INTRODUCTION TO
PEACE STUDIES &
RESEARCH METHODS

The Alliance for Conflict Transformation
Soth Plai Ngarm, Tania Miletic
INTRODUCTION TO PEACE STUDIES & RESEARCH METHODS

A 12 week introductory course and 12 week research practicum for peace workers and university students on understanding concept of peace studies and conducting peace related research in the social sciences.

The Alliance for Conflict Transformation

Soth Plai Ngarm, Tania Miletic
This manual is for practical training in Cambodia, it does not intend to provide international standard on subjects incorporated in this manual.


Printed in Cambodia, March 2006

By The Alliance for Conflict Transformation (ACT)
34, St. 480, Psa Doem Thkov, Chamkarmon
Phnom Penh, Kingdom of Cambodia.

Supported by German Development Service (DED) and Civil Peace Service

Designed by Boonruang Song-ngam
Foreword

Cambodia has moved on from a dark age of war and conflict. Today it is focussed on rebuilding the nation, entering into a new millenium where it must acquire not only adequate economic and political infrastructures but social ones too, in order to maintain peace and stability. Cambodia needs at the very least to maintain its competitiveness if it is going to participate in the contemporary, globalizing world.

For the last fifteen years, peace and conflict resolution concepts have been practiced in Cambodia at many levels. Within communities of civil actors, many have been working to address social and political problems using conflict resolution and peace building approaches. However, experience has taught us that existing capacity should not be static, but must be sufficient to cope with emerging issues and new dynamics. We therefore need to develop more sophisticated approaches to peace building and better our knowledge to face today’s challenges.

As Cambodians need more knowledge, it is very important to know how to acquire it. There is a need to explore possible shortcut approaches in order to bridge these wider gaps. This manual is developed on the basis that Peace Studies as a multiple discipline is very much related to social science in many aspects and shares many theoretical roots. The manual is designed particularly for providing short courses on the concepts of peace studies and practical research methods, so that participants can begin their research work without spending so many years in school. We hope that the course will provide an opportunity for participants to develop both their career and the effectiveness of their peace work in the field.

A commitment to learn through practice is the key behind the training course. It is believed that participants will gain professional ability through participation in our short course training and their continued practice of field research.

Soth Plai Ngarm,
Alliance for Conflict transformation
Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge the people who contributed to the development of this manual. Ms. Tania Miletic has spent a lot of time and energy putting together most parts of the manual. On behalf of the Alliance for Conflict Transformation (ACT), I would like to give special recognition and thanks to Tania for her major contribution. Tania with her personal commitment has worked with us as research technical advisor for more than one year. She has helped us develop a comprehensive research framework on “Nationalism and Identity” and helped us develop projects addressing ethnic relations in Cambodia.

Many thanks to Mr. Brian Pointer for his significant contribution. Brian is our current research technical advisor provided by Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA) from New Zealand. Brian’s personal capacity has helped us to edit the manual and develop additional practical exercises.

Thanks also to Asif Iqbal, a volunteer from United Kingdom who helped extract relevant materials from several books.

I would like to express my deep gratitude and thanks to the German Development Service in Cambodia (DED) who provides the funding for developing and publishing this manual.

Finally, many thanks to all ACT staff who helped in different ways during the process of producting this manual.

Soth Plai Ngarm
Executive Director
About this Manual

This manual was written for participants of the 12 week course on research for practical application by peace practitioners and university students interested in the social sciences more generally. It is not intended to be a comprehensive course about peace research methods. In fact, it is intended to be an ambitious introduction into the more practical area of research methods useful for peace workers and students, with a focus on applications of these new ideas. Learning through application is emphasized in the final practicum component.

This manual is for a short course and yet is quite thick! It is not intended to be read as a book, but rather a course manual that is divided by topic. Each topic has a lecture outline with recommended reading and extra supplementary reading (which is optional).

The lecture outline will provide you with a summary of the course topic. Each topic will also have a list of additional reading materials that can be studied by students in addition to the topic summaries and lectures. As well as the topic overviews and summaries, this manual also has a “built-in” reading pack. Selected reading materials will also be provided in addition to the manual. All the referenced (and recommended) reading materials can be borrowed from the ACT office/library or, when indicated, can be accessed via the internet.

Practicum Period:

After the 12 week Instruction period, you will continue to receive support during your practicum period (independent research) through your supervisor.

Upon completion of the course, all participants are encouraged to remain associated researchers with ACT on a consultancy basis. This is voluntary and can promote a support network of researchers sharing their research experiences and reports.

It is hoped that as many people as possible can learn the basic practical and theoretical knowledge to conduct research in their areas of interest.
Credits:

The following resources were used in developing the manual:


# Table of Contents

**TOPIC 1:** INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL SCIENCES .......................................... 1  
  1. Introduction to the processes of thinking and learning .......... 2  
  2. The Disciplines that make up the Social Sciences .......... 5

**TOPIC 2:** INTRODUCTION TO PEACE THEORIES .................................... 29

**TOPIC 3:** THE SCIENTIFIC APPROACH .................................................. 65

**TOPIC 4:** THEORY AND THEORIZING ..................................................... 77

**TOPIC 5:** DECIDING YOUR TOPIC AND THE LITERATURE REVIEW ........... 85

**TOPIC 6:** RESEARCH STRUCTURE AND DESIGN ..................................... 93  
  Introduction to a Research Practice ............................................. 102

**TOPIC 7:** SAMPLING AND SAMPLING DESIGNS .................................... 111

**TOPIC 8:** MEASUREMENT AND SCALING TECHNIQUE ............................ 117

**TOPIC 9:** THE QUESTIONNAIRE ......................................................... 123  
  The Practice of Field Research .................................................... 134

**TOPIC 10:** DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS .................................... 151

**TOPIC 11:** BASIC CONCEPTS IN STATISTICS ....................................... 155

**TOPIC 12:** RESEARCH WRITING SKILLS .............................................. 171

**TOPIC 13:** PRESENTATION SKILLS ....................................................... 183
Topic 1: Introduction to Social Sciences

The purpose of this topic is to introduce you to the “social sciences” as a discipline. If you are doing this course you are probably already working or studying within the field covered by “social sciences”. The social sciences include many disciplines, or branches of knowledge, which help you learn about people. You may be familiar with some of them: history, geography, economics, political science, anthropology, sociology, and psychology. This lecture will try to provide you with some of the basic concepts, background and skills necessary to better understand the social sciences and the research methods they use.

Topic Overview

1. Introduction to the processes of thinking and learning
   - Perception
   - Thought Patterns
   - Experience Patterns
   - Concepts
   - Conceptual Patterns
   - Conceptualization
   - Memory and Emotions
   - Complete Experience Patterns
   - Methods of Reasoning

2. Introducing the disciplines that make up the social sciences
   - Psychology
   - Sociology
   - Anthropology
   - Geography
   - History
1. Introduction to the processes of thinking and learning

We begin with an introduction to processes of thinking and learning. It will help you to consider why people think and act differently.

Perception

We learn about things in the world through experiencing them with our senses. Perception is the contact of your senses with the outside world. It is where we start to examine how your perceptions turn into thoughts and how your thoughts turn into actions. We learn that a piece of fruit has a colour with our eyes, that it has a particular skin texture with touch, that it smells a certain way and that it has a unique taste all through experience. The name we give objects helps us identify those objects. Imagine that you meet someone from another country where some fruits cannot grow. You would probably describe the fruit, such as an ‘apple’ using shared sensory experiences, like “it is sweet, red and has a smooth skin”, for example. This is a simple example, but all the things we know, we learn through our senses, and our perceptions are all shaped by those experiences.

Thought Patterns

Perceptions come before thoughts. You taste the fruit before you think “that fruit is sweet”. Thought patterns lead to actions. An action may be defined as either doing something or not doing something, mental activity or physical activity.

Experience Patterns

This leads us to the simple diagram of an Experience Pattern:

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCEPTION</th>
<th>THOUGHT PATTERN</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```


Concepts

We are constantly looking for similarities in different things. By grouping things which are familiar, it becomes easier for us to identify things and to understand their relationships and their uses. Concept is the name we give to similar objects which we group together.

We use concepts to communicate our thoughts. Concepts and thoughts are used in communication with others, as we connect two or more concepts to form a Concept Pattern.

For example, Poor (C) old (C) people (C) are three concepts which lead to a logical thought pattern.

Concepts can be either abstract or empirical. An abstract construct is one which you cannot perceive with your senses. For example “happy” is an abstract construct. Yet we all know the feeling of being happy is very real. Abstract concepts cannot be perceived by your senses. For example you cannot hear or see or smell “happy” but you can perceive happiness in the objective behaviour of someone. When people or things show abstract qualities, we say they manifest those qualities. When we infer a state of mind from manifest behaviour most often we are right, everyday life gives us lots of experience of doing this. But we can get it wrong.

This brings us to a fundamental question in social science: What can we know about other people? We can know our own state of mind and what we think. We can know our own objective behaviour, that is, how we are behaving, what we are doing. We can know the relationship between what we are thinking and how we are acting, for example, that when we feel happy we are more inclined to smile, when we are angry we are inclined to shout or be aggressive. Finally we can know what other people do but we cannot know from direct experience what they think. We bridge this gap by inferring that what other people think from what we would be thinking when we behave that way. This is a very important process to grasp because it lies at the heart of much error in social science research.

An empirical concept is one you can experience with more than one sense. “Tree” is an example of an empirical construct.

A manifestation is the visible quality of an abstract concept. For example we can see that if someone is laughing, smiling and says they are feeling good, we can think that these are the manifestations of qualities of the abstract concept of happiness.
Conceptualization

We store our concepts in our memories and when we use them in thinking processes they help us to make sense of the world around us. Creating these concepts is the process of conceptualization. For example, we carry in our minds a concept of a table. Tables come in many shapes and sizes: most have four legs but there are some with three and some with five or six or more. When we experience, that is, see, a table we have not seen before we compare what we see with the concepts we have stored in our mind and when we find the concept which seems to be closest the reality we see in front of us we produce/remember/recall the word – table. Nearly all of us are extremely skilled at doing this. We do it in a fraction of a second and are not usually aware of the process. Of course, occasionally we get it wrong, most often when we have not witnessed a particular object before. Concepts not only include tangible things but also smells, certain feelings, tastes and sounds. These concepts may also be called experience patterns.

Methods of Reasoning

Millions of experience patterns are stored in our memories. When we encounter something new, our brains automatically search in our memories for similar experience patterns. We often think by drawing inferences about experiences from our past experience patterns. We know from experience that the sun rises every morning. Although we do not know for certain that it will rise tomorrow we can infer that it will.

Fact and inference are different. Facts are proven, or at least not disproven, while inferences cannot be. Until the sun rises tomorrow we can only make an inference that it will. Once it has it is a fact.

Induction

The process of inference is also called induction. In induction, several examples of past experiences suggest the best action in the present. For example,

Last week I ate steamed fish and was sick
Two years ago I ate fish soup and was sick
Last year I ate fish curry and was sick.

Conclusion: Eating fish or foods that contain fish make me sick.

Induction is one method of reasoning. It involves drawing conclusions from a range of facts.
Deduction

Using the same example, if someone offers me a dish of fish, I may think:

I have been sick from eating fish in the past.
Someone is offering me fish.

**Conclusion:** I had best not eat the fish in case it makes me sick again.

This pattern of thinking is called deduction. In deduction, you give a proven inference or fact, as your first statement. Then you give a second statement that is fact. From these you draw a conclusion, or deduce what you will do. Deduction involves working from a theory to explain facts around us.

We also need to distinguish between fact and opinion. A fact is something which is proven, or at least not yet disproved, and which most people would accept as valid. An inference is a guess based on a past experience pattern. An opinion is something that you think is true, but has not been proven to be a fact.

Later on in the course we will encounter most of these terms again. By using them we will expand our understanding of social sciences and research methods by using these ideas as a basis.

*How we approach the world and try to understand things, people and events is the result of our own perceptions, thoughts and experiences, which we understand and communicate through concepts and reasoning.*

2. The Disciplines that make up the Social Sciences

- **Sociology**

Sociology is the systematic study of social structures, normal social relationships. It focuses primarily on social relationship; people’s attitudes and behaviour and on how societies change. Sociology deals with such varied topics as relationships in families, the workplace, street gangs, business firms, political parties, schools, religions and labour unions. It is concerned with such phenomena (things) as love, poverty, conformity, discrimination, illness, overpopulation and community.

The term 'sociological imagination’ was coined by a well known sociologist called C. Wright Mills to refer to an awareness of the relationships between an individual or group and the wider society. It is an important element of the study of sociology. It is the ability to view our own society as an outsider
might, rather than from the perspective of our limited experiences and cultural biases.

Sociologists are committed to the use of the scientific method in their research efforts.

- **Anthropology**

  Anthropologists study how people live in groups, their languages, and technologies. They study changes through the years. The work of anthropologists is similar to the work of sociologists. Sociologists however, usually study the relationships between people in groups in society today. Anthropologists study the ways human beings behave in many different parts of the world and at many different times throughout history.

  There are two main branches of Anthropology. **Physical Anthropology** is the study of heredity and the biological evolution of human beings. **Social or Cultural Anthropology** is the study of how people in different societies live and the effects their environments have on their life styles. It focuses upon culture.

  Anthropologists find out about different cultures in several ways. One is by living with the cultures they study. Another way is by studying the writings of other Anthropologists, or through artefacts of cultures no longer existing today. These people are called archaeologists.

  We live in only one part of a very big world. Anthropologists describe the many ways that people live and do things. Culture is a very important aspect to the study of Anthropology.

- **Psychology**

  Psychology is the science of human behaviour and mental processes. The word “psychology” comes from two Greek words meaning ‘the study of the mind’. Most simply, psychology is the study of how the mind works together with the body to produce thoughts and actions. It is considered a behavioural science.

  Psychologists observe not only mental processes, but also other aspects of human functioning: overt actions or behaviours, social relationships, emotional responses, and physiological responses.

  Overt actions are directly observable and measurable movements or the results of such movements. Social relationships are the behaviours people
exhibit in their interactions with other people. Mental processes include thoughts and ideas as well as more complex reasoning processes. Emotional responses include feelings such as anger, regret and happiness. Physiological reactions are the body’s reactions to stimuli and include such things as biochemical changes.

Psychology is a science. Because psychology is a science, psychologists use scientific principles, carefully defined methods, and precise procedures to develop an organised body of knowledge and to draw inferences, or make predictions, about how people will behave. Predicting behaviour is important, for it enables psychologists to help people anticipate their responses to certain situations and learn how to manage their reactions and express themselves in reasonable ways.

- **Geography**

  Geography literally means the “charting of the earth” but it involves much more than that. Geography not only involves the study of the earth’s surface, but also of the resources found above, on, and below the surface of this planet. It is the study of how people use the earth’s resources. It is the study of how the environment affects the way people live and how people affect the environment. Basically geography is the study of places and geographers seek to explain why one place is different from another.

  There are many types of geography.

  - Physical geography studies the planet earth and its place in the universe, and concerns itself with the study of soils, plants and animals, minerals, weather.
  - Economic geography is the study of how people make a living from the Earth and its resources. It concerns itself with the resources taken from the Earth and the uses of those resources by humans.
  - Cultural geography studies the ways people live in different environments. It looks at how groups of people are related. It also looks at how groups of people are related to the locations in which they live.
  - Strategic geography is the study of how people can make the best use of resources to allow them to survive and improve themselves.

  Geography is both a social science and a physical science. It is a social science because it is the study of people and how they interact with the environment and with each other. It is a physical science because it deals with the earth and the resources which make the earth what it is.
History

History includes many things. When we talk about history we usually refer to the events caused by people and events which happened to people. History is events recorded in some way. History can be passed orally from person to person or it can be passed by written records. The idea is that future generations will know what happened and why it happened. In order to learn from history we need to know more than just facts about the past. We need to interpret them as well. So history is more than just facts, it is also made up of many interpretations of why events happened. It describes the impact of events on people’s lives. It is also a useful and interesting tool for examining ourselves.

Historians’ facts are referred to as evidence. Historians classify evidence into two types: primary evidence and secondary evidence. Primary evidence comes directly from the past and it is recorded by firsthand witnesses to the event or people who knew the person or persons who witnessed an event.

Secondary evidence is evidence that comes second-hand. It is recorded after the event, at a later time. A history book is an example of secondary evidence. Whilst letters are an example of primary evidence.

All possible sources and evidence are used by historians. But a historian usually has a main goal to write an account which is as fair and as accurate as possible, or 'objective'.

An objective historical account is based on facts, and not influenced by the historians’ feelings and opinions. Of course even with factual evidence historians may choose only those facts which support their (biased) accounts.

When the writing of a historian, or any author, is known to be influenced by personal opinion and feeling, it is called 'subjective' writing.

Political Science

Political Science is the study of politics, power, and government. It is important to understand what each one means and how they are related to one another. Government is a system of rule over people. Power is the means to rule and to control the government. Politics is the process of using power in government.

The uses of politics and power vary widely throughout the world. They have varied throughout history. There are many types of government, the classic types include: Republic, Democracy, Oligarchy, Dictatorship, Monarchy and Anarchy. Within Democracy alone, there are many different types of democracy.
Cambodia’s constitutional monarchy is different from the constitutional monarchies in Sweden or the Netherlands or the United Kingdom.

Political Science includes the study of how nation states work and relations between nation states, also called the study of “International Relations”, and can include the many areas of conflict studies, international laws, customs and treaties which operate between nations.

Political science also includes the study of the international system of governance, such as the United Nations system.

Political science also includes the study of the relationship of civil society within the political process.

- **Economics**

  Economics is the study of how wealth is created and distributed. It deals with making choices about using resources and spending money. Economics deals with not only the use of natural resources, but also with how people spend their time, and what they do with their money.

  Economists study how people manage their households, groups and industries, businesses and governments and other institutions. All parts of society have an important effect on the entire economic system.

  Within economics there are a whole range of focused topics ranging from market economics to the economics of developing countries, and so forth.

- **Peace Studies**

  Peace studies can be considered a more recent addition to the social sciences family, even though work has been done in this area for some time now. Peace studies focuses on human beings in a social setting.

  Peace is both the absence/reduction of violence of all kinds and non-violent and creative conflict transformation. Peace work then is the reduction of violence by peaceful means and thus peace studies can be described as the study of the conditions of peace work.

  Peace studies is a multidisciplinary field, incorporating a range of disciplines both within the social sciences family (such as politics, psychology, anthropology, history, economics, sociology) and beyond. As such, peace studies is one of the social sciences, with an explicit value orientation (value towards peace). Peace studies also shares some basic assumptions with scientific endeavours, and other social and applied sciences.
This course dedicates one topic to Peace Studies as the work within this field drives the type of research methodologies taught in this course.

- **Other disciplines, sub-disciplines and multidisciplinary**

   There are many other disciplines that could also be considered within the Social Sciences Family. Within each discipline already mentioned there are hundreds of sub-disciplines all working within the area of the social sciences. For example, within psychology there are the sub-disciplines of social psychology, cross-cultural psychology, etc. Within Sociology, there are the sub-disciplines of Gender, Population, Family, Development and Change and many others.

   One of the most import things to remember is that all of the social sciences are related. Each disciplines may be distinguished by its focus, but all in there own ways attempt to explore, understand how people and society work together. In this way, the social sciences is multidisciplinary.

   Another important shared aspect of the social sciences is their shared key methodological approaches to research.

**Social Sciences Research**

Behavioural and social sciences research is a large, multifaceted field, encompassing a wide array of disciplines. The field employs a variety of methodological approaches including: surveys and questionnaires, interviews, randomized clinical trials, direct observation, physiological manipulations and recording, descriptive methods, laboratory and field experiments, standardized tests, economic analyses, statistical modelling, ethnography, and evaluation, amongst others. Behavioural and social sciences research is not restricted to a set of disciplines or methodological approaches. Instead, the field is defined by substantive areas of research that transcend disciplinary and methodological boundaries. In addition, several key cross-cutting themes characterize social and behavioural sciences research. These include: an emphasis on theory-driven research; the search for general principles of behavioural and social functioning; the importance ascribed to a developmental, lifespan perspective; an emphasis on individual variation and variation across socio-demographic categories such as gender, age and sociocultural status and a focus on both the social and biological context of behaviour.

In social science research, the principal designs used are the observational, correlational and experimental methods. In this course we will give you an overview of the main research methods used for the social sciences.
So, what is Peace Research...?

We will define Peace Research, as research conducted within the social sciences that has the core values and aims of trying to examine, explore and understand the conditions that both block and promote peace in society, as well as work towards reducing the conditions in society that support or promote war. That is, peace studies and research is both theoretical and practical. YES

There are many different levels and approaches that can be taken by peace researchers. However, the unique quality assumed by peace research is that the research will not only contribute to understanding but will also be applied, to be linked somehow to positive change.

Supplementary Reading:

The following reading explores one of the disciplines, Sociology, more fully. It can give you an idea of how one of the various disciplines mentioned in our overview of the social sciences, describes their field. More detailed descriptions of the other disciplines can be found in the ACT library also.


What Is Sociology?

Sociology is the systematic study of social behaviour and human groups.

If focuses primarily on the influence of social relationship on people’s attitudes and behaviour and on how societies are established and change. This textbook deals with such varied topics as families, the workplace, street gangs, business firms, political parties, schools, religions, and labour unions. It is concerned with love, poverty, conformity, discrimination, illness, overpopulation, and community.

The Sociological Imagination

This extract from C. Wright Mills’ book, The Sociological Imagination, has a double us in this course. First, and of immediate use, is the fact that it provides a stimulating introduction to the Peace Studies part. Second, it also provides an introduction to the second part. Social research, indeed any research, is a very creative exercise. It requires imagination and innovation on the part of the researcher.
In attempting to understand social behaviour, sociologists rely on an unusual type of creative thinking. C. Wright Mills (1959) described such thinking as the sociological imagination -- an awareness of the relationship between an individual and the wider society. This awareness allows all of us (not just sociologists) to comprehend the links between our immediate, personal social settings and the remote, impersonal social world that surrounds us and helps to shape us.

A key element in the sociological imagination is the ability to view one’s own society as an outsider would, rather than only from the perspective of personal experiences and cultural biases. Consider something as simple as the practice of eating while walking. In the United States we think nothing of seeing people consuming ice cream cones or soda or candy bars as they walk along. Sociologists would see this as a pattern of acceptable behaviour because others regard it as acceptable. Yet sociologists need to go beyond one culture to place the practice in perspective. This “normal” behaviour is quite unacceptable elsewhere.

For example, in Japan people do not eat while walking. Streetside sellers and vending machines dispense food everywhere, but the Japanese will stop to eat or drink whatever they buy before they continue on their way.

The Sociological imagination allows us to go beyond personal experiences and observations to understand broader public issues. Unemployment, for example, is unquestionably a personal hardship for a man or woman without a job. However, C. Wright Mills pointed out that when unemployment is a social problem shared by millions of people, it is appropriate to question the way that a society is structured or organized.

Similarly, Mills advocated using the sociological imagination to view divorce not simply as the personal problem of a particular man or woman, but rather as a structural problem, since it is the outcome of many marriages. And he was writing this in the 1950s, when the divorce rate was but a fraction of what it is today (I. Horowitz 1983). End of Mills’ extract.

Sociological imagination can bring new understanding to daily life around us. Since 1992, sociologists David Miller and Richard Schaefer have studied the food bank system of the United States, which distributes food to hungry individuals and families.

As part of their research, they have examined government documents and other reference materials in libraries; they have conducted phone interviews with food bank directors in Illinois, Iowa, Oregon, and California; and they have observed the distribution of food at various churches and Salvation Army facilities.
On the face of it, food bank plans seem above reproach. After all, as Miller and Schaefer learned, more than one out of four children in the United States are hungry. One-third of the nation’s homeless people report eating one meal per day or less. What could be wrong with charities redistributing to pantries and shelters food that just a decade ago was destined for landfills? In 1997, for example, Second Harvest, a food distribution organization, distributed one billion pounds of food from hundreds of individual and corporate donors to more than 50,000 food pantries, soup kitchens, and social service agencies.

Many observers would uncritically applaud the distribution of tons of food to the needy. But let’s look deeper. While supportive of and personally involved in such efforts, Miller and Schaefer (1993) have drawn on the sociological imagination to offer a more probing view of these activities. They note that powerful forces in our society—such as the federal government, major food retailers, and other large corporations—have joined in charitable food distribution arrangements.

Perhaps as a result, the focus of such relief programs is specific and limited. The homeless are to be fed, not housed; the unemployed are to be given meals, not jobs. Relief efforts assist hungry individuals and families without challenging the existing social order (for example, by demanding a redistribution of wealth). Of course, without these limited successes in distributing food, hoards of starving people might assault patrons of restaurants, loot grocery stores, or literally die of starvation on the steps of city halls and across from the White House. Such critical thinking is typical of sociologists, as they draw on the sociological imagination to study a social issue such as hunger in the United States (Second Harvest 1997; Vladimiroff 1998).

Sociology and Common Sense

Sociology focuses on the study of human behaviour. Yet we all have experience with human behaviour and at least some knowledge of it. All of us might well have theories about why people get tattoos. Our theories and opinions typically come from “common sense”—that is, from our experiences and conversations, from what we read, from what we see on television, and so forth.

In our daily lives, we rely on common sense to get us through many unfamiliar situations. However, this commonsense knowledge, while sometimes accurate, is not always reliable, because it rests on commonly held beliefs rather than on systematic analysis of facts. It was once considered “common sense” to accept that the earth was flat—a view rightly questioned by Pythagoras and Aristotle. Incorrect commonsense notions are not just a part of the distant I past; they remain with us today.
In the United States, “common sense” tell us that when a racial minority group moves into a previously all-White neighbourhood, property values decline. “Common sense” tells us that people panic when faced with natural disasters, such as floods and earthquakes, or even in the wake of tragedies such as the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. However, these particular “commonsense” notions—like the notion that the earth is flat—are untrue; neither of them is supported by sociological research.

Race has little relationship to property values; such factors as zoning changes, overcrowding, and age of housing are more significant. Disasters do not generally produce panic. In the aftermath of disasters and even explosions, greater social organization and structure emerge to deal with a community’s problems. In the United States, for example, an emergency “operations group” often coordinates public services and even certain services normally performed by the private sector, such as food distribution. Decision making becomes more centralized in times of disaster.

Like other social scientists, sociologists do not accept something as a fact because “everyone knows it?” Instead, each piece of information must be tested and recorded, and then analyzed in relationship to other data. Sociology relies on scientific studies in order to describe and understand a social environment. At times, the findings of sociologists may seem like common sense because they deal with facets of every day life. The difference is that such findings have been tested by researchers. Common sense now tells us that the earth is round. But this particular commonsense notion is based on centuries of scientific work up holding the breakthrough made by Pythagoras and Aristotle.

The nature and history of sociology

This section also provides a valuable introduction to both Peace Studies and Research Methods and in particular the section entitled ‘Theory and theorising’. This requires that you formulate theories, that you look at particular social phenomena from different perspectives and speculate on the causes of them. That is what the founders of Sociology did. Though they wrote between 100 and 200 year ago their work is still relevant today and is still widely referred to. Read the following summary of their work carefully.

This chapter explores the nature of sociology as a field of inquiry. We will evaluate the contributions of three pioneering thinkers—Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Marx—to the development of sociology.

Next we will discuss a number of important theoretical perspectives used by sociologists. We’ll also consider what it means to develop a “sociological imagination.”
The Development of Sociology

People have always been curious about sociological matters—such as how we get along, what we do, and whom we select as our leaders.

Philosophers and religious authorities of ancient and medieval societies made countless observations about human behaviour. They did not test or verify these observations scientifically; nevertheless, they often became the foundation for moral codes. Several of the early social philosophers predicted that a systematic study of human behaviour would one day emerge. Beginning in the nineteenth century, European theorists made pioneering contributions to the development of a science of human behaviour.

Early Thinkers:

Comte, Martineau, and Spencer

The nineteenth century was an unsettling time for intellectuals in France. The French monarchy had been deposed earlier in the revolution of 1789, and Napoleon had subsequently suffered defeat in his effort to conquer Europe. Amidst this chaos, philosophers considered how society might be improved. Auguste Comte (1798—1857), credited with being the most influential of these philosophers of the early 1800s, believed that a theoretical science of society and a systematic investigation of behaviour were needed to improve society. He coined the term sociology to apply to the science of human behaviour.

Writing in the 1800s, Comte feared that the excesses of the French Revolution had permanently impaired France’s stability. Yet he hoped that the study of social behaviour in a systematic way would eventually lead to more rational human interactions. In Comte’s hierarchy of sciences, sociology was at the top. He called it the “queen” and its practitioners “scientist-priests.” This French theorist did not simply give sociology its name; he also presented a rather ambitious challenge to the fledgling discipline.

Scholars were able to learn of Comte’s works largely through translations by the English sociologist Harriet Martineau (1802–1876). But Martineau was a path-breaker in her own right as a sociologist; she offered insightful observations of the customs and social practices of both her native Britain and the United States. Martineau’s book Society in America (1962, original edition 1837) examines religion, politics, child rearing, and immigration in the young nation. Martineau gives special attention to status distinctions and to such factors as gender and race.

Martineau’s writings emphasized the impact that the economy, law, trade, and population could have on the social problems of contemporary society.
She spoke out in favour of the rights of women, the emancipation of slaves, and religious tolerance. In Martineau’s (1896) view, intellectuals and scholars should not simply offer observations of social conditions; they should act upon their convictions in a manner that will benefit society. In line with this view, Martineau conducted research on the nature of female employment and pointed to the need for further investigation of this important issue (Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley 1998).

Another important contributor to the discipline of sociology was Herbert Spencer (1820—1903). Writing from the viewpoint of his relative prosperity in Victorian England, Spencer (unlike Martineau) did not feel compelled to correct or improve society; in stead, he merely hoped to understand it better. Drawing on Charles Darwin’s study On the Origin of Species, Spencer applied the concept of evolution of the species to societies in order to explain how they change, or evolve, over time. Similarly, he adapted Darwin’s evolutionary view of the “survival of the fittest” by arguing that it is “natural” that some people are rich while others are poor.

Spencer’s approach to societal change was extremely popular in his own lifetime. Unlike Comte, Spencer suggested that societies are bound to change; therefore, one need not be highly critical of present social arrangements or work actively for social change. This position appealed to many influential people in England and the United States who had a vested interest in the status quo and were suspicious of social thinkers who endorsed change.

**Emile Durkheim**

Emile Durkheim made many pioneering contributions to sociology, including important theoretical work on suicide. The son of a rabbi, Durkheim (1858—1917) was educated in both France and Germany.

He established an impressive academic reputation and was appointed as one of the first professors of sociology in France. Above all, Durkheim will be remembered for his insistence that behaviour must be understood within a larger social context, not just in individualistic terms.

For example, in his research on suicide, Durkheim was primarily concerned not with the personalities of individual suicide victims (as psychologists might be), but rather with suicide rates and how they varied from country to country. As a result, when he looked at the number of suicides reported in 1869 in France, England, and Denmark, Durkheim also examined the populations of these nations to determine their rates of suicide. In doing so, he found that whereas England had only 67 reported suicides per million inhabitants, France had 135 per million and Denmark
had 277 per million. The question then became: “Why did Denmark have a comparatively high rate of reported suicides?”

Durkheim went much deeper into his investigation of suicide rates, and the result was his landmark work Suicide, published in 1897. Durkheim refused to automatically accept unproven explanations regarding suicide, including the beliefs that cosmic forces or inherited tendencies caused such deaths. Instead, he focused on such problems as the cohesiveness or lack of religious and occupational groups.

Durkheim’s research suggested that suicide, while a solitary act, is related to group life. Protestants ad much higher suicide rates than Catholics did; the unmarried had much higher rates than married people did; soldiers were more likely to take their lives than civilians were. In addition, it appeared that there higher rates of suicide in times of peace than in times of war and revolution, and in times of economic instability and recession than in times of prosperity. Durkheim concluded that the suicide rates of a society reflected the extent to which people were or were not integrated into the group life of the society.

Like many other sociologists, Durkheim’s interests were not limited to one aspect of social behaviour. Later in this book, we will consider his thinking on crime and punishment, religion, and the workplace. Few sociologists have had such a dramatic impact on so many different areas within the discipline.

Max Weber

Another important early theorist was Max Weber (pronounced “VAY-ber”). Born in Germany in 1864, Weber took his early academic training in legal and economic history, but he gradually developed an interest in sociology. Eventually, he became a professor at various German universities. Weber taught his students that they should employ Verstehen, the German word for “understanding” or “insight,” in their intellectual work. He pointed out that we cannot analyze much of our social behaviour by the kinds of objective criteria we use to measure weight or temperature. To fully comprehend behaviour, we must learn the subjective meanings people attach to their actions—how they themselves view and explain their behaviour.

For example, suppose that a sociologist was studying the social ranking of individuals in a fraternity. Weber would expect the researcher to employ Verstehen to determine the significance of the fraternity’s social hierarchy for its members. The researcher might examine the effects of athleticism or grades or social skills or seniority on standing within the fraternity. He or she would seek to learn how the fraternity members relate to other members of higher or lower status. While investigating these questions, the researcher
would take into account people’s emotions, thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes (L. Coser 1977).

We also owe credit to Weber for a key conceptual tool: the ideal type. An ideal type is a construct, a made-up model that serves as a measuring rod against which actual cases can be evaluated. In his own works, Weber identified various characteristics of bureaucracy as an ideal type (discussed in detail in Chapter 5). In presenting this model of bureaucracy, Weber was not describing any particular business, nor was he using the term ideal in a way that suggested a positive evaluation. Instead, his purpose was to provide a useful standard for measuring how bureaucratic an actual organization is (Gerth and Mills 1958:219).

Later in this textbook, we use the concept of ideal type to study the family, religion, authority, and economic systems and to analyze bureaucracy.

Although their professional careers coincided, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber never met and probably were unaware of each other’s existence, let alone ideas. This was certainly not true of the work of Karl Marx.

Durkheim’s thinking about the impact of the division of labour in industrial societies was related to Marx’s writings, while Weber’s concern for a value-free, objective sociology was a direct response to Marx’s deeply held convictions. Thus, it is not surprising that Karl Marx is viewed as a major figure in the development of sociology as well as several other social sciences (see Figure 1—1).

Karl Marx

Karl Marx (1818—1883) shared with Durkheim and Weber a dual interest in abstract philosophical issues and the concrete reality of everyday life. Unlike the others, Marx was so critical of existing institutions that a conventional academic career was impossible, and although he was born and educated in Germany, he spent most of his life in exile.

Marx’s personal life was a difficult struggle. When a paper he had written was suppressed; he fled his native land for France. In Paris, he met Friedrich Engels (1820—1895), with whom he formed a lifelong friendship. They lived at a time when European and North American economic life was increasingly being dominated by the factory rather than the farm.

In 1847, Marx and Engels attended secret meetings in London of an illegal coalition of labour unions, known as the Communist League. The following year, they prepared a platform called The Communist Manifesto, in which they argued that the masses of people who have no resources other
than their labour (whom they referred to as the proletariat) should unite to fight for the overthrow of capitalist societies. In the words of Marx and Engels:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. . . The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. WORKING MEN OF ALL COUNTRIES UNITE! (Feuer 1959:7, 41).

After completing The Communist Manifesto, Marx returned to Germany, only to be expelled. He then moved to England, where he continued to write books and essays. Marx lived there in extreme poverty. He pawned most of his possessions, and several of his children died of malnutrition and disease. Marx clearly was an outsider in British society, a fact that may well have affected his view of Western cultures.

In Marx’s analysis, society was fundamentally divided between classes that clash in pursuit of their own class interests. When he examined the industrial societies of his time, such as Germany, England, and the United States, he saw the factory as the centre of conflict between the exploiters (the owners of the means of production) and the exploited (the workers). Marx viewed these relationships in systematic terms; that is, he believed that an entire system of economic, social, and political relationships maintained the power and dominance of the owners over the workers. Consequently, Marx and Engels argued that the working class needed to overthrow the existing class system. Marx’s writings inspired those who were later to lead communist revolutions in Russia, China, Cuba, Vietnam, and elsewhere.

Even apart from the political revolutions that his work fostered, Marx’s influence on contemporary thinking has been dramatic. Marx emphasized the group identifications and associations that influence an individual’s place in society. This area of study is the major focus of contemporary sociology.

Modern Developments

Sociology as we know it today builds on the firm foundation developed by Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Marx. However, the discipline of sociology has certainly not remained stagnant over the last century.

While Europeans have continued to make contributions to the discipline, sociologists from throughout the world and especially the United States have advanced sociological theory and research. Their new insights have helped them to better understand the workings of society.

Charles Horton Cooley (1864—1929) was typical of the sociologists who came to prominence in the early 1900s. Cooley was born in Ann Arbor,
Michigan, and received his graduate training in economics but later became a sociology professor at the University of Michigan. Like other early sociologists, he had become interested in this “new” discipline while pursuing a related area of study.

Cooley shared the desire of Durkheim, Weber, and Marx to learn more about society. But to do so effectively, Cooley preferred to use the sociological perspective to look first at smaller units—intimate, face-to-face groups such as families, gangs, and friendship networks. He saw these groups as the seedbeds of society in the sense that they shape people’s ideals, beliefs, values, and social nature. Cooley’s work increased our understanding of groups of relatively small size.

In the early 1900s, many leading sociologists in the United States saw themselves as social reformers dedicated to systematically studying and then improving a corrupt society. They were genuinely concerned about the lives of immigrants in the nation’s growing cities, whether these immigrants came from Europe or from the American South. Early female sociologists, in particular, often took active roles in poor urban areas as leaders of community centres known as settlement houses.

For example, Jane Addams (1860—1935), an active member of the American Sociological Society, co-founded the famous Chicago settlement Hull House.

Addams and other pioneering female sociologists commonly combined intellectual inquiry, social service work, and political activism—all with the goal of assisting the underprivileged and creating a more egalitarian society. For example, working with the Black journalist and educator Ida B. Wells, Addams successfully prevented the implementation of a racial segregation policy in the Chicago public schools. Addams’ efforts to establish a juvenile court system and a women’s trade union also reflect the practical focus of her work (Addams 1910, 1930; Deegan 1991; Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley 1998).

By the middle of the twentieth century, however, the focus of the discipline had shifted. Sociologists restricted themselves to theorizing and gathering information; the aim of transforming society was left to social workers and others. This shift away from social reform was accompanied by a growing commitment to scientific methods of research and to value-free interpretation of data.

Sociologist Robert Merton (1968) made an important contribution to the discipline by successfully combining theory and research. Born in 1910 of
Slavic immigrant parents in Philadelphia, Merton won a scholarship to Temple University. He continued his studies at Harvard, where he acquired his lifelong interest in sociology. Merton’s teaching career has been based at Columbia University.

Merton produced a theory that is one of the most frequently cited explanations of deviant behaviour. He noted different ways in which people attempt to achieve success in life. In his view, some may not share the socially agreed-upon goal of accumulating material goods or the accepted means of achieving this goal. For example, in Merton’s classification scheme, “innovators” are people who accept the goal of pursuing material wealth but use illegal means to do so, including robbery, burglary, and extortion. Merton bases his explanation of crime on individual behaviour— influenced by society’s approved goals and means—yet it has wider applications. It helps to account for the high crime rates among the nation’s poor, who may see no hope of advancing themselves through traditional roads to success. Chapter 7 discusses Merton’s theory in greater detail.

Merton also emphasized that sociology should strive to bring together the “macro-level” and “micro-level” approaches to the study of society.

Macro-sociology concentrates on large-scale phenomena or entire civilizations. Thus, Emile Durkheim’s cross-cultural study of suicide is an example of macro-level research. More recently, macro-sociologists have examined international crime rates (see Chapter 7), the stereotype of Asian Americans as a “model minority” (see Chapter 9), and the population patterns of Islamic countries (see Chapter 14). By contrast, micro sociology stresses study of small groups and often uses experimental study in laboratories. Sociological research on the micro level has included studies of how divorced men and women, for example, disengage from significant social roles (see Chapter 5); of how conformity can influence the expression of prejudiced attitudes (see Chapter 7); and of how a teacher’s expectations can affect a student’s academic performance (see Chapter 12).

Contemporary sociology reflects the diverse contributions of earlier theorists. As sociologists approach such topics as divorce, drug addiction, and religious cults, they can draw on the theoretical insights of the discipline’s pioneers. A careful reader can hear Comte, Durkheim, Weber, Marx, Cooley, Addams, and many others speaking through the pages of current research. In describing the work of today’s sociologists, it is helpful to examine a number of influential theoretical approaches (also known as perspectives).
Major Theoretical Perspectives

Sociologists view society in different ways. Some see the world basically as a stable and ongoing entity. They are impressed with the endurance of the family, organized religion, and other social institutions. Some sociologists see society as composed of many groups in conflict, competing for scarce resources. To other sociologists, the most fascinating aspects of the social world are the everyday, routine interactions among individuals that we sometimes take for granted.

These three views, the ones most widely used by sociologists, are the functionalist, conflict, and interactionist perspectives. They will provide an introductory look at the discipline.

Functionalist Perspective

Think of society as a living organism in which each part of the organism contributes to its survival. This view is the functionalist perspective, which emphasizes the way that parts of a society are structured to maintain its stability.

Talcott Parsons (1902—1979), a Harvard University sociologist, was a key figure in the development of functionalist theory. Parsons had been greatly influenced by the work of Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and other European sociologists. For over four decades, Parsons dominated sociology in the United States with his advocacy of functionalism. He saw any society as a vast network of connected parts, each of which helps to maintain the system as a whole. The functionalist approach holds that if an aspect of social life does not contribute to a society’s stability or survival—if it does not serve some identifiably useful function or promote value consensus among members of a society—it will not be passed on from one generation to the next.

Let’s examine prostitution as an example of the functionalist perspective.

Why is it that a practice so widely condemned continues to display such persistence and vitality? Functionalists suggest that prostitution satisfies needs of patrons that may not be readily met through more socially acceptable forms such as courtship or marriage. The “buyer” receives sex with out any responsibility for procreation or sentimental attachment; at the same time, the “seller” makes a living through this exchange.

Such an examination leads us to conclude that prostitution does perform certain functions that society seems to need. However, this is not to suggest that prostitution is a desirable or legitimate form of social behaviour.
Functionalists do not make such judgments. Rather, advocates of the functionalist perspective hope to explain how an aspect of society that is so frequently attacked can nevertheless manage to survive (K. Davis 1937).

**Manifest and Latent Functions**

Your college catalogue typically states various functions of the institution. It may inform you, for example, that the university intends to “offer each student a broad education in classical and contemporary thought, in the humanities, in the sciences, and in the arts.” However, it would be quite a surprise to find a catalogue that declared, “This University was founded in 1895 to keep people between the ages of 18 and 22 out of the job market, thus reducing unemployment.” No college catalogue will declare that this is the purpose of the university. Yet social institutions serve many functions, some of them quite subtle. The university, in fact, does delay people’s entry into the job market.

Robert Merton (1968) made an important distinction between manifest and latent functions. Manifest functions of institutions are open, stated, conscious functions. They involve the intended, recognized consequences of an aspect of society, such as the university’s role in certifying academic competence and excellence. By contrast, latent functions are unconscious or unintended functions and may reflect hidden purposes of an institution. One latent function of universities is to hold down unemployment. Another is to serve as a meeting ground for people seeking marital partners.

**Dysfunctions**

Functionalists acknowledge that not all parts of a society contribute to its stability all the time. A dysfunction refers to an element or a process of society that may actually disrupt a social system or lead to a decrease in stability.

We consider many dysfunctional behaviour patterns, such as homicide, as undesirable. Yet we should not automatically interpret dysfunctions as negative. The evaluation of a dysfunction depends on one’s own values or, as the saying goes, on “where you sit.” For example, the official view in prisons in the United States is that inmates’ gangs should be eradicated because they are dysfunctional to smooth operations.

Yet some guards have actually come to view the presence of prison gangs as functional for their jobs. The danger posed by gangs creates a “threat to security” requiring increased surveillance and more overtime work for guards (Hunt et al. 1993:400).
Conflict Perspective

In contrast to functionalists’ emphasis on stability and consensus, conflict sociologists see the social world in continual struggle. The conflict perspective assumes that social behaviour is best understood in terms of conflict or tension between competing groups. Such conflict need not be violent; it can take the form of labour negotiations, party politics, competition between religious groups for members, or disputes over the federal budget.

Throughout most of the 1900s, the functionalist perspective had the upper hand in sociology in the United States. However, the conflict approach has become increasingly persuasive since the late 1960s.

The widespread social unrest resulting from battles over civil rights, bitter divisions over the war in Vietnam, the rise of the feminist and gay liberation movements, the Watergate scandal, urban riots, and confrontations at abortion clinics offered support for the conflict approach—the view that our social world is characterized by continual struggle between competing groups. Currently, the discipline of sociology accepts conflict theory as one valid way to gain insight into a society.

Marxism

As we saw earlier, Karl Marx viewed struggle between social classes as inevitable, given the exploitation of workers under capitalism. Expanding on Marx’s work, sociologists and other social scientists have come to see conflict not merely as a class phenomenon but as a part of everyday life in all societies. Thus, in studying any culture, organization, or social group, sociologists want to know who benefits, who suffers, and who dominates at the expense of others. They are concerned with the conflicts between women and men, parents and children, cities and suburbs, and Whites and Blacks, to name only a few. Conflict theorists are interested in how society’s institutions—including the family, government, religion, education, and the media—may help to maintain the privileges of some groups and keep others in a subservient position.

Their emphasis on social change and redistribution of resources makes them more “radical” and “activist” than functionalists (Dahrendorf 1958).

A Racial View: W. E. B. Du Bois

One important contribution of conflict theory is that it has encouraged sociologists to view society through the eyes of those segments of the population that rarely influence decision making. Early Black sociologists
such as W. E. B. Du Bois (1868—1963) conducted research that they hoped would assist the struggle for a racially egalitarian society. Du Bois believed that knowledge was essential in combating prejudice and achieving tolerance and justice. Sociology, Du Bois contended, had to draw on scientific principles to study social problems such as those experienced by Blacks in the United States.

Du Bois had little patience for theorists such as Herbert Spencer who seemed content with the status quo. He advocated basic research on the lives of Blacks that would separate opinion from fact, and he documented their relatively low status in Philadelphia and Atlanta. Du Bois believed that the granting of full political rights to Blacks was essential to their social and economic progress in the United States. Many of his ideas challenging the status quo did not find a receptive audience within either the government or the academic world. As a result, Du Bois became increasingly involved with organizations whose members questioned the established social order, and he helped to found the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, better known as the NAACP (Green and Driver 1978).

The addition of diverse views within sociology in recent years has led to some helpful research, especially for African Americans. For many years, African Americans were understandably wary of participating in medical research studies, because those studies had been used for such purposes as justifying slavery or determining the impact of untreated syphilis. Now, however, African American sociologists and other social scientists are working to involve Blacks in useful ethnic medical research in such areas as diabetes and sickle cell anaemia, two disorders that strike Black populations especially hard (St. John 1997).

The Feminist View

Feminist theory builds in important ways on the conflict perspective. Like other conflict theorists, feminist scholars see gender differences as a reflection of the subjugation of one group (women) by another group (men). Drawing on the work of Marx and Engels, contemporary feminist theorists often view women’s subordination as inherent in capitalist societies. Some radical feminist theorists, however, view the oppression of women as inevitable in all male-dominated societies, including those labelled as capitalist, socialist, and communist (Tuchman 1992).

As is true of the work of African American sociologists, feminist scholarship in sociology has broadened our understanding of social behaviour by taking it beyond the White male point of view. For example, a family’s
social standing is no longer defined solely by the husband’s position and income. Feminist scholars have not only challenged stereotyping of women; they have also argued for a gender-balanced study of society in which women’s experiences and contributions are as visible as those of men (Brewer 1989; Komarovsky 1991).

The feminist perspective has given sociologists new views of familiar social behaviour. For example, past research on crime rarely considered women, and when it did, the studies tended to focus on “traditional” crimes by women like shoplifting. Such a view tended to ignore the role that women play in all types of crime as well as the disproportionate role that they play as victims of crime. Research conducted by Meda Chesney-Lind and Noelie Rodriguez (1993) showed that nearly all women in prison had suffered physical and/or sexual abuse when they were young; half had been raped. Contributions by both feminist and minority scholars have enriched all the sociological perspectives.

Interactionist Perspective

Whereas functionalist and conflict theorists analyze society-wide patterns of behaviour, the interactionist perspective generalizes about everyday forms of social interaction in order to understand society as a whole. Thus, interactionists tend to focus on micro-sociology—workers interacting on the job, en counters in public places like bus stops or parks, and behaviour in small groups. In the 1990s, the workings of juries became a subject of public scrutiny. High-profile trials ended in verdicts that left some people shaking their heads. Long before jury members were being interviewed on their front lawns following trials, interactionists tried to better understand behaviour in the small-group setting of a jury deliberation room, as shown in Box 1–1.

Interactionism is a sociological framework for viewing human beings as living in a world of meaningful objects. These “objects” may include material things, actions, other people, relationships, and even symbols (Henslin 1972:95).

George Herbert Mead (1863–1931) is widely regarded as the founder of the interactionist perspective. Mead taught at the University of Chicago from 1893 until his death. His sociological analysis, like that of Charles Horton Cooley, often focused on human interactions within one-to-one situations and small groups. Mead was interested in observing the most minute forms of communication—smiles, frowns, nodding of one’s head—and in understanding how such individual behaviour was influenced by the larger context of a group or society. Despite his innovative views, Mead
only occasionally wrote articles and never a book. Most of his insights have come to us through edited volumes of his lectures that his students published after his death.

The interactionist perspective is sometimes referred to as the symbolic interactionist perspective, because interactionists see symbols as an especially important part of human communication. Members of a society share the social meanings of symbols. In the United States, for example, a salute symbolizes respect, while a clenched fist signifies defiance. However, another culture might use different gestures to convey a feeling of respect or defiance.

Let us examine the different ways various societies portray suicide without the use of words. People in the United States point a finger at the head (shooting); Japanese bring a fist against the stomach (stabbing); and the South Fore of Papua New Guinea clench a hand at the throat (hanging). These types of symbolic interaction are classified as forms of nonverbal communication, which can include many other gestures, facial expressions, and postures.

Since Mead’s teachings have become well known, sociologists have expressed greater interest in the interactionist perspective. Many have moved away from what may have been an excessive preoccupation with the large-scale (macro) level of social behaviour and have redirected their attention toward behaviour that occurs in small groups (micro level).

Erving Goffman (1922—1982) popularized a particular type of interactionist method known as the dramaturgical approach. The dramaturgist compares everyday life to the setting of the theatre and stage. Just as actors project certain images, all of us seek to present particular features of our personalities while we hide other qualities. Thus, in a class, we may feel the need to project a serious image; at a party, we want to look relaxed and friendly.
Topic 2: Introduction to Peace Theories

Overview:

Peace can mean many different things to different people. Contemporary definitions seem to include (and reflect the assumption) that peace must include not only the absence of war (which is called “negative peace”) but also the establishment of life-affirming and life-enhancing values and structures (“positive peace”). Thus an important concept in peace studies is that negative peace is a necessary but not sufficient condition for positive peace. Another important assumption is that there are no simple solutions to the problems of either peace or war; the war-peace dilemma is complex, interconnected, and often poorly understood. On the other hand there is much to be gained by exploring the various dimensions of war and peace, including the prospects of achieving a just, sustainable world.

The field of Peace Studies focuses on issues relating to peace from a range of disciplines and approaches. Whilst peace is studied within the various disciplines; peace studies as a discipline in itself offers a unique focus on peace. It also differs from some of the social sciences as it is value-driven, that is, it values peace and is bias in favour of peace (e.g., peace is better than war; social justice is better than injustice; environmental integrity is better than destruction, etc).

The following topic can only briefly introduce some of the key terms, theories and issues important to understanding the broad discipline of peace studies.

Background Reading:


Soth Plai Ngarm is the Director of ACT. In 1999 Ngarm studied at Bradford University in the Department of Peace Studies, and completed a Masters thesis which examined and attempted to explain the Cambodian condition for war and peace. In the Cambodian context it is essential background reading for anyone working, studying and in particular researching in the peace-field in Cambodia.
Ngam’s thesis and other related work is available from ACT’s library.

**Topic Overview:**

- Peace Studies defined
- Understanding War
- Understanding the Causes of War: Direct, Structural and Cultural Violence
- Negative Peace
- Positive Peace
- Exercise: Conflict Case Study
- Approaches to War
- Pacifism
- Realism
- Just War Theory
- Supplementary Reading on Just War Theory (simplified version)
- The phenomenon of conflict
- Structural, Cultural and Relational Approaches to War
- Conflict Responses & the Management of Conflict
- Non-violence
- Religious Inspiration
- Ethics considered
- The Great Traditions
- Christian and Islamic texts
- Peace Movements, Transformation, and the Future
- Additional Topics and Readings
- International Law
- International Politics International Ethics and International Law
- Humanitarian Intervention
- Retributive Justice: Why punish war criminals?
- Applied Ethics in Peace Studies
- Recommended Reading
- Online Resources for further education in Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution
Peace Studies defined

[Adapted from Barash (2000)]

Peace studies is the study of how human beings can live together (a) without harming or killing each other, and (b) in such a way that individuals, communities and countries have the opportunity for mutual development and self-fulfilment, economic, political, cultural, emotional, spiritual. Some peace researchers emphasize (a) as the proper focus for peace studies, on the grounds that, although this may be seen as a minimalist programme, it is perhaps the most urgent in the world today, can be relatively clearly articulated, and is in any case in itself an enormous and complex subject area. For these researchers (b) is too ambitious, too undefined and too controversial. Other peace researchers, however, aim for (b), the maximalist programme, and argue that (a) is in the end impossible to achieve unless (b) is tackled as well.

Either way, peace studies is a subject area which is:

(i) Multidisciplinary: in order to approach its complex problematique adequately it has to draw on many disciplines, including politics, international relations, strategic studies, development studies, individual and social psychology, etc.

(ii) Multilevel: peace researchers have to be able to handle their subject at different levels, for example -
- Intrapersonal-peace within a person
- Interpersonal- peace between individuals
- Inter-group-peace between communities (this stretches from families, through neighbourhoods to ethnic groups)
- International- peace between nations
- Global-peace between human beings and the rest of the biosphere.

(iii) Multicultural: peace research has to be a truly cooperative international enterprise, both (a) in terms of the geographical locations where peace is sought, and (b) in terms of the peace researchers themselves who come from all parts of the world.

Some people argue, even different ‘civilizations’ contribute to the challenge which peace studies is trying to address. In a controversial recent article in *Foreign Affairs* (1993) Samuel Huntingdon has predicted that the main future lines of world conflict will take the form of an impending ‘clash of civilizations’. Huntingdon believes there are several ‘civilization identities’ that their interactions will be increasingly important in the future. These include...
western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic, Orthodox, Latin America and African civilization. However, many analysts have criticized the idea of ‘civilisations’ as unjustified and western biased.

On the other hand, the resources for overcoming this can also be found within the same cultures. We note the profound and subtle connotations of understandings of peace within the different world traditions, attached to words like pax, peace, eirene, mir, sala’am, shalom, shanti, ahimsa, ho p’ing, heiwalwahei. A brief class discussion will reveal the richness within the great civilizations. These concepts are connected to all the various institutions and practices throughout the world for handling conflict and violence, from family and local levels, up to the regional and UN mechanisms which are only the most recent attempts to regulate differences in a peaceful way. All of this has to be drawn upon in the ambitious general enterprise of studying peace.

(iv) Finally, peace studies is both (a) an analytic, and (b) a normative discipline. It is both theoretical and practical. It aims to understand what blocks the path to peace, but also wants to do something to remove those blocks. This is where peace research links to peace activism - something which should not only be pursued by governments, but also (a deep conviction for most peace researchers) by citizens. That is why many peace researchers believe that peace studies and conflict resolution should be taught in all schools, since it denies no traditions and may help all to coexist. Some have said that to learn the theory and practice of peaceful conflict resolution is a human right! To paraphrase Karl Marx, the purpose of peace studies is not just to understand the world, but to change it.

Understanding the Causes of War:

There is no generality of war; each war is unique so it can be argued that the causes of each war require detailed study. However, trying to comprehend the causes of war is not summative, that is studying separate causes will not result in an accurate understanding of “What is War?” It is useful and necessary to try to get a comprehensive view of the complex factors that make up wars causes. For every cause there is assumed an effect.

A. Direct, Structural and Cultural Violence: the Analysis of Johan Galtung

What is the antithesis of peace? Many things, Anxiety, fear, war, conflict, turbulence, suffering, destruction, violence - these are some of the candidates. Here we sum up by using the word ‘violence’ in a generic sense to mean the antithesis of peace (in other words, peace is the absence of violence), along lines suggested more than thirty years ago by one of the doyens of the European peace research movement, the Norwegian Johan Galtung.
Galtung distinguishes three types of violence:

(a) **Direct Violence**

(b) **Structural Violence**

(c) **Cultural Violence**

Wherein Direct violence, is the overt infliction of injury, loss, misery and pain, physical and emotional. (b) Structural violence, which may involve no overt manifestations, but may nevertheless result in equal or even greater suffering, exploitation and deprivation for the victims. (c) Recently, Galtung has added a third type of violence - cultural violence, which, in his view is what legitimises (a) and (b).

**Negative and Positive Peace**

Following on from this we can construct a neat and suggestive dichotomy between ‘negative peace’, which is the absence of ‘direct violence’, including war (the original target for peace research), and ‘positive peace’ which is the absence of ‘structural’ and ‘cultural violence’ as well. Taking each in turn:

(a) **Negative peace** is the absence of direct violence (physical, verbal, and psychological) between individuals, group and governments. The concept of Negative peace addresses immediate symptoms, the conditions of war, and the use and effects of force and weapons. At intrapersonal level, anyone who has been unable to sleep through grief, remorse (for the past), anxiety (for the future), etc., will know the blessings of a peaceful mind. The same goes at family level for anyone who has suffered violence or abuse. Or at community level discrimination, persecution, ‘ethnic cleansing’, genocide. Or at international level the terrible destruction of war. Over all of this since 1945 has hung the threat of nuclear holocaust.

On the other hand, negative peace on its own can be coupled with repression, deprivation, exploitation, injustice. Pax Romana, pax Britannica, pax Sovietica and pax Japonica were all associated with the forcible crushing of legitimate human aspirations. As the Latin historian of the conquest of Britain in the first century AD said of the victorious Roman general: ‘he made a wasteland and called it peace’.

(b) **Positive peace**, is more than the absence of violence; it is the presence of social justice through equal opportunity, a fair distribution of power and resources, equal protection and impartial enforcement of law. The concept involves the elimination of root causes of war, violence and injustice and the conscious effort to build a society which reflects these commitments. Positive peace includes the key ideas of ‘legitimacy’ and
‘justice’. An unjust structure or relationship in this terminology is not a peaceful one. In order to achieve positive peace, therefore, injustice must be removed. This also operates at all the different levels, from unjust economic relations between ‘North’ and ‘South’, though unjust political relations between majority and minority groups within a country, to unjust personal relations between individuals. It applies to all the various types of ‘differences’ which distinguish sets of human beings: differences of race (the idea that some races are ‘superior’ to others), gender (male domination), class (perpetuation of socio-economic advantage and disadvantage through birth, not merit), etc. At intrapersonal level positive peace goes beyond absence of anxiety and embraces the idea of deep inner peace through integrity (wholeness) of being, physical, emotional, and spiritual. Some believe that ‘inner’ peace of this kind is the ultimate underpinning of lasting world peace.

To learn more about some initiatives to promote a ‘culture of peace’ visit the United Nation’s UNESCO website for a Culture of Peace: [ww3.unesco.org/iycp/](http://ww3.unesco.org/iycp/)

Positive peace is also deeply problematic, however. For example, ‘injustice’ usually amounts to ‘perceived injustice’ and we are immediately plunged into a highly controversial and complicated arena which virtually includes the whole of politics. Nothing is more characteristic of violent conflict than the fact that all parties genuinely believe that they are victims of injustice, and that therefore ‘justice’ is on their side. Both pray to God for victory. Linked to this is the well-known paradox that many of those who battle against perceived injustice themselves use force in order to do so. Again, there is a danger here of doctrinaire activists ‘forcing people to be free’ (Rousseau’s phrase). The fact that people may not ‘realize’ that they are exploited (in the eyes of the activist) - for example, women who say they are happy to be housewives - is interpreted as brainwashing ‘or’ false consciousnesses (a Marxist phrase). It is seen as ‘the problem of the happy slave’. The conclusion may then be to try coercing them into revolt. Behind all of this the problem of imputation can be seen to be a deep and questionable one. On the other hand, there undoubtedly is exploitation and injustice, much of it is institutionalized, and also culturally and psychologically internalized. The exploiters are as unaware as anyone else of the overall situation, and, indeed, genuinely believe that there is no injustice.

Some ‘hard’ questions for consideration:

(a) What can and should be done in the face of direct violence? Peace
researchers tend to be very reluctant to advocate force. But should we really stand by when atrocities are being perpetrated and we could do something to stop them? And can purely peaceful means prevent such crimes in a turbulent and violent world? Domestic crime is met, among other things, by a police force. But there are no international police.

(b) What can and should be done in the face of structural violence? We have just noted some of the problems here.

(c) What can and should be done in the face of cultural violence? This opens the path to the rich and highly complex areas of cross-cultural dialogue, inter-faith communication, community relations, mutual understanding work, anti-sectarian work, cultural traditions work, justice and rights work, political options work, and so on.

We end by distinguishing three types of peace. (i) The first, represented by the Latin word ‘pax’, is simply the absence of war. (iii) The third, represented by the Hebrew word ‘shalom’, is the ultimate goal of fully realized peace at all levels in which all differences are completely reconciled. In Christian terms it is ‘the peace which passes all understanding’ for the human soul, and the achievement of the final ‘kingdom of God’. Between the two lies the confused and messy area where we aspire to what St. Augustine (5th century AD) called (ii) ‘tranquillitas ordinis’ (the tranquillity of good order). This is peace-with-justice, insofar as this can be approximated to in this world despite all imperfections and controversies. It is the declared aim of the Charter of the United Nations and the goal towards which peace studies properly aspires.

Exercise: Conflict Case Study

Specific case studies can help us more deeply understand a conflict situation. Choose a conflict individually or as a group and use the following Conflict Case Study Guide to help you analyse, discuss, and understand the conflict situation better. Pay particular attention to some of the aspects of conflict analysis that were mentioned in the previous section. By doing this activity you should also be reflecting on the different levels and approaches that could be taken for any one conflict.

Overview: Brief summary of the dispute emphasizing current status.

1.0 Issues

1.1 Identify the issues and the history of their development

1.2 How well defined are these issues?

1.3 What type of issues are they? What is the source – information, relationship, interests, values, structure?
1.4 How controversial is the situation? Have there been demonstrations, petitions, etc?
1.5 How urgently is a resolution required? Is the situation escalating?
1.6 What is the scope of the potential resolution?

2. Parties

2.1 Identify the parties/groups involved including their background, level of organization and distinctiveness from other groups. Identify each parties underlying interests and the interests that they have in common.
2.2 How well informed are the parties regarding the issues and interests of other parties? How have they obtained information and what communication channels are open to them?
2.3 What is the relative power of the parties in terms of determining the outcome of the dispute? Can some parties impose a solution and if so for what time period?
2.4 How much incentive do the parties have to resolve the issues in the short and long term?
2.5 What are the relationships between the parties? Are there significant cultural differences among them? How willing are they to trust each other?
2.6 Are the parties willing and able to work together? How do they expect to be involved in the resolution of the dispute? Have they worked together to resolve other issues and if so, how?

3. Context

3.1 What methods of dispute resolution have been attempted in the past and are there examples of similar disputes being resolved through negotiations in other places? How these other processes designed and what were were the factors that made them successful or unsuccessful?
3.2 How are political disputes and instability, influential public figures, the media and forthcoming elections affecting the dispute?
3.3 How do the issues relate to the government’s policy agenda and priorities?
3.4 What are the trends in the dispute in terms of escalation?
3.5 How difficult would it be for the parties to engage in a negotiation process and what logistical barriers would have to be overcome?
4. Policy Framework

4.1 Which agency(s) is/are responsible for the decision and at what level can a range of different decisions be made?

4.2 How would (or has) the responsible agency responded to the prospect of public participation and the possibility of a negotiated approach to dispute resolution?

4.3 What policies are directing the resolution of the dispute and how are they perceived by the parties in terms of fairness, balance and comprehensiveness?

4.4 How much public support is required to implement decisions within the policy framework?

5. Identify Resources for Intervention

5.1 Who is the capable person to mediate this conflict?

5.2 How is his power relation to the conflict parties?

5.3 If his power relates to only one of the parties, who will be able to deal with the other? Can both of them work together to resolve this conflict?

5.4 If there is not a capable person to intervene the conflict, who is the best person among the rest?

5.5 What are the other needs?

Conclusion

If resolution has been achieved, identify the issues that have been resolved indicating the nature of the resolution as well as the process that was used to achieve it. If resolution has not been achieved consider what forms of public participation might assist in resolving the dispute(s).

Peace Studies Continued:

- Approaches to War
  
  Adapted from Barash (2000)

Realism, Pacifism and Just War

Consider this question: Does the defence of values by force remain a moral possibility?
Three Responses

(i) Pacifism

Pacifism says: “War is an evil, and it is always wrong to fight”. There are many forms of pacifism, which we will only have time to touch on here.

It is useful to distinguish (a) personal witness from public policy, (b) public policy for one government from global public policy, (c) immediate decision in certain critical test cases from long-term aspiration, (d) specific categories of weapons/actions - for example, nuclear pacifism. Martin Ceadel distinguishes pacifism (working towards long-term abolition of war) from pacifism (the absolutist theory that participating in or supporting war is always impermissible). Within pacifism he distinguishes (i) an optimistic version which claims that this is already the most effective form of defence (ie non-violent), (ii) a mainstream version which sees (i) as imminent but not actual, and in the meantime support pacifism within limits as a step in the right direction, and (iii) a pessimistic version which sees itself as a faith, not a strategy, in an insurmountably fallen world.

(ii) Realism

Realism is not the opposite of pacifism. The opposite of pacifism is bellicism, which holds that war is a good thing - perhaps because it purges a nation, or allows the strong to attain what is rightfully theirs:

‘The natural law to which all laws of Nature can be reduced is the law of struggle. All intra-social property, all thoughts, inventions, and institutions, as indeed in the social system itself, are a result of the intra-social struggle in which one survives and the other is cast out. The extra-social, the super-social struggle which guides the existence and development of societies, nations and races is war. The internal development of the intra-social struggle is man’s daily work – the struggle of thought, wishes, sciences, activities. The outward development, the super-social struggle, is the sanguinary struggle of nations – war. In what does the creative power of the struggle consist? In growth and decay, in the victory of the one factor and the defeat of the other. The struggle is the creator since it eliminates’ (C. Wagner, War as a Creative Universal Principle).

The so-called realist position ((a) classical realists - Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes, as elaborated by (b) twentieth century realists - Morgenthau, Can, Gulpin, Kennan, and (c) neo-realists - Waltz) is that, given the international anarchy, and the nature of the state system in which governments pursue their own national interest, war is simply a natural phenomenon and there is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ about it. Prudent
statesmanship maintains strong defences, powerful alliances, nurtures a stable balance of power and interest, and effective deterrence. Si yes pacem, para bellum (if you want peace, prepare for war). Where necessary there is no problem about the use of military force. Realism says: “War is neither good nor evil. It is a fact of the international system. To start introducing moral categories is at best irrelevant, at worst dangerous.”

Central to realist interpretations is the equation of politics with power, and the subordination of ethical categories to this. For Thrasymachus in Plato’s Republic politics is by nature a power game, and the use of ‘ethical’ terms which do not recognise this fact is an error: justice is the interest of the stronger. There are echoes of this in the way the victors in a political contest subsequently rewrite its history, as also in the Marxist idea that dominant moral systems are part of the political superstructure which reflect the interests of the ruling class.

Do realists succeed ‘in their effort to exclude morality categorically from international relations’. It is somewhat ironical that Forde’s and Donnelly’s chapters appear in a book titled Traditions of international Ethics. In other words, the realist tradition is here itself being seen as a tradition of international ethics! The editors justify this on the grounds that moral scepticism is not an essential part of the realist position, and that ‘it is only the more vulgar forms of realism that insist on amorality as an everyday approach to foreign policy’. The characteristic realist move is to insist that at the limit foreign policy is constrained by necessity, and that, in these circumstances, the usual demands of ethics are overborne. Realists disagree about whether this is in turn a ‘higher morality’ (governments should morally behave in this way - for example, because their first duty is to the survival of the societies they represent), or whether this is an abrogation of morality in the name of non-ethical prudence. Either way, as noted earlier, governments persist in uniformly justifying their actions and policies, both to their own citizens and to other governments, in terms which we are calling ‘ethical’.

‘Government is an agent, not a principal. Its primary obligation is to the interests of the national society it represents, its military security, the integrity of its political life and the well-being of its people. These needs have no moral quality. They are the unavoidable necessities of national existence and therefore are subject to classification neither as ‘good’ or ‘bad” (George Kennan, ‘Morality and Foreign Policy’, Foreign Affairs, 1985/6, 206).
‘States in anarchy cannot afford to be moral. The possibility of moral
behaviour rests upon the existence of an effective government that can
deter and punish illegal actions’ (Kenneth Waltz, 1983, 6).

(iii) Just War Theory

This tradition agrees with pacifists that there is a moral presumption
against war, but disagrees by holding that there are circumstances
where, nevertheless, war is the right option. This position was worked
out by Augustine, Aquinas, Vitoria, Suarez, Grotius, and, in the twentieth
century, Ramsay, Russell, Johnson, O’Brien, particularly in response to
the grave challenge of nuclear weapons. It says: “War is evil, but
sometimes it is right to wage it”. It is, therefore, a doctrine of justified
and limited war. As such, at its core, it has tried to work out a set of
criteria to determine when and how war may legitimately be fought.

Criteria for when war may be fought are called jus ad bellum. A list of
criteria for jus ad bellum would include:

1. War must be publicly declared
2. War must be waged by a competent (legitimate) authority
3. War must be fought with a right intention
4. War must be fought for a just cause
5. War must be fought for a proportionate reason
6. War must be fought for a just peace
7. War must be a last resort.

As a group or individually, discuss these criteria with particular reference
to a conflict, such as the Gulf War of 1990-1 or Iraq 2002-present. In
strict versions of just war all criteria must be met if the war is to be
accepted as justified.

Or more simply begin with the question:

Is there a way that war can be morally justifiable?

Criteria for how war may be fought are called jus in bello. The two main
criteria for jus in bello are:

8. Proportion: the harm done must be proportional to the good likely to
follow
Supplementary Reading on Just War Tradition

There are also some key concepts underlying the just war tradition. These are briefly mentioned below.

Key concepts:

To understand Just War doctrine requires some understanding of the Theory of Aggression –

The Legalist Paradigm is the underlying basis.

Legalist Paradigm:

1. There exists an international society of independent states
2. This international society has a law that establishes the rights of its members above all- the rights of territorial integrity and political sovereignty
3. Any use of force or imminent threat of force by one state against the political sovereignty or territorial integrity of another constitutes aggression and is a criminal act
4. Aggression justifies two kinds of violent response: war of self-defence by the victim and a war of law enforcement by the victim and any other members of international society
5. Nothing but aggression can justify war
6. Once the aggressor state has been militarily repulsed it can also be punished

There are some exceptions to the Legalist Paradigm and consider the case examples:

- Appeasement- Iraq- invasion of Kuwait- current situation
- Preventative war - Iraq
- Pre-emptive strikes – Iraq
- Humanitarian intervention - Bangladesh
- Civil War intervention- Sierra Leone and Vietnam
- Self determination and secession- East Timor

Wars Ends
Unconditional surrender- Japan and World War II
Approaches to War continued:

A. The Phenomenon of Conflict

Most peace researchers seem to agree that, whereas violence can and should be avoided and overcome, conflict is both endemic in human development, and can, indeed, be positively creative. The pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Heraclitus said that if conflict was removed the cosmos itself would disappear. Others, only slightly less dramatically, have equated absence of conflict with death. To challenge injustice is to engage in conflict, so the concept is integral to ideas of ‘positive peace’. Mohandas Gandhi, for example, rejected all forms of violence (his doctrine of *ahimsa* is a doctrine of non-violent love), but advocated strenuous, courageous and active opposition to evil and wrong (the doctrine of *satyagraha* is a doctrine of vigorous struggle for truth and justice). Once again, conflict can be found at all the levels outlined in the previous lecture. Conflicts are multi-factorial, both ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’, of different types (eg. ideological conflict, authority conflict, resource conflict, racial or identity conflict etc.), and evolve and change over time.

Complex though the generic phenomenon of conflict may be, we may here usefully distinguish between *structural, relational* and *cultural* approaches to the analysis of conflict.

(a) **Structural approaches** emphasise the external conditions for conflict. They look at the situation in context as a whole. For example, if there are choppy seas, a structural approach would analyze the form of the seabed; prevailing currents etc. to determine whether there were underlying (structural) reasons for the turbulence. Another example: when three motorway lanes are reduced to two (perhaps because of roadworks), we can make a (structural) prediction that the level of conflict between motorists is likely to rise. It does not in general matter who the motorists are. We expect tempers to rise in conditions of relative scarcity of this kind. This would link to the ‘Dollard’ hypothesis that aggression is triggered by frustration. Applied to ‘ethnic’ conflict, the following structural conditions for conflict could be suggested: (i) cultural heterogeneity is more likely to generate such conflict within a country than cultural homogeneity; (ii) conflict is more likely in politically un-integrated societies where identity groups do not have sufficient access to political institutions capable of assuring perceived needs; (iii) it is more likely in economically underdeveloped societies, or at times of economic hardship, or where there are wide economic disparities related to identity groups; (iv) it is more likely when outside powers have a perceived interest to foment conflict or champion the interests of one community; etc. Underlying
this is the global mismatch between the configuration of existing state boundaries and the geographical distribution of peoples. To some extent we might be able to ‘predict’ conflict in this way.

(b) **Relational approaches** begin by identifying the conflict parties and concentrate on relations between them. There are relations of interest, relations of power, relations of attitude and belief etc. Here, for example, is CR Mitchell’s (relational) definition of conflict:

“What situation in which two or more social entities or ‘parties’ (however defined or structured) perceive that they possess mutually incompatible goals” (1981, p.17). Relational definitions tend either to be in terms of the *interests* of the parties (an ‘objective’ or ‘instrumental’ approach traditionally characteristic of social science), or in terms of their *perceptions* or *attitudes* (a ‘subjective’ or ‘expressive’ approach). To emphasise the former suggests that the conflict is about scarce resources. To emphasise the latter suggests that the conflict is about hopes, fears and projections. CR Mitchell calls himself an ‘instrumentalist’, but his definition above seems more ‘expressive’.

(c) **Cultural approaches** see the origins of conflict in innate human qualities, such as a ‘hunting instinct’, or ‘natural aggression’. Are human beings naturally aggressive, or do different societies behave differently in this respect (and how does ‘internal’ relate to ‘external’ aggression)? Is aggression learnt? Can it be controlled? Or sublimated? Are human beings at base like animals? And are animals aggressive? Or does natural selection favour cooperation as much, if not more than aggression? Is predation the same as aggression? Are animal displays of aggression often functional within an overarching context of cooperation and conflict avoidance?

We might finally note that conflicts go through various phases (with attendant complications). Escalation, for example, may be seen to move from isolation/cooperation (there is no contact, or compatible goals), through a phase of incipient conflict (there are incompatible goals), to latent conflict (goal incompatibility is recognised), to the outbreak of manifest conflict (there is overt conflict behaviour to achieve these goals and prevent the other from doing so), to the various stages of mounting violence. These phases are the same in conflict de-escalation.

**B. Conflict Response: the Positive Management of Conflict**

If conflict can be good or bad, the aim of positive conflict management is to recognise the difference and transform the latter into the former. A complication here is that there are many different and often mutually
incompatible paradigms within which conflict is understood. Paul Wehr (1979 pp. 1-8) lists seven:

a) that it is **biologically innate** in social animals (in which case control and coercion may seem appropriate);

b) that it results from **structural asymmetries** (in which case the aim might be to change structures);

c) that it is **functional** for social systems (in which case it might be to encourage controlled conflict);

d) that it is **dysfunctional** for social systems (in which case it might be to restore systemic equilibrium);

e) that it is the result of **incompatible competing interests** (in which case it might be to contain it within a deterrent and balance of power nexus - this is the realist response in international relations);

f) that it is a consequence of **poor communication and irrationality** (in which case it might be to clear up misunderstanding);

g) that it is a **natural and predictable** process common to all societies (in which case the idea might be to legitimise, formalise and routinise the process - for example, through a system of parliamentary democracy).

The theory and practice of positive conflict management - called ‘**conflict resolution**’ since Kenneth Boulding and Norman Angell coined the term in the 1950s - recognises the differences between all the various types, levels and aspects of conflict, as also the fundamental controversies about them, but nevertheless holds that conflict can be usefully studied as a generic phenomenon. As a part of peace studies, conflict resolution is also both (a) analytic (it studies conflict as a phenomenon, what Boulding calls ‘polemologie’), and (b) normative or prescriptive (it aims to prevent, mitigate and resolve destructive conflict). It adopts non-violent and peaceful approaches, but (along the lines of Gandhi) is quite prepared where necessary to be forthright and challenging. A few useful distinctions can be made at the outset here.

There are (a) approaches which concentrate on direct relations between the **conflict parties** or protagonists - for example, negotiation principles and techniques, one-to-one listening, communication and dialogue techniques etc., and (b) approaches which focus on the role of ‘outsiders’ or **third parties** (some are unhappy with this term) - for example, facilitation, conciliation, mediation, arbitration etc.

As in peace studies in general, conflict resolution is studied at every level, inter-personal to inter-state. At domestic level, for example, ‘The Alliance for Conflict Transformation’, which is a network of projects, organisations
and individuals interested in conflict resolution in Cambodia and South East Asia, covers: education (conflict resolution in schools), family or community mediation, inter-group conflict, neighbourhood/civil disputes, organisational conflict, victim/offender mediation, etc.

Some theorists and practitioners, who tend to favour the instrumental approach, focus on reconciling ‘objective’ interests. This is sometimes referred to as conflict settlement. Other theorists and practitioners, who tend to favour the expressive approach, focus on overcoming ‘subjective’ perceptions. Some (confusingly) reserve the term conflict resolution for this deep transformation in what they see as underlying conflict relations. For them, conflict settlement only treats symptoms (for example, behaviour). It leaves the underlying conflict attitudes untouched. This is all somewhat controversial and links to the idea that, when responding to complex social conflict, it is important to deal both at structural level (for example, constitutional arrangements etc.) and relational level (for example, cultural-community relations etc.).

It is also important to match appropriate type of intervention to the stage the conflict has reached in escalation or de-escalation. At international level this is the main idea behind the UN Secretary-General’s distinction between pre-conflict conflict prevention, peace making to end conflict once it has broken out, and post-conflict peace building to reconcile the parties, rebuild shattered relations and create conditions such that destructive conflict will not break out again. Peace keepers play a role in all these phases. Different tracks (e.g. governmental or non-governmental) have different but complementary roles to play. And different levels of coercion or force (e.g. mediation with or without ‘muscle’, the offering of incentives/imposition of sanctions, the threat or use of military force) have controversial relevance.

Peace and War - the Great Traditions

A. Introduction: A question in Applied Ethics

So far we have assumed that peace studies is concerned with the appropriate manipulation of exchange or integrative power, but not threat power. We have not only defined peace as the absence of violence, but implied that peace is the absence of force. But is this true? In domestic politics the police and the courts enforce law for the protection of peace-loving and law-abiding citizens. We do not usually call this an exercise of violence, but it is certainly an exercise of force. The question to be addressed in this section is: does the same apply in international politics? In a violent world how should we respond when values we deeply
cherish are threatened? Must we stand by and let them be trampled underfoot by the unscrupulous or wicked (“It is only necessary for the good man to do nothing for evil to triumph” - Edmund Burke)? In the international arena there is no police force. There is no world government. Some call this an ‘international anarchy’, not meaning chaos, but that there is no supreme world sovereign, in international law there are only sovereign states, which, as such, enjoy formal equality. So in the end what is at issue is war. Are we ever justified in taking up arms, or, as James Turner Johnson puts it: “does the defence of values by force remain a moral possibility? (Johnson 1986 p.31). Can war be an instrument of peace and justice? Must the use of military force, unlike police force, always be ruled out as (ethically) illegitimate violence? Should military force have been used to expel Saddam Hussein from Kuwait? Or to protect humanitarian aid in Somalia? Should nothing have been done to stop the war in Iraq? Clearly this is an enormous subject, and a very difficult one for students of peace studies who are often divided on these issues.

There has, so far as we know, always been fighting and war in the world. Most of the current settlement of peoples and all state borders are partly or almost entirely the result of past war. The great traditions themselves are highly ambivalent about war.

**Religious Inspiration**

The Old Testament is full of battles in which Jaweh encouraged the Israelites to slaughter, expel or subjugate other peoples living in what they believed was the ‘promised land’. Between 70 AD and 1948 Jewish people had no state and were in no position to wage war. Since the creation of the state of Israel, however, they have not hesitated to fight when they thought it necessary and have overwhelmingly considered themselves justified in so doing.

The Christian record is equally inconsistent. In general (although the full story is more complicated) the early Christians, along lines advocated in the Sermon on the Mount, seem often to have been pacifist. Once the Roman Emperor Constantine was converted, however, (4th century AD), most Christian theologians believed that the temporal sword should be used in certain circumstances. This remains the majority view, despite the strong pacifist convictions of Mennonites, Quakers and others.

Islam is much the same. Early Meccan suras in the Koran seem to emphasise peaceful rather than military struggle. After the Hijra, however, and the setting up of the first Muslim Umma (community) in Medina, the prophet had no compunction about defending the new polity, and, indeed,
expanding it, by the sword. His death was followed by one of the most remarkable military conquests in history.

Nor are ‘Eastern’ religions different. The early Hindu traditions are full of military epics. The Bhagavad Gita is set in the context of a great battle in which the kshatriya Arjuna and his charioteer, the avatar Krishna, discourse between the two armies. Arjuna questions the ethics of fighting. The incarnate God tells him that he should fight. Gandhi, whose favourite text this was, interpreted it allegorically: “It describes the spiritual duel that always goes on in the human heart. Physical warfare was brought in merely to make the description of the internal duel more alluring”.

Since the seventeenth century the so-called ‘modern state’ (roughly, since the Peace of Westphalia brought the European ‘Thirty Years War’ to an end in 1648) has been seen to hold a monopoly on the use of military force. It is perhaps the most cherished aspect of ‘state sovereignty’. Since 1945 this has been tempered by the ban in the United Nations Charter on aggression or the threat of aggression between states (Article 2(4)). In strict interpretations of the Charter there are now only two legitimate grounds for the use of military force between states: self-defence (Article 51) and action authorised by the Security Council in response to threats to international peace and security (Article 42). Recently many have pressed for the addition of military action under the authority of the United Nations in defence of human rights – “humanitarian intervention”. (See supplementary reading)

Supplementary Reading on International Law

International Law

International law plays an important role in our international and domestic lives. It subjects the often chaotic interactions of countries to the same reason and order- at least in theory- that governs the interactions of individuals. Yet international law is not codified in the same way as domestic laws nor is it enforced in the same ways. It is relatively disorganized, spread over history and generated in many different ways. International law has many imperfections. However, depending on how we chose for international law to develop in the future, it offers the prospect of restraining, or possibly ending war, and promoting a more lawful world, which may also be more predictable, just, and peaceful.

There are four major sources of international law:

- Classical writings that have been widely accepted,
- Custom (International custom, as evidence of general practice accepted as law).
- Treaties (International conventions, whether general or particular, establishing rules expressly recognised by the contesting states); and
- Rulings of International Courts (Opinions of qualified publicists are subsidiary means for the determination of rules of law).

**International Politics International Ethics and International Law**

**The nature of international law**

‘Is international law to be seen as a progressive instrument of change, as a means of furthering the interests of peoples rather than governments, as something antithetical to the Hobbesian world of brute force? Or is it to be seen as a practical means of devising modest and limited adjustments between conflicting interests of the great powers, who are the principle agents of its creation?’ (Adam Roberts, ‘Law, lawyers and nuclear weapons;,, Review of International Studies, 16(1) January 1990, 84).

Jack Donnelly thinks that it is both: ‘international law is in many ways the intersection of international morality and politics’. He goes on to conclude that:

‘Law, whether domestic or international, can hold a community to standards which it generally accepts and respects, but by which individuals occasionally find it hard to abide. It can also help to protect the community against outlaws and provide some assurance to individuals who comply that others will not be allowed to use this compliance to unfair advantage. Law cannot, however, make the majority of people or states better than they truly want to be; it must take its subjects as they are, in the sense of the best that they are willing to become’ (‘Human rights, humanitarian intervention and American foreign policy’, Journal of International Affairs, 37, 3 23-4).

The relationship between ethics, politics and law in the international scene is complex.

(i) Positivists and realists, in rejecting ‘legalism-moralism’ tend to lump law with ethics to the disadvantage of both. For positivists international law has been dismissed as ‘positive morality’, no more than ‘opinions or sentiments current among nations generally’ (John Austen, The Province of Jurisprudence Determined, 1832). For a realist like the American Dean Acheson, when decisions involving the possible deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent people were being made at the time of the
Cuba missile crisis in 1962, ‘those involved will remember the irrelevance of the supposed moral considerations brought into the discussions; moral talk did not bear on the problem’. In supreme national emergency all necessary means are adopted without compunction. International ‘legitimacy’ is not relevant. International politics shakes itself clear from international law.

(ii) International ethicists, on the other hand, are equally dismissive of international law insofar as it is seen to be subsumed into international politics:

International law ‘constrains or it is a travesty to call it law, it transcends the power of the powerful and transforms the situation of the weak or it is a travesty to call it law’ (P. Allott *Eunomia*, OUP, 1990, xvii).

**International war-decision law (jus ad bellum)**

According to restrictionists the initiation of war, as aggression, is outlawed under United Nations Charter Article 2(4):

All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.

Only two legal bases for recourse to armed force are recognised.

(i) Self-defence under Article 51:

Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.

(ii) UN enforcement action ordered by the Security Council under Article 42:

Should the Security Council consider that measures provided for in Article 41 would be inadequate or have proved to be inadequate; it may take such action by air, sea or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security...

Recourse to armed force beyond this is contested, for example:

(iii) Invitation by host government.

(iv) Cross-border reprisals.
(v) Rescue of nationals.
(vi) Upholding treaty rights.
(vii) International police action.
(ix) Support for legitimate secessionist movements.
(x) Humanitarian intervention.

**International war-conduct law (jus in bello)**

Derived from principles of military necessity (force should not be used wantonly), humanity (non-combatant immunity from direct intentional attack) and chivalry (honourable behaviour vis-à-vis the enemy), international law recognises restraints on war-conduct, against the spirit of the dictum attributed to General Sherman in his notorious burning of Atlanta - ‘war is hell’. For Sherman, it was the Confederacy that had transgressed by initiating war. In response, he had no option but to pursue victory by all means available, and could not be held morally responsible. In marked contrast is the ‘Martens clause’ submitted by the Russian, Fedor Fedorovich Martens to the 20 June 1899 Hague Conference, and subsequently incorporated in the preamble to the 1899 and 1907 conventions:

‘The Conference is unanimous in thinking that it is extremely desirable that the usages of war should be defined and regulated. In this spirit it has adopted a great number of provisions which have for their object the determination of the rights and of the duties of belligerents and of populations, and for their end the reduction and softening of the evils of war, so far as military necessities permit. It has not always been possible to come to an agreement that henceforth all these stipulations should apply in all practical cases. On the other hand, it could not possibly be the intention of the Conference that unforeseen cases should, in the absence of written stipulations, be left to the arbitrary decision of those who commanded the army. In awaiting the time when a complete code of the laws of war may be elaborated and proclaimed, the Conference considers it opportune to state that in cases not provided for in the Articles of this date, populations and belligerents remain under the safeguards and government of the principles of international law, resulting from the customs established between civilised nations, the laws of humanity, and the demands of the public conscience’.

Nothing could illustrate better the complex interrelationships between international politics, ethics and law.

International humanitarian law applicable in armed conflict has been codified in two parallel streams, (i) the law of the Hague, which mainly covers
the rights and duties of belligerents, including prohibitions and restrictions on the conduct of military operations, and (ii) the law of Geneva, mainly designed to ensure respect, protection and humane treatment for those taking no direct part in the fighting (wounded, sick, medical services, prisoners of war, civilians). The law of Geneva, initiated in 1864, includes the 1949 Conventions, and the two 1977 Additional Protocols on international armed conflicts and internal wars.

**Humanitarian intervention**

Important concepts in the study of Humanitarian intervention are:

- Sovereignty, non-intervention, intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The concept of sovereignty</th>
<th>The non-intervention norm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External aspect</td>
<td>(c) respect for mutual independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) the right to wage war</td>
<td>(d) self-determination of peoples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal aspect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) absolute supremacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Charter Article 2(4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Charter Article 2(7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require Members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter; but this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII.

*UN General Assembly resolution 2131, 21 December 1965*

No state has the right to intervene, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any state. Consequently armed intervention and all forms of interference or attempted threats against the personality of the state or against its political, economic and cultural elements, are condemned.

*UN Charter Article 42*

Should the Security Council consider that measures provided for in Article 41 would be inadequate or have proved to be inadequate; it may take such action by air, sea or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security...

*UN Charter Article 51*
International Court of Justice ruling:
The court can only regard the alleged right of intervention as the manifestation of a policy of force, such as has, in the past, given rise to the most serious abuses and such as cannot, whatever the present defects in international organisation, find a place in international law (ICJ Reports, Corfu Channel Case (Merits), 1949, 39).

**Definition**

The threat or use of force by a state or states abroad, for the sole purpose of preventing or putting a halt to a serious violation of fundamental human rights, in particular the right to life of persons, regardless of their nationality, such protection taking place neither upon authorization by the relevant organs of the United Nations nor with permission by the legitimate government of the target state (Wil Verwey, 1992, 114).


**Retributive Justice : Why Punish War Criminals?**

**Classical theories**

Briefly, there are three well-known theories of punishment:

(a) **Retribution** where the sense of justice is tied to, if not equated with, the idea of desert. ‘An eye for and eye and a tooth for a tooth’. This corresponds to a deeply held conviction of many that criminals should ‘pay’ through punishment which is justified on the grounds that the criminal has created an imbalance in the social order that must be addressed by action against the criminal. Many conceive of the afterlife in these terms, particularly within the Christian/Muslim traditions with their doctrines of judgement and eternal punishment/reward. Others find all this primitive and barbaric.

(b) **Utilitarian** where the central concept has tended to be deterrence. This looks to the future only in its classic form. It has been criticised for leading to recommendation of punishment of the innocent if this would prevent greater suffering overall. See JS Mill’s (1868)
celebrated parliamentary speech in favour of capital punishment. Most utilitarians today argue against the death penalty. Protection of the public also features here.

(c) Rehabilitation where the emphasis is on reform of the criminal.

Discussion: why punish war criminals

There have been many arguments both in support of and against a criminal trial of the surviving Khmer Rouge leaders for the period of Democratic Kampuchea 1970 – 1975. Discuss whether a retributive form of accountability is the most appropriate accountability mechanism for Cambodia.

Important to peace studies are the notions of reconciliation and restorative justice, amongst others.

Applied Ethics in Peace Studies

Definition

(A) Ethics

Some theorists use the words ethics and morality interchangeably (e.g. ethics = moral philosophy). Others stress the difference between the Greek ethikos (from ethos, roughly, character) and the Latin moralitas (from mos, roughly, custom), and distinguish accordingly between broad considerations to do with choice and action (ethics) and the more narrow realm defined by conventional rules of proper conduct (morals) - what Bernard Williams calls ‘the peculiar institution of morality’ (Williams Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy 1985 6). In this course we are concerned with the broad sense of ethics/morality.

What marks out the ethical from the non-ethical? For example, it is quite common to distinguish between facts and values (a distinction made particularly since the eighteenth century by positivists under the influence of seventeenth century science). One of the most famous claims in deontic logic (the application of logic to ethical argument) is that there is a ‘logical gap’ between is (how things are) and ought (how things ought to be) such that inference from the former to the latter is invalid (Hume Treatise of Human Nature 1739-40 III. 1.1). Values are often further subdivided into ethical and non-ethical (for example, aesthetic).
We note six ways in which the ethical field has been marked out by different theorists (there are others), in terms of: (i) form (universality), (ii) substance (human welfare), (iii) authority (what is commanded), (iv) function (to mediate conflict inherent in the human condition), (v) attitude (expression of approval/disapproval), (vi) disposition (altruism) etc.

For Peter Singer the key aspect is universality:

“From ancient times, philosophers and moralists have expressed the idea that ethical conduct is acceptable from a point of view that is somehow universal. The ‘Golden Rule’ attributed to Moses, to be found in the book of Leviticus and subsequently repeated by Jesus, tells us to go beyond our own personal interests and ‘love thy neighbour as thyself - in other words, give the same weight to the interests of others as one gives to one’s own interests. The same idea of putting oneself in the position of another is involved in the other Christian formulation of the commandment that we do to others as we would have them do to us. The Stoics held that ethics derives from a universal natural law. Kant developed this idea into his famous formula: ‘Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.’ Kant’s theory has itself been modified and developed by R.M. Hare, who sees universalisability as a logical feature of moral judgements. The eighteenth-century British philosophers Hutcheson, Hume and Adam Smith appealed to an imaginary ‘impartial spectator’ as the test of a moral judgement, and this theory has its modern version in the Ideal Observer theory. Utilitarians from Jeremy Bentha. M to J.J.C. Smart, take it as axiomatic that in deciding moral issues ‘each counts for one and none for more than one’; while John Rawls, a leading contemporary critic of utilitarianism, incorporates essentially the same axiom into his own theory by deriving basic ethical principles from an imaginary choice in which those choosing do not know whether they will be the ones who gain or lose by the principles they select. Even Continental European philosophers like the existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre and the critical theorist Jurgen Habermas, who differ in many ways from their English-speaking colleagues - and from each other - agree that ethics is in some sense universal” (Practical Ethics 1993 10-11).

As a utilitarian, Singer identifies ethical behaviour with the impartial or social point of view, expressed through the principle of equal consideration of interests: ‘The essence of the principle of equal consideration of interests is that we give equal weight in our moral deliberations to the like interests of all those affected by our actions’ (Practical Ethics, 21).

Ethical considerations apply to conduct (what should we do?), character (how should we live? what should we become?) and social arrangements
(what type of society/world should we create?). They apply both to individuals (for methodological individualists this is their primary locus) and collectivilies (for methodological collectivists public policy is the nub).

Here, since our concern for the rest of the course will be with issues of peace and war, we concentrate mainly on actions and policies. For our specification of the domain of ethics we will adopt the following definition, broader than Peter Singer’s:

“Where (i) it is a case of evaluating policy options with a view to action, particularly where such action is likely to affect people seriously and the issues are controversial, then (ii) to justify decisions in general terms which should also apply in other comparable circumstances is to make an ethical argument.”

In other words, (i) ethical questions characteristically arise where there are options to be evaluated with a view to action. Traditionally, this assumes free will and the possibility of rational choice. If there are no possibilities or alternatives, then there is no room for the ethical (‘ought’ implies ‘can’ in the formulation attributed to Kant). And the alternatives must be seen to make a difference, to matter. Ethical questions intensify when preferred outcomes are seen to be in tension if not to be mutually exclusive, where what happens is seen to affect people seriously and where the issues are contentious and emotions highly charged. In these circumstances, (ii) the ethical realm is characteristically entered when the advocates of different courses of action justify their recommendations by appeal to generalised argument.

(B) Descriptive ethics, normative ethics, and meta-ethics

We distinguish:

(a) Descriptive ethics: that is, the study of the ethical principles and practices of individuals and societies across geographical space and historical time - the history, sociology and anthropology of ethics. This approach has often been referred to as ‘value free’: simply a description of how things are, not an evaluation of how they ought to be. Does this make it ‘scientific’ or ‘objective’? In the empiricist tradition such has been the implicit and at times explicit claim since the time of Herodotus. Is such a claim ‘value-free’? There are many examples of ‘slides’ from description to evaluation - for example, via the meta-ethical conclusion that ethics is ‘no more than’ epiphenomenal, together with accompanying policy recommendations.
(b) **Normative ethics:** that is, the part of ethics explicitly concerned with guiding action, or with promoting personal and social development. Here are those theories and practices which directly aim to answer the questions listed above: What should we do? How should we live? What society (world) should we create?

Normative ethics is sometimes divided into:

- **Theoretical normative ethics:** the more or less abstract theories to which appeal is made, or which purport to guide consistent and principled decision-making. Examples would be theories in consequentialist ethics, deontological ethics, contractarian ethics, natural law ethics, rights based ethics, religion based ethics, etc..

- **Applied normative ethics:** the application of ethical reasoning to specific issues of the kind considered in this course. Here we arrive at the heart of our subject matter, although in the process of deliberation we will be driven to take note of differences at theoretical normative level. We will also be straying into the realms of descriptive ethics and meta-ethics.

(c) **Meta-ethics:** that is, the process of stepping back from the business of descriptive and normative ethics in order to ask questions about them. For example, what are we doing when we engage in ethical debate? These are not so much theories of ethics as theories about ethics. We have already met one type of approach under (a) above: the conclusion, having studied the history and sociology of ethics, that ethics is, say, no more than epiphenomenal on species survival (after Darwin), class dominance (after Marx), or introjected superego (after Freud).

**The ethical development of societies: from parochialism to cosmopolitanism?**

What of the (natural) history of ethics? We briefly consider the question of origins (ethology), early pre-history (anthropology), and the evolution of the great civilisations (Judaic, Christian, Islamic, Indic, Sinic) which still provide the roots for current global ethical traditions. In Europe (despite protests about ‘the noble savage’ from Rousseau) the Enlightenment brought the idea of progress and ethical advance for civilised nations - a language which still survives in international law. Colonial peoples were thought ethically, as well as politically and economically, backward. The First World War proved a shock here - the ‘civilised nations’ were responsible for unprecedented barbarity.
Then came the Second World War. Now the general revulsion against the ethics believed in and practiced in Nazi Germany revived the idea that there are minimum standards of ethical decency, and that regimes and societies which fall below these standards can and should be censured, if not, where possible, prevented from persisting in violations. The whole enterprise of the United Nations International Bill of Human Rights expressed recognition that there were universal ethical standards and a long-term aspiration to achieve them. It embodies the idea that there is ethical progress for societies:

‘International human rights is the world’s first universal ideology. Religious, political, philosophical, and economic ideas have adherents in various parts of the world, but human rights represents an idea that now has world-wide acceptance’. (D. Weissbrodt, ‘Human Rights: An Historical Perspective’ in P. Davies (ed.) Human Rights, Routledge, 1988, 1).

Is this the case? Or is the idea of human rights a ‘Western’ concept, and attempts to lay it down and enforce it as an international norm a manifestation of Western domination?

From a somewhat different angle, how about the idea that there is ethical development for societies in general inasmuch as human beings learn progressively to expand the boundaries of ethical significance until it coincides with humanity itself (or, for Singer and others, sentience)? One of the limitations of Aristotle in this view, therefore, is that his Politics/Ethics was conceived mainly in terms of the individual polis. It was an ethics for citizens -but did not extend to the ‘cosmopolis’ to the extent that non-citizens hardly featured. The practice of slavery was not considered ethically significant. Rather along the lines sketched out for individuals by Lawrence Kohibeig, we could trace three stages: (i) ethics underpinned by fear (tribal ethics), (ii) ethics underpinned by conformity to the group (the ethics of the polis/ethnic group/nation), (iii) ethics which has become truly universal and cosmopolitan. Needless to say, this would be criticised, among others, by communitarians.

**Teleological and deontological traditions**

We have reached what many regard as a fundamental divide in Western normative ethics between teleological (Greek ‘telos’ = goal) and deontological (Greek ‘deon’ = duty) approaches. (Some trace this back to the Greek and Hebrew roots of European ethics respectively).

The pre-enlightenment era in the West was dominated by religious teleological systems in which what was right for human beings was held to
derive from divinely ordained purposes within a wider hierarchical natural order. Since the enlightenment, the teleological approach has been secularised, detached from ideas of natural ‘goals’ for individual and collective human development, and translated into various forms of consequentialism. What counts ethically for strict consequentialists is the outcome of actions, not the actions themselves. Deontological theories are then defined as perhaps the most prominent among various forms of non-consequentialism. Non-consequentialists hold that agents, their intentions and the nature of actions themselves are central to ethical evaluation. Here we note a number of overlapping ways in which the consequentialist, non-consequentialist divide is said to manifest itself. This only gives a rough approximation in a very complicated field.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consequentialist (Teleological/Utilitarian)</th>
<th>Non-consequentialist (Deontological/Kantian)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consequences of actions</td>
<td>Nature of actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future oriented</td>
<td>Present and past also</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Intentions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ends over means</td>
<td>Absolute prohibitions (evil may not be done that good may come)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good over right (promote values; instrumental relation between values and agents)</td>
<td>Right over good (honour values; non-instrumental relation between values and agents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impartial aggregation of utilities</td>
<td>Personal autonomy of agent reflexivity (virtue ethic)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For deontologists, teleologists miss the ethical realm altogether inasmuch as they thereby not only allow, but advocate what is deontologically forbidden (for example the destruction of innocent people). This opens the floodgates to atrocity (Hitler, Stalin) in which individuals and minorities are sacrificed on the altar of ‘the greatest good of the greatest number’. Deontologists recognise absolute prohibitions which protect the ethical realm from such barbarity. Insofar as human rights are seen as absolute (non-derogable), they could be claimed as ‘deontological’. They ‘trump’ all calculations of ‘the general good’. For teleologists, such as utilitarians, it is deontologists who are looking in the wrong direction. Solely concerned with their own ‘purity’, they ignore the results of their action and inaction. For example, for them all that matters ethically is that they have not transgressed (for example themselves harmed the innocent). They refuse to take responsibility for the consequences - that millions more of the innocent will suffer as a result - simply because they themselves will not have directly done it. They are blind
to ‘negative responsibility’ (for example, Henry Shue’s ‘holocaust of neglect’).
This is not an adequate basis for ethics. It generates a negative self-regarding code, not a positive foundation for public policy decision.

Two of the most influential ethical traditions in the West in recent times have been utilitarianism and Kantian ethics, representing the consequentialist and non-consequentialist streams. They are too complicated to go into properly here, but a few remarks will introduce them.

(A) Utilitarianism

The principle of utility:

‘By the principle of utility is meant that principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question: or, what is the same thing in other words, to promote or to oppose that happiness. I say of every action whatsoever; and therefore not only of every action of a private individual, but of every measure of government’ (Bentham, An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, 1780).

For Bentham the only intrinsic good was pleasure, and the only intrinsic bad pain. He was both a psychological and ethical hedonist (Greek ‘hedone’ = pleasure). He proposed a hedonic calculus for measuring utility (the quantity of pleasure/pain likely to be produced by alternative courses of action). This included intensity, duration, certainty/uncertainty, propinquity/remoteness, fecundity, purity, extent. The calculus involves a multiplication of quantity with probability of outcome (i.e. a bad outcome with low probability may come out the same as a less bad outcome with higher probability). Mill, critical of what he saw as Bentham’s view that ‘quantity of pleasure being equal, push-pin is as good as poetry’, refined the hedonism by recognising distinctions of quality (higher and lower pleasures): ‘It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied’ (Utilitarianism, 1863). Negative utilitarianism sees avoidance of pain as deserving especial emphasis. Today the ‘intrinsic good’ which utilitarian seek to serve is described less in terms of pleasure than in terms of (a) preferences/desires ((i) actual or (ii) ‘rational’ i.e. preferences people would have if they were rational), or (b) needs (interests independent of preferences).

Further developments have included the expansion from act-utilitarianism (which only considers individual acts and is thus situational) to rule-utilitarianism (which assesses the utility of practices and rules of behaviour...
overall even when they may not produce the best results in individual cases. The latter can be seen to be a move in the direction of Kant, incorporating his principle of universalisability.

(B) Kantian ethics

There are two deep roots to Kant’s theory. One root reaches down to Kant’s view of personal autonomy (human freedom). This relates to his ‘two-world metaphysic’ (Critique of Pure Reason, 1781) which distinguishes the ‘phenomenal’ world (as perceivable, knowable by creatures like us) from the ‘noumenal’ world (things as they are ‘in themselves’). To treat people as means only and not also as ends is to ignore the latter. This is the ultimate, irreducible source of human worth and dignity. The other root reaches down into Kant’s view of ‘pure’ human reason. Pure reason delivers universal and necessary judgements, both theoretical (i.e. science) and practical (i.e. ethics). Pure reason also is not found in the phenomenal world. It can only be deduced ‘transcendentally’. So far as concerns ethics, therefore (Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten/Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals, 1785), we can trace our deliberations back to their ultimate grounding in pure practical reason, the categorical imperative (which says ‘do this’ unequivocally, as against hypothetical imperatives which say ‘do this if...’).

The categorical imperative is given in four versions (wording, Thomas, 1993):

1. **Formula of universal law** (form): Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law (alternative: Act as though the maxim of your action were by your will to become a universal law of nature).

2. **Formula of the end in itself** (content): Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end, never as a means only.

3. **Formula of autonomy** (of agent): Act only so that the will through its maxims can regard itself at the same time as universally lawgiving.

4. **Formula of the kingdom of ends** (synthesis of 1-3): So act as if you, by your maxims, were at all times a legislative member in the universal realm of ends.

Formula I stresses necessity and universality, the hallmarks for Kant of the sense in which ethical maxims and principles are deliverances of pure practical reason which thus in their origin entirely transcend the phenomenal world to which they apply. Formula 2 stresses the non-reducible value of the persons whom actions and policies will affect. For many Kantians this rules
out the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Formula 3 stresses the autonomy of the agent, and above all the intrinsic value of the agent’s ‘good will’. The good will is not motivated simply by self-interest, nor is it only driven by inclination, however benign. It acts because it sees by the light of pure practical reason that this is what should be done. Unlike utilitarians, for Kant the good will (which is at the same time the ethical will) has intrinsic value. Indeed only the good will is ‘good without qualification’. Formula 4 sums up the rest. It offers Kantians an awe-inspiring vision of the ethical realm, a ‘kingdom of ends’, which shares nominal quality with the transcendental categories of pure theoretical reason and the transcendental aesthetic which generates space and time, but imbues it with value. This is how Kant, having travelled along the path of Humean scepticism to the point where he ‘awoke’ from his ‘metaphysical slumbers’ and let go of traditional (medieval) dialectics, finally rediscovered at the end of his life the metaphysical underpinnings for ethics. No grander conception of the ethical realm has been offered since.

The test for Kantian maxims is whether they can be consistently applied, not only logically (contradictions in the laws of nature), but also in view of likely consequences (contradictions in the will). This roughly relates to Kant’s distinction between perfect duties (which are exceptionless - we must always fulfil them - like keeping promises), and imperfect duties (which we must on occasion fulfil - like giving to charity). Here is a distinction between the obligatory and forbidden, and the recommended and permissible.

The richness of Kant’s legacy is attested to by its continuing influence. A number of recent Kantians have shifted interest away from individual actions to policies and structures, as, for example, with ‘Kantian contractarianism’. Here, in contrast to ‘Hobbesian contractarianism’ with its basis in self-interest and mutual advantage, the emphasis is on the inherent moral standing of persons (equality of concern for those who are ‘ends in themselves’) and on impartial deliberations of justice, as expounded by John Rawls. Strengths include the emphasis on universalisability, the respect for human autonomy, and the depth of ethical reasoning.
Further Reading/ References:


Online Resources for further education in Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution:

The Conflict Resolution Information Source at www.crinfo.org is an excellent database for online information.

The following links are useful links for PEACE EDUCATION ONLINE:

* Cyberschoolbus - UN global teaching and learning project www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/
* United States Institute for Peace
  www.usip.org/
  www.usip.org/class/guides/
  has downloads of teaching guides
* The Global Schoolhouse
  www.gsh.org/
  online global collaborative learning
* Conflict Resolution Network
  www.crnhq.org/freecrkit.html
  free conflict resolution kit
* The Institute for Peace and Justice
  www.ipj_ppj.org/
  classroom activities
* Kids Pledge of Non-Violence
  www.simpleliving.org/catalog/FullText/KidPeace.html
* Out on a Limb: A Guide to Getting Along
  www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/conflict/index.html
  conflict resolution kit for grades 3-4

* Peace Doves computer game 15+
  www.nobel.se/peace/educational/nuclear_weapons/

* PeaceJam
  www.peacejam.org
  www.peacejam.org/laureates.shtml
  click on names for activities

* Peace and NonViolence Curriculum: Education for Peaceful Living Grades 1-6
  www.mincava.umn.edu/reports/book/

* Teaching and Learning for Peace Foundation
  Stories and songs and activities
The Research Process
We now begin by looking in more detail at the methods social scientists use to conduct research. We start with the basic scientific approach.

Topic 3: The Scientific Approach

Purpose

The purpose of this section is to explain the origins of social science and the scientific method. We often think of science as a body of knowledge including physics, chemistry, biology and other natural sciences. This is one, and probably the most common, use of the word in English. But it is not the meaning we shall be using here. Here we shall use the word, ‘science’ to refer to a method of study, a way of discovering “the facts”. It is this scientific method which links all areas of study which rely upon empirical facts – they all share this method of study. So what is the scientific method? It is the purpose of this section to explain.

Lecture

The scientific method and its application in social research; what we research; stages of the research process; purpose and method.

Question and answer session on this section: the scientific approach.

Glossary

Whenever you start to learn about anything that is new to you your vocabulary expands. The new ideas and skills need specific words to describe them. This is true in any language including Khmer, Cham, Thai or any other Cambodian language. If completing this course has not increased your English vocabulary then something has gone seriously wrong.

When you have completed this section you should know the meanings of the following words and phrases and be able to use them correctly.

Do not be daunted by the length of these lists of terms. Note that some concepts appear in several lists. This serves to emphasise their importance.
These repeated terms are especially important. Make sure you are thoroughly familiar with them at an early stage in the course.

- Empirical/empiricism
- Logical
- Skeptical
- Critical
- Valid
- Invalid
- Definition
- Concept
- Conceptual definition
- Operational definition
- Variable
- Rational/ rationalist
- Operationalisation
- *Ex post facto*
- Empiricist
- Case
- Hypothesis
- Dependent variable
- Independent variable
- Induction
- Research methods
- Methodology
- Unit of analysis
- Derive, deduce, deduction
- Predict/prediction
- Probably/probability/probabilistic
- Theory
- Epistemology

**Skills**

How to design a social survey (basic).
Methodology: how to analyse the relationship between purpose and method.
Further reading

A number of readings relevant to this topic are given below. You are not expected to read all of them. They are there to ease pressure on the library so that you will always be able to find something relevant. In general you should try to read at least three of these references. Usually they are the relevant reading in this study guide, a reading from Mann and a reading from de Vaus. Read actively. There is no point in reading if you do not understand. Make sure you understand every sentence, every step. Write down words, phrases, sentences you do not understand. Try to find out yourself what they mean by looking them up in other book or asking fellow students. If you are not able to find out what they mean bring them to class. The following readings are graded as follows:

*   Easy         †    Essential
**  More difficult ††  Important
*** Difficult     ††† Useful

In this study guide please read: pp 57-63: The Research Process.
** † de Vaus, 2002: 1-8 The nature of surveys; 9-40 Theory and social research.
***†† Madge, 1953: 1-18
***†† Madge, 1953: 19-37
***††† Rosenberg, 1968: 3-22

Exercise

Complete the following exercise and bring it to class on the date given to you by your instructor.

In your own words explain the meaning of the following terms: theory, inductive, deductive, ex post facto, operationalisation, empiricist, rationalist
The Scientific Approach

In this topic, we begin by defining science and compare the scientific approach with other approaches to knowledge. We discuss the basic assumptions of science, its aims, and the roles of methodology in the scientific approach. We try to understand the basic concepts and ideas of science and understand the model of the research process. The discipline of science has its own topic dedicated to it. This is because the scientific approach underlies how other disciplines such as those of the social sciences we were introduced to earlier, try to approach social problems. It helps us to understand why and how the social sciences are members of the family of science.

Topic Overview

1. What is science?
2. Basic assumptions of science
3. The role of methods
4. Aims of the Social Sciences
5. Principles of Scientific Methods

1. What is science?

The sciences are united by their methods, not by their subject matter. What sets the scientific approach apart from other ways of acquiring knowledge is the assumptions on which it is grounded and its methods.

Empiricism and the Search for Knowledge

The ultimate goal of science is to produce a verifiable body of knowledge. Such knowledge enables us to explain, understand and predict the phenomena that interest us. We can only know of the world by perceiving it through our senses, and science rests on the assumption that knowledge is acquired through our senses, that everything can be observed and/or measured. This is known as empiricism and science is necessarily empirical. When we talk of something being empirical we mean that it can be perceived or measured by us.

There have been many different methods for explaining the world around us. Religious, mystical or authoritarian methods have been used. But what distinguishes the scientific approach is that it is, above all else, logical and rational. There must be clear reasons for doing or assuming something. It is an assumption of science that nothing is self-evident; claims for truth must be demonstrated objectively. Scientists accept that the possibility of error is always present; therefore scientific thinking is skeptical and critical.
2. Basic Assumptions of Science

The assumptions of the scientific approach are:

- nature is orderly,
- we can know nature,
- natural phenomena have natural causes,
- nothing is self evident,
- knowledge is derived from the acquisition of experience
- and knowledge is tentative but superior to ignorance.

3. The Role of Scientific Methods

The methodology of the scientific approach serves three major purposes: it provides rules for communication, rules for logical and valid reasoning, and rules for inter-subjectivity (the ability to share knowledge). These three systems of rules allow us to understand, explain, and predict ourselves and our environments in a manner that other systems for producing information cannot allow us to do:

i) Scientific progress by induction; the gathering of data, the search for patterns and, from the results, the formulation of hypotheses with supporting arguments.

ii) Scientific progress by theory testing starts with a theory and seeks to prove it valid (for the time being) or invalid.

iii) Most sciences lie somewhere in between. Natural sciences (e.g. physics, chemistry) make bold predictions and therefore have theories subject to testing. Social sciences, for example, psychology, history and economics) are less absolute and rely on a more inductive approach. But all are united by using scientific methods in research and study.

4. Aims of Science

The aim of science, in general, is to produce a body of knowledge. Such knowledge must be verifiable (can be independently checked or tested) and should help us to explain, predict and understand the things that we are interested in.

i) Scientific Explanations

ii) Predictions

iii) Understanding.
i) **Scientific explanations**: the social scientists’ aim is to provide an answer for the “Why?” question. When scientists ask for an explanation of why an event has taken place, they ask for a systematic (step-by-step) and empirical analysis of the factors that caused it.

To explain something is a matter of relating the observed events to the explained events by general laws. These could be highly general laws which may be applied to many situations to form specific laws (as a logical consequence).

In early stages of a science, especially the social sciences, most laws may be simply the classification of things into various groups or classes. But the purpose of an explanation is to connect our knowledge to the separate events with the aim of being able to predict future events.

As science progressed the forms of explanations have changed. A distinction has been made between two important types of explanations: deductive and probabilistic.

**Deductive Explanations**: So called because explanations are deduced (inferred logically, reasoned, derived) from general laws. A thing is explained if its behaviour or events are shown to be the consequences of an established universal law.

For example the explanation for an object thrown in the air is based upon the law of gravitation. If this universal law is stated and the conditions of the event are known; the event that is observed (the object returns to earth) is logically explained from the premise. It is for this reason that deductive explanations are the most powerful type of explanations in science, because the premises lead necessarily to the conclusion; that is if the premises are valid the conclusions must be valid. Obviously if the premises are untrue then the conclusion will also be untrue.

**Probabilistic Explanations**: Not all explanations in science are based on simple generalisations or universal laws. This is especially true of the social sciences because few meaningful and universal generalisations can be made. In subjects like economics or psychology there are always exceptions that will go against any trend so few phenomena can be governed by firm laws which always predict results. Most explanations, therefore, are not certainties but tentative (careful, cautious) hypotheses that say; *most of the time* \( x \) causes \( y \); so this time, when we see \( x \), we *should* see \( y \).

Such explanations are termed probabilistic (or inductive) because they express either a ratio between phenomena (\( n \) percent of \( x = y \)) or a tendency (\( x \) tends to cause \( y \)).
The major restriction with probabilistic explanations is that conclusions cannot be drawn with complete certainty about specific cases. You can say that 90% of Cambodians are Khmer Buddhists but that does not mean that the probability of the next 10 Cambodians you meet being Khmer and Buddhist is 9/10. Other factors may influence the outcome; you may be standing in front of a mosque or a church, or in a neighbourhood or province with an immigrant community. The best you can say is that there is a high probability of one particular outcome. And an explanation of this kind means: there is a high probability that \( y \) happened because of \( x \); a probabilistic generalisation.

ii) **Predictions:** The outstanding achievement of science is the ability to make accurate predictions of events. If you know that demand for electricity increases in the hot season (to power A/C units), then a civil engineer can plan to save energy in the cool season for use in the hot season.

The ability to predict rests on having sufficient knowledge about the conditions present and the laws (or probabilistic generalisations) that govern the relevant behaviour. In other words if it is known that \( x \) causes \( y \), and it is observed that \( x \) is present then you can predict that \( y \) will occur (or probably occur).

Of course it has to be said that the laws must be valid and that the required conditions are correctly fulfilled. In this way, if a prediction is shown to be false, it can only be because:

1. the law or generalisation is not in fact valid or
2. the existing conditions were incorrectly perceived.

If we look back at the deductive mode of explanation we can see that, logically speaking, prediction is the reverse of explanation. Universal laws declare that given certain conditions, certain actions will have specific consequences. Predictions merely point out that the initial conditions are present.

iii) **Understanding:** Ultimately the purpose of finding laws and generalisations is to understand the causes and reasons for an observed behaviour. This understanding can take pace on many different levels. To continue the above analogy, Newton gave mathematical proof of the laws of motion and then of gravity. This enabled much progress of science, but while his laws showed the beautiful simplicity of nature, they did not explain why nature is the way it is. Newton himself said that his theory of gravity was in need of an explanation as to what gravity actually was. It took Einstein, 400 years later, to demonstrate that gravity was the
5. Principles of scientific methods

As already mentioned, what unites social and natural sciences is not subject matter but methods, the way an investigation is carried out.

**Basic elements of scientific research**

i) Definition of a research problem;
ii) Concepts and definitions;
iii) Units of analysis;
iv) Dependent and independent variables;
v) Control variables;
vi) Types of variables and measurement scales;
vi) Relations between variables and constructing hypotheses

The following ideas and tools are very important in the context of research so they will be talked about in quite some detail. Knowledge of these concepts is central to scientific research and they should be well understood by all who seek to undertake it.

i) **Definition of a research problem;** scientific research is based on a specific problem which the researcher is trying to address. The problem must be empirically grounded (i.e. identified with observed behaviour) so that it is available to scientific study. Not all intellectual problems can be studied empirically and not all human behaviour is guided by scientific knowledge. The application of scientific methods to the study of subjective preferences, beliefs, values or tastes are particularly difficult because they cannot be empirically validated. In addition to being empirically grounded, the problem must be clearly stated and specific. The research process usually starts with a broad area of interest, the initial problem that the researcher wishes to study. But this initial interest may be far too broad to study in any single research project. The researcher has to narrow the question down to one that can reasonably be studied in a research project with the resources available, including time. This might involve formulating a hypothesis or a focus question. In short, choosing a research topic is a process not an event.

ii) **Concepts and definitions** The word concept can be thought of as similar to idea. (It is a fancy word meaning “word”!); a concept is a symbol, a representation of an object or event or one of its properties.
For example, psychologists use the concepts of ‘intelligence’ and ‘denial’ and every psychologist understands what these words mean when they are mentioned. Political scientists have concepts like ‘power’ and ‘bureaucracy’ and these mean the same things to most political scientists, if not to all other people.

The point is that concepts define both empirical (real-world/observable) and abstract (theoretical/ideal) phenomena and provides a way with which to communicate them to other researchers. With a concept such as ‘water’ the definition is simple; with a concept such as ‘grief’, or ‘friendship’ or ‘survival’ it is less straightforward and will be different when applied to different subjects, for example, the survival of a person, a community or a particular society or species.

Each concept must be defined sufficiently well to have no ambiguities for the purposes at hand. A concept that is being studied or is used in the course of study must have a clear, precise and agreed-upon meaning. To achieve this clarity researchers use two major types of definitions.

**Conceptual definitions** are those that are described by using other concepts. A “tree” can be defined as something that grows in the earth using sunlight and water, has a trunk of wood and leaves that use photosynthesis for growth. This definition contains other concepts which may need further clarification, such as “wood”, “sunlight” or “photosynthesis”.

There are concepts that do not require other concepts to define them; for example, colours, sounds and smells. These are usually very precisely, with clear empirical examples. Other concepts should eventually be able to be explained in terms of these *primitive terms*.

The second type of definition is known as an **operational definition** and is widely used in research. It is all very well having a clear and agreed definition of a concept, but how is that concept judged to exist or not exist in a situation? For example in a study in ‘poverty’, how is a researcher able to state in a categorical way that one person is ‘poorer’ than another? He or she must have a way of determining the level of poverty, by means of calculating, for example, assets or income, etc. Operational definitions bridge the conceptual (theoretical) and empirical (observational) levels by providing a means for a concept to be observed and/or measured.

To clarify this ‘bridging’ of conceptual and empirical levels an example is necessary. If research is conducted into the level of alienation (a feeling of exclusion from society) of certain groups or individuals, the concept must be defined. The problem lies in the fact that ‘alienation’, though
undoubtedly real, is difficult to observe in an empirical way. In a landmark study, one researcher defined alienation as consisting of five distinct attributes; *powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation* and *self-estrangement* (this would be a conceptual definition of alienation). Each of these concepts required further definitions, so powerlessness was conceptually defined as: the expectation of individuals that their behaviour cannot bring about the influence or outcomes they desire.

However, this quality must be measured or observed in individuals so the operational definition of powerlessness should enable the researcher to observe it in individuals. The researchers constructed a set of questions to ask individuals, and the responses defined the existence of each quality. Note that the questionnaire items were the operational definitions of the five concepts; they transformed the conceptual definition into behaviour that could be directly observed. For example one question was; “If a law was passed that you considered was unjust or harmful, what could you do?” Individuals who said they could do nothing were categorized as feeling powerless. In this way the operational definition (the responses to certain questions) allowed the researchers to observe the *empirical* existence of ‘powerlessness’ and each of the other qualities which led them to *infer* (lit: deduce/conclude) the existence of alienation. Note that alienation is an abstract concept which cannot be directly observed, but careful thought enabled the researchers to infer its empirical existence through its *conceptual components* and their *operational definitions*.

In practice the selection of very abstract concepts is limited to those which can be universally tested and agreed to have some congruence between the conceptual level and the observational level. This is the idea that the observations one makes are closely linked to the concept, or in other words that the operational definition does cover most of the elements of a conceptual definition. If there is not enough agreement between the empirical and theoretical, any conclusions and inferences will be highly suspect. If a study contains a loose or highly subjective operational definition of intelligence, for example a written test that is not widely approved of, the results comparing ‘intelligence’ across schools will be called into question and the research results will be doubted.

**iii) Units of Analysis (or Level of Analysis);** When a social scientist formulates a research problem, he or she should give serious thought to the unit/level of analysis. These are the fundamental, the most elementary, and parts of the investigation to be studied. The level(s) of analysis will influence everything from the design of the research, the collection of data and the decisions made in the analysis and processing of the data.
The levels/units of analysis are the subjects which are being studied. We may be conducting research into behaviour or perceptions, actions or relations, but who are these concepts applied to? They may be equally well applied to individuals, families, business groups, social classes, ethnic groups or entire nations; but the results will have different meanings for all these levels, and may even be vastly different among these levels. Generalizations based on individuals as units of analysis can be quite different from generalizations based on groups.

In principle there are no limits to the selection of units to be analysed. However, one has to be aware that the theorising and generalising is limited by the units of analysis to those same levels. In a study focusing on individual children’s intelligence, the scientist cannot use the results to make statements on collective intelligence of children in a group. Also concepts can have different meanings when applied to different levels. Survival, for example, when applied to individuals is different when applied to business companies and different again when applied to nations. The unit should be rigorously defined and consistently applied so that the research findings can be discussed and replicated, or checked, later by others.

iv) Dependent and Independent Variables; In any research there are elements that will be empirically studied, in fact it is impossible to study anything that has no observable character. When a concept can take on two or more values it is known as a variable, and any concept to be studied must be a variable. Variables are things that we measure, control or manipulate in research. They differ in many respects, most notably in the role they are given in our research and in the type of measures that can be applied to them (we will discuss this further in the section on measurement scales later). Usually, in a study, one variable is changed and the effect observed in another variable. The variable that is deliberately changed is the independent variable and the variable that is affected is the dependent variable. Another way of looking at it is that the variable that is to be studied and/or explained is the dependent variable, and that which is used ‘to do the explaining’ is the independent variable. For example, a researcher may wish to explain why some people participate more in politics than others and may deduce that social class is a factor. In this case, therefore, social class is the independent variable and political participation is the dependent variable, because changes in social class cause variations in political participation; specifically, the higher someone’s social class the more likely it is that they will participate in political activities (if stated before the research this would be considered an hypothesis, also to be discussed later).
Of course, how both of these variables are to be measured and compared is a subject for much thought in the definitions of each. How do you measure political participation of a group of people? How can you compare who participates more or less? These concepts require rigorous definitions, both conceptually and operationally, for the purposes of the study. Only then can they be used as variables in the study.

You should be aware that the distinction between dependent and independent variables is only for the study’s purpose; the researcher decides how to use them, based on the goals of the study. An independent variable in one study may be the dependent variable in another.

For the social sciences, most phenomena require the study of more than one independent variable. This is usually because social phenomena are quite complex and other variables may be needed to explain the changes in the dependent variable. So, for the study of political participation, other factors that affect our dependent variable (level of political participation) must be considered. Social class may be one but not the only one; other factors such as age, gender and level of education also play significant roles in an individual’s participation in politics and any study would be incomplete if it ignored these.
Topic 4: Theory and Theorizing

Purpose

The purpose of this section is to show the importance of theorising and to show you how to go about it. First look at the figure immediately below this introduction. It shows that the researcher can start at one of two points in the research cycle. First, you can begin by gathering data in the hope that the data you collect will be relevant to your research interest and then analyse it to see whether it tells a coherent story. Students who use this method often justify it by saying that they need the facts before they can write anything. This is not true. You need to know what you are looking for before you can find it!

Second, you can begin by formulating a theory. Facts are far less important than we think they are. Most often the knowledge we use in our everyday lives is not of the factual kind at all but highly speculative, propositional knowledge. Using the facts we have in our minds and our past experiences we formulate propositions. Students commonly find the notion of theory difficult to grasp but it is not that difficult. A theory is a speculation, a proposition, a guess. Using our own direct knowledge, what our own real experience has taught us, together with our indirect knowledge, what we have learned from others, from their books, articles, lectures, or face-to-face conversations we put together a proposition, a theoretical proposition. For example, we might be interested in criminal behaviour. The major questions social researchers ask with regard to this topic are: first, what exactly are they doing and second, why do they do it?

Lecture

What theory is, why we need it and how we do it.

Question and answer session on this section.

Glossary

The following is a list of technical terms (words) which you should know the meanings of at the end of this section. Not only should you know their meanings but you should be able to use them correctly when talking and writing about social research in English. They should be part of your active vocabulary.

- Research model
• Research process
• Research question
• Research design
• Cause/causal inference/effect
• Research problem
• Hypothesis
• Construct/reality
• Generalisation
• Data collection
• Data analysis
• Measurement
• Validity
• Reliability
• Research ethic
• Concept
• Conceptual proposition
• Deductive reasoning
• Empiricism
• Operational definition
• Operationalisation
• Rationalism
• Testable proposition
• Theory construction
• Theory testing

Skills

How to develop concepts.
How to generalise
How to theorise
Further reading

Please read the following sections of the study guide: the extract from Schaefer, 2000 above

*†Mann, 1968, 32-49, Basic steps in sociological investigation.
*†Babbie, 1995: 26-38, The foundations of social science;
*†De Vaus, 2002: 9-21 Theory and social research.

Exercise

Please complete the following exercise and bring it to class on the date given to you by the instructor.

In your own words explain the following terms: theory, inductive, deductive, ex post facto, operationalisation, empiricist, rationalist.

1. The following is a theory to do with smoking among the young:

   Anti-smoking campaigns and rules make smoking appear risky, deviant and marginal. Because young people need to develop a sense of identity that distinguishes them from their parents (and it is their parents’ generation that make these rules and run the campaigns). These portrayals of smoking make smoking appear attractive to young people. Therefore, anti-smoking campaigns and restrictions will lead to an increase rather than a decrease in smoking among young people.

   i   Now translate this theory into a flow chart.

   ii  Develop at least four conceptual propositions fro the theory.
Observation and theory

Many textbooks on research methods state (or imply) that scientific work proceeds according to prescribed rules in which a law-like relationship between defined concepts is formulated. For example, the starting point is a certain theory; then one derives from this theory a set of specific hypotheses; the next step is to...
test these against observations; eventually, as a result of such observational
tests, the original theory is verified, falsified, confirmed or disconfirmed.

However, if we look at the actual behaviour of sociological investigators, a
standardized procedure of this sort does not, in fact, exist. Thus it is impossible
to discern the actual sequence of procedures; the various activities - theorising,
defining, observing, etc. There seem to be all sorts of backward and forward
movements, of trial and error behaviour. The irregular interplay of different
operations becomes very obvious as soon as one tries to visualise the conduct
of enquiry as a process through time. (To see this, you have only to put down in
retrospect what happened in producing your extended essay.) On that basis, the
difference between a journalistic article and a paper in a professional journal,
both dealing with the same substantive problem, seems negligible. Another
device is to contrast the apparent chaotic activities of sociological work within
the standardised pattern of controlled experiments in psychology: see the
paradigmatic, if oversimplified, chronicle reported by Boring.

Nevertheless, we shall see in due course that there are very specific skills
as well as stereotyped methods of procedure. The real difficulty is: how is one to
teach this sort of thing? In awareness of the seemingly chaotic nature of
sociological work, many attempts have been made to present nicely written texts
under the title of ‘Scientific Sociology’, ‘The Science of Sociology’, ‘Theory and
Methods of Social Research’ etc. They either ignore or misinterpret such
uncomfortable facts as presented in Hammond’s Sociologists at Work. There we
find a collection of autobiographic chronicles of important empirical studies from
which it is quite clear that there is no such thing as observation preceded by the
formulation of specific theories or hypotheses.

The position is even more puzzling when one examines the work of theorists.
On the basis of a firmly established tradition, ‘theory’ is taught as a distinctive
specialization. This is done by selecting an assortment of famous sociologists,
for instance Durkheim, Weber, Simmel, Tonnies, Znaniecki, Parsons, Merton,
Dahrendorf, etc. who are associated with various theoretical concepts and specific
theorems.

The output of theoretical work is thus treated as a collection of finished products
which can be memorized, compared, commented upon, criticized or classified.
Almost nothing is known about how these concepts and theories have been
produced. Are they merely the outcome of intuition or imagination? Are there no
rules, no methods of procedure? Despite the vast literature on Parsons alone, no
attempt has been made, to the best of my knowledge, of enquiring into the methods,
techniques or skills by means of which he creates his elaborate and ever-changing
classificatory schemes. (The studies on Parsons edited by Max Black are quite
useless in this respect.) The recent fad of talking about theoretical models, model-
Construction and model-building has done little to fill this gap in our knowledge. Here again the usual practice is to treat an existing theory as given and to merely restate it by using a more formalized (e.g. mathematical language). The question by what means it has been thought up in the first place is left open.

Observation and Theory

Perhaps we should leave the mystery of theory-construction alone and proceed straight to observation? To do so, however, we would come up against a serious difficulty. Fifty years ago, Merton (1949) opened up a new problem: the relation between ‘theory and research’. He claimed that in sociology —there is little connection between the two. Rigorous theories, capable of testing against observation, are exceedingly rare; what goes for “theory” as a rule is little more than “general ‘orientations toward data”. Eventually, Merton’s lament grew into a large and complicated issue, widely discussed among methodologists and philosophers. The solution of the puzzle came, quite unexpectedly, about 10 years later, largely from the impact of Hammond’s work. It was very simple: though there is little connection between formal, testable theory and published research, in actual fact the entire process of empirical enquiry is saturated with unstated, inarticulated, improvised theorizing from start to finish. Indeed, so close is the interpenetration of theory and fact that the real difficulty is how to separate the two. It is for this reason that some preliminary thoughts about theorizing are necessary before we can understand the meaning of ‘observation’. I am using here the word ‘theory’ in a vague and over-simplified sense. The problem will be re-opened again in Part Four. On the present preliminary level we may say that an act of theorizing is a thought process which comes before the facts, which transcends overrides or even counteracts factual observation. This process is called ‘abstraction’. In that sense a particular theory moves on a ‘higher’ or ‘lower’ level of abstraction. The higher the level of theoretical statement, the more is it removed from the world of unadulterated facts. For example, the statement, that throughout history all human societies are characterized by an unequal distribution of power, status, income. Low-level theories are confined to a limited range of facts, according to particular historical, spatial, ethnographic conditions. The contrast between high and low levels of abstraction is the same as that between a larger or smaller degree of ‘generality’.

But this is only the simplest and widest usage of the word ‘theory’. As regards sociological theorizing in particular, one further aspect has to be added. This emerges from the fact that all social existence involves subjective consciousness, or ‘subjective meanings’. Again, to simplify, we can treat this element as a matter of degree: a given social situation contains not only subjective phenomena, but also external, objective, physical structures. Therefore, it is possible to look at a concrete situation in different ways. One can either
concentrate on the subjective meaning elements or one can emphasize the social elements. Thirty years ago this dichotomy was the subject of sophisticated methodological discussion and there are various terminologies in use; for the time being I suggest simple descriptive terms: “phenomenological (or subjective) data” vs. “sense data”.

To sum up, observation is always inevitably contaminated by explicit or implicit theorizing. This kind of theoretical process can vary according to two aspects: it may be more or less abstract and it may be orientated in varying degrees towards phenomenological or sense data.

**Purpose of theory** is to help us to structure reality, to bring order to chaos.

Facts, like theories, are cultural products. They need interpreters, they never speak for themselves. I don’t mean that we make them up. Rather, the kinds of information which we think it necessary to collect and the way we collect it is a cultural matter. Often we would explain it as ‘logical’, but logic is also a cultural artefact.

Empirical work disciplines theory.

Two pillars of science are:
1. logic
2. observation

that is, a scientific understanding of the world must:
1. make sense
2. correspond with what we observe.

These relate to three aspects of overall scientific enterprise: theory, data collection and data analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...or values are characteristics that describe an object</td>
<td>gender, occupation, age</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- female/male
- plumber/teacher
- young/old

“Theories describe the relationships we might logically expect among variables” (Babbie, 1995: 33)
Topic 5: Deciding your Topic and the Literature Review

Purpose

The purpose of this topic is twofold: to assist you with the process of choosing a topic and, the next stage, to read what others have written about it. You need to find out what is known about the topic already so that you can build on that knowledge and avoid duplication. You will be looking for relevant theories, relevant facts and relevant methods. Relevant is relative. Should you not find information on your topic on Cambodia, then see what is available with regard to other parts of South East Asia or countries in Europe or some other part of the world. Remember to check the methods used in other similar studies. Your contribution to the field may be in using a different method of study rather than a different topic.

Lecture

Choosing a topic: a process not an event. Refining the topic

The literature review: why and how?

Question and answer session on this section: the scientific approach.

Glossary

Descriptive research
Explanatory research
Time frame
Geographical location
Comparing and specifying sub-group patterns
Abstraction
Skills

Locating relevant literature

Note making

Referencing

Further reading

In this study guide read this section: Selecting a research topic.


*†De Vaus, 2002: pp25-30, Using the Internet to review existing information and research.

**††Bogue, 1985: 24, Searching related literature.

***Verma, G.K. and Beard, R.M.1981. *What is educational research? Perspectives on*


Exercise

Begin working on the literature review that will inform the research project you will commence at the end of this course. You should find at least 10 items (books, journal articles, media reports on you chosen topic. This is a guide for your practicum only). In other cases you would try to find a much wider range of relevant items.

One of you instructors will check you progress periodically and respond to any questions you might have.

Start a research journal in which you record your thoughts and actions on your research practicum. When you change something, as you will, record in your journal what you have change and why. Then check through your proposal, and your journal, to see what else you need to modify to fit in with the change you have made.
Preliminary outline of your research practicum proposal

You may be able to write something on each of the sections below from what you have already learned already but that is unlikely. Do what you can now and then return to this exercise as the course progresses. I would suggest that you date each entry. That will help you to keep track of your progress.

- Let us begin by thinking about what we are interested in examining and why? Your topic of interest may come from the type of work you are doing or some theory you are interested in. Try to think about what is interesting or important to you and why. Why do you think it is necessary or worthwhile? What do you expect or hope to learn through exploring these questions you may develop a research problem? (Use extra pages if necessary.

- What kind of study does the examination of this research topic require? Do you have a belief about the research problem already? If so, what are your research questions? If you have your research problems and questions, you should also be able to state your research aims.

  date

  date
It is now time to think about what kind of design is most appropriate for your research. Think back to our topic on research designs. There may be one or mixed-design you think may be good for your research. Try to consider your time and resources well. It is important that your design is feasible (doable). You can make some notes about how long, how much, who, where and what your study will require.

As this is just a first draft of your proposal, write down as many ideas or foreseeable concerns, etc you have. This will help you plan and improve your design later on.

You also need to consider what kind of measurement your research requires. Will you need to do survey research or get information from a particular source, such as the Ministry of Education, etc.? What will be your units of analysis?
• How will you collect your data?

• How might you process your data once it is collected? How do you intend to do this?

• From the type of measurement you intend to use, what kind of analysis or analyses will you be able to conduct?
• Give yourself some time for writing up your research also. An important part of your practicum will be your experience gained by doing the research as well as the results you obtained. What do you expect to find out about the substance of the topic? What do you expect to find out about the research process.

____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
__________________________________________

• Take another look at the figure labelled 1.1 below, the one titled, ‘The main stages of the research process’. Have you thought about your practicum idea in terms of these main stages?

• The above notes will help you to write your thesis proposal. A full proforma for this is given below. You need to adapt it to any special aspects of your project.

Guidelines for a research proposal

1. Tentative title

2. Substance and theory
   a. Purpose. What is your basic research question? Any others?
   b. What perspectives do you intend to emphasise in your approach to the topic? Why?
   c. Do you have a particular concept, theoretical perspective, model or approach you intend to use? Describe this.
   d. Areas of study involved and the reading you need to do in each?
   e. Include a list of books that you know you will need to become familiar with.
   f. What led you to this topic?
3. Methods and methodology.
   a. What data/information do you need in order to research your topic?
      Why do you need it?
      What form should it be in?
   b. What research methods do you intend to use to get it? Why those?
   c. Do you think those methods might influence your purpose?
   d. If you intend to use one make a rough draft of your questionnaire.
   e. How will you obtain respondents?
   f. Do you foresee any ethical implications?

4. Skills
   What skills will you need to complete your topic as you envisage it, e.g.
   typing, interviewing, statistical analysis etc.?
   Do you have those skills? Are you comfortable using them?
   If you don’t have them how will you acquire them?

5. Draft chapter headings of your thesis and write about 100 words under
   each, of what each will contain i.e. the nature of the information not the
   information itself which you may not yet have. For example, you will have
   chapters on Methods, Research findings, Conclusions.

6. Note conclusions you expect to come to. (This will be useful in discussing
   your methods.)

7. Timetable. According to the University regulations how long do you have to
   complete this thesis? How long do you plan to take? Plan out your work on
   your thesis week by week from now until your deadline. Include all your
   commitments: family, paid employment, holidays etc. Note when your
   research subjects may be particularly busy and therefore should not be
   approached. Your supervisors will tell you of any particular commitments
   they may have which may impinge on your work.

8. Resources. Note any special material or equipment you require and how
   you plan to obtain this.

9. Budget. What will be the financial cost of your project? How do you intend
   to meet this? Modest funds are available from the School for research
   papers with a point value of 75 points or more. Do you have any other
   possible sources of funding/support?
10. Anticipated value of your research. What? To whom?

Make a separate note of how it may benefit you. Think about whether the project as you envisage it will give you optimum benefit.

11. Note any other matters you think important which are not covered above.

Please write the using a set of stylistic conventions known to you and which you plan to use in your final thesis. These will cover citations, construction of a bibliography and other matters. The American Psychological Association conventions are becoming increasingly dominant but it does not matter which set you use, e.g. University of Chicago, University of Oxford, New Zealand Government, as long as you use them consistently.

Your initial proposal should be about 15-20 pages of 1.5 spaced typescript, longer if you have more to say. Some of this material will go into at least the first draft of your thesis. Don’t worry if, at this stage you can put together only five pages or if you have to leave some sections blank. We have to start somewhere!

Note that none of this is fixed at any stage until you have completed the fieldwork. You will make changes as your research emerges. As you progress options close down: less and less become amenable to change.
Topic 6:  Research Structure and Design

Purpose

The purpose of this topic is to introduce you to the basic structure of social research projects using the social survey method. Researchers using this method need to go through certain basic steps in order to gather reasonably objective information on their research topic and then use those data to address their research topics in order to advance their understanding of them. We shall see that complete objectivity is impossible to attain. That must not stop us from doing our best.

Lecture

The research model and its application to your project: research structure and design

Question and answer session on this section.

Glossary

The following is a list of technical terms (words) which you should know the meanings of at the end of this section. Not only should you know their meanings but you should be able to use them correctly when talking and writing about social research in English. They should be part of your active vocabulary.

- Research model
- Research process
- Research question
- Research design
- Cause/causal inference/effect
- Research problem
- Hypothesis
- Construct/reality
- Generalisation
- Data collection
Skills

How to choose a topic and refine a topic.

How to match your methods with your topic.

Further reading

Please read the following sections of the study guide: pp 64-70, Research design and structure; 97-98, Choosing a site and gaining access
*†Mann, 1968: 42-54, Research procedure.
*de Vaus, :Chapter 5, pp 58-68, Ethics and data collection.
**††Bogue, 1985: 1-10, The research task.

Exercise

Complete the following exercise and bring it to class on the date given to you by your instructor.

For each of the following statements of research findings indicate the type of research design that appears to have been employed and explain what is wrong with the conclusions that are drawn. Concentrate on problems that arise from research design problems.

a) Sixty eight percent of married people scored high on our index of conservatism while only 38% of single people scored high. Marriage makes people more conservative.

b) After observing a sample of childless married couples over a ten-year period we observed that the level of marital happiness declined over this period. Childlessness works against people being happily married.
c) In the early 1970s, before the end of the Vietnam War, surveys showed that tertiary students had strong anti-American attitudes. Recent surveys have shown that these attitudes are no longer prevalent among students. Ending the Vietnam War certainly improved the attitudes of students to the United States.

d) Old people attend the pagoda more often than young people. For example, 58% of those over 60 attend pagoda ceremonies regularly while only 22% of those under 25 do so. From this we can conclude that as people get older they become more religious.

e) The average number of children per family is now 2.8. Families are obviously getting smaller these days.

f) To test the theory that having children make people happier, a group of parents were asked how happy they felt now compared with before they had children. From this we can conclude that having children improves people’s happiness.

g) A HEADSTART programme (a pre-school educational programme to help disadvantaged children have a head-start by the time they start school) was used to test the effectiveness of HEADSTART. A group of four-year-olds from disadvantaged backgrounds were chosen to enter the programme. I.Q. tests were given at the beginning of the programme and again at the end. There was an average gain of ten IQ points over the programme. HEADSTART increases children’s I.Q.

Supplementary Reading:

**Overview of Basic Scientific Research Designs**

**Overview:**

The research design is the program that guides the investigator in the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting observations. It allows inferences concerning causal relations and defines the domain of generalizability.

**Introduction**

Research design provides the glue that holds the research project together. A design is used to structure the research, to show how all of the major parts of the research project — the samples or groups, measures, treatments or programs, and methods of assignment — work together to try
to address the central research questions. Here, after a brief introduction to research design, we also distinguish the major types of designs. You’ll see that a major distinction is between the experimental designs that use random assignment to groups or programs and the quasi-experimental designs that don’t use random assignment.

Research Designs: Experiments

- The Classical Experimental Design

The classic experimental design consists of two comparable groups: an experimental group and a control group. These two groups are equivalent except that the experimental group is exposed to the independent variable and the control group is not. Assignment to the groups is random. To assess the effect of the independent variable, researchers take measurement on the dependant variable, designated as scores, twice from each group. One measurement, the pre-test, is taken for all cases prior to the introduction of the independent variable in the experimental group; a second, the post test, is taken for all cases after the experimental group has been exposed to the independent variable. The difference in measurements between pre-test and post test is compared between the two groups. If the difference between the experimental group and the control group is significantly larger than in the control group, it is inferred that the independent variable is causally related to the dependent variable.

Experimental designs helps us understand the logic of all research designs and it is the best way to a researcher can draw causal inferences, which gives us some idea about limitations of other designs.

Generally experimental designs are used more by the natural sciences than by the social sciences because its rigid structure cannot be applied to social sciences research. Thus social scientists usually use designs that are weaker in causal inferences but are more appropriate to the types of problems they examine.

Designs identified as quasi-experimental are more common to the social sciences research.

Causal Inferences

At the heart of all scientific explanations are the idea of causality; that is, an independent variable is supposed to produce a change in the dependent variable in the direction and of the magnitude specified by the theory. But this effect does not always infer a cause and effect relationship.
In practice, the demonstration of causality involves three distinct operations: demonstrating co-variation, eliminating spurious relations, and establishing the time order of the occurrences.

Co-variation simply means that two or more phenomena vary together. Such as increases in education may co-vary with increases in income. In scientific research, the notion of co-variation is expressed through measures of relations commonly referred to as correlations or associations (we will meet these measures again in a later topic).

A nonspuriousness relation is a relation between two variables that cannot be explained by a third variable. This operation requires that the researcher prove that co-variation he or she observed is nonspurious, and therefore there is an inherent causal link between the variables.

Time order requires the researcher to demonstrate that the assumed cause occurs first or changes prior to the assumed effects. The implicit assumption is that phenomena in the future cannot determine phenomena in the present or the past.

Components of a Research Design

The classic research design consists of four components: comparison, manipulation, control, and generalization.

Comparison is an operation that enables researchers to demonstrate that the independent and dependant variables are related.

Manipulation involves some form of control over the introduction of the independent variables, so that the investigator can determine the time order of the variables.

The control component allows researchers to rule out other factors as rival explanations of the observed associations between the independent and dependent variables. Such factors could invalidate the causal relationship of the variable, a problem called internal validity. In order to establish internal validity, a researcher must answer the question of whether changes in the independent variable did cause the dependent variable to change (we will learn ways to test for internal validity in a later topic).

Generalization requires that the findings of research be applicable to the natural settings and populations the researcher is investigating.

The first three are necessary to establish that the independent and dependent variables are causally related. Comparison allows us to
demonstrate co-variation, manipulation helps in establishing the time order of events, and control enables us to determine that the observed co-variation is nonspurious. Generalization, the fourth component concerns the extent to which research findings can be applied to larger populations and different settings.

**Design Types**

Four major design types can be distinguished: experimental, quasi-experimental, cross-sectional and pre-experimental.

In *experimental designs*, individuals or other units of analysis are randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups and the independent variable is introduced only to the experimental group. Such designs allow for comparison, control, manipulation, and usually generalization.

*Quasi-experimental* and cross-sectional designs ordinarily include combinations of some of these elements but not all of them. Typically these designs lack possibilities for manipulation and randomization.

*Pre-experimental* designs include even fewer safeguards than quasi-experimental and cross-section designs, and in this sense they provide less credibility in determining whether two or more variables are causally related.

**Box 1:** Advantages and Disadvantages of Research Designs Used in the Social Sciences

**Experimental Designs**

**Advantages**

- Experiments enable researchers to exert a great deal of control over extrinsic and intrinsic variables, strengthening the validity of causal inferences (internal validity).
- Experiments enable researchers to control the introduction of the independent variable so they may determine the direction of causation.

**Disadvantages**

- External validity is weak because experimental designs do not allow researchers to replicate real-life social situations.
• Researchers must often rely on volunteer or self-selected subjects for their samples. Therefore, the sample may not be representative of the population of interest, preventing researchers from generalizing to the population and limiting the scope of their findings.

**Cross-Sectional and Quasi-Experimental Designs**

**Advantages**
• They allow researchers to carry out studies in natural, real-life settings using probability samples, thus increasing the external validity of their studies.
• They do not require the random assignment of individual cases to comparison groups. While this limits the internal validity of studies employing these designs, it does enable researchers to study situations where the assignment of individuals to either a control or an experimental group might be unethical or impossible.

**Disadvantages**
• The lack of adequate control over rival explanations makes it difficult for researchers to make unambiguous inferences.
• Because researchers often cannot manipulate the independent variable, the direction of causation must be logically or theoretically inferred.

**Pre-experimental Designs**

**Advantages**
• They may allow researchers to gather information when no other research design can be applied, or may allow researchers to show that further, more valid, research would be valuable.

**Disadvantages**
• They are very weak on both internal and external validity and do not allow researchers to make causal inferences.

**Research Designs Summary**

1. The research design is the program that guides the collector in the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting observations. It allows inferences concerning causal relations and defines the domain of generalizability.
2. The classic research design consists of four components: comparison, manipulation, control and generalization. Comparison is an operation that enables researchers to demonstrate that the dependent and independent variables are related. Manipulation involves some form of control over the introduction of the independent variables, so that the investigator can determine the time order of the variables. The control component allows researchers to rule out other factors as rival explanations of the observed association between the independent and dependent variables. The fourth component, generalization, requires that the findings of research be applicable to the natural settings and populations the researcher is investigating.

3. The process of control is related to the internal validity of the research design. To establish internal validity the researcher must rule out rival explanations for the change occurring in the dependent variable. Factors that may jeopardize internal validity are intrinsic or extrinsic to the research operation. Extrinsic factors are called selection effects. They are biases resulting from the differential recruitment of respondents to the experimental and control groups. Intrinsic factors are history, maturation, experimental mortality, instrumentation, regression artefact, and factors that interact with the selection effect caused by differential assignment of subjects to the experimental and control groups.

4. Two methods of control are employed to counteract the effect of extrinsic factors. Matching allows investigators to control for variables that are known to them prior to the research operation, and randomization helps to offset the effects of foreseen as well as unforeseen factors. Intrinsic factors are controlled by using a control group.

5. Generalization addresses the problem of external validity of research designs. It concerns the extent to which the research findings can be generalized to larger populations and applied to different settings.

Experimental research designs are the strongest mode of proof because they permit the manipulation of the independent variables and provide maximum control over the extrinsic and intrinsic factors. Two variations of the classic experimental design are the Solomon four-group design and the post-test-only control group design. Other designs allow the study of effects extended in time, and factorial designs permit researchers to examine the effects of more than one independent variable. The advantage of factorial designs is that they strengthen the external validity of the study and allow the investigator to assess the interaction between the independent variables.
The scientific approach uses designs that are considered ‘quantitative’ in that they can be quantified numerically and analysed statistically.

In the social sciences, it can sometimes be difficult to use quantitative methods as easily as in the other sciences, such as chemistry, etc.

There are ‘qualitative’ approaches that aim to research and create new understandings by exploring and interpreting complex data. Data sources include interviews, group discussions, observations, journals, archival documents, etc., without the use of quantification.

There are many opportunities and challenges in working with qualitative designs for data, that can preserve the richness of information and meaning.

There are many perspectives and techniques in qualitative data analysis, which involve uncovering and discovering themes in the raw data, and interpreting the meaning or implications of those themes for research questions.

**Suggested reading:**

Introduction to Research Practice

Most research projects share the same general structure. You might think of this structure as following the shape of an hourglass. The research process usually starts with a broad area of interest, the initial problem that the researcher wishes to study. But this initial interest may be far too broad to study in any single research project. The researcher has to narrow the question down to one that can reasonably be studied in a research project. This might involve formulating a hypothesis or a focus question/s. At the narrowest point of the research hourglass, the researcher is engaged in direct measurement or observation of the question of interest.

Once the basic data is collected, the researcher begins to try to understand it, usually by analyzing it in a variety of ways. Even for a single hypothesis there are a number of analyses a researcher might typically conduct. At this point, the researcher begins to formulate some initial conclusions or inferences about what happened as a result of the study. Finally, the researcher often will attempt to address the original broad question of interest by generalizing from the results of this specific study to other related situations.

**Major Components of a Study:**

- The Research Problem (general problem or question)
- The Research Question (more specific research question) and/or the Hypothesis (an even more specific statement that describes in operational terms exactly what we think will happen in the study)
- The Program (Cause)
  - The Units (sampling- population of interest or groups, or geographical entities like cities or towns)
- The Outcomes (Effect)
- The Design
Figure 1.1 is another way of thinking about the research process. It shows how the main stages of research progress. Notice that theory continuously informs the process at all the stages. Also, notice that once we complete the research process, we are usually left with more questions and areas to research and explore!

**Figure 1.1** The Main Stages of the Research Process
Overview of Research Structure and Design

Most social research originates from some general problem or question. Usually, the problem is broad enough that you could not hope to address it adequately in a single research study. Consequently, we typically narrow the problem down to a more specific research question that we can hope to address. The research question is often stated in the context of some theory that has been advanced to address the problem. The research question is the central issue being addressed in the study and is often phrased in the language of theory.

Consequently, in most research we develop an even more specific statement, called an hypothesis that describes in operational terms exactly what we think will happen in the study. The hypothesis needs to be specific enough that a reader can understand quite well what the study is trying to assess.

In causal studies, we have at least two major variables of interest, the cause and the effect. Usually the cause is some type of event, program, or treatment. We make a distinction between causes that the researcher can control (such as a program) versus causes that occur naturally or outside the researcher’s influence (such as a change in interest rates, or the occurrence of an earthquake). The effect is the outcome that you wish to study. For both the cause and effect we make a distinction between our idea of them (the construct) and how they are actually manifested in reality. For instance, when we think about what a program of support services for the newly employed might be, we are thinking of the “construct.” On the other hand, the real world is not always what we think it is. In research, we remind ourselves of this by distinguishing our view of an entity (the construct) from the entity as it exists (the operationalisation). Ideally, we would like the two to agree.

Social research is always conducted in a social context. We ask people questions, or observe families interacting, or measure the opinions of people in a city. An important component of a research project is the units that participate in the project. Units are directly related to the question of sampling. In most projects we cannot involve all of the people we might like to involve. For instance, in studying a program of support services for the newly employed we can’t possibly include in our study everyone in the world, or even in the country, who is newly employed. Instead, we have to try to obtain a representative sample of such people. When sampling, we make a distinction between the theoretical population of interest to our study and the final sample that we actually measure in our study. Usually the term “units” refers to the people that we sample and from whom we gather information. But for some projects the units are organizations, groups, or geographical entities like cities or towns. Sometimes our sampling strategy is multi-level: we sample a number of cities and within them sample families.
In causal studies, we are interested in the effects of some cause on one or more outcomes. The outcomes are directly related to the research problem — we are usually most interested in outcomes that are most reflective of the problem. In our hypothetical supported employment study, we would probably be most interested in measures of employment — is the person currently employed, or, what their rate of absenteeism is.

Finally, in a causal study we usually are comparing the effects of our cause of interest (e.g., the program) relative to other conditions (e.g., another program or no program at all). Thus, a key component in a causal study concerns how we decide what units (e.g., people) receive our program and which are placed in an alternative condition. This issue is directly related to the research design that we use in the study. One of the central questions in research design is determining how people wind up in or are placed in various programs or treatments that we are comparing.

**Summary Reading**


1. **Define the Topic**

   In your proposal the research topic should be posed in such a way that it is clearly grounded in the general social field relevant to it. Topics should be grounded in some already known factual information which is used to introduce the topic and from which the research question will stem.

2. **Make a Literature Review**

   Find out what information already exists about the topic. Social research topics are usually found in so many different kinds of materials, such as journals, books, etc.

   For the research proposal, you should refer to the most relevant findings you have uncovered which seem to raise significant questions or which offer suggestions for avenues for you to follow for your project. You must be able to draw out these findings from the studies in which they are embedded and summarize them succinctly in such a way that someone unfamiliar with the study can easily grasp their meaning and importance.
3: Clarify Concepts and Their Measurement

Concepts like culture, democracy, health, may all seem to be familiar terms. However, the precise meanings you attach to these concepts must be defined, and then an appropriate way to measure concepts must be found or developed.

In the proposal, a clear definition of the main concept or concepts must be given. The general question of measurement should be discussed so that it is clear that the potential problems in measuring the concepts have been thoroughly thought out. These include two critical issues: validity, that is, whether the measurement of a concept in fact produces a result that truly represents what the concept is supposed to mean; and reliability, that is, whether the measurement would lead to consistent enough outcomes, were it to be repeated, that one could have some confidence in the results.

4: Data Collection Method

A topic may often be studied with a variety of methods, and that the use of multiple methods is desirable in social research.

The methods you choose will depend on your research topic and question and what kind of information you want to gain. You must describe how you will collect data and which sources of available data you will actually use. Issues of access to the data are important to consider- you must be able to get the data you propose. If you anticipate problems in securing the desired data, these problems should be discussed and possible alternative sources of data might be suggested. Most studies have one central type of method to be used (a survey, an experiment), though they may also draw on a few other data sources to widen their scope.

You must also plan how you are going to analyze the data.

5: Measurement - Operationalize Concepts and Design the Research Instruments

In a survey, the questionnaire or interview schedule is the operationalized survey. In an experiment, the operationalization of the independent variable is the actual stimulus. In field studies, this process of operationalizing occurs rather differently. It often must wait until the field notes have been gathered. Then the researcher may find evidence that suggests certain meanings, at which time conceptualizations are formed to describe and explain observations.
Concepts are sometimes better measured using more than one indicator of the concept. In a survey, how the concepts are operationalized in the questionnaire will determine what will be produced from the survey. If the concepts are poorly operationalized, the best national sample and the fanciest statistical routines will not make something useful of the data. In the proposal, the actual way that the concepts will be operationalized should be spelled out. If a survey is to be carried out, it is usually appended to the proposal. In addition, the critical questions that measure the most important concepts in the study should be discussed and their level of adequacy addressed.

6: Sampling

The selection process for deciding what or whom you will study is called sampling. Remember that even if you study your parents, the residents of your block, or the dog next door, all of these represent elements in some type of sample. Many researchers want to be able to generalize their findings to subjects beyond those studied. When probability samples are used, it is possible to determine how representative your sample is of all the others out there (the population) who might have gotten into your study. Sampling plans may be very complex or quite straightforward. When the rules of probability are not followed and you merely select a sample of subjects who seem to fulfill the needs of your study, you have a non-probability sample. For many studies, such a sample is sufficient; and for some, it is the best that can be achieved. Whatever the design of your sample, it needs to be explained in detail in your proposal. It should be so precise that someone else could generate a similar sample by following your procedures.

7: Consider the Purpose, Value, and Ethics of the Study

Once the topic, the background, the clarification of concepts, and the major methods of data collection have been presented, it is time to address the purpose, value, and ethics of the study. If we are thinking about “Peace Research Methodologies” than it is likely that the type of research may be targeted towards communities who are or have experiences conflict and violence, or other socially-oriented issues that may require substantial consideration of the purpose, and value and ways that research is being conducted.

The study design must be presented before the rationale and ethical issues involved can be discussed. Remember that the rationale for doing the project will be accomplished only if the study is done well. By showing that you have devised a plan to study your topic that looks plausible and
seems feasible, you reinforce the sense that the purpose will be achieved. The value of the project lies not only in what it alone will produce, but also in how it may add to or challenge other research in the area.

The ethical issues are often confronted in data collection, for example, in maintaining the confidentiality of the data, in gaining access to the field, and in avoiding deception as to the role of the researcher. If these will be major issues in your study, they should be addressed. In any proposal seeking public funding, potential ethical issues are of great importance, and researchers who ignore such subjects may be penalized.

8: Data Collection

Different types of procedures might be followed for data collection. Each form of data collection has its special concerns which need to be considered fully before doing the study. This is why protesting is so valuable, because it helps you to find and address potential problems before they enter your study and cause bigger problems.

For the proposal, the plans for collecting data should be described carefully. In a field project, it is always more difficult to be precise, and you may need to make changes once the field is entered. Nevertheless, it is better to have a clear plan that can be altered as you go along than only some vague ideas that subsequently you cannot be sure you have followed. For an experiment, data collection procedures can usually be described very precisely. This is also true of a survey. Mail surveys tend to have multiple stages in the data collection procedure to increase the response rate. If you are using already available data, you need to describe at this stage how you will obtain the data.

9: Data Processing

Once the data are collected, they must be put into a form which will enable them to be analyzed. If they are quantifiable data, you usually have to prepare them for the computer. If they are field notes, they must be organized and categorized.

In the proposal, a concise statement may be included to address this subject. It may describe what type of computer facilities are at the disposal of the researcher, what possible sources of assistance are available, and what efforts are being made to increase accuracy in the handling of the data.
10: Analyzing Data

How you plan to analyze the data must be thought through carefully while the study is being designed. It is true that once the data are collected, there may be some changes in these plans. Nevertheless, it is better to have a strategy that can be adapted than to end up with piles of data for which you have no organized plan. There are numerous analytic tools for studying quantifiable data.

The proposal should indicate the analyses planned; it may suggest that some analytic strategies will depend on how earlier ones turn out. In a field study, only very preliminary plans will probably be possible.

11: Write-up

The data for an entire study may be collected, but the research is not complete until the results of the study have been written up. For research projects which are funded, final reports must be written. Most social research projects become the basis for articles, books, chapters in books, or unpublished papers offered at professional meetings. A single study may lead to many and varied types of publications and presentations.
Topic 7: **Sampling and Sampling Designs**

**Purpose**

Sampling can save us time and money. Why interview 10,000 people when a sample of 1,000 would enable us to draw the same conclusions with much less cost. This topic will explain how to draw up effective and efficient samples.

**Lecture**

Purpose, topic, treatment, research design and sampling.

Question and answer session on this section: the scientific approach.

**Glossary**

- Population
- Sample
- Simple random sample
- Systematic sample
- Stratified sample
- Cluster sample
- Sample size
- Sampling error
- Non-sampling error
- Standard error
- Random numbers
- Statistic/parameter

**Skills**

How to find out what kind of sample we need and how to draw samples.
Further reading

In this study guide please read: 83-85 Sampling and sample designs* Mann, 1997


Please read the following sections of the study guide

*† Mann, 101-112, The sample survey with formal interviews.

*† Babbie, 1995: 186-228 The logic of sampling.


*†† Bogue, 1985: 78-86 Sampling and generalizing.

***†† Madge, 1953: 205-216 Sampling.

Exercise

Please complete the following exercise and bring it to class on the date given to you by the instructor.

Find a page of the Phnom Penh Telephone Directory which has relatively few businesses listed on it. Draw a simple random sample of 20 people from the first column. Use the table of random numbers (supplied). Describe exactly what you did to obtain this simple random sample.

Using the same page of the telephone directory select a systematic sample of 40 people using the whole page. Describe exactly how you did this.

Write a paragraph for each sample explaining why you would or would not expect each of these samples to be representative of the population of Phnom Penh.
Introduction to Research Practice 2

Researchers collect data in order to test hypotheses, explanations and predictions. Once researchers have constructed their questionnaires for the collection of the relevant data to address the research problem, the subsequent explanations and predictions are most useful if they are capable of being generalized to the relevant population. The inferences we make from our results, or the conclusions we draw often call for descriptive generalizations, such as “What is the level of political trust among Cambodians?” Typically, generalizations are not based on data collected from all the possible observations, all the respondents, or all the events that are defined by the research problem. Instead, researchers use a relatively small number of cases (a sample) as the basis for making inferences about all the cases (a population). Social scientists apply various criteria in selecting their sample. These considerations in turn influence how they make inferences from a sample to a population.

Aims of Sampling

Empirically supported generalizations are usually based on partial information because it is often impossible, impractical, or extremely expensive to collect data from all the potential units of analyses covered by the research problem. Researchers try to draw precise inferences on a set of all units of study based on a relatively small number of units (subset) which represent the attributes of the whole set. The entire set of analysis, or data, is called the population. When the data serving as the basis for generalizations is comprised of a subset of the population, that subset is called a sample. A particular value of the population, such as the median income or the level of education, is called a parameter; its counterpart in the sample is termed a statistic. The major objective of sampling theory is to provide accurate estimates of unknown values of the parameters from sample statistics that can be easily calculated. To estimate accurately unknown parameters from known statistics, researchers have to deal effectively with three major problems: a) the definition of the population, b) the sample design and c) the size of the sample.

Population

Methodologically speaking, a population is the aggregate of all cases that conform to some designated set of specifications. A sample is any subset of sampling units taken from the population. A sample may range over any number of units from the relevant population. For example, by the specifications “people” and “residing in Cambodia” we can define a population consisting of all the 13
Introduction to Peace Studies and Research Methods

million people who reside in Cambodia. Similarly, if we employ the specifications “students” and “enrolled in universities in Phnom Penh”, we define a population of all students enrolled in universities in Phnom Penh. You may also specify, for example, “all books in a public library”. A population has to be defined in terms of content, extent, and time. Therefore: all residents studying at university in the capital, in Cambodia, enrolled in Semester 1, 2005 would be one example.

Sample Designs

After the definition of a population and the estimation of the size of the sample, a representative sampling design has to be selected. A sample is representative if the analyses made on its units produce results equivalent to those that would be obtained had the entire population been analysed. Researchers use probability sampling designs most often in situations where they can specify the probability of each unit of the population’s being included in the sample. The characteristics of four basic probability samples - simple random, systematic, stratified, and cluster are summarized below:

Description of Four Probability Samples

- **Simple Random Sample**: Assign a unique number to each sampling unit; select sampling units by use of a table of random numbers. These are readily available on the Internet and are often found in the appendices of social research methods texts.

- **Systematic Sample**: Determine the sampling interval (N/n); select the first sample unit randomly; select remaining units according to the interval.

- **Stratified Sample**: (proportionate) Determine the strata; from each stratum select a random sample proportionate to the size of the stratum in the population. (disproportionate) Determine the strata; from each stratum, select a random sample of the size dictated by analytic considerations.

- **Cluster Sample**: Determine the number of levels of clusters; from each level of clusters select a sample randomly; the basic units of analyses are groups within the sampling populations.

Sample Size

A **sample** is any subset of a population. A subset is any combination of sampling units that does not include the entire set that has been defined as the population. A sample may include only one sampling unit, all but one or something in between. But how do we determine the sampling size? The method of obtaining a sample affects the extent to which sample results can be extrapolated to the population. There are several misconceptions about the necessary size of a
sample: for example, more is always better for precision; 5 percent of the population size is another, and so forth. To estimate the adequate size of the sample properly, researchers need to determine what level of accuracy is expected of their estimates; that is, how large a standard of error is acceptable.

The concept of **Standard Error** (or sampling error) is central to sampling theory and to determining the size of a sample. It is one of the statistical measures that indicates how closely the sample results reflect the true values of a parameter. There is a fairly simple computation to estimate the Standard Error, which will be introduced in a later topic in statistics.

The formula for the standard error of the mean is:

\[ S.E. = \frac{s}{\sqrt{n}} \]

In general, the mean distribution of an infinite number of samples is assumed to equal the mean of the population. The more sample mean values deviate from the population mean, the greater the variability of findings obtained from each sample, and the greater the risk of making a large error in estimating a parameter of the population from one or a limited number of samples. The distribution of all the sample means about the mean of the total of those samples is termed the standard error (S.E.)

Another important concept is the **Confidence Interval**. We have already stated that the population mean equals the mean of all the sample means that can be drawn from a population and that we can compute the standard deviation of these sample means. If the distribution of sample means is normal or approximates normality (the concept of normalcy, expressed in the normal curve, points to assumptions about the distribution of a variable in the general population, and is discussed in the later section on statistics). Put simply, if a given sampling distribution is known to be approximately normal, we can infer that a proportional percentage, for example 70 percent, of the sample estimates of which it is comprised will lie between its mean and one standard error, about 95 percent between its mean and 2.0 standard errors. Confidence levels and standard errors are routinely used in surveys and interview polls.

**Determining the Sample Size**

To calculate the sample size we have to have some idea of the standard deviation in the population and must also decide how large a standard error we can tolerate. The statistical approach requires inverting the formula we used for the standard error:

\[ n = \frac{s^2}{(S.E.)^2} \]
In practice, decisions concerning the sample size are more complicated. First of all, researchers must decide how precise they want their sample results to be, that is, how large a standard error is acceptable. Second, they must determine the way the results are to be analysed. Third, if researchers are studying more than one variable at a time, they should ascertain whether a sample that is adequate for one variable is also okay for another variable.

Non-sampling errors

In survey research, in addition to sampling error, non-response error is very common. Non-response is defined as measurements that are not carried out because of refusal to answer, absence, lost forms, and so on. Non-response can introduce a substantial bias into the findings. Usually, the proportion of non-respondents depends on factors such as the nature of the population, the data collection method, the kinds of questions being asked, the skill of the interviewers, and the number of call-backs that can be made for respondents who are not available at the time. Consequently, researchers have to apply some method to compensate for this type of bias if the response rate is low: such as tracing and interviewing the non-respondents.
Topic 8: Measurement and Scaling Technique

Purpose

Social research is an exercise in measurement: social researchers are trying to measure aspects of society. Those aspects might be the attitudes of women towards new fashions, the social relations of men working in a particular factory or what people think about plans to build a new road, or how much they earn or their use of medical services. These attributes can be measured more or less accurately depending on the level of measurement we use. This topic explains this matter and introduces techniques of more precise questioning. These are usually referred to as scaling. You will learn about several different scaling techniques.

Lecture

Levels of measurement and scaling

Question and answer session on this section: measurement.

Glossary

Continuous variable
Discrete variable

- Validity
- Content
- Empirical

Levels of measurement

- Nominal variable
- Ordinal variable
- Interval value
- Ratio variable
Scaling questions

- Semantic differential
- Thurston scale
- Likert scale
- Guttman scale
- Bogardus social distance scale
- Typologies
- Ranking
- Listing

Indexes
Construct

- Reliability
- Test-retest methods
- Parallel-forms technique

Skills

How to recognize levels of measurement
How to convert levels of measurement
How to design scaling questions

Further reading

Please read this study guide pp 86-88, Measurement.
*†Mann, 1995: to be announced.: 
*††Babbie, 1995: 134-139 Levels of measurement.
*†Babbie, 1995: 176-185 Scale construction.

Exercise

Please complete the following exercise and bring it to class on the date given to you by the instructor
Write five questions that would tell us something about a person’s religiousness. At least one of your questions should yield nominal data, another should yield ordinal data and another interval data.

**The Nature of Measurement**

In research, what is the difference between a concept and a variable?

Remember, that a concept is a general notion or abstract idea. It can be an abstract concept like “happy” or an empirical concept like “age”.

When we decide to research concepts we need to operationalize or find indicators of our concepts. Variables are things we measure, control, or manipulate in research. For example if we wanted to study the concept of “happy” and the concept of “age” we would have to turn these concepts into variables. Age is an empirical concept; we find these easier to measure. For age, we can measure this in years. “Happy” is an abstract construct so making it a variable means we have to find some indicators that measure “happy”. Our variable for happy might include general measures of subject well-being, etc. Variables are created to help us measure and study the concepts we are interested in.

**Types of Variables and measurement scales:**

Variables (and concepts) represent anything the researcher chooses, so it should be no surprise that there are many different types of variables that can be analysed, and the researcher must be aware that they usually demand different treatment in the analysis.

An important property of quantitative variables (and all types of numbers, measurements etc.) is whether they are continuous or discrete. This distinction has significant consequences in the research, with particular regard to measurement procedures, data analysis, statistical inference and conclusions that can be drawn from results.

A **continuous variable** does not have a minimum sized unit; it can be broken down into smaller and smaller parts. Length is a continuous variable because there is no minimum unit of length. We can speak of one metre, one thousandth of a metre (0.001m = one millimetre), one millionth of a metre (0.0000001m) or any size as small or as big as required. Although we cannot measure all of these lengths accurately, it is possible for objects to exist at an infinite number of lengths and similarly for all other continuous variables such as time, mass etc.

**Discrete variables**, however, do have minimum sized units which cannot be broken down. Money is a discrete variable; different amounts of money cannot
differ by less than the minimum-sized unit, which is one cent. You may have $1.50 or $1.51 but you cannot have $1.50586 because there is no such thing as a half cent or a tenth of a cent. Similarly, families have only discrete numbers of children. One family may have five children, another have seven; but no family can have 5.4 children. *If it cannot be subdivided it is a discrete variable.*

Levels of Measurement

**Measurement scales.** Variables differ in “how well” they can be measured, i.e., in how much measurable information their measurement scale can provide. There is obviously some measurement error involved in every measurement, which determines the “amount of information” that we can obtain. Another factor that determines the amount of information that can be provided by a variable is its “type of measurement scale.” Specifically variables are classified as (a) nominal, (b) ordinal, (c) interval or (d) ratio.

a. Nominal variables allow for only qualitative classification. That is, they can be measured only in terms of whether the individual items belong to some distinctively different categories, but we cannot quantify or even rank order those categories. For example, all we can say is that 2 individuals are different in terms of variable A (e.g., they are of different race), but we cannot say which one “has more” of the quality represented by the variable. Typical examples of nominal variables are gender, race, colour, city, etc.

b. Ordinal variables allow us to rank order the items we measure in terms of which has less and which has more of the quality represented by the variable, but still they do not allow us to say “how much more.” A typical example of an ordinal variable is the socioeconomic status of families. For example, we know that upper-middle is higher than middle but we cannot say that it is, for example, 18% higher. Also this very distinction between nominal, ordinal, and interval scales itself represents a good example of an ordinal variable. For example, we can say that nominal measurement provides less information than ordinal measurement, but we cannot say “how much less” or how this difference compares to the difference between ordinal and interval scales.

c. Interval variables allow us not only to rank order the items that are measured, but also to quantify and compare the sizes of differences between them. For example, temperature, as measured in degrees Fahrenheit or Celsius, constitutes an interval scale. We can say that a temperature of 40 degrees is higher than a temperature of 30 degrees, and that an increase from 20 to 40 degrees is twice as much as an increase from 30 to 40 degrees.
d. Ratio variables are very similar to interval variables; in addition to all the properties of interval variables, they feature an identifiable absolute zero point, thus they allow for statements such as x is two times more than y. Typical examples of ratio scales are measures of time or space. For example, as the Kelvin temperature scale is a ratio scale, not only can we say that a temperature of 200 degrees is higher than one of 100 degrees; we can correctly state that it is twice as high. Interval scales do not have the ratio property. Most statistical data analysis procedures do not distinguish between the interval and ratio properties of the measurement scales.

The relationship between variables is important to most research designs. But the nature of the relationship depends on what kind of research you are doing.

In experimental research, the type of variables is central to the design, as a causal relationship between variables is usually being studied. The Independent variable is manipulated; and the Dependant variable is measured or recorded. Other variables such as Extraneous variables and Intervenous variables are also important. So the IV is expected to effect the outcome of the DV. The EV and IVs are also considered to effect the relationship and DV.

In correlational research, relationships between variables are studies. The links between variables is explained or described by other variables, but not in causal terms: A effects B. Instead correlational research makes “interpretations” in causal terms based on some theories, etc.

The relationship between variables has two important aspects. The first is “magnitude” (size) and the second is “reliability” (the probability that the observed relationship in a sample occurred by pure chance and that in the population no such relationship exists).

Data Transformation

Measurement Error

Validity

Whether the indicator measures the concept that we say it does.

Internal validity

Whether the data yielded by one question in a questionnaire is consistent with that yielded by another.
External validity
Whether the data yielded by a question or the questionnaire as a whole is consistent with reality.

Content Validity
Whether a test measure what it is supposed to

Empirical Validity
Result of a comparison of new research findings with established tests.

Construct Validity
This measures how well the responses to a question conform with theoretical expectations

Reliability
A measure of the consistency with which people give the same response on different occasions assuming no change in the characteristic being measured. Note that a consistent but false response is still reliable.

Test-Retest Method
Basically the only way to check the reliability of a single questions: test then retest. Difficult to apply.

Split-Half Method
Imagine that you have created a questionnaire that contains ten items you believe measure prejudice against women, using the split-half technique, you would randomly assign those ten items to two sets of five. The two sets are incorporated into the questionnaire. Each set should provide a good measure of prejudice against women and the two sets should correspond in the way they classify the respondents to the study. If the two sets of items measure people differently, that points to a problem in the reliability of how you are measuring the variable.
Topic 9: The Questionnaire

“Ask a stupid question and you will get a stupid answer”

(Alexander the Great)

Purpose

This topic takes you through the various steps in the creation of a questionnaire. These include writing questions and putting them together to form a questionnaire. This is one of the most critical steps in the survey research process. Like the others it needs to be carried out with great care. In this topic you will learn how to draft simple, unambiguous questions in order to obtain the data which you have decided is significant in order to respond to your research questions. You will also learn how to put these questions together into a well designed questionnaire.

Lecture

Asking questions and designing questionnaires.

Question and answer session on this section: the questionnaire

Glossary

- Acquiescent response set
- Attitudes
- Beliefs
- Binary choice
- Checklist format
- Closed/forced choice question
- Double barreled question
- Exhaustiveness
- Extremity of attitudes
- Exclusiveness
- Filter question
- Inclusiveness
- Intensity of attitudes
• Leading question
• Level of measurement
• Likert format
• Multiple choice
• Numerical ranking scale
• Open-ended question
• Personal/impersonal question
• Prestige bias
• Pretest/pilot test
• Ranking format
• Rating scale
• Response set
• Semantic differential format
• Social desirability response

Further reading
In this study guide please read: 89-95 Design of questionnaires for group or self-administration.
*Mann, 1998: 82-100, People as sources of data; 101-131, The sample survey with formal interviews; 132-143, The self-completed questionnaire; 144-162, How to ask questions.
*†Babbie, 1995: 141-147 Guidelines for asking questions; 147-156 Questionnaire construction.
Bogue, 1985: 108-117 The interview schedule and the questionnaire.
Madge, 1953:164-167 The focused interview.

Skills
How to ask simple, efficient questions
How to design an effective, efficient questionnaires.
How to judge whether a particular question will meet your needs'.
Exercise

Design and complete a questionnaire with 18-20 questions on one of the following topics:

1. The causes of domestic violence
2. Social status in contemporary Cambodia
3. Gender equality in the workplace

Bring the completed exercise to the class on the date indicated by your instructor.

Developing appropriate wording for questions

In a written questionnaire, the words that make up the questions are the basis for your study. Hence, the survey designer must develop unambiguous, clear, and simple questions which serve the purposes of the research study. Here are a set of rules developed from suggestions offered by de Vaus (1986, 71-74), which you should go through for every question you prepare for your survey:

1. Are the words that make up this question, and the meaning of the question, simple and clear? Avoid words that are known only by experts in an area (i.e., jargon), and avoid overly complex and unfamiliar words. Carefully consider the sample who will be answering the questionnaire and ask yourself whether the questions will be fully understood by the likely respondents. This means, of course, that if the respondents have some particular expertise—for example, if they are pharmacists—then you could include words experts in that field would know. Remember that on certain questions respondents may honestly not have a response; therefore, ask yourself whether a “don’t know” or “not relevant” category should be offered as an option.

2. Could the question have an alternative meaning to some respondents? This addresses the issues of ambiguity and possible group differences in interpretation. You may not see the question, or words within it, as ambiguous; however, others might. Sometimes members of particular ethnic groups or occupational groups use words differently from the conventional way. The best assistance you can get on this problem is to show your questions to others and to pre-test the questions on a broad range of individuals who share the characteristics your sample will have.

3. Word questions in such a way that respondents are not likely to give false information to make themselves look more socially desirable or prestigious.
People want to make themselves look good. Your questions must discourage this bias toward social desirability by trying to elicit honest answers on years of education, income, number of friends. Ask yourself whether the question easily lets the respondent report, for example, a low income, a low level of education, or a few friends while experiencing as little shame as possible about revealing this information. One method used is to not ask people to give an exact income or education level, but to place themselves within grouped categories, which are more neutral.

4. Avoid negative questions. The use of negatives in questions—for example, “AIDS cannot be prevented through safe sex practices: Agree or disagree?”—is confusing. It is always better to word questions positively and then give the respondents a chance to respond positively or negatively.

5. Avoid double-barreled questions. Any question that subsumes more than one response is ambiguous. For example, “Do you like Battambang and Oddar Meanchey? Yes/No” cannot be easily answered by a respondent who likes one of these cities but not the other.

6. Check for bias in your questions! Leading questions encourage respondents to answer in a certain way. Questions such as “Do you agree with Chief Justice . . . “ or “If the X party is doing poorly in running the state education system, what do you think the state should do with the system?” are biased in favour of one answer.

7. Should the question be posed directly or indirectly? Questions that touch on more personal matters are often best posed, or moved toward, indirectly (“Many people in Cambodia voted in the last elections”). Then it is easier to ask whether the respondent has voted. However, you must be careful that indirect questions do not seem too coy or contrived.

Design of questionnaires for group or self-administration

You will not be involved in this type of data gathering operation, but because one needs to be even more rigorous in this situation some advice is given here.

General Rules of Questionnaire Construction

1. Include only questions which will address your research concerns and which you plan to analyze.
2. Make the questionnaire as appealing as possible to the respondents.

3. Keep the questionnaire as short as will suffice to elicit the information necessary to analyze the primary research concerns. Be sure, however, to include questions on all aspects of the research problem that you will need to address.

   If the questionnaire is self-administered, keep the instructions brief, but make sure they contain all the information required to complete and send back the questionnaire.

5. Consider in advance all the issues that a respondent might raise when he or she receives this instrument. Be sure that the questionnaire addresses these issues.

General Format of a Questionnaire

A questionnaire should include a cover letter, brief instructions on how to complete the questionnaire, the questions, a clearly defined space and method for the respondent to register answers to the questions, possibly codes for transcribing the data onto a computer once they are collected, instructions on how to return the questionnaire (as well as a stamped, addressed return envelope), and a final thank-you to the respondent for the time and effort expended.

Covering Letter

The primary objective of a cover letter is to tell the respondents the purpose of the questionnaire and to request that they participate. The purpose of the study should be stated clearly and simply. There are often two different types of purposes in a study: the first is the more general purpose of collecting information to address specific research questions or hypotheses; the second is to accomplish the objectives of the researcher, who may be a student carrying out a study in a methods course, a graduate student seeking data for thesis research, a government researcher collecting data for reporting, a marketing researcher who is exploring the tastes of potential clients, or an academic researcher who is collecting data on some topic.

Whatever is doing the study wants those who receive the questionnaire to complete it. Will the potential respondents be more likely to complete the instrument if the cover letter stresses the importance of the research project itself (its contribution to scientific understanding) or if it stresses the importance of the needs of the researcher as a person? In the first case, you are trying to convince the respondents that valuable information can be gained through survey research and that by participating in this study he or she may be helping to do science.
This has been called an egoistical approach because it assumes that a respondent who consents to participate has been convinced that participation will better society as a whole, the state of scholarship, and thereby, indirectly, the respondent also. In the other case, where you are stressing your needs as a researcher, you are banking on the altruism of the respondents to motivate their participation. If the respondents are convinced that their help is really vital to the study, then out of a sense of generosity they may volunteer the time needed to complete the survey. Usually the significance of the study is also stressed. Further, if the researcher is a student and makes an earnest request for help with the study, respondents may be encouraged to assist.

Whatever the pitch of the covering letter, the researcher must decide how it will sound to potential respondents. Sometimes a very matter-of-fact letter succeeds. If respondents have very little time (for example, if they have high-pressure jobs), it may be wise to stress both how important the data are for studying the subject and how short a period of time it will take to complete the form. It is important that the suggested time of completion be reasonably accurate. Ethical issues should also be considered. The letter should describe how the protection of human subjects will be accomplished (whether anonymity or confidentiality will be offered).

Instructions for interviewers and interviewees

In a self-administered questionnaire, all the information necessary to complete the form accurately and completely must be given. The following issues might need to be addressed in the instructions:

1. How and where does the respondent give his or her answers? (Check the box; circle the correct response, etc.) In this case, the questionnaire should be consistent so that all the answers can be given in the same way.

2. If there is a separate answer sheet which is machine-readable, clear instructions must be given about how to move from reading questions on the questionnaire to providing responses on the answer sheet. If a special kind of pencil is required, this must be made absolutely clear. Generally, separate answer sheets are not desirable for a self-administered survey because of the possible problems of confusion and error in using them. Questionnaires themselves may be printed on machine-readable forms; this simplifies the processing of the data, without sacrificing the ease of having respondents place their responses right next to the questions. (Of course, some groups, such as college students, probably have had extensive experience at taking tests where the responses must be filled in on machine-readable forms, but other groups may not have had much experience at
filing out such materials.) The most appropriate way of administering a survey using machine-readable forms is to a group. Then not only may the use of correct pencils be clearly stated by the administrator, but the pencils themselves may be made available.

3. Clear instructions for contingency questions (described below) where respondents are allowed to skip certain questions or specifically answer certain questions must be given throughout the instrument as they are needed.

Clear instructions for returning the questionnaire are also necessary. These may be given in three different places: in the cover letter, at the end of the survey, or at the beginning of the survey. The best policy is to have the instructions on the survey itself. If the cover letter is, in fact, the top sheet of the survey, the method of returning the questionnaire may be mentioned in the letter. If the letter is on a separate sheet of paper, however, it may accidentally be disposed of before the respondent finishes the survey. Thus the return instructions are best printed on the survey form itself.

Supplementary Reading

Read the following extract once, carefully. It is unlikely that you will be using any of these research methods but knowing about them, their assumptions and procedures will help you to develop insights into the social survey method.

Focus on Field Research: Reading from Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996

Field research is the most central strategy of data collection associated with qualitative methodology. In general terms, field research is defined as “the study of people acting in the natural courses of their daily lives. The fieldworker ventures into the worlds of others in order to learn firsthand about how they live, how they talk and behave, and what captivates and distresses them.” More explicitly, field work is characterized by its location and by the manner in which it is conducted.

With respect to location, fieldwork is carried out in natural settings, for example, anthropologists living with remote tribes or sociologists sharing in and observing the daily life of a local community. Field research is also a way of empathizing with and understanding the subjective meanings of the people being studied. Typically, fieldworkers attempt to incorporate these two characteristics in their studies.
Contemporary sociological fieldwork has its origins in the social reform movement of the turn of the twentieth century. Reformers believed that descriptions of the conditions in which the poor lived would call attention to their plight and lead to social change and improvement in those conditions. The reform movement found its strongest academic expression in the Chicago School in the early 1920s. The Chicago School sociologists were intensely involved in the social reform movement centred outside the university. Robert Park, a leading figure in the Chicago School, saw in the city a critical area for sociological research and urged his students to observe life in its various enclaves firsthand:

Go and sit in the lounges of the luxury hotels and on the doorsteps of the flop houses; sit on the Gold Coast settees and on the slum shake-downs; sit in Orchestra Hall and in the Star and Garter Burlesk. In short, gentlemen, go get the seat of your pants dirty in real research.

At that time, the methodology of qualitative research was limited to assembling a variety of personal documents: autobiographies, life histories, letters, and diaries. Qualitative researchers had only a limited conception of how to participate in the lives of the people they were studying. During the following two decades, as fieldwork became more established in sociology, its methodology came to emphasize participation in the lives of those studied so that researchers could share, and consequently better understand, the subjective perspectives of the subjects.

**Participant Observation**

The method of data collection most closely associated with contemporary field research is participant observation, whereby the investigator attempts to attain some kind of membership in or close attachment to the group that he or she wishes to study. In doing so, the participant observer attempts to adopt the perspectives of the people in the situation being observed. The participant observer’s role is that of “conscious and systematic sharing, insofar as circumstances permit, in the life activities, and on occasion, in the interests and effects of a group of persons.” Direct participation in the activities of the observed often entails learning the language, habits, work patterns, leisure activities, and other aspects of their daily lives. The researcher assumes either a complete participant role or a participant-as-observer role.

**Complete Participant**

In a complete participant role, the observer is wholly concealed, the research objectives are unknown to the observed, and the researcher
attempts to become a member of the group under observation. The complete participant interacts with the observed “as naturally as possible in whatever areas of their living interest him and are accessible to him.” For example, Festinger, Riecken, and Schachter studied a group of persons who predicted the destruction of the world. The nature of the group led the investigators to believe that if they presented themselves as researchers, they would not be allowed to observe the activities of the group. Consequently, they posed as individuals who shared the beliefs of the group and became full-fledged members trying to be “nondirective, sympathetic listeners, passive participants who were inquisitive and eager to learn whatever others might want to tell us.” Richard Mitchell Jr., describes some of the difficulties he and his fellow researchers encountered in a field investigation of paramilitary survivalists. In order to penetrate the secrecy surrounding the activities of most paramilitary survivalist groups, the researchers took advantage of the survivalist desire for new members by posing as potential recruits. Although they found themselves overdressed when they arrived for their first weekend among the survivalists, they were accepted and praised for their enthusiasm even though their costumes made it difficult to blend in. To gain membership in the group, the researchers had to participate in physical and social activities antithetical to their personal beliefs. Mitchell describes an occasion when he was required to tell a story proposing a solution to something the group considered to be a social problem.

As I began a new man joined us. He listened to my idea and approved, introduced himself, then told me things not everyone knew, about plans being made, and actions soon to be taken. He said they could use men like me and told me to be ready to join. I took him seriously. Others did, too. He was on the FBI’s “ten most wanted” list.

Mitchell’s story was good enough to gain him admittance to the inner circle of the group, but his success was not without cost. There was a possibility that his proposed solution, repulsive as it was to him, would be implemented by the survivalist. He tells how he felt about this.

If there are researchers who can participate in such business without feeling, I am not one of them nor do I even hope to be. What I do hope is someday to forget, forget those unmistakable sounds, my own voice, my own words, telling that... story.

Complete participation has been justified on the grounds that it makes possible the study of inaccessible groups or groups that do not reveal to outsiders certain aspects of their lives. Presumably, the fieldworker is treated as just another member of the group. Despite this research advantage, some researchers have severely criticized the complete participant role on
methodological and ethical grounds. Kai Erikson, for example, rejects all field studies in which the researchers do not make their role and the intent of the study known beforehand. He maintains that such studies constitute an invasion of privacy and may harm the observed.

The sheer act of entering a human transaction on the basis of deliberate fraud may be painful to the people who are thereby misled; and even if that were not the case, there are countless ways in which a stranger who pretends to be something else can disturb others by failing to understand the conditions of intimacy that prevail in the group he has tried to invade.

Erikson points to the difficulties that may arise when a researcher takes on a complete participant role and uses as an illustration an incident reported in the Festinger, Riecken, and Schachter study, When Prophecy Fails. At one point in the study, two observers arrived at one of the group’s meeting places under instructions to tell quite ordinary stories about their experience in Spiritualism in order to create as little commotion as possible. A few days afterwards, however, the leader of the group was overheard explaining that the two observers had appeared upset, excited, confused, and unsure of their errand at the time of their original visit, all of which helped confirm her suspicion that they had somehow been “sent” from another planet. In one sense, of course, this incident offered the observers an intriguing view of the belief structure of the cult, but in another sense, the leader’s assessment of the situation was very shrewd: after all, the observers had been sent from another world, if not another planet, and she may have been quite right to sense that they were a bit confused and unsure of their errand during their early moments in the new job. “In both cases,” the report informs us, the visits of the observers “were given as illustrations that ‘strange things are happening.’” Indeed, strange things were happening; yet we have no idea how strange they really were. It is almost impossible to evaluate the reaction of the group to the appearance of the pair of observers because we do not know whether they were seen as ordinary converts or as extraordinary beings. And it makes a difference, for in the first instance the investigators would be observing a response which fell within the normal range of the group’s experience, while in the second instance they would be observing a response which would never have taken place had the life of the group been allowed to run its own course.

The complete participant role poses several methodological problems. First, observers may become so self-conscious about revealing their true selves that they are handicapped when attempting to perform convincingly in the pretended role. Or they may “go native,” that is, incorporate the pretended role into their self-conception and lose the research perspective. Second, it is difficult for the researcher to decide what to observe because
he or she cannot evoke responses or behaviour and must be careful not to ask questions that might raise the suspicions of the persons observed. Third, recording observations or taking notes is impossible on the spot; these have to be postponed until the observer is alone. However, time lags in recording observations introduce selective bias and distortions through memory.

**Participant-as-Observer**

In view of these limitations, contemporary fieldworkers most often assume a dual role: they are participants and in that role they observe.

**Participant-as-observer role.**

When researchers adopt this type of role, they inform the group being studied that there is a research agenda. Researchers make long-term commitments to becoming active members of the group and attempt to establish close relationships with its members who subsequently serve as both informants and respondents. John Van Maanen’s research on police training illustrates the process of taking this role.

While a graduate student at the University of California..., I began contacting police officials across the country seeking permission to conduct a one-man field study inside a large, metropolitan law-enforcement agency... Although I encountered some initial difficulties in locating a department willing to tolerate my planned foray into its organizational spheres, eventually I managed to gain access to one police organization... Throughout the study I worked in the fashion of a traditional ethnographer or participant observer, made no attempt to disguise my scholarly aim or identity, and met with little overt hostility from the men whose everyday affairs were the explicit subject of my investigation. In most respects I felt my mode of inquiry approximated both the substance and spirit of Evans-Pritchard’s classic formulation of the ethnographic technique: “to get to know well the persons involved and to see and hear what they do and say.”

As this example demonstrates, the participant-as-observer role differs from complete participation in that the research goal is explicitly identified. Yet membership and participation in the observed group is still an important dimension in this form of research. With this method, the fieldworker gains a deeper appreciation of the group and its way of life and may also gain different levels of insight by actually participating rather than only observing.
Introduction to Peace Studies and Research Methods

The Practice of Field Research

Selecting a Research Topic

The first step in doing field research is to select a topic for investigation. Very often, the selection of a topic is influenced by personal interests or concerns. Such concerns may be related to the researcher’s job, personal relationships, family history, social class, or ethnic background. Lofland and Lofland, in their useful guide to doing qualitative research, describe this process as “starting where you are.” This practice originated in the 1920s with the Chicago School, where many well-known qualitative studies arose out of the unique experiences of students with little background in doing social research. Everett Hughes has described the beginning of this tradition in the following way:

Most of these people didn’t have any sociological background... They didn’t come in to become sociologists. They came in to learn something and Park picked up whatever it was in their experience which he could build on... He took these people and he brought out of them whatever he could find there... They might be Mennonites who were just a little unhappy about wearing plain clothes, girls who didn’t like to wear long dresses and funny little caps, or children of Orthodox Jews who really didn’t like to wear beards anymore... And he got hold of people and emancipated them from something that was inherently interesting but which they regarded as a cramp. And he turned this “cramping orthodoxy” into something that was of basic and broad human interest. And that was the case for a lot of these people. He made their pasts interesting to them, much more interesting than they ever thought they could be.

Field research requires that the investigators first determine what they care about independent of scientific considerations. This emotional involvement in their work provides a meaningful link between the personal and emotional lives of the researchers and the rigorous requirement of the social scientific endeavour; not only does this emotional attachment make the involvement in social research more personally rewarding but it helps researchers to cope with problems that are inevitable in every research project.

Choosing a Site and Gaining Access

Once a researcher has chosen a research topic, the next stage of field research is to select and gain access to an appropriate research site. To a large extent, the choice of a topic determines the range of appropriate sites. For example, Festinger and his colleagues were interested in how religious sects deal with prophetic failure. This interest necessarily limited their choice to a contemporary
research site where prophecies likely to fail had been made about events in the
near future. They chose a religious sect that predicted a natural disaster on a
given date. This allowed them to make observations before the predicted disaster
and after the date of the failed prophecy. In this case, substantive and theoretical
interest dictated the choice of setting.

Very often, geographic or other practical considerations will dictate the choice.
Moreover, it is tempting to choose a site that is easily accessible, where a
researcher has an influential contact or is a member. However, in situations
where would-be observers are close to the group and thus have easy access,
they must find ways to distance themselves emotionally when they engage in
their analysis. Conversely, investigators who are outsiders to the research setting
may have more difficulty gaining access and need to determine how much to
reduce distance after entering the research site. When the researcher reduces
the distance too much, he or she runs the risk of “going native.” Researchers
who “go native” internalize the lifestyle of the group being studied and lose their
objectivity, which compromises the findings of the research project. Some
researchers even abandon their research projects to protect their adopted group.

The ascriptive characteristics of the investigator are another important
consideration in gaining access to a setting. For example, the gender, age, race,
or ethnicity of the observers, if different from the observed, may create serious
barriers in gaining access or in communication.

In the words of Rosalie Wax:

Many tribal or folk societies not only maintain a strict division of labour
between the sexes and ages, but the people who fall into these different
categories do not converse freely or spontaneously with each other. I, as a middle
aged woman, was never able to converse openly or informally with either the old
or the young Indian men at Thrashing Buffalo. The older men, even when I knew
them fairly well, would tend to deliver lectures to me; the younger men, as was
proper, were always too bashful or formally respectful to say much. With the
Indian matrons, on the other hand, I could talk for hours.

On the basis of her experience in the field, Wax concluded that a biased
view of “whole” cultures can be avoided by using research teams whose
members have a variety of personal attributes similar to those of the group
being studied.

The problems that confront young female fieldworkers in gaining access to
male settings were discussed by Lois Easterday and her associates:
One of us established rapport with the photographers of a special military photography programme by being a photographer and knowing their language. The relationship was sustained by insisting that the researcher not be photographed as a model, but rather that she be “one of the boys” on the other side of the lens. In an attempt to gain approval for the study from the programme’s director, the researcher was denied full access with the statement, “It won’t work. The men in the programme are a close bunch, and the talk is rough. They wouldn’t be themselves if you are there.”

While these examples demonstrate that the status and gender of the researcher may be a handicap in field research, there are situations where differences have definite advantages. Blanche Geer wrote about women: The most handicapped observer is the one doing people and situations he/she is closest to. Hence, women are in luck in a male-run world. They can see how few clothes the emperor has on, question the accepted, what is taken for granted.

In other words, being an outsider can sometimes seem less threatening to the observed, help a researcher gain access to the field, and contribute to the perceptiveness that the researcher brings to the field.

Establishing Relations with Members

The ease with which a researcher establishes relationships with members of a group depends to a large extent on the nature of the group and the skills of the researcher. Edward Evans-Pritchard gives an example:

Azande would not allow me to live as one of themselves; Nuer would not allow me to live otherwise. Among Azande I was compelled to live outside of the community; among Nuer I was compelled to be a member of it. Azande treated me as a superior: Nuer as an equal.

Contemporary field researchers have emphasized that the phase of establishing social relations is perhaps the most central aspect of fieldwork: “Good fieldwork... depends crucially upon discovering the meaning of social relations, and not just those characterizing the natives’ relations with each other. It depends equally upon discovering the meanings of anthropologists’ relations with people they study.”

One basic requirement, significant especially when studying subcultures, is that the observer understands the jargon used by the particular group. Eleanor Miller, who studied “street women,” describes her frustration in her initial encounter with the women she interviewed:
I remember very well my first visit to Horizon House. I had been invited to dinner after which I was to describe my study and recruit informants. Dinner was being served, so I sat down. There were, perhaps, eight others seated as well, mostly black women... People talked and joked and occasionally sang along with the radio. I couldn’t understand half of what was being said. With a sinking feeling I started to question whether or not I could ever be comfortable enough personally to do this study.

The kinds of social relations that develop between the observer and the observed have several aspects. Rosalie Wax has noted that the identity that is chosen by the fieldworker and the role playing that takes place in the field are central to this social process. She suggests that in a well-balanced relationship, the fieldworker “strives to maintain a consciousness and respect for what he is and a consciousness and respect for what his hosts are.” The tendency to assume a “native” identity is one of the most serious errors that a fieldworker can commit. Ned Poisky, in his study of criminals, stresses the danger of “going native”:

In doing field research on criminals you damned well better not pretend to be “one of them,” because they will test this claim out and one of two things will happen: either you will... get sucked into participant observation of the sort you would rather not undertake, or you will be exposed, with still greater negative consequences. You must let the criminals know who you are; and if it is done properly it does not sabotage the research.

There are no magic formulas for learning the ropes, and field researchers generally recommended that the researcher begin by participating in the daily life of the observed, a process described as “hanging around.” Learning the ropes and establishing relationships involve adopting a variety of roles. These roles are sometimes spontaneously invented and blend with the demands of the particular research setting. Rosalie Wax describes her experiences while conducting a fieldwork study of the Japanese relocation centres during the Second World War:

I would not have been able to do field work in Gila and Tule Lake if my respondents and I had not been able, jointly, to invent and maintain many of these relationships. Some Japanese Americans felt more comfortable if they could treat me like a sympathetic newspaper reporter. I knew very little about how a reporter behaved (indeed, I had never seen or spoken with one), but I responded and we were able to converse more easily. In Tule Lake the superpatriots and agitators found it easier to talk to me once they convinced themselves that I was German Nisei, “full of the courageous German spirit.” I found this fantasy personally embarrassing, but I did not make a point of denying my German ancestry. Finally, I was not a geisha, even though a shrewd Issei once suggested that it was because I functioned as one that I was able to find out so much of
what happened at Tule Lake. His explanation was that Japanese men - and especially Japanese politicians - do not discuss their plans or achievements with other men or with their wives, but they are culturally conditioned to speak of such matters with intelligent and witty women.

As this example shows, learning the ropes and adopting the range of research roles is a flexible process that requires the researcher to exercise ingenuity and demonstrate sensitivity to the personalities and perceptions of the research participants.

Finding Resourceful and Reliable Informants

Once participant observers have established relationships with members of the group, they are regarded as provisional group members. They learn how to behave in the group and “teach” the observed how to act toward them. Next, observers are accepted as categorical members of the group. By this time, rapport will have been established, areas of observation will be agreed on, and informants will be providing information. William Whyte’s experiences illustrate several phases in this process:

I began with a vague idea that I wanted to study a slum district... I made my choice on very unscientific grounds: Cornerville best fitted my picture of what a slum district should look like... I learned early in my Cornerville period the crucial importance of having the support of the key individuals in any groups or organizations I was studying. Instead of trying to explain myself to everyone, I found I was providing far more information about myself and my study to leaders such as Doc than I volunteered to the average corner boy. I always tried to give the impression that I was willing and eager to tell just as much about my study as anyone wished to know, but it was only with group leaders that I made a particular effort to provide really full information... Since these leaders had the sort of position in the community that enabled them to observe much better than the followers what was going on and since they were in general more skilful observers than the followers, I found that I had much to learn from a more active collaboration with them.

Intimate relationships with informants may, however, bias the researcher’s reports, as Whyte himself has observed:

Doc found this experience of working with me interesting and enjoyable, and yet the relationship had its drawbacks. He once commented: “You’ve slowed me up plenty since you’ve been down here. Now, when I do something, I have to think what Bill Whyte would want to know about it and how I can explain it. Before, I used to do things by instinct.”
Leaving the Field

The social complexity of field research is not limited to gaining access and establishing relationships. Leaving the field is no less problematic. This stage depends on the agreement the observer and the observed reached when the study began and on the kind of social relationships that developed during the research process. The research requirement of “getting involved” during the fieldwork itself presents a problem when it is time to leave, as Wax notes:

Being by that time experienced fieldworkers, Murray and I had planned to stay six months in the field and spend six months writing our report. But rough as life was, I had become so attached to some of my Indian friends that I talked Murray into staying an extra month - even at temperatures of 30 below zero. I did not want to leave but I had to.

Another problem in leaving the field is how it affects the subjects themselves.

“As they see it, they stand to gain little, if anything, from our research findings and may even lose. A related reason for their reluctance is their impression that our work will add little to their own lives.”

Field exit processes range from the quick and sharply defined to the gradual and drawn out. Leaving can be a recurring phenomenon when research needs require the researcher to leave and come back numerous times. In the end, the procedure the researcher selects is a function of the commitment he or she made while conducting the research.

Recording Observations

In field research, the primary sources of data are what people say and do. Researchers may record the behaviour they observe by writing notes, tape recording, and on occasion photographing or videotaping. In some cases when the researcher’s identity and purpose are known to the observed, recording can be done on the spot, during the event. In most cases, however, the researcher wants the members of the group to forget they are being observed so that their behaviour and interaction remains natural. Recording in the presence of the group serves as a reminder of the researcher’s agenda, which may influence the behaviour of the group and also may limit the researcher’s ability to participate in group activities. When the researcher’s identity and purpose are unknown to the observed, it is usually impossible to document events as they occur.

When researchers cannot overtly document observations, they must use devices to help them remember events as they occurred so they can be fully documented at the earliest possible opportunity. Many researchers use moments
of privacy - such as regular use of the rest room - to jot down key words that will help them to remember the sequence of events, relevant behaviours, and valuable quotations. When privacy is impossible, researchers may rely on mnemonic devices to help them remember. The key to mnemonic devices is the association of the things to be remembered with things that are familiar and easily recalled.

When researchers cannot fully document their observations immediately, the possibility of distortion and unintentional misrepresentation increases. The longer the researcher must wait to record observations, the greater the possibility for flawed recall. It is helpful to employ certain notational conventions to minimize distortions. For example, a researcher could use quotation marks around recorded material to indicate exact recall; data with no quotation marks around it would be based on impressions or inferences. Such a recording practice is vulnerable because of observer inference, however. Lofland and Lofland suggest asking the following questions before the data is written up:

1. Is the report firsthand?
2. What was the spatial location of the observer?
3. Did the research participant have any reason to give false or biased information?
4. Is the report internally consistent?
5. Can the report be validated by using other independent reports?

Although information gained from these questions does not guarantee that a report is true, it helps the researcher to assess the reliability of the data.

**Analyzing Data**

Data analysis in qualitative field research is an ongoing process. Observers formulate hypotheses and note important themes throughout their studies. As the research progresses, some hypotheses are discarded, others are refined, and still others are formulated. Bogdan and Taylor give an example of such a process:

In the job training program study, the observer had an early hunch that men trainees clearly differentiated “women’s factory work” from “men’s factory work.” The hunch came after one of the staff personnel had reported the following to the observer: “When the men saw women doing the work (soldering) on the assembly line, they didn’t want any part of it.” Since this sex differentiation would have important implications for the potential success of the program and for the meanings of work, the researcher presented his hunch on later visits to the setting. He found that, although men and women differed in the types of work they valued, men did not reject certain work as “women’s work.” For
example, they expressed little pride in doing physical labour and openly avoided jobs that were dangerous or “too hard.” The observer dropped his earlier hypothesis and turned to the pursuit of others.

An important aspect of data analysis during the period of data collection is establishing files and coding field-notes. Essentially, this is a process of dissecting field-notes. In the early stages of fieldwork, a researcher may develop simple categories based on the characteristics of the people being observed and the events that occur. For example, a researcher might classify members of the group as leaders, followers, and renegades. Field notes pertaining to the actions of each type of group member are filed or coded under the appropriate classification. Interactions between different types of group members are filed under both classifications. As the fieldwork progresses, researchers use what they have learned to refine and, sometimes, redefine their categories. After each refinement the researcher must review and re-file all relevant field notes. It is during the process of categorization that researchers develop tentative hypotheses.

Researchers can create files by actually cutting apart a copy of their field-notes and filing the pieces of paper into file folders, or they can use a word processing program to excerpt portions of the field-notes into separate data files. The labels on the file folders or data files reflect the categories the researcher has developed.

Becker and Geer, in their study of a medical school, found it useful to prepare data for analysis by making a running summary of their field notes. They coded the data into separate incidents, summarizing for each incident their observation of a student’s action. First, they tentatively identified the major areas or categories during the fieldwork process. Then, when going through a summarized incident, they marked it with a number standing for each area into which it could be classified. The following examples from their field notes and their subsequent analysis illustrate this process:

Mann says that now that he and the other students have found out what Dr. Prince, the staff physician, is like, they learn the things they know he’s going to try to catch them on and keep him stumped that way.” This incident contains some reference to student-faculty relations and would accordingly be coded under that category. It also refers indirectly to the phenomenon of student cooperation on school activities and would be coded under that category as well. The next stage in the analysis would be to inspect the various items coded under one area, and formulate a more detailed statement of the content of this area or perspective citing examples of actions and statements that characterize it.

Once researchers have identified actions and statements that support their emerging hypotheses, their next step is to look for negative cases—instances
that refute the hypotheses. Researchers must compare positive and negative cases to determine whether the hypothesis can be modified to better fit all of the data or if the hypothesis must be rejected entirely. In addition, the range of the perspective is checked, that is, how widely the items of data were distributed through a number of different situations.

When analyzing qualitative data, it is useful to look for certain regularities or patterns that emerge from the numerous observations made during the fieldwork stage. A researcher can perform this task by posing a number of questions:

1. What type of behaviour is it?
2. What is its structure?
3. How frequent is it?
4. What are its causes?
5. What are its processes?
6. What are its consequences?
7. What are people’s strategies?

The written report is the culmination of the field-research study. The final report describes the background for the study, the theoretical framework guiding it, and the design and methodology of the study. It provides a detailed analysis and interpretation of the data and also explores what the findings imply in terms of further analysis or public policy decisions.

The Theory of Field Research

When researchers engage in qualitative research, their goal is to either falsify, modify, or provide support for existing theory. They accomplish this goal deductively by deriving hypotheses from theory and using the data they collect to test statistically the hypotheses. Qualitative field research moves in the opposite direction, using a process call analytic induction. Researchers collect data, formulate hypotheses based on the data, test their hypotheses using the data, and attempt to develop theory. The theory they develop is called grounded theory because it arises out of, and is directly relevant to, the particular setting under study:

While in the field, the researcher continually asks questions as to fit, relevance, and workability about the emerging categories and relationships between them. By raising questions at this point in time the researcher checks those issues while he still has access to the data. As a result, he continually fits his analysis to the data by checking as he proceeds.
Researchers must approach the field with an open mind to ensure that their ultimate theory is grounded. Because field research is based on observation, preconceived ideas and rigid hypotheses may influence the observations a researcher chooses to record for analysis, which can compromise the resultant theory. Since most researchers do not spend all of their time in the field, they may, however, use very loosely defined hypotheses to decide when and how to make their initial observations. Subsequently, researchers will use observations to refine, reject, and reformulate hypotheses throughout the research process. Blanche Geer exemplifies this method in the following excerpt:

My use of hypotheses falls roughly into three sequential types. The first operation consisted of testing a crude yes-or-no proposition. By asking informants or thinking back over volunteered information in the data... I stated a working hypothesis in the comments and began the second operation in the sequence: Looking for negative cases or setting out deliberately to accumulate positive ones... Working with negatively expressed hypotheses gave me a specific goal. One instance that contradicts what I say is enough to force modification of the hypothesis... The third state of operating with hypotheses in the field involves two-step formulations and eventually rough models. Hypotheses take the form of predictions about future events which may take place under specific conditions or changes in informants over time in conjunction with events.

Theory building in analytic induction consists of finding and delineating relationships between categories of observations. Often, researchers attempt to distinguish a core category and explain how various subcategories influence the core category. The researcher’s goal in developing grounded theory is to produce a set of propositions that explains the totality of the phenomenon. Qualitative researchers use examples of their observations and quotations from members of the group under study to support their theories. In some cases, researchers can use grounded theory to develop empirically testable hypotheses amenable to statistical analysis.

A classic instance of field research using analytic induction is Donald Cressey’s study of embezzlement. Cressey defined embezzlement as the phenomenon of accepting a position of trust in good faith and then violating this trust by committing a crime. He initially formulated a hypothesis that these violations of trust occurred when embezzlers conceived of the thefts as “technical violations” but rejected this hypothesis after finding embezzlers who said they knew their behaviour had been wrong and illegal. Cressey next hypothesized that violators defined the illegal use of funds as an emergency that could not be met by legal means. But he revised this hypothesis again when he observed violators who did not report an emergency or who noted an even greater emergency in the past. Next Cressey noted that violators were individuals who
felt they needed to use “secret means.” But again, he had to reformulate this hypothesis when he discovered deviant cases. The final hypothesis, according to Cress is the one that accounts for all cases observed:

Trusted persons became trust violators when they conceive of themselves as having a financial problem which is non-shareable, are aware that this problem can be secretly resolved by violation of the position of financial trust, and are able to apply to their own conduct in that situation verbalizations which enable them to adjust their conceptions of themselves as trusted persons with their conceptions of themselves as users of the entrusted funds or property.

An Example of Field Research: Blue-Collar Community

Before concluding our discussion of field research, it is useful to illustrate the various stages with one inclusive study, Blue-Collar Community, conducted by William Kornblum in South Chicago. Kornblum used a variety of methods to gather data, including discussions with community residents, archival records, census data, interviewing, and attending community meetings. However, the study leans primarily on Kornblum’s firsthand involvement and participation in the life of the community. As such, it is a good example of a field study employing participant observation as the main method of analysis.

Choosing the Research Topic and the Research Site

The general topic was suggested to Kornblum by his professors in graduate school, who were interested in sponsoring a study of Chicago’s south Slavic ethnic groups. Kornblum conducted some research on local community organizations in Yugoslavian communities and was interested in the general question of how Yugoslav immigrants adapted in the United States. He decided to focus on the south Slavic settlement in South Chicago and on the Pulaski-Milwaukee section on the North-west side and started interviewing Croatian and Serbian immigrants. He also visited the immigrant coffee shops, soccer clubs and taverns and was gradually drawn toward the steel mill neighbourhoods of South Chicago. Kornblum describes his choice of the community in the following way:

South Chicago fascinated me. I had never seen such heavy industry at close range, and I was awed by the immensity of the steel mills and the complexity of the water and rail arteries which crisscrossed the area’s neighbourhoods. In the people’s faces and in their neighbourhoods I saw more of the spectrum of cultural groups which had settled and built the community. Thus, I was beginning to see that my study would have to concern itself as much with the larger community as it would with the cultural and social adaptations of Serbian and Croatian settlers.
Kornblum found a Serbian immigrant restaurant where he was introduced to some of the regular patrons. The majority of them were Serbian immigrant men in their mid-thirties to early forties, most of whom were steelworkers. Although it was a congenial spot, the restaurant was socially peripheral because its patrons were mostly recent immigrants. At this point, Kornblum wanted to make contacts with American-born Serbian and Croatian residents, so he began looking for a place to settle in the community.

Gaining Access

Soon after moving into the community, Kornblum started attending public meetings to identify local leaders and to arrange an introductory meeting with them. He identified himself as a researcher only to a few: to most residents he said he was teaching at the nearby Indiana University while his wife was a student at the University of Illinois in the central city and that the neighbourhood was a halfway point for both of them.

Gradually, Kornblum became friendly with a larger number of political activists and leaders, in particular with a group of steelworkers who ran the local union at one of the mills. He began to feel that it was necessary to make more of a commitment to South Chicago’s lifestyle: I felt like a knowledgeable outsider who was missing some of the most important experiences of life in the community... A friend whose opinion I highly valued, the Serbian president of a local steel union, confronted me with a serious challenge, “How can you really understand what goes on here if you’ve never spent any time inside a steel mill?”

Subsequently, Kornblum was hired as a subforeman in the steel mill that became the focus of his study.

Establishing Relations with Members

Kornblum's job as a subforeman proved to be an ideal position from a research perspective. As subforeman he had to understand how the work at his end of the mill fit with the overall division of labor in the entire plant. As a manager he could walk freely throughout the mill and converse informally with workers. This made him sensitive to the interactions that took place in the mill, especially to the meaning of unionism. He began to understand how steel production creates an occupational community inside the mill.

Kornblum was particularly interested in understanding the community’s political leaders, especially unionist politicians. At that time, the community was involved in choosing the leaders of its central institutions. Therefore, many of his friends and informants were actively involved in politics and were sometimes
members of opposing factions. This created a problem that is quite typical of field research. Kornblum notes:

I began to feel that I could not remain aloof from political commitment when all the people I cared for had so much more at stake than I did. Aside from the personal aspect of this decision, there are very real limitations to what one can learn about political processes through informants. If one wishes actually to watch decisions being made in a competitive political system, it is often necessary to become part of the decision-making body itself. I did this by taking highly partisan although “behind the scenes” roles in most of the political campaigns reported in this study. The liabilities of this strategy are numerous and deserve some attention. First, it is obvious that the more committed one is to a particular faction, the less one can learn, at first hand, about others... In consequence of this, whenever I committed myself to a given faction I attempted to function as much as possible in capacities which would require little public exposure. In order to keep up with events in opposing factions I attempted to explain my affiliations as frankly as possible to friends on opposite sides, in much the same terms as any other resident of the community would. In this way it was possible to act as a partisan and still communicate with friends in opposing factions who acted as my informants... Another problem in taking on partisan roles as a researcher is that it almost inevitably causes bias in favour of those to whom one is committed. In my case, again, the answer to this problem was to maintain close informants on opposing sides, and to try, in the analysis of events, to be on guard against my own partialities so that I might correct them or use them knowingly.

Leaving the Field

Kornblum and his family moved from South Chicago to Seattle, where the study was written. Periodically, he returned to South Chicago to continue his involvement in local political life.

Ethical and Political Issues of Fieldwork

Because fieldwork is characterized by long-term and intimate participation in the daily life of the people being studied, it is associated with a number of ethical, legal, and political dilemmas. Two ethical issues are associated with fieldwork: the problem of potential deception and the impact the fieldwork may have on the lives of those studied.

Earlier in this chapter, we saw that fieldworkers sometimes conduct their study under a false identity in order to gain access to the field and that this kind of fieldwork has generated considerable controversy and criticism. However, some field researchers defend the use of disguised observation; they claim that
it is the only way to gain access to important research sites. Furthermore, they argue that covert methods have never directly harmed the people studied in any significant way.

Obviously, this is a serious controversy that cannot be easily resolved. We must stress, however, that anyone planning to use disguised identity in a field study should be aware of the serious ethical implications of doing so. If at all possible, the researcher should examine alternative ways of gaining access to the research site.

Another important ethical issue is the unanticipated effect that any kind of fieldwork may have on the people being studied. Very often the fieldworkers have more power than their hosts. Subjects may perceive fieldworkers as sources of material resources, political connections, and social prestige. For example, in a study conducted in New Guinea, the Papuan settlers (mistakenly) credited the fieldworkers with getting the government to change certain land policies. Obviously, such a perception could be very harmful to the relations between the researcher and the study population, especially if the fieldworker fails to perform in ways that the people expect.

The research community has become more concerned with the political issues associated with field research as governments and other political groups have become increasingly interested in who gets studied and in what ways. This concern has particular relevance in cases where the results of research dealing with disadvantaged groups may have political and social implications. In addition, many of these groups are now claiming the right to review both research proposals and prepublication drafts of research reports.

In spite of these ethical and political concerns, qualitative field research can yield rich descriptions of cultures that cannot be attained through quantitative research. When we have little or no information about a group or subculture, field research can serve as an exploratory tool in the development of quantitative measures. Researchers who engage in field research must act responsibly to ensure that social scientists do not lose the opportunity to use this valuable tool.

Summary

1. Field research is the most central strategy of data collection associated with the qualitative method. Scientists conduct field research in natural settings in an effort to understand subjectively the people being studied.

2. The method of data collection most closely associated with field research is participant observation, the process through which the investigator attempts to obtain membership in or a close attachment to the group he or she wishes
to study. The researcher can assume either a complete participant role or a participant-as-observer role. Complete participants conceal their identities and do not make their research objectives known, whereas participants-as-observers make their presence known to the group being studied.

3. The practice of field research can be divided into the following distinct stages: selecting a research topic, choosing an appropriate research site and obtaining access, establishing relations with members of the group and finding reliable informants, and leaving the field and analyzing the data.

4. The goal of field research is to develop grounded theory using the method of analytic induction. The researcher constructs analytic categories from the data and develops hypotheses based on the relationships between categories. Both the analytic categories and the hypotheses are revised and refined as the research progresses by comparing positive and negative cases.

5. Fieldwork is associated with a number of ethical and political dilemmas. The first problem is the potential for deception, which is especially likely in studies in which the observer disguises his or her identity. The unanticipated consequences of the research are a second important ethical issue. Subjects may perceive researchers as sources of material resources, political connections, and social prestige, resources that are unrelated to the research process or its objectives.

Introduction

a. Introduce yourself clearly: who you are and why you are there.

b. Break the ice—establish a friendly and comfortable introduction

c. Right to information: remember the interviewee has a right to information, about you, the study, their involvement, your organizations affiliations (political, religious, etc)

d. Explain that the interview is confidential and their response is anonymous, say this clearly and simply. You may like to explain that their answers are not singled out but are looked at with others responses, etc.

e. Ask for consent

Your attitude

a. Be polite, use simple language

b. Never laugh or look strangely on someone’s ideas or opinions

c. Remain engaged throughout the interview, don’t look bored, impatient, etc.
d. If a situation occurs that you feel you cannot manage and must end the interview, thank the respondent and excuse yourself.

e. Be aware of your own negative body language, (checking your watch) tone, etc, as these effects the respondents also.

**Know your questionnaire and purpose well**

I Know your questions, and have established ways to restate for clarification, examples, etc.

a. If you summarise or paraphrase a long response, make sure you check for correct meaning and understanding with the interviewee.

b. Be engaged with your verbal and non-verbal communication

c. Try to use their verbal and non-verbal cues to better understand their situation. E.g., if they are uncomfortable or do look like they do not understand, are upset etc.

**Recording**

a. Be prepared with your materials (clipboard, paper, recorder, etc)

b. Make sure you answer all questions

c. Make sure you are them according to the item format. For example if it says tick one box, make sure that several responses are not recorded, etc.

d. When you finish, make sure you thank your respondent for their time, and restate that their contribution is valuable, etc.

e. Before leaving, take a couple of minutes to check all answers were given.

f. If you have a comment or note regarding the interview make a note as soon as you can, so as not to forget (e.g., outside the home, etc).

**Further reading**

Supplementary reading on research methods that attempts to address ‘real - world’ problems + issues, see: Zina O’leary, Researching Real-World Problems:


( Available in ACT’s library).
Topic 10: Data processing and analysis

Purpose

When you have completed your fieldwork, coded your data and, if appropriate, entered in your data in a statistical computer programme, you can begin the fascinating process of analysing your data. Begin by going back to your research question or questions. (If you did not formulate these clearly at the beginning of your project you will now have a serious problem. You will not know what to do with the data you have worked hard to get.) Ask yourself why you wanted that data you in the first place. Then proceed, using your data, to respond to the questions you created.

Lecture

Table construction: frequencies and cross-tabulations. Changing, collapsing and re-ordering categories of variables. Creating new variables. Standardising variables to enable better comparisons. Dealing with missing data.

Question and answer session on this section: data processing and analysis.

Glossary

- Coding
- Code book
- Data entry
- Data cleaning

Skills

- How to analyse data
- How to construct tables
  - Frequency
  - Crosstabulations
**Further reading**

Please read the following sections of the study guide

*†Mann: 163-181, Analysis and presentation of results.
*†Babbie, 1995: 360-394 Quantifying data & Elementary analyses
De Vaus, 2002:  201-266 Analysing survey data.
Bogue, 1985: 125-150 Quantified analysis of social data.

**Exercise**

Please complete the following exercise and bring it to class on the date given to you by the instructor.

Imagine a set of 10 questions designed to measure conservatism. Each item is scored from 1 to 5 with five being given to the most conservative response to each question. Non-answers were coded as 9.

a) What would be the scale score of someone who was most conservative on every question?

b) What is the minimum score possible?

c) What would a scale score of 54 suggest?

d) If two respondents had both obtained a score of 25 what conclusions could you draw about how they answered each question?

e) If one respondent obtained a score of 15 and another of 30, what conclusions would you draw from this?
Introduction

Data processing is a link between data collection and data analysis whereby observations are transformed into codes that are amendable to analysis.

Today, data collected for analysis is almost always coded, stored, retrieved, and analysed using computerized systems. Most systems are similar. The purpose of this topic is to familiarise you with common methods of preparing data for coding and codebook construction. When researchers assign numeric codes to their data, they increase their ability to use computers to retrieve and analyse data.

Data Preparation / Processing

Data processing is a link between data collection and data analysis whereby observations are transformed into codes that are amenable to analysis. At the first stage of data processing, researchers classify numerous individual observations into a smaller number of categories to simplify the description and analysis of the data. Such systems are referred to as coding schemes.

Coding Schemes

Coding schemes must be linked to theory and the problem under study, which decides the categories to be included. Other requirements of a coding scheme are that it be both exhaustive and mutually exclusive so that all observations can be classified and each observation falls into only one category. Researchers use coding schemes to translate data into a format that allows computer processing. The translation is usually guided by a codebook, which presents the schemes with their assigned values together with coding instructions.

Codebook Construction

Once you have developed a coding scheme for each of the variables used in a research project, you should compile this information in a codebook. All good codebooks should include some information regarding each variables name or number, the coding scheme, and codes for missing data. The codebook serves as a guide for the coders who will put the raw data into a database or other data device. It is also a reference for the principal researcher and other researchers who wish to use the data set. For research involving the use of surveys, the actual survey question is often included in the codebook. Make sure you check through your coding systems for any mistakes or inconsistencies.
Using Computers in Social Science Research

Social scientists have been using computers to organize the research process for many years. Although your access to computers and the forever developing programs that are available may vary, computers are simply tools that help us to store, process, access, and analyse data sets more quickly and easily. Once we understand the research methods and statistics discussed in this course, we can let a computer calculate the statistics and provide printouts of the results. However, it is up to the researcher to supply correct and reliable data, choose statistics that are appropriate for the level of data, and interpret the results properly. In this course, we focus on two statistical programs that are designed especially for the social sciences, both of which are available for you to access. Appendix A has manuals for use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

In addition, recall that there are different approaches to data processing and data analysis for ‘qualitative’ and ‘quantitative’ designs. Unlike quantitative data analysis (which is mainly explored in our course), Qualitative data analysis generally involves moving through the raw data through processes of inductive and deductive reasoning, thematic exploration (using words and concepts to explore ‘themes’), and exploration of the interconnections among themes. There also exists qualitative data analysis software that can assist with these tasks (such as Nuivo). References include: Silverman, D. (2001) Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction. London: Sage.
Topic 11: Basic concepts in statistics

Purpose

When you have completed your field work you will have generated much data (singular datum, this is the word commonly used for facts expressed in figures, as distinct from information, which is facts expressed in words). You will need to generalise from this data before you can draw conclusions. Statistics helps us to do this but the subject is much more useful than this. In this topic we shall learn how to apply some basic statistical techniques.

Lecture

The use of basic descriptive statistical formula.

Question and answer session on this section: basic concepts in statistics

Skills

To be able to use and apply basic descriptive statistical formula.

Further reading

Please read this section of this study guide.
*†De Vaus, 2002: 201-266 Analysing survey data
*††Bogue, 1985: 125-143 Quantified analysis of social data; 157-178 Statistical aids.

Exercise

Please complete the following exercise and bring it to class on the date given to you by the instructor.

Using the data which will be supplied to you calculate the following statistics:
Overview of Basic Concepts in Statistics.

In this introduction, we will briefly discuss those elementary statistical concepts that provide the necessary foundations for more specialized expertise in any area of statistical data analysis. The selected topics illustrate the basic assumptions of most statistical methods and/or have been demonstrated in research to be necessary components of one’s general understanding of the “quantitative nature” of reality (Nisbett, et al., 1987). Because of space limitations, we will focus mostly on the functional aspects of the concepts discussed and the presentation will be very short. Further information on each of those concepts can be found in statistical textbooks.

The Role of Statistics

The field of statistics involves methods for describing and analysing data and for making decisions or inferences about phenomena represented by the data. Methods in the first category are referred to as descriptive statistics; methods in the second category are called inferential statistics.

1. Descriptive statistics enable the researcher to summarize and organize data in an effective and meaningful way. They provide tools for describing collections of statistical observations and reducing information to an understandable form.

2. Inferential statistics allow the researcher to make decisions or inferences by interpreting data patterns. Researchers use inferential statistics to determine whether an expected pattern designated by the theory and hypotheses is actually found in the observations.

Both descriptive and inferential statistics help social scientists develop explanations for complex social phenomena that deal with relationships between variables. Statistics provides tools to analyse represent and interpret data variables and relationships between variables.

Data Analysis

After data have been coded and processed they are ready for analysis.

During the preliminary stage of analysis, researchers use quite ordinary methods designed to provide a straightforward description of the data. When you start to analyse your data, it is common to first summarise each item in some tabular form, and measures such as averages and percentages are calculated to describe the main characteristics.
The Univariate Distribution

In this section we distinguish the main characteristics of single variable or univariate, distributions. During the preliminary stages of analysis, researchers use quite ordinary methods designed to provide a straightforward description of the data.

Frequency Distribution

Researchers usually begin the analysis by showing how the respondents are distributed on all the items of the investigation. For example, a distribution might show that 60 of the 100 respondents included in a sample are females; that 20 of 50 families have no electricity; etc. These listings of the number of observations that fall into each of several categories are called frequency distributions. Frequencies are often converted into proportions or percentages.

Using graphs to describe distribution

Sometimes it is difficult for people to read and understand numeric tables.

Graphs provide researchers with an alternative method of displaying the information organised in frequency distributions. Three of the graphs most commonly used are the pie chart, the bar chart and the histogram. Both the pie chart and the bar chart can be used to present data measured at the nominal and ordinal levels. Researchers use the histogram to display data measured at interval or ratio levels.

Measures of Central Tendency

Often it is useful to obtain some average value that is representative of the distribution. For example a researcher may need to answer such questions as “What is the average level of education of this group of respondents?” or “What is the most typical source of conflict for these families?” These questions can be answered by using measures of central tendency. The three most common statistical measures used are the mode, the median, and the arithmetic mean.

The Three Measures of Central Tendency

There are three measures of central tendency that can be used and each has its own characteristics. The mode indicates the point of central distribution
1. **Mode:** The category or observation that appears most frequently in the distribution. You can find the mode by finding the category with the largest number of responses. The mode is easy to identify and thus can be used as a first and quick indicator of the central tendency. For example: In a survey of countries visited by students in a class of 40, we can see that Thailand was the country (category) most students had visited.

   Thailand I I I I I I I I I
   Vietnam I I I I I I I I I
   Laos I I I
   China I
   Japan I I
   Italy I

   However, the mode is not useful when there are two points with maximum points of frequency, that is when a distribution is bimodal not unimodal.

2. **Median:** The median is the observation, category or interval that divides the distribution into two equal parts. To find the median for ungrouped data with an uneven number of scores, the researcher lists the observations in increasing order and locates the middle score. If the number of scores is even, the median is located between the middle two scores. To find the median for grouped data, use the following equation:

   \[
   \frac{(N + 1)}{2}
   \]

   For example, below is a list of values for one variable:

   1111122223333444444444666677777777778
   
   There are 39 cases. To find the midpoint or Median we use the equation

   \[
   \frac{(N + 1)}{2}
   \]

   Whereby, \((39 + 1) / 2 = 20\)

   Median = midpoint = the 20th case = 4

   The median is one example of a group of measures called percentiles.

3. **Arithmetic mean (or mean):** The mean is equal to the sum of all the observations divided by the total number of observations. The formula for finding the mean of ungrouped data is:
\[ X = \frac{\sum x}{N} \]

where

\[ X = \text{the arithmetic mean} \]

\[ \sum x = \text{the sum of total observations} \]

\[ N = \text{the number of observations} \]

So using the same series of numbers we can calculate the mean as follows:

\[
11111122223334444444666677777777778
\]

\[ X = \frac{\sum x}{N} \]

\[
\text{Mean} = \frac{168}{39} = 4.3
\]

So the average or mean observation is 4.3

There are no clear rules about when to use which measure, it depends on the objective of the study. The mean may be used with interval or ratio variables such as income and age. Whilst the mode can be used at any level of measurement but only for normal variables such as party affiliation. The median can be applied to ordinal level variables such as party attitudes.

Measures of central tendency can be misleading if they are not accompanied by measures that describe the amount of dispersion or spread in the distribution. For example if the following list of ages of students in a class was:

\[
22 \ 21 \ 23 \ 11 \ 22 \ 78 \ 18 \ 18 \ 19 \ 21 \ 22 \ 34 \ 22 \ 22 \ 67
\]

The mode would be: 22
The median would be: 22
The mean would be: 28

The measures of central tendency above show us information about the most typical or average characteristics of the group, whereas measures of dispersion show us how many members of the group deviate from it and the extent of the deviation.

In the example above, three students deviate from the central tendency. One student is younger than average age and is in the class because he is
particularly intelligent. Her grandparents look after the child and decided to also participate in the undergraduate course because they have spare time and want to make sure their grandchild is okay at university. Did the measures of central tendency give you any information about these three students? No, so it is important to check your distribution as well as the central tendency.

**Variables.** Variables are things that we measure, control, or manipulate in research. They differ in many respects, most notably in the role they are given in our research and in the type of measures that can be applied to them.

**Correlational vs. experimental research.** Most empirical research belongs clearly to one of those two general categories. In correlational research we do not (or at least try not to) influence any variables but only measure them and look for relations (correlations) between some set of variables, such as blood pressure and cholesterol level. In experimental research, we manipulate some variables and then measure the effects of this manipulation on other variables; for example, a researcher might artificially increase blood pressure and then record cholesterol level. Data analysis in experimental research also comes down to calculating “correlations” between variables, specifically, those manipulated and those affected by the manipulation. However, experimental data may potentially provide qualitatively better information: Only experimental data can conclusively demonstrate causal relations between variables. For example, if we found that whenever we change variable A then variable B changes, then we can conclude that “A influences B.” Data from correlational research can only be “interpreted” in causal terms based on some theories that we have, but correlational data cannot conclusively prove causality.

**Dependent vs. independent variables.** Independent variables are those that are manipulated whereas dependent variables are only measured or registered. This distinction appears terminologically confusing to many because, as some students say, “all variables depend on something.” However, once you get used to this distinction, it becomes indispensable. The terms dependent and independent variable apply mostly to experimental research where some variables are manipulated, and in this sense they are “independent” from the initial reaction patterns, features, intentions, etc. of the subjects. Some other variables are expected to be “dependent” on the manipulation or experimental conditions. That is to say, they depend on “what the subject will do” in response. Somewhat contrary to the nature of this distinction, these terms are also used in studies where we do not literally manipulate independent variables, but only assign subjects to “experimental groups” based on some pre-existing properties of the subjects. For example, if in an experiment, males are compared with females regarding their white cell count (WCC), Gender could be called the independent variable and WCC the dependent variable.
Relations between variables. Regardless of their type, two or more variables are related if in a sample of observations, the values of those variables are distributed in a consistent manner. In other words, variables are related if their values systematically correspond to each other for these observations. For example, Gender and WCC would be considered to be related if most males had high WCC and most females low WCC, or vice versa; Height is related to Weight because typically tall individuals are heavier than short ones; IQ is related to the Number of Errors in a test, if people with higher IQ's make fewer errors.

Why relations between variables are important. Generally speaking, the ultimate goal of every research or scientific analysis is finding relations between variables. The philosophy of science teaches us that there is no other way of representing “meaning” except in terms of relations between some quantities or qualities; either way involves relations between variables. Thus, the advancement of science must always involve finding new relations between variables. Correlational research involves measuring such relations in the most straightforward manner. However, experimental research is not any different in this respect. For example, the above mentioned experiment comparing WCC in males and females can be described as looking for a correlation between two variables: Gender and WCC. Statistics does nothing else but help us evaluate relations between variables. Actually, all of the hundreds of procedures that are described in this manual can be interpreted in terms of evaluating various kinds of inter-variable relations.

Two basic features of every relation between variables. The two most elementary formal properties of every relation between variables are the relation’s (a) magnitude (or “size”) and (b) its reliability (or “truthfulness”).

a. Magnitude (or “size”). The magnitude is much easier to understand and measure than reliability. For example, if every male in our sample was found to have a higher WCC than any female in the sample, we could say that the magnitude of the relation between the two variables (Gender and WCC) is very high in our sample. In other words, we could predict one based on the other (at least among the members of our sample).

b. Reliability (or “truthfulness”). The reliability of a relation is a much less intuitive concept, but still extremely important. It pertains to the “representativeness” of the result found in our specific sample for the entire population. In other words, it says how probable it is that a similar relation would be found if the experiment was replicated with other samples drawn from the same population. Remember that we are almost never “ultimately” interested only in what is going on in our sample; we are interested in the sample only to the extent it can provide information
about the population. If our study meets some specific criteria (to be mentioned later), then the reliability of a relation between variables observed in our sample can be quantitatively estimated and represented using a standard measure (technically called p-value or statistical significance level, see the next paragraph).

What is “statistical significance” (p-value). The statistical significance of a result is the probability that the observed relationship (e.g., between variables) or a difference (e.g., between means) in a sample occurred by pure chance (“luck of the draw”), and that in the population from which the sample was drawn, no such relationship or differences exist. Using less technical terms, one could say that the statistical significance of a result tells us something about the degree to which the result is “true” (in the sense of being “representative of the population”). More technically, the value of the p-value represents a decreasing index of the reliability of a result (see Brownlee, 1960). The higher the p-value, the less we can believe that the observed relation between variables in the sample is a reliable indicator of the relation between the respective variables in the population. Specifically, the p-value represents the probability of error that is involved in accepting our observed result as valid, that is, as “representative of the population.” For example, a p-value of .05 (i.e.,1/20) indicates that there is a 5% probability that the relation between the variables found in our sample is a “fluke.” In other words, assuming that in the population there was no relation between those variables whatsoever, and we were repeating experiments like ours one after another, we could expect that approximately in every 20 replications of the experiment there would be one in which the relation between the variables in question would be equal or stronger than in ours. (Note that this is not the same as saying that, given that there IS a relationship between the variables, we can expect to replicate the results 5% of the time or 95% of the time; when there is a relationship between the variables in the population, the probability of replicating the study and finding that relationship is related to the statistical power of the design. See also, Power Analysis. In many areas of research, the p-value of .05 is customarily treated as a “border-line acceptable” error level.

How to determine that a result is “really” significant. There is no way to avoid arbitrariness in the final decision as to what level of significance will be treated as really “significant.” That is, the selection of some level of significance, up to which the results will be rejected as invalid, is arbitrary. In practice, the final decision usually depends on whether the outcome was predicted a priori or only found post hoc in the course of many analyses and comparisons performed on the data set, on the total amount of consistent supportive evidence in the entire data set, and on “traditions” existing in the particular area of research. Typically, in many sciences, results that yield $p < .05$ are considered borderline statistically significant but remember that this level of significance still involves a
pretty high probability of error (5%). Results that are significant at the p .01 level are commonly considered statistically significant, and p .005 or p .001 levels are often called “highly” significant. But remember that those classifications represent nothing else but arbitrary conventions that are only informally based on general research experience.

**Statistical significance and the number of analyses performed.** Needless to say, the more analyses you perform on a data set, the more results will meet “by chance” the conventional significance level. For example, if you calculate correlations between ten variables (i.e., 45 different correlation coefficients), then you should expect to find by chance that about two (i.e., one in every 20) correlation coefficients are significant at the p .05 level, even if the values of the variables were totally random and those variables do not correlate in the population. Some statistical methods that involve many comparisons, and thus a good chance for such errors, include some “correction” or adjustment for the total number of comparisons. However, many statistical methods (especially simple exploratory data analyses) do not offer any straightforward remedies to this problem. Therefore, it is up to the researcher to carefully evaluate the reliability of unexpected findings. Many examples in this manual offer specific advice on how to do this; relevant information can also be found in most research methods textbooks.

**Strength vs. reliability of a relation between variables.** We said before that strength and reliability are two different features of relationships between variables. However, they are not totally independent. In general, in a sample of a particular size, the larger the magnitude of the relation between variables, the more reliable the relation (see the next paragraph).

**Why stronger relations between variables are more significant.** Assuming that there is no relation between the respective variables in the population, the most likely outcome would be also finding no relation between those variables in the research sample. Thus, the stronger the relation found in the sample, the less likely it is that there is no corresponding relation in the population. As you see, the magnitude and significance of a relation appear to be closely related, and we could calculate the significance from the magnitude and vice-versa; however, this is true only if the sample size is kept constant, because the relation of a given strength could be either highly significant or not significant at all, depending on the sample size (see the next paragraph).

**Why significance of a relation between variables depends on the size of the sample.** If there are very few observations, then there are also respectively few possible combinations of the values of the variables, and thus the probability of obtaining by chance a combination of those values indicative of a strong relation is relatively high. Consider the following illustration. If we are interested in two variables (Gender: male/female and WCC: high/low) and there...
are only four subjects in our sample (two males and two females), then the probability that we will find, purely by chance, a 100% relation between the two variables can be as high as one-eighth. Specifically, there is a one-in-eight chance that both males will have a high WCC and both females a low WCC, or vice versa. Now consider the probability of obtaining such a perfect match by chance if our sample consisted of 100 subjects; the probability of obtaining such an outcome by chance would be practically zero. Let’s look at a more general example. Imagine a theoretical population in which the average value of WCC in males and females is exactly the same. Needless to say, if we start replicating a simple experiment by drawing pairs of samples (of males and females) of a particular size from this population and calculating the difference between the average WCC in each pair of samples, most of the experiments will yield results close to 0. However, from time to time, a pair of samples will be drawn where the difference between males and females will be quite different from 0. How often will it happen? The smaller the sample size in each experiment, the more likely it is that we will obtain such erroneous results, which in this case would be results indicative of the existence of a relation between gender and WCC obtained from a population in which such a relation does not exist.

Example. “Baby boys to baby girls ratio.” Consider the following example from research on statistical reasoning (Nisbett, et al., 1987). There are two hospitals: in the first one, 120 babies are born every day, in the other, only 12. On average, the ratio of baby boys to baby girls born every day in each hospital is 50/50. However, one day, in one of those hospitals twice as many baby girls were born as baby boys. In which hospital was it more likely to happen? The answer is obvious for a statistician, but as research shows, not so obvious for a lay person: It is much more likely to happen in the small hospital. The reason for this is that technically speaking, the probability of a random deviation of a particular size (from the population mean), and decreases with the increase in the sample size.

Why small relations can be proven significant only in large samples.

The examples in the previous paragraphs indicate that if a relationship between variables in question is “objectively” (i.e., in the population) small, then there is no way to identify such a relation in a study unless the research sample is correspondingly large. Even if our sample is in fact “perfectly representative” the effect will not be statistically significant if the sample is small. Analogously, if a relation in question is “objectively” very large (i.e., in the population), then it can be found to be highly significant even in a study based on a very small sample. Consider the following additional illustration. If a coin is slightly asymmetrical, and when tossed is somewhat more likely to produce heads than tails (e.g., 60% vs. 40%), then ten tosses would not be sufficient to convince anyone that the coin is asymmetrical, even if the outcome obtained (six heads and four tails) was perfectly representative of the bias of the coin. However, is it so that 10 tosses is not enough to prove anything? No, if the effect in question were large enough,
then ten tosses could be quite enough. For instance, imagine now that the coin is so asymmetrical that no matter how you toss it, the outcome will be heads. If you tossed such a coin ten times and each toss produced heads, most people would consider it sufficient evidence that something is “wrong” with the coin. In other words, it would be considered convincing evidence that in the theoretical population of an infinite number of tosses of this coin there would be more heads than tails. Thus, if a relation is large, then it can be found to be significant even in a small sample.

**Can “no relation” be a significant result?** The smaller the relation between variables, the larger the sample size that is necessary to prove it significant. For example, imagine how many tosses would be necessary to prove that a coin is asymmetrical if its bias were only .000001%! Thus, the necessary minimum sample size increases as the magnitude of the effect to be demonstrated decreases. When the magnitude of the effect approaches 0, the necessary sample size to conclusively prove it approaches infinity. That is to say, if there is almost no relation between two variables, then the sample size must be almost equal to the population size, which is assumed to be infinitely large. Statistical significance represents the probability that a similar outcome would be obtained if we tested the entire population. Thus, everything that would be found after testing the entire population would be, by definition, significant at the highest possible level, and this also includes all “no relation” results.

**How to measure the magnitude (strength) of relations between variables.** There are very many measures of the magnitude of relationships between variables which have been developed by statisticians; the choice of a specific measure in given circumstances depends on the number of variables involved, measurement scales used, nature of the relations, etc. Almost all of them, however, follow one general principle: they attempt to somehow evaluate the observed relation by comparing it to the “maximum imaginable relation” between those specific variables. Technically speaking, a common way to perform such evaluations is to look at how differentiated are the values of the variables, and then calculate what part of this “overall available differentiation” is accounted for by instances when that differentiation is “common” in the two (or more) variables in question. Speaking less technically, we compare “what is common in those variables” to “what potentially could have been common if the variables were perfectly related.” Let us consider a simple illustration. Let us say that in our sample, the average index of WCC is 100 in males and 102 in females. Thus, we could say that on average, the deviation of each individual score from the grand mean (101) contains a component due to the gender of the subject; the size of this component is 1. That value, in a sense, represents some measure of relation between Gender and WCC. However, this value is a very poor measure, because it does not tell us how relatively large this component is, given the “overall differentiation” of WCC scores. Consider two extreme possibilities:
a. If all WCC scores of males were equal exactly to 100, and those of females equal to 102, then all deviations from the grand mean in our sample would be entirely accounted for by gender. We would say that in our sample, gender is perfectly correlated with WCC, that is, 100% of the observed differences between subjects regarding their WCC is accounted for by their gender.

b. If WCC scores were in the range of 0-1000, the same difference (of 2) between the average WCC of males and females found in the study would account for such a small part of the overall differentiation of scores that most likely it would be considered negligible. For example, one more subject taken into account could change, or even reverse the direction of the difference. Therefore, every good measure of relations between variables must take into account the overall differentiation of individual scores in the sample and evaluate the relation in terms of (relatively) how much of this differentiation is accounted for by the relation in question.

Common “general format” of most statistical tests. Because the ultimate goal of most statistical tests is to evaluate relations between variables, most statistical tests follow the general format that was explained in the previous paragraph. Technically speaking, they represent a ratio of some measure of the differentiation common in the variables in question to the overall differentiation of those variables. For example, they represent a ratio of the part of the overall differentiation of the WCC scores that can be accounted for by gender to the overall differentiation of the WCC scores. This ratio is usually called a ratio of explained variation to total variation. In statistics, the term explained variation does not necessarily imply that we “conceptually understand” it. It is used only to denote the common variation in the variables in question, that is, the part of variation in one variable that is “explained” by the specific values of the other variable, and vice versa.

How the “level of statistical significance” is calculated. Let us assume that we have already calculated a measure of a relation between two variables (as explained above). The next question is “how significant is this relation?” For example, is 40% of the explained variance between the two variables enough to consider the relation significant? The answer is “it depends.” Specifically, the significance depends mostly on the sample size. As explained before, in very large samples, even very small relations between variables will be significant, whereas in very small samples even very large relations cannot be considered reliable (significant). Thus, in order to determine the level of statistical significance, we need a function that represents the relationship between “magnitude” and “significance” of relations between two variables, depending on the sample size. The function we need would tell us exactly “how likely it is to obtain a relation of a given magnitude (or larger) from a sample of a given size, assuming that there is no such relation between those variables in the population.” In other words, that function would give us the
significance (p) level, and it would tell us the probability of error involved in rejecting the idea that the relation in question does not exist in the population. This “alternative” hypothesis (that there is no relation in the population) is usually called the null hypothesis. It would be ideal if the probability function was linear, and for example, only had different slopes for different sample sizes. Unfortunately, the function is more complex, and is not always exactly the same; however, in most cases we know its shape and can use it to determine the significance levels for our findings in samples of a particular size. Most of those functions are related to a general type of function which is called normal.

Why the “Normal distribution” is important. The “Normal distribution” is important because in most cases, it well approximates the function that was introduced in the previous paragraph (for a detailed illustration, see Are all test statistics normally distributed?). The distribution of many test statistics is normal or follows some form that can be derived from the normal distribution. In this sense, philosophically speaking, the Normal distribution represents one of the empirically verified elementary “truths about the general nature of reality,” and its status can be compared to the one of fundamental laws of natural sciences. The exact shape of the normal distribution (the characteristic “bell curve”) is defined by a function which has only two parameters: mean and standard deviation.

A characteristic property of the Normal distribution is that 68% of all of its observations fall within a range of ±1 standard deviation from the mean, and a range of ±2 standard deviations includes 95% of the scores. In other words, in a Normal distribution, observations that have a standardized value of less than -2 or more than +2 have a relative frequency of 5% or less. (Standardized value means that a value is expressed in terms of its difference from the mean, divided by the standard deviation.) If you have access to STATISTICA, you can explore the exact values of probability associated with different values in the normal distribution using the interactive Probability Calculator tool; for example, if you enter the Z value (i.e., standardized value) of 4, the associated probability computed by STATISTICA will be less than .0001, because in the normal distribution almost all observations (i.e., more than 99.99%) fall within the range of ±4 standard deviations. The animation below shows the tail area associated with other Z values.
Illustration of how the normal distribution is used in statistical reasoning (induction). Recall the example discussed above, where pairs of samples of males and females were drawn from a population in which the average value of WCC in males and females was exactly the same. Although the most likely outcome of such experiments (one pair of samples per experiment) was that the difference between the average WCC in males and females in each pair is close to zero, from time to time, a pair of samples will be drawn where the difference between males and females is quite different from 0. How often does it happen? If the sample size is large enough, the results of such replications are “normally distributed” (this important principle is explained and illustrated in the next paragraph), and thus knowing the shape of the normal curve, we can precisely calculate the probability of obtaining “by chance” outcomes representing various levels of deviation from the hypothetical population mean of 0. If such a calculated probability is so low that it meets the previously accepted criterion of statistical significance, then we have only one choice: conclude that our result gives a better approximation of what is going on in the population than the “null hypothesis” (remember that the null hypothesis was considered only for “technical reasons” as a benchmark against which our empirical result was evaluated). Note that this entire reasoning is based on the assumption that the shape of the distribution of those “replications” (technically, the “sampling distribution”) is normal. This assumption is discussed in the next paragraph.

Are all test statistics normally distributed? Not all, but most of them are either based on the normal distribution directly or on distributions that are related to, and can be derived from normal, such as $t$, $F$, or Chi-square. Typically, those tests require that the variables analyzed are themselves normally distributed in the population, that is, they meet the so-called “normality assumption.” Many observed variables actually are normally distributed, which is another reason why the normal distribution represents a “general feature” of empirical reality. The problem may occur when one tries to use a normal distribution-based test to analyze data from variables that are themselves not normally distributed (see tests of normality in Nonparametrics or ANOVA/ MANOVA). In such cases we have two general choices. First, we can use some alternative “nonparametric” test (or so-called “distribution-free test” see, Nonparametrics); but this is often inconvenient because such tests are typically less powerful and less flexible in terms of types of conclusions that they can provide. Alternatively, in many cases we can still use the normal distribution-based test if we only make sure that the size of our samples is large enough. The latter option is based on an extremely important principle which is largely responsible for the popularity of tests that are based on the normal function. Namely, as the sample size increases, the shape of the sampling distribution (i.e., distribution of a statistic from the sample; this term was first used by Fisher, 1928a) approaches normal shape, even if the distribution of the variable in
question is not normal. This principle is illustrated in the following animation showing a series of sampling distributions (created with gradually increasing sample sizes of: 2, 5, 10, 15, and 30) using a variable that is clearly non-normal in the population, that is, the distribution of its values is clearly skewed.

![Sampling Distribution](image)

However, as the sample size (of samples used to create the sampling distribution of the mean) increases, the shape of the sampling distribution becomes normal. Note that for n=30, the shape of that distribution is “almost” perfectly normal (see the close match of the fit). This principle is called the central limit theorem (this term was first used by Pólya, 1920; German, “Zentraler Grenzwertsatz”).

How do we know the consequences of violating the normality assumption? Although many of the statements made in the preceding paragraphs can be proven mathematically, some of them do not have theoretical proofs and can be demonstrated only empirically, via so-called Monte-Carlo experiments. In these experiments, large numbers of samples are generated by a computer following pre-designed specifications and the results from such samples are analyzed using a variety of tests. This way we can empirically evaluate the type and magnitude of errors or biases to which we are exposed when certain theoretical assumptions of the tests we are using are not met by our data. Specifically, Monte-Carlo studies were used extensively with normal distribution-based tests to determine how
sensitive they are to violations of the assumption of normal distribution of the analyzed variables in the population. The general conclusion from these studies is that the consequences of such violations are less severe than previously thought. Although these conclusions should not entirely discourage anyone from being concerned about the normality assumption, they have increased the overall popularity of the distribution-dependent statistical tests in all areas of research.

**Further Resources/ Reading:**

**Additional Research Resources on the Internet:**

The following resources are internet-based. Internet-based resources can be useful if you are looking for additional information that is specific.

- **These two are to help you during your data analysis stage:**
  - **Statistical Tools on the Internet**
    - Go to John Pezzullo's javastat page
      - http://members.aol.com/johnp71/javastat.html
    - Learn about statistics at the StatSoft web site
  - **This one is just in case you are thinking about submitting your report to a journal for publication!**
    - **Journals Instructions to Authors**
      - http://www.mco.edu/lib/instr/libinsta.html
Topic 12: Research Writing Skills

Purpose

The purpose of this section is to introduce you to some basic principles to be observed in the literary presentation of your report in academic English.

Lecture

The literary presentation of your data.
Question and answer session on this topic.

Skills

Be able to describe and interpret research findings in basic academic English.

Further reading

Please read this section of the study guide.
Mann, 1968,179-181, Presenting results

Exercise

You will be asked to describe and interpret a set of tables in basic academic English.

How to write up your research?

Once you have collected and analysed your data it is time to write up your research report skills. This section will introduce you to a standard approach to writing up your research for the social sciences. Of course, you may not wish to follow this structure exactly, or it may not be feasible or even appropriate to your work or study. However, this structure allows you to bring together all the parts of your research and draw out some conclusions and recommendations based on your efforts and knowledge.
Key elements of a Research paper

There are some key elements or criteria that you must typically address in a research paper. The assumption in this particular research writing approach assumes that you are addressing a causal hypothesis in your paper.

I. Introduction

1. Statement of the problem: The general problem area is stated clearly and unambiguously. The importance and significance of the problem area is discussed.

2. Statement of causal relationship: The cause-effect relationship to be studied is stated clearly and is sensibly related to the problem area.

3. Statement of constructs: Each key construct in the research/evaluation project is explained (minimally, both the cause and effect). The explanations are readily understandable (i.e., jargon-free) to an intelligent reader.

4. Literature citations and review: The literature cited is from reputable and appropriate sources (e.g., professional journals, books and not Time, Newsweek, etc.) and you have a minimum of five references. The literature is condensed in an intelligent fashion with only the most relevant information included. Citations are in the correct format (see APA format sheets).

5. Statement of hypothesis: The hypothesis (or hypotheses) is clearly stated and is specific about what is predicted. The relationship of the hypothesis to both the problem statement and literature review is readily understood from reading the text.

II. Methods

Sample section:

1. Sampling procedure specifications: The procedure for selecting units (e.g., subjects, records) for the study is described and is appropriate. The author state which sampling method is used and why. The population and sampling frame are described. In an evaluation, the program participants are frequently self-selected (i.e., volunteers) and, if so, should be described as such.

2. Sample description: The sample is described accurately and is appropriate. Problems in contacting and measuring the sample are anticipated.
3. External validity considerations: Generalizability from the sample to the sampling frame and population is considered.

**Measurement section:**

1. Measures: Each outcome measurement construct is described briefly (a minimum of two outcome constructs is required). For each construct, the measure or measures are described briefly and an appropriate citation and reference is included (unless you created the measure). You describe briefly the measure you constructed and **provide the entire measure** in an Appendix. The measures which are used are relevant to the hypotheses of the study and are included in those hypotheses. Wherever possible, multiple measures of the same construct are used.

2. Construction of measures: For questionnaires, tests and interviews: questions are clearly worded, specific, appropriate for the population, and follow in a logical fashion. The standards for good questions are followed. For archival data: original data collection procedures are adequately described and indices (i.e., combinations of individual measures) are constructed correctly. For scales, you must describe briefly which scaling procedure you used and how you implemented it. For qualitative measures, the procedures for collecting the measures are described in detail.

3. Reliability and validity: You must address both the reliability and validity of all of your measures. For reliability, you must specify what estimation procedure(s) you used. For validity, you must explain how you assessed construct validity. Wherever possible, you should minimally address both convergent and discriminant validity. The procedures which are used to examine reliability and validity are appropriate for the measures.

**Design and Procedures section:**

1. Design: The design is clearly presented in both notational and text form. The design is appropriate for the problem and addresses the hypothesis.

2. Internal validity: Threats to internal validity and how they are addressed by the design are discussed. Any threats to internal validity which are not well controlled are also considered.

3. Description of procedures: An overview of how the study will be conducted is included. The sequence of events is described and is appropriate to the design. Sufficient information is included so that the essential features of the study could be replicated by a reader.
III. Results

1. Statement of Results: The results are stated concisely and are plausible for the research described.

2. Tables: The table(s) is correctly formatted and accurately and concisely presents part of the analysis.

3. Figures: The figure(s) is clearly designed and accurately describes a relevant aspect of the results.

IV. Conclusions, Abstract and Reference Sections

1. Implications of the study: Assuming the expected results are obtained, the implications of these results are discussed. The author mentions briefly any remaining problems which are anticipated in the study.

2. Abstract: The Abstract is 125 words or less and presents a concise picture of the proposed research. Major constructs and hypotheses are included. The Abstract is the first section of the paper. See the format sheet for more details.

3. References: All citations are included in the correct format and are appropriate for the study described.

Stylistic Elements

I. Professional Writing
First person and sex-stereotyped forms are avoided (e.g., avoid using “I”) Material is presented in an unbiased and unemotional (e.g., no “feelings” about things, but descriptions), but not necessarily in an uninteresting fashion.

II. Parallel Construction
Tense is kept parallel within and between sentences (as appropriate).

III. Sentence Structure
Sentence structure and punctuation are correct. Incomplete and run-on sentences are avoided.

IV. Spelling and Word Usage
Spelling and use of words are appropriate. Words are capitalized and abbreviated correctly.
V. General Style.

The document is neatly produced and reads well. The format for the document has been correctly followed.

There are several general considerations to keep in mind when generating a report:

- **The Audience**
  
  Who is going to read the report? Reports will differ considerably depending on whether the audience will want or require technical detail, whether they are looking for a summary of results, etc.

- **The Story**
  
  I believe that every research project has at least one major “story” in it. Sometimes the story centres around a specific research finding. Sometimes it is based on a methodological problem or challenge. When you write your report, you should attempt to tell the “story” to your reader. Even in very formal journal articles where you will be required to be concise and detailed at the same time, a good “storyline” can help make an otherwise very dull report interesting to the reader.

  The hardest part of telling the story in your research is finding the story in the first place. Usually when you come to writing up your research you have been steeped in the details for weeks or months (and sometimes even for years). You have to try to view your research from your audience’s perspective.

- **Formatting Considerations**
  
  Are you writing a research report that you will submit for publication in a journal? If so, you should be aware that every journal requires articles that you follow specific formatting guidelines. Thinking of writing a book. Again, every publisher will require specific formatting. Writing a term paper? Most faculties will require that you follow specific guidelines. Doing your thesis or dissertation? Every university I know of has very strict policies about formatting and style. Try to find out what standards for formatting you may need to consider.

**Formatting Example (perhaps for an academic paper or report):**

**Contents of report**

- **Abstract** (on a separate page) No more than 250 words

- The Main **Body** of text (no page breaks between sections in the body)
Title Page

On separate lines and centred, the title page has the title of the study, the author’s name, and the institutional affiliation. At the bottom of the title page you should have the words (in caps) RUNNING HEADER: followed by a short identifying title (2-4 words) for the study. This running header should also appear on the top right of every page of the paper.

Abstract

The abstract is limited to 250 words, double-spaced. At the top of the page, centred, you should have the word ‘Abstract’. The abstract itself should be written in paragraph form and should be a concise summary of the entire paper including: the problem; major hypotheses; methods; a brief description of the measures; the name of the design or a short description (no design notation here); the major results; and, the major conclusions. The writing of an abstract is an especially skilled operation. You may well go through several drafts.

Main Body

The first page of the body of the paper should have, centred, the complete title of the study.

Introduction

The first section in the body is the introduction. There is no heading that says ‘Introduction,’ you simply begin the paper in paragraph form following the title. Every introduction will have the following (roughly in this
order): a statement of the problem being addressed; a statement of the cause-effect relationship being studied; a description of the major constructs involved; a brief review of relevant literature (including citations); and a statement of hypotheses. The entire section should be in paragraph form with the possible exception of the hypotheses, which may be indented.

**Methods**

The next section of the paper should have five subsections: Sample; Measures; Design; Procedure and Methodology. (Note that this last word is often used interchangeably with ‘methods’. This misuse is very common. Here the word is used with a more specialised meaning to refer to the relationship between purpose and methods. This addresses the question: If I had used other methods would I have produced different results? If the answer to this question is yes then you have a serious problem. It means that your results have no validity: your findings are dependent on the methods used not on the reality addressed.) The Methods section should begin immediately after the introduction (no page break) and should have the centred title ‘Methods’. Each of the five subsections should have an underlined left justified section heading.

**Sample**

This section should describe the population of interest, the sampling frame, the method for selecting the sample and the sample itself. A brief discussion of external validity is appropriate here, that is, you should state the degree to which you believe results will be generalizable from your sample to the population.

**Measures**

This section should include a brief description of your constructs and all measures that will be used to operationalize them. You may present short questions in their entirety in this section. If you have more lengthy instruments you may present some “typical” questions to give the reader a sense of what you will be doing (Always include a copy of your questionnaire or aide memoire in an appendix. If your questionnaire was delivered to interviewees in a language other than English, for example Khmer, then you should include a copy of your questionnaire in that language as well as in English.). You may include any instruments in full in appendices rather than in the body. Appendices should be labelled by letter. (e.g., ‘Appendix A’) and cited appropriately in the body of the text. For pre-existing instruments you should cite any relevant information about reliability and validity if it is
available. For all instruments, you should briefly state how you will determine reliability and validity, report the results and discuss. For reliability, you must describe the methods you used and report results. A brief discussion of how you have addressed construct validity is essential. In general, you should try to demonstrate both convergent and discriminant validity. You must discuss the evidence in support of the validity of your measures.

Design

You should state the name of the design that is used and tell whether it is a true or quasi-experiment, non-equivalent group design, and so on. You should also present the design structure in X and O notation (this should be indented and centred, not put into a sentence). You should also include a discussion of internal validity that describes the major likely threats in your study and how the design accounts for them, if at all. (Be your own study critic here and provide enough information to show that you understand the threats to validity, whether you’ve been able to account for them all in the design or not.)

Procedures

Generally, this section ties together the sampling, measurement, and research design. In this section you should briefly describe the overall plan of the research, the sequence of events from beginning to end (including sampling, measurement, and use of groups in designs), how participants will be notified, and how their confidentiality will be protected (where relevant). An essential part of this subsection is a description of the program or independent variable that you are studying. (Link to Knowledge Base discussion of validity).

Results

The heading for this section is centred with upper and lower case letters. You should indicate concisely what results you found in this research. Your results don’t have to confirm your hypotheses. In fact, the common experience in social research is the finding of no effect.

Conclusions

Here you should describe the conclusions you reach (assuming you got the results described in the Results section above). You should relate these conclusions back to the level of the construct and the general problem area which you described in the Introduction section. You should also discuss
the overall strength of the research proposed (e.g. general discussion of the strong and weak validity areas) and should present some suggestions for possible future research which would be sensible based on the results of this work.

References

There are really two parts to a reference citation. First, there is the way you cite the item in the text when you are discussing it. Second, there is the way you list the complete reference in the reference section in the back of the report.

Reference Citations in the Text of Your Paper

Cited references appear in the text of your paper and are a way of giving credit to the source of the information or quote you have used in your paper. They generally consist of the following bits of information:

- The author’s last name, unless first initials are needed to distinguish between two authors with the same last name. If there are six or more authors, the first author is listed followed by the term, et al., and then the year of the publication is given in parenthesis. Year of publication in parenthesis. Page numbers are given with a quotation or when only a specific part of a source was used.

  “To be or not to be” (Shakespeare, 1660, p. 241)

  One Work by One Author:

  Rogers (1994) compared reaction times...

  One Work by Multiple Authors:

  Wasserstein, Zappulla, Rosen, Gerstman, and Rock (1994) [first time you cite in text]

  Wasserstein et al. (1994) found [subsequent times you cite in text]

Reference List in Reference Section

There are a wide variety of reference citation formats. Before submitting any research report you should check to see which type of format is considered acceptable for that context. If there is no official format requirement then the most sensible thing is for you to select one approach and implement it consistently (there’s nothing worse than a reference list with a variety of formats). Here, I’ll illustrate by example some of the major reference items and how they might be cited in the reference section.
The References lists all the articles, books, and other sources used in the research and preparation of the paper and cited with a parenthetical (textual) citation in the text. These items are entered in alphabetical order according to the authors’ last names; if a source does not have an author, alphabetize according to the first word of the title, disregarding the articles “a”, “an”, and “the” if they are the first word in the title.

**EXAMPLES BOOK BY ONE AUTHOR:**


**BOOK BY TWO AUTHORS:**


**BOOK BY THREE OR MORE AUTHORS:**


**BOOK WITH NO GIVEN AUTHOR OR EDITOR:**


**TWO OR MORE BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR:**

Oates, J.C. (1990). Because it is bitter, and because it is my heart. New York: Dutton.


**Note:** Entries by the same author are arranged chronologically by the year of publication, the earliest first. References with the same first author and different second and subsequent authors are listed alphabetically by the surname of the second author, then by the surname of the third author. References with the same authors in the same order are entered chronologically by year of publication, the earliest first. References by the same author (or by the same two or more authors in identical order) with the same publication date are listed alphabetically by the first word of the title following the date; lower case letters (a, b, c, etc.) are included after the year, within the parentheses.

**BOOK BY A CORPORATE (GROUP) AUTHOR:**

BOOK WITH AN EDITOR:

A TRANSLATION:

AN ARTICLE OR READING IN A COLLECTION OF PIECES BY SEVERAL AUTHORS (ANTHOLOGY):

EDITION OF A BOOK:

DIAGNOSTIC AND STATISTICAL MANUAL OF MENTAL DISORDERS:

A WORK IN SEVERAL VOLUMES:

ENCYCLOPEDIA OR DICTIONARY:

ARTICLE FROM A WEEKLY MAGAZINE:

ARTICLE FROM A MONTHLY MAGAZINE:

ARTICLE FROM A NEWSPAPER:

ARTICLE FROM A SCHOLARLY ACADEMIC OR PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL:
GOVERNMENT PUBLICATION:

PAMPHLET OR BROCHURE:

Tables
Any Tables should have a heading with ‘Table #’ (where # is the table number), followed by a colon (:) and the concise title of the table. It should be complete and readily understandable without reading the text even though each table will be described and interpreted in the text. The title should contain no punctuation. Tables and figures are embedded in the text and not placed in an appendix unless they are only marginally relevant (see below – Appendices).

Figures should also be embedded in the text and, should be labelled as for tables.

Appendices
Appendices are for extensive but only marginally relevant information. Keep these to a minimum. If you include appendices, you should refer to them but only briefly in the main text. If you feel that extensive reference to an appendix is necessary this is a good indication that they should not be appendices at all but included in the main text. (e.g., ‘see Appendix A’).
Topic 13: Presentation Skills

Purpose

The purpose of this topic is to learn how to present research findings in a way which is clear, succinct, interesting and engaging.

Lecture

The graphic presentation of research findings.
Question and answer session on this topic.

Skills

To present research findings in a clear, interesting and unambiguous way.

Further reading

Read this section of the study guide.
Mann, 1969: 178-181, Presentation of results.

Exercise

You will be asked to graph a number of sets of statistics.

Introduction

An important stage of the research process is when you are able to share your research and findings with others. Disseminating research and ideas is a very important part of the process. You may have the opportunity to present your work to your colleagues, the community, government officials, conferences, or even just your friends.
Many people are nervous about public speaking, and this can be especially true when you are presenting work that is your own, is important for you, that you want to clearly share with others.

In this section we will provide some very basic but very useful presentation skills. Presenting your research is not just a matter of memorizing the information you want to share. Presentation skills are how you put across your words - it involves giving life to your words - the skill is in what you do and say and what you leave out.

**Introduction: Communication channels**

There are four main channels of communication:
- Visual
- Voice quality
- Touch
- Actual words you say

Some classic research by Prof Albert Mehrabian of the University of California, Los Angeles tells us that the impact and perceived truth of any communication comes mostly from the body language of the presenter, closely followed by the voice quality. It may surprise you, but the actual words came third! His figures for the impact and perceived sincerity of a communication are 55 per cent body language, 38 percent voice quality and 7 per cent words.

If there is a discrepancy between the words and body language, most people will pay attention to the non-verbal behaviour (even if they do not do so consciously). This means your body language + voice are important parts of your presentation.

**Body Language:**
- Make your appearance appropriate to the presentation.
- Make eye contact with members of the audience.
- Have a natural upright posture.
- To keep gestures natural, eliminate the unnecessary and nervous ones.
- Take all the physical space you want.

**Voice:**
- Project your voice
  Talk more slowly and use your voice congruently with the material you are presenting.
- Use pauses.
- Use appropriate language and vocabulary and avoid jargon.
- Use names.
- Avoid cliff-hangers and long sentences.

Feedback:
- Record yourself to find your nervous verbal gesture and stop it. (or just watch yourself in the mirror)
- Utilize every opportunity for practice and feedback.
- Learn from models- find what does and doesn’t work.
- Keep self-criticism within bounds.

Exercise:

Task I

In your group, or in smaller groups of 5 or 6, prepare a small (one or two minute presentation). You can talk about your job or a hobby, anything you like. What is most important is that you try to be aware of your body language as well as your voice. Spend a minute giving and receiving feedback. Check whether what you thought worked, was noticed by others and likewise what did not work. Also remember that we all have our own personalities and ways of expressing ourselves, what is important is that you find a way of presenting yourself that reflects you, the information you want to convey, and makes an impact on your audience.

Task II

It is time to combine as much of what you have learnt during the course together in a brief presentation of your proposed research practicum. It is a good chance to share your idea before you head out into the field. Use the diagram you developed (there is an extra copy below if you want to re-write it).

Try to keep your presentation simple and clear. It is important that you enjoy yourself and enjoy sharing and listening to others. This task is the final one for your coursework but it is also the beginning of your practicum!
Introduction to Peace Studies and Research Methods

Research Problem:

Generalization:

Hypothesis/Questions:

Data Collection:

Theory/Field Experience:

Data Analysis:

Design:

Measurement: