What is Social Science Research?
HOW?
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