i>Value-free Sociology • The Myth of Value-free Sociology • Effects of Values in Social Research • Values and Perception</i>		
Reactivity	31	
Methodology Versus Method	32	
The Unit of Analysis	34	
Cross-sectional Versus Longitudinal Studies	34	
Summary	35	
3	Constructing Social Explanations	37
Descriptive Studies	38	
Explanatory Studies	38	
<i>Explanation • Prediction</i>		
Theory	39	
<i>Concepts and Variables • Propositions Defined • Relationships Between Variables</i>		
Types of Propositions	41	
<i>Hypotheses • Empirical Generalizations • Components of Axiomatic Theory: Postulates, Axioms, Theorems</i>		
Bivariate Relationships	44	
<i>Positive Versus Negative Relationships • Strength of the Relationship • Symmetrical Versus Asymmetrical Relationships • Independent and Dependent Variables • Distinguishing Independent from Dependent Variables • Causal Relationships • Linear Versus Nonlinear (Curvilinear) Relationships • Spurious and Intervening Relationships • Suppressor and Distorter Variables</i>		
Alternate Strategies for Hypothesis Formulation and Verification	51	
<i>The Classical Approach • Grounded Theory • Classical Versus Grounded-Theory Approach • Operationalism • A Critique of Operationalism • Classical, Grounded-Theory, and Operational Approaches Compared</i>		
Summary	58	
4	Measurement	59
The Quantitative/Qualitative Distinction	60	
Level of Measurement	61	
<i>Nominal • Ordinal • Interval • Ratio • Discrete Versus Continuous</i>		

Contents

Measuring the Validity and Reliability of Measurement	66
Assessing Validity	67
<i>Face Validity • Criterion Validity • Construct Validity • Internal and External Validity</i>	
Assessing Reliability	70
<i>Alternate or Parallel Methods • Test/Retest Reliability</i>	
Error	73
Summary	75

PART TWO Survey Research Methods

5	Survey Sampling	79
	Technical Terms	81
	Sample Versus Population	81
	Sampling Efficiency	82
	<i>Notorious Sampling Failures • Sampling Successes • Advantages of Sampling</i>	
	Constructing the Sampling Frame	84
	Probability Sampling	87
	<i>Random Sampling • Systematic Sampling • Stratified Random Sampling • Cluster Sampling</i>	
	Nonprobability Sampling	92
	<i>Convenience Sampling • Quota Sampling • Dimensional Sampling • Purposive Sampling • Snowball Sampling</i>	
	Sample Size	95
	<i>Statistical Considerations of Sample Size • Sample Size Versus Sampling Proportion • Sample Size for Stratified Sampling • Weighted Samples • Examples of Weighted Samples • Sample Size for Cluster Sampling</i>	
	Summary	102
6	Questionnaire Construction	104
	Constructing Questionnaires	106
	Questionnaire Relevance	107
	<i>Relevance of the Study • Relevance of Questions to the Study • Relevance of Questions to Respondents</i>	
	Pitfalls in Questionnaire Construction: Wording the Questions	110
	<i>Double-barreled Questions • Ambiguous Questions • Level of Wording • Abstract Versus Factual Questions • Leading Questions • Sensitive or Threatening Questions</i>	
	Open and Closed Response Categories	117
	<i>Closed-ended Questions • Open-ended Questions • Open and Closed Questions Compared</i>	

	Response-category Format	122
	<i>Number of Categories • Ordinal Variables • Interval Scales</i>	
	Question Order	131
	Contingency Questions	135
	Cover Letter or Introductory Statement	137
	Instructions for Interviewers or Respondents	140
	Pretesting	141
	Summary	145
7	Mailed Questionnaires	147
	Advantages of Mailed Questionnaires	148
	Disadvantages of Mailed Questionnaires	149
	The Total Design Method	152
	Factors Affecting Mail Surveys	153
	<i>Sponsorship • Questionnaire Format and Color •</i>	
	<i>Questionnaire Length • Cover Letter • Ease of Completing and</i>	
	<i>Returning Questionnaire • Inducements to Reply • The Nature</i>	
	<i>of Respondents • Type of Mailing • Day, Week, or Month of</i>	
	<i>Mailing • Follow-up Letters and Telephone Calls • Number and</i>	
	<i>Timing of Follow-ups or Reminders</i>	
	Adequate Response Rate	168
	Validity and Reliability	170
	<i>Validity • Reliability</i>	
	Summary	171
8	Interview Studies	173
	Advantages of Interview Studies	174
	Disadvantages of Interview Studies	175
	The Interview as Social Interaction	176
	The Interview as a Secondary Relationship	178
	Effects of Interviewer Characteristics	180
	<i>Race and Ethnicity • Sex • Social Status • Age • Clothing</i>	
	<i>and Grooming</i>	
	The Interview	185
	<i>Approaching the Respondent • Dealing with Refusals •</i>	
	<i>Conducting the Interview</i>	
	Less Structured Interviews	188
	<i>Open-ended Questions • Probes • Semistructured Interview •</i>	
	<i>The Clinical Interview • The Unstructured Interview •</i>	
	<i>Reliability and Validity of Unstructured Interview</i>	
	Interviewing Children	193
	<i>Language Skills • The Child–Adult Relationship • The</i>	
	<i>Interview Situation</i>	
	Projective Methods	196

The Telephone Interview	197
<i>The Revolution in Telephone Interviewing • Random Digit Dialing • Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) • Telephone Versus Face-to-Face</i>	
Interviewer Training	204
Entering the Field	205
The Panel Study	206
Validity and Reliability	207
Summary	208

PART THREE Nonsurvey Data Collection Techniques

9	Experiments	213
	Advantages of Experiments	215
	Disadvantages of Experiments	216
	Closure	217
	The Logic of Experimentation	219
	One- and Two-Group Experimental Designs	220
	<i>Before and After Experiment with No Control Group • Two-Group Design</i>	
	Assignment of Subjects to Control Groups	222
	<i>Randomization • Simple Matching (Precision Control) • Frequency Distribution Control</i>	
	Multiple-group Designs	225
	<i>Two Experimental Groups with One Control Group • Factorial Designs • Latin Square Design • Interaction Effect • Solomon Two/Control/Group Design • Solomon Three/Control/Group Design</i>	
	Further Examples of Laboratory Experiments	231
	<i>Field Experiments • Quasi-experimentation</i>	
	Validity and Reliability	235
	Summary	237
10	Observation	238
	Advantages of Observation	240
	Disadvantages of Observation	241
	Types of Observation	243
	Field Studies	245
	<i>Gaining Entry • Gaining Rapport • Observing and Recording • Dealing with Crises • Data Analysis</i>	
	Completely Structured Observation	255
	<i>Semistructured Study • Unstructured Laboratory Study</i>	