

What is Social Science Research?

HOW?

SSC 470/570: *Methods of Social Research*

What is Social Science Research

“Social research is a process in which people combine a set of principles, outlooks, and ideas (i.e. a methodology) with a collection of specific practices, techniques, and strategies (i.e. a method of inquiry) to produce knowledge.”

-Neuman, p. 2

Goal of Research

Production of Knowledge

Alternatives to Scientific Research

(1) Authority

Expert or Credential-based knowledge

(2) Tradition

Time-based knowledge

(3) Common Sense

Community-based knowledge

(4) Personal Experience

Judgment-based knowledge

(5) Media Myths

Selective knowledge

Distinguishing Characteristics of Scientific Research vis a vis Other Knowledge Systems

- (1) Systematic, Based on Procedure
- (2) Precise, Careful
- (3) Open to Challenge from Others
- (4) Rooted in a Theoretical Tradition
- (5) Demands Evidence to Support Claims

Distinguishing Characteristics of Social Science Research

- (1) Frequently Deals with Self-Aware Subjects
- (2) Value-Laden
- (3) Uses a variety of paradigms or methodological approaches

Who Does Research?

Professors in Universities

Researchers in Government Agencies

“Think Tanks” and Policy Institutes

Who Uses Research?

Scientists for Basic Knowledge

Government for Policy Development

Businesses for Marketing Decisions

Community Groups to Understand the
Needs of Local Residents

How Do Ordinary People Benefit From Research?

Group Participation

Through the Media & News Organizations

Through Educational Institutions

What are DATA?

Data are the empirical evidence or information that one gathers carefully according to rules or procedures.

-Neuman, p. 7

Where Do We Get Data?

Quantitative Data

Survey

Qualitative Data

Participant-Observation