Power & Society

14th Edition

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Brigid Callahan **Harrison**

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& Society

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

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BRIEF CONTENTS

CONTENTS

Part 2   Power and the Social Sciences   73

CHAPTER 4   Power and Culture: An Anthropologist's View   74

CHAPTER 5   Power and Sociology: The Importance of Social Class   107

CHAPTER 6   Power and History   141

CHAPTER 9   Power and Psychology   254

Part 3   The Uses of Power   287

CHAPTER 14 **Power among Nations**   **409**

Power & Society: An Introduction to the Social Sciences is designed as a basic text for introductory, interdisciplinary social science courses. It is written specifically for first and second-year students at community colleges and at four-year colleges and universities that offer a basic studies program. *Power and Society* introduces students to central concepts in anthropology, psychology, sociology, political science, economics, and history. But more important, the text focuses these disciplinary perspectives on a central integrative theme—the nature and uses of power in society. In this way, students are made aware of the interdependence of the social sciences. Compartmentalization is avoided, and students are shown how each social science discipline contributes to an understanding of power.

Power and Society also introduces students to some of the central challenges facing American society: ideological conflict, crime and violence, racism and sexism, community problems, poverty and powerlessness, globalization, and international relations in a post–September 11 world. Each of these challenges is approached from an interdisciplinary viewpoint, with power as the integrating concept.

Power and Society facilitates the introduction of each of the social sciences to students. Hopefully, they find their interest piqued—by one discipline or an interdisciplinary area of inquiry—and that will help them focus their studies in their academic career. *Power and Society* provides a kind of "tasting menu" for the social sciences. Although we hope that students enjoy every chapter thoroughly, we also recognize, and hope that students recognize, the value of when one particular subject stimulates their intellect.

Addressing the theme of power is a useful tool in arousing students' interest because it allows for a real application of each of the social sciences. *Power* has been defined as the capacity to modify the conduct of individuals through the real or threatened use of rewards and punishments. Doubtless other central concepts or ideas in the social sciences might be employed to develop an integrated framework for an introduction to social science. But power certainly is a universal phenomenon that is reflected in virtually all forms of human interaction. Power is intimately related to many other key concepts and ideas in the social sciences—personality, behavior, aggression, role, class, mobility, wealth, income distribution, markets, culture, ideology, change, authority, oligarchy, and the elite. Power is also a universal instrument in approaching the various crises that afflict human beings and their societies—racism, sexism, poverty, violence, crime, urban decay, and international conflict.

Several special features are designed to arouse student interest in the social sciences as well as to help students understand the meaning of various concepts. Each feature now includes several critical thinking questions to stimulate discussion among students. The first feature is the presentation of timely, relevant

Case Studies in each chapter to illustrate important concepts. Topics include Scientific Research Design: An Experiment in Preventing PTSD; The Rise and Fall of Communism in Russia; Aboriginal Australians; Diagnosing Mental Illness; Achieving Economic Stability; The Great Depression; How Is Poverty Measured?; The Insanity Defense; and When Should the United States Use Military Force?.

In addition, illustrative Focus features throughout the text help maintain student interest. Topics include The Vocabulary of Social Science; How to Tell if You're Liberal or Conservative; The World's Missing Girls; Sociology Asks: Who Are the Poor?; DNA as a Genealogical Tool; Interest Rates and You; Explaining Presidential Approval Ratings; A Declaration of Women's Rights, 1848; America's Poor Children; It's a Real Crime!; The Least-Developed Countries; Afghanistan; and Know Your Geography.

A third special feature is the International Perspective. Although this book introduces students to the social sciences with principal reference to the American experience, international and comparative perspectives are integrated into each chapter. International Perspective sections include Polling the World; Women in the Workforce; Global Inequalities; Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: Not Just a Soldier's Disease; A Look at Government Debt; The Multinationals' Global Economic Power; The Basic Necessities: Water and Food; The Death Penalty; Worldwide Urbanization; and Iran.

Critical thinking skills and research methodologies are highlighted in a feature that appears in every chapter, Research This! In Chapter 1, students are asked to analyze the concept of legitimacy as a source of power. Chapter 2 looks at population changes between 2010 and 2014, while in Chapter 3 this feature examines how Americans describe their political ideology, and in Chapter 4 it asks students to compare the importance of religion in various nations. In Chapter 5, students analyze the trending level of satisfaction with regard to an individual's opportunity to get ahead by working hard, and in Chapter 6 students analyze and compare the Declaration of Independence and the Declaration of Sentiments. Chapter 7 examines voting decisions in U.S. presidential elections and demographics, and Chapter 8 looks at U.S. federal government revenues and expenditures. In Chapter 9, students examine the prevalence of serious mental illness in subsets of the population. Chapter 10 asks students to compare laws restricting abortion in the various states, while Social Security recipients are the Research *This!* topic in Chapter 11. In Chapter 12, this feature examines U.S. citizens' feelings of security regarding where they live, how these feelings have changed over the last decade, and whether this sense of security reflects the changes in national crime rates during this period. Chapter 13 asks students to analyze global population growth, and in Chapter 14, they are asked to think critically about the trend of Americans' confidence in the military.

Connecting through Social Media is a new feature in this edition. Students analyze Facebook pages, Twitter feeds, and blogs, and draw connections between the issues discussed in the book and everyday life. Activities include looking at data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, examining a court document from *Plessy v. Ferguson*, studying interactive Electoral College maps, and learning

more about the objectives and history of organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign, Kaiser Family Foundation, and the Smithsonian.

Key vocabulary terms with definitions are placed in the margins throughout each chapter. The special feature On the Web at the end of each chapter continues to provide students with initial directions for further exploration on the Internet of the topics in each chapter. Updated Web addresses are provided with brief descriptions of the information available at various sites.

The fourteenth edition of *Power and Society* also strives to facilitate students' critical thinking and integrate self-assessment into the text. In the beginning of each chapter, learning objectives frame that chapter's area of inquiry, helping students navigate each chapter by providing a critical thinking "roadmap." Each chapter ends with a Chapter Summary that has been reorganized to tie into the learning objectives as it recaps the most important concepts of each chapter. A Review Quiz at the end of each chapter enables students to test their own level of comprehension of key concepts within that chapter. These tools are meant to assist students in their studies by providing them with a clear path to the text's content in the beginning, along with an assessment tool to gauge their progress on that path at the end.

With its stimulating and provocative Focus, Case Study, and International Perspective sections, as well as the Connecting through Social Media and Research This! features—all of which provide timeliness, relevance, interest, and perspective to each chapter topic—*Power and Society* strives to be a "teachable" text. Rather than evade or dilute "hot topics"—for example, ideological conflict, genetics versus environmental influences on behavior, power and gender, sexual harassment, mental illness, the neglect of African American and Native American history, affirmative action, violence in American history, the death penalty, and drug legalization—it focuses on controversy as a means of developing student interest and appreciation for the social sciences. The fourteenth edition shows that social science research and scholarship are relevant to our current societal problems, and that an introductory text can facilitate the use of the paradigms of the social sciences by undergraduate students.

As always, coverage has been brought up to date to reflect current events and contemporary concerns. New content includes new considerations of how ideology affects power relationships within societies (Chapter One), coverage of the attempts to recover from the global economic recession (Chapters 8, 13); how divided government is affecting the exercise of power in Washington, D.C. (Chapter 7); how some of the world's economies, including China, are prospering while others continue to struggle to develop (Chapter 8); new developments in the exploitation of individuals throughout the world, including human trafficking and child soldiers (Chapter 13); and new developments in international affairs, including new threats of terrorism from Islamic State militants, the U.S. response to these threats, and increasing tensions between the United States and Russia (Chapter 14).

Each chapter now introduces its discipline, its subfields, and concerns more systematically. Specifically, Chapter 3 includes an updated discussion of Modern Conservatism, and Chapter 6 features a section that describes the process of historical analysis called, "How Historical Analysis Informs the Social Sciences."

Chapter 12 now features streamlined coverage of violence. In addition, data has been meticulously updated in the narrative, tables, and figures throughout the book.

This edition continues the book's traditional focus on the condition of women and minorities in American society. It contains discussions of specific issues related to racial equality in the American justice system, including the "Black Lives Matter" campaigns that occurred in response to the deaths of African Americans at the hands of police officers throughout the United States, the efforts made toward and obstacles in the way of immigration reform, pay equity for women, and the obstacles related electing women to office. This edition also seeks to further integrate analysis of the role of women and racial and ethnic minorities into the text as a whole, not just in boxed features. New to the fourteenth edition is expanded coverage of the struggle for power and rights by people with disabilities and the evolving agenda of those advocating for the rights of gays and lesbian. This edition also, looks at the commonalities among the movements for equality by African Americans, other racial and ethnic minorities, women, the disabled, and those advocating for LGBT rights.

Though Tom Dye's name no longer appears on the cover, he created this book and I remain indebted to him for sharing his considerable intellect, his knowledge of numerous disciplines, and his understanding of the world of publishing with me. I would also like to thank the folks at Cengage for their continuing support, including Product Team Manager, Carolyn Merrill; Content Developer, Jessica Wang-Strykowski; Cathy Brooks and Michelle Forbes. Paul Meilak provided wonderful encouragement and support during this revision process. I also would like to thank Caroline, Alexandra, and John Harrison for their patience and good humor (and for occasionally being quiet) while I was revising this edition. Able research assistance was provided by Taylor St. John. Many thanks to those who provided guidance on this and past editions:

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Supplements for Instructors

Test Bank and PowerPoints online for Harrison *Power and Society: An Introduction to the Social Sciences,* 13e

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- This password-protected Test Bank and PowerPoint presentations are accessible by logging into your account at www.cengage.com/login. The test bank, revised for the new edition, is offered in Microsoft Word® and includes multiple-choice questions with answers and page references along with essay questions for each chapter. The Microsoft® PowerPoint® presentations are ready-to-use, visual outlines of each chapter. These presentations, which have also been revised for the new edition, are easily customizable for your lectures.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

The struggle for power is one that plays out in societies throughout the world each day. Who should exercise power? How should that power be limited? When is power exercised with legitimacy? Here, protesters march in Washington, D.C., alleging that a series of shootings of African-American men by police officers throughout the United States constitutes an illegitimate exercise of force.

The Nature and Study of Power

The purpose of this book is to introduce you to the social sciences. Because the concept of power is a theme that pervades each of the social sciences, as well as the societies and problems they study, we have chosen this theme as the focal point for our presentation. Part One is designed to familiarize you with the notion of power, with the nature of each of the social sciences, and with the scientific methods they employ. You will find that Chapter 1 reflects the structure of the entire text. Its first part examines the nature of power; its second part describes the individual social sciences and the particular ways in which they contribute to our understanding of power. Its third part focuses on the problems with which the social sciences are concerned. Chapter 2 is devoted to a discussion of the methods used in social science research—how social scientists gather data, how they endeavor to employ scientific and experimental methods of research, and the special problems they encounter in doing so. In Chapter 3, we explore how ideology shapes the context in which struggles for power occur, and we also examine some of the major ideological struggles in recent times.

1

Power, Society, and Social Science

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, students will be able to:

- Explain how power is defined.
- List the defining characteristics of power.
- List the disciplines within the social sciences, and describe how each analyzes power.
- Explain what is meant by the interdisciplinary study of social problems.

The Nature of Power

Ordinary men and women are driven by forces in society that they neither understand nor control. These forces are embodied in governmental authorities, economic organizations and markets, families and communities, social values and ideologies, accepted ways of life, and learned patterns of behavior. However diverse the nature of these forces, they have in common the ability to modify the conduct of individuals, to control their behavior, and to shape their lives. **Power** *is the capacity to affect the conduct of individuals through the real or threatened use of rewards and punishments.* Power is exercised over individuals and groups by offering them things they value or by threatening to deprive them of those things. These values are the base of power, and they can include physical safety, health, and well-being; wealth and material possessions; jobs and means to a livelihood; knowledge and skills; social recognition, status, and prestige;

power
the capacity to affect the conduct of others through the real or threatened use of rewards and punishments

4

love, affection, and acceptance by others; and a satisfactory self-image and self-respect. To exercise power, then, control must be exercised over the things that are valued in society.

Power is a special form of influence. Broadly speaking, influence is the production of intended effects. People who can produce intended effects by any means are said to be influential. People who can produce intended effects by the real or threatened use of rewards and punishments are said to be powerful.

Power can rest on various resources. The exercise of power assumes many different forms—the giving or withholding of many different values. In many circumstances, the desire for power as well as wealth motivates people. Indeed, the English philosopher Bertrand Russell (1872–1970), regarded as one of the twentieth century's greatest thinkers, summarized his views about the importance of power in society in the book *Power: A New Social Analysis*, in which he wrote:

> When a moderate degree of comfort is assured, both individuals and communities will pursue power rather than wealth: they may seek wealth as a means to power, or they may forgo an increase of wealth in order to secure an increase of power, but in the former case as in the latter, their fundamental motive is not economic.[1]

Yet power bases are usually interdependent—individuals who control certain valued resources and are likely to control other resources as well. Wealth, economic power, prestige, recognition, political influence, education, respect, and so on, all tend to "go together" in society.

Power is never equally distributed. "There is no power where power is equal." For power to be exercised, the "power-holder" must control some base values. By *control* we mean that the power-holder is in a position to offer these values as rewards to others or to threaten to deprive others of these values.

Power is a relationship among individuals, groups, and institutions in society. Power is not really a "thing" that someone possesses. Instead, power is a relationship in which some individuals or groups have control over resources valued by others. As Bertrand Russell writes:

> Like energy, power has many forms, such as wealth, armaments, civil authority, and influence on opinion. No one of these can be regarded as subordinate to any other, and there is no one form from which the others are derivative. The attempt to treat one form of power, say wealth, in isolation can only be partially successful. … To revert to the analogy of physics, power, like energy, must be regarded as continually passing from any one of its forms into any other, and it should be the business of social science to seek the laws of such transformations.

Elites and Masses

The **elite** are the few who have power; the **masses** are the many who do not. The elite are the few who control what is valued in society and use that control to shape the lives of others. The masses are the many whose lives are shaped by institutions, events, and leaders over which they have little control. Political scientist Harold Lasswell wrote, "The division of society into elites and masses is universal," and even in a democracy, "a few exercise a relatively great weight of power, and the many exercise comparatively little."[2]

elite
the few who have power

masses
the many who do not have power

Power, Legitimacy, and Authority

legitimacy
belief that the exercise of power is right and proper

Legitimacy is the belief that the exercise of power is "right" or "proper" and that people are morally obligated to submit to it. Legitimacy depends on people believing that the exercise of power is necessary and valuable to society. As long as people believe in the legitimacy of the institutions in which power is lodged and believe that power is being used rightfully and properly, force will seldom be required. People feel obliged to obey laws, follow rules, and abide by decisions that they believe to be legitimate. But if people begin to question the legitimacy of institutions (that is, governments, corporations, churches, the military, and so on) and if people come to believe that laws, rules, and decisions are no longer rightful or proper, then they will no longer feel morally obligated to abide by them. Institutional power will then rest on sheer force alone—as, for example, when unpopular, "illegitimate" governments rely on repression by police or military forces to exercise power over their populations.

authority
power that is exercised legitimately

Authority refers to power that is exercised legitimately. Not all power is legitimate: A thief who forces us to turn over money at gunpoint is exercising power, not authority. A tax collector from the Internal Revenue Service who forces us to turn over money under threat of a fine or jail sentence is exercising authority—power that is perceived as legitimate. Authority, then, is a special type of power that is believed to be rightful and proper. Political leaders in all societies surround themselves with elaborate symbols of office in order to help legitimize their authority. Symbols of authority surround us: your instructor's podium, a police officer's uniform, and a presidential entourage all connote authority. These symbols all seek to convey authority and legitimacy to the masses. Symbols of authority often rest on the perception by the masses that a particular symbol designates authority.

North Korean Dictator Kim Jong Un has power, but his authoritarian government lacks legitimacy. What are the sources of legitimate authority?

KCNA KCNA/REUTERS

Sources of Legitimacy

What are the sources of legitimacy? Early in the twentieth century, a German sociologist named Max Weber (pronounced "Vayber") suggested three general sources of legitimacy:

1. *Tradition:* Legitimacy rests on established beliefs in the sanctity of authority and the moral need to obey leaders.
2. *Charisma:* Legitimacy rests on the personal heroic qualities of a particular leader.
3. *Legality:* Legitimacy is based on a commitment to rules that bind both leaders and the people.

Historically, most leaders have depended on tradition for their authority. The rule of tribal chieftains, pharaohs and kings, and feudal lords and ladies has been accepted as right because "it has always been that way." Even today, some important, modern organizations (like the Catholic Church) have legitimacy derived primarily from tradition. Both historically and in modern times, governments and other organizations have relied on charismatic leadership—from Napoleon to Hitler to Gandhi to Mao Zedong. The authority of these leaders was based on personal appeal of an individual leader and the faith of their followers. Still other elites depend on legitimacy conferred by rules that are agreed on by both leaders and followers. Weber referred to this type of legitimacy as **rational-legal authority**. Leaders exercise their authority not because of tradition or personal charisma but because of the office or position they occupy—a position they assumed through legal means and often in modern times based on constitutional requirements—such as winning a seat in government through an election.

rational-legal authority
legitimacy conferred by rules that are agreed on by both leaders and followers

Institutional Power

Power is exercised in large institutions—governments, corporations, schools, the military, churches, newspapers, television networks, law firms, and so on. Power that stems from high positions in the social structures of society is stable and far-reaching. Sociologist C. Wright Mills once observed: "No one can be truly powerful unless he has access to the command of major institutions, for it is over these institutional means of power that the truly powerful are, in the first instance, powerful."[3] Not all power, it is true, is anchored in or exercised through institutions. But institutional positions in society provide a continuous and important base of power. As Mills explained,

If we took the one hundred most powerful men in America, the one hundred wealthiest, and the one hundred most celebrated away from the institutional positions they now occupy, away from their resources of men and women and money, away from the media of mass communication that are now focused upon them—then they would be powerless and poor and uncelebrated. For power is not of a man. Wealth does not center in the person of the wealthy. . . . To have power requires access to major institutions, for the institutional positions men occupy determine in large part their chances to have and to hold these valued experiences.[4]

The Context of Power

Sometimes power is exercised to fulfill small, personal objectives. But on a societal level, often power is exercised in order to enact a specific agenda, and action takes place with greater goals in mind. One of the most common determinants of how power is exercised broadly is ideology—people are frequently motivated to exercise power because of their ideas and values about the nature of society. How these actions are remembered occurs through collecting recorded facts, organizing them into a narrative, and interpreting their meaning as history.

Power and Ideology

ideology
integrated system of ideas about values in general, and the ideal role of government in particular

Ideas have power. Indeed, whole societies are shaped by systems of ideas that we call ideologies. An **ideology** is an integrated system of ideas about values in general, and the ideal role of government in particular. Some ideologies focus on the political system—how power is and should be exercised within societies. Other ideologies focus on the economic system—how things of value, including wages and products, are and should be distributed within societies. The study of ideologies is not a separate social science. Rather, while political and economic ideologies provide the underpinning for our examination of power and politics and power and the economy, the study of ideologies spans each of the social sciences, and it is closely related to philosophy. Ideologies are integrated systems of ideas that rationalize a way of life, establish standards of "rightness" and "wrongness," and provide emotional impulses to action. Beyond their political and economic foundations, ideologies usually include social, psychological, and cultural ideas, as well as interpretations of history.

Mao Zedong led the Communist Revolution in China in 1949 and then was the leader of China until his death in 1976. His control over China's people and government is often attributed to his charismatic leadership ability. This 1938 photo shows Mao in Shaanxi Province speaking to fellow communist revolutionaries during a six thousand-mile "Long March" during that country's revolution. Are there any political leaders today who derive power from their charisma?

Hulton-Deutsch Collection/Historical/Corbis

Ideologies rationalize and justify power in society. By providing a justification for the exercise of power, the ideology itself becomes a base of power in society. Ideology "legitimizes" power—whether that is rationalizing a constitutional democracy like the United States, or justifying communism in Cuba—making the exercise of power acceptable to the masses and thereby adding to the power of the elite. However, ideologies also affect the behavior of the elite, because once an ideology is deeply rooted in society, power-holders themselves are bound by it.

In our study of power and ideology, we will first explore political ideologies that have informed the foundations of all governments. We learn about how the social sciences categorize various types of governments, including monarchies, oligarchies, and democracies. In focusing on democracies, we explore the ideology of *classical liberalism*—a political ideology that attacked the established power of a hereditary aristocracy and asserted the dignity, worth, and freedom of the individual. Whereas classical liberalism limits the powers of government, *modern liberalism* accepts governmental power as a positive force in freeing people from poverty, ignorance, discrimination, and sickness. It justifies the exercise of governmental power over private enterprise and the establishment of the welfare state. In contrast, *modern conservatism* doubts the ability of the governmental planners to solve society's problems; conservatism urges greater reliance on family, church, and individual initiative and effort (see Research This!).

Our analysis also examines libertarianism, which emphasizes individual freedom and strong limitations on government and *fascism*, an ideology that asserts the supremacy of a nation or race over the interests of individuals, groups, and other social institutions.

> Our exploration of economic ideologies includes an examination of *capitalism*, in which the power is structured in private enterprise through the free market system. *Marxism* attacks this capitalist market system; it justifies revolutionary power in overthrowing capitalist systems and the establishment of a "dictatorship of the proletariat." *Communism* calls for the evolutionary democratic replacement of the private enterprise system with government ownership of industry. We will describe the collapse of communism and the reasons for its failure in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, as well as its evolution in China.

Finally, our examination of ideologies explores the intersections between various economic and political ideologies and the types of government found in a society. For example, there is a strong interdependence between capitalism and democracies, with both emphasizing ideals put forth in classical liberalism, especially in terms of the power of the individual to master his or her political and economic destiny.

Power in History

History is the recording, narrating, and interpreting of human experience. The historian recreates the past by collecting recorded facts, organizing them into a narrative, and interpreting their meaning. History is concerned with change

history
the recording, narrating, and interpreting of human experience

R E S E A R C H *THIS!*

The Gallup organization has been tracking the ideology of Americans for many years. The follow-ing figure presents the annual averages to responses to the question: How would you describe your political views—very conservative, conservative, moderate, liberal, or very liberal? The "verys" are condensed into the data shown.

How would you describe your political views—very conservative, conservative, moderate, liberal, or very liberal?

Source: www.gallup.com/poll/180452/liberals-record-trail-conservatives.aspx

Your Analysis:

1. Based on the figure shown, what is the overall trend with regard to Americans' ideology between 1992 and 2008? Was ideology in the United States stable then?

2. Democrats, who are usually affiliated with a liberal ideology, were elected to the presidency in 1992, 1996, 2008, and 2012 while a Republican (typically conservative) was elected in 2000 and 2004. What happened to the ideologies of those parties after their respective presidents were elected?

3. What marked change occurred in Americans' ideology since 2008? What marked change occurred in 2014? Why do you think these two very different changes might have occurred?

over time. It provides a perspective on the present by informing us of the way people lived in the past. History helps us understand how society developed into what it is today.

The foundations of power vary from age to age. As power bases shift, new groups and individuals acquire control. Thus, power relationships are continuously developing and changing. An understanding of power in society requires an understanding of the historical development of power relationships.

In our consideration of the historical development of power relationships, we will look at the changing nature of power relationships in American history and the characteristics of the individuals and groups who have acquired power. We will describe the people of power in the early days of the Republic and their shaping of the Constitution and the government it established. We will also discuss how westward expansion and settlement created new power-holders and new bases of power. We will explore the power struggle between Northern commercial and industrial interests and Southern planters and slave owners for control of land in the West, and the Civil War, resulting from that struggle. In addition, we will explore the development of an industrial elite in America after the Civil War, the impact of the Great Depression on that elite, and the resulting growth of New Deal liberal reform. In our analysis of the Reconstruction Era and African American history, we will examine how history occasionally overlooks the experiences of powerless minorities and later reinterprets their contributions to society.

Power and the Social Sciences

Social science is the study of human behavior. There are several social sciences, each specializing in a particular aspect of human behavior and each using different concepts, methods, and data in its studies. Anthropology, sociology, economics, psychology, and political science have developed into separate "disciplines," but all share an interest in human behavior.

social science
the study of human behavior

Power is *not* the central concern of the social sciences, yet all the social sciences deal with power in one form or another. Bertrand Russell notes:

> Those whose love of power is not strong are unlikely to have much influence on the course of events. The people who cause social changes are, as a rule, people who strongly desire to do so. Love of power, therefore, is a characteristic of the people who are causally important. We should, of course, be mistaken if we regarded it as the sole human motive, but this mistake would not lead us so much astray as might be expected in the search for causal laws in social science, since love of power is the chief motive producing the changes that social science has to study.[5]

Each of the social sciences contributes to an understanding of the forces that modify the conduct of individuals, control their behavior, and shape their lives. Thus, to fully understand power in society, we must approach this topic in an **interdisciplinary** fashion—using ideas, methods, data, and findings from all the social sciences.

interdisciplinary
the study of a topic using ideas, methods, and data from all of the social sciences

Anthropology

anthropology
the study of people
and their ways of life

society
a group of people
who depend on one
another and share a
common culture

Anthropology is the study of people and their ways of life. It is the most holistic of the social sciences in that it studies all aspects of a **society**—a group of people who depend on one another for their well-being and who share a common culture. Many anthropologists focus their energies on describing humans, societies, and power structures at various points in time and in various places; others are concerned with using knowledge derived from anthropological studies to improve human existence. Within the discipline of Anthropology are four subfields. These include linguistics, archaeology, biological and physical anthropology, and socio-cultural anthropology.

archaeology
the study of the
physical and cultural
characteristics of
peoples and societies
that existed prior to
recorded history

prehistory
the time before
written records

Linguistic anthropology is a method of analyzing societies in terms of their use of language, while **archaeology** is the study of both the physical and cultural characteristics of peoples and societies that existed in the distant past. It is similar to history but reaches further back in time, into **prehistory**, the time before written records. It endeavors to reconstruct the history of a society from the remains of its culture. Some of these remains are as impressive as the pyramids of Egypt, the Terra Cotta soldiers of China, the Mayan temples of Mexico; some are as mundane as bits of broken pottery, stone tools, and garbage.

Biological anthropologists (sometimes called physical anthropologists) are concerned with the evolution of the human species. They examine how humans historically have interacted with their natural environment and with each other. Biological anthropologists also are concerned with contemporary issues concerning human growth, development, adaption, disease, and mortality.

culture
the ways of life that
are common to a
society

Socio-cultural anthropologists study how people live within their environment. Cultural anthropologists describe and compare societies and cultures. They describe and explain a great many things: child rearing and education, family arrangements, language and communication, technology, ways of making a living, the distribution of work, religious beliefs and values, social life, leadership patterns and power structures, and culture, or the ways of life that are common to a society.

Power is part of the **culture** or the way of life of a people. Power is exercised in all societies because all societies have systems of rewards and sanctions designed to control the behavior of their members. Perhaps the most enduring structure of power in society is the family: Power is exercised within the family when patterns of dominance and submission are established between male and female and between parents and children. In our study of power and culture, we will examine how cultural patterns determine power relationships. We will also examine patterns of authority in traditional and modern families and the changing power role of women in society. Societies also develop structures of power outside the family to maintain peace and order among their members, to organize individuals to accomplish large-scale tasks, to defend themselves against attack, and even to wage war and exploit other peoples.

Political Science

political science
the study of
government and
politics

Political science is the study of government and politics. Governments possess authority, a particular form of power—that is, power that may include the legitimate use of physical force. Recall that by legitimate, we mean that people believe

the exercise of power is "right" or "proper." In legitimate governments, the people generally consent to the government's use of this power. Of course, other individuals and organizations in society—for example, muggers, street gangs, terrorists, violent revolutionaries—use force. But only government can legitimately threaten people with the loss of freedom and well-being as a means of modifying their behavior. Moreover, governments exercise power over all individuals and institutions in society—corporations, families, schools, and so forth. Obviously the power of government in modern society is very great, extending to nearly every aspect of modern life "from womb to tomb."

Political scientists from Aristotle to the present have been concerned with the dangers of unlimited and unchecked governmental power. We will examine the American experience with limited, constitutional government and the meaning of democracy in modern society. We will observe how the U.S. Constitution divides power, first between states and the national government, and second among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. We will examine the growth of power in Washington, DC, and the struggle for power among the different branches of government. We will observe that the president of the United States enjoys more power than the writers of the Constitution envisioned. We will explore what factors appear to strengthen and weaken presidents, including how presidential approval ratings affect the ability of presidents to succeed at their job.

Economics

Economics is the study of the production and distribution of scarce goods and services. There are never enough goods and services to satisfy everyone's demands, and because of this, choices must be made. Economists study how individuals, businesses, and nations make these choices about goods and services.

Economic power is the power to decide what will be produced, how much it will cost, how many people will be employed to produce it, what their wages will be, what the price of the good or service will be, what profits will be made, how these profits will be distributed, and how fast the economy will grow.

Capitalist societies rely heavily on the market mechanism to make these decisions. In our study of economic power, we will explore the strengths and weaknesses of this market system, as well as the ideas of economic philosophers Adam Smith and John Maynard Keynes. We will examine America's great wealth—how it is measured, how it is distributed, where it comes from, and where it goes. In addition, we will consider the role of government in the economy, where it gets its money, and how it spends it. Finally, we will describe the globalization of economic power and the emergence of giant multinational corporations.

Psychology

Psychology may be defined as the study of the behavior of people and animals. Behavior, we know, is the product of both "nature and nurture"—that is, a product of both our biological makeup and our environmental conditioning. We will examine the continuing controversy over how much of our behavior is a product of our genes versus our environment. There is great richness and diversity in psychological inquiry. **Biological psychology** examines the extent to which electrical and

economics
the study of the production and distribution of scarce goods and services

psychology
the study of the behavior of people and animals

biological psychology
the study of electrical and chemical events in the brain and nervous system as determinants of behavior

behavioral psychology
the study of human and animal responses to stimuli

social psychology
the study of interpersonal behavior

psychoanalytic (Freudian) psychology
the study of the effects of subconscious feelings and early childhood experiences on behavior

humanistic psychology
the study of the growth and development of the human personality

cognitive psychology
an approach to psychology that emphasizes how people learn about themselves and their environment

personality
all the enduring, organized ways of behavior that characterize an individual

chemical events in the brain and nervous system determine behavior. **Behavioral psychologists** study the learning process—the way in which people and animals learn to respond to stimuli. Behavioral psychologists frequently study in experimental laboratory situations, with the hope that the knowledge gained can be useful in understanding more complex human behavior outside the laboratory. **Social psychologists**, on the other hand, study interpersonal behavior—the ways in which social interactions shape an individual's beliefs, perceptions, motivations, attitudes, and behavior. Social psychologists generally study the whole person in relation to the total environment. **Psychoanalytic (Freudian) psychologists** study the impact of subconscious feelings and emotions and of early childhood experiences on the behavior of adults. **Humanistic psychologists** are concerned with the human being's innate potential for growth and development. **Cognitive psychologists** emphasize how people learn about themselves and their environment. Many other psychologists combine theories and methods in different ways in their attempts to achieve a better understanding of behavior.

Personality consists of all the enduring, organized ways of behavior that characterize an individual. Psychologists differ over how personality characteristics are determined. Some psychologists study the impact of physical aspects of the brain—particularly chemicals and electrical impulses—on personality traits (biological psychology). Other branches of psychology explore whether characteristics are acquired through the process of reinforcement and conditioning (behavioral psychology), products of the individual's interaction with the significant people and groups in his or her life (social psychology), manifestations of the continuous process of positive growth toward "self-actualization" (humanistic psychology), the results of subconscious drives and long-repressed emotions stemming from early childhood experiences (Freudian psychology), or some combination of all these.

In our study of power and personality, we will examine various theories of personality determination in an effort to understand the forces shaping an individual's reaction to power. We will explore the recurring question of "nature versus nurture," biology versus environment, in determining the human condition. Using a Freudian perspective, we will study the "authoritarian personality"—the individual who is habitually dominant and aggressive toward others over whom he or she exercises power but is submissive and weak toward others who have more power; the individual who is extremely prejudiced, rigid, intolerant, cynical, and power oriented. We will explore the power implications of B. F. Skinner's ideas of behavioral conditioning for the control of human behavior. We will also describe the treatment of mental illness from these various psychological perspectives. In a case study, we will describe the startling results of an experiment designed to test the relationship between authority and obedience, and we'll also examine levels of stress worldwide.

Sociology

sociology
the study of relationships among individuals and groups

Sociology is the study of relationships among individuals and groups. Sociologists describe the structure of formal and informal groups, their functions and purposes, and how they change over time. They study social institutions (such as families, schools, and churches), social processes (for example, conflict, competition, assimilation, and change), and social problems (crime, race relations, poverty, and so forth). Sociologists also study social classes.

All societies have some system of classifying and ranking their members—a system of **stratification**. In modern industrial societies, social status is associated with the various roles that individuals play in the economic system. Individuals are ranked according to how they make their living and the power they exercise over others. Stratification into social classes is determined largely on the basis of occupation and control of economic resources.

social stratification
the classification and ranking of members of a society

Power derives from social status, prestige, and respect, as well as from control of economic resources. Thus, the stratification system involves the unequal distribution of power.

In our study of power and social class, we will explore stratification and the extent of inequality in America. We will discuss the differing lifestyles of upper, middle, working, and lower classes in America and the extent of class conflict. We will examine the ideas of sociologist C. Wright Mills about a "power elite" in America that occupies powerful positions in the governmental, corporate, and military bureaucracies of the nation. Taking our study of power relationships to an international level, we will look at global inequalities. We will examine the ideas of Karl Marx about the struggle for power among social classes. Finally, we will describe the differential in political power among social classes in America.

Social Sciences and Social Problems

Social problems—the major challenges confronting society—include racism, sexism, poverty, crime, violence, urban decay, increasing globalization, and international conflict. These problems do not confine themselves to one or another of the disciplines of social science. They spill over the boundaries of anthropology, economics, sociology, political science, psychology, and history—they are interdisciplinary in character. Each of these problems has its *historical* antecedents, its *social* and *psychological* roots, its *cultural* manifestations, its *economic* consequences, and its impact on *government* and public policy. The origins of these social problems, as well as the various solutions proposed, involve complex power relationships.

Inequality Based on Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexual Orientation, and Disability

In some power relationships, there is inequality because of discrimination against individuals because of their race, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. Historically, no social problem has challenged the United States more than racial inequality. It is the only issue over which Americans ever fought a civil war. We will describe the American experience with racism and the civil rights movement that brought about significant changes in American life. However, we will also examine continuing inequalities between blacks and whites in income, employment, and other conditions of life in the United States. We explore recent controversies concerning the deaths of young African-American men at the hands of police officers, and the calls for reform of law enforcement practices these cases have spawned. We will explore how the face of America continues to change, including the problems confronting Hispanic Americans, Muslim and Arab Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and other groups.

In addition, we will look at sexism in American life, particularly in the economy. We will describe the successes and failures of the women's movement over the years and examine the issue of sexual harassment and the constitutional status of abortion as a privacy right. We also will examine the issue of women's participation in the workforce from an international perspective.

We will also examine other forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on sexual orientation, and discrimination based on disability. We will describe the struggle for equality undertaken by gay rights groups, and by groups who advocate for the disabled. We will also look at current efforts by these groups to secure equal treatment.

Poverty and Powerlessness

powerlessness
a sociopsychological condition of hopelessness, indifference, distrust, and cynicism

The American economy has produced the highest standard of living in the world, yet a significant number of Americans live in poverty. Poverty can be defined as **powerlessness**—a sociopsychological condition of hopelessness, indifference, distrust, and cynicism. We will discuss whether there is a "culture of poverty"—a way of life of the poor that is passed on to future generations—and, if so, what are the implications for government policy. We will describe governmental efforts to cope with poverty and discuss the controversial question regarding the effect of welfare reform policies on the poor. We will focus special attention on homelessness in America and on the problem of poverty among children in the United States.

Crime and Violence

Governmental power must be balanced against *individual* freedom. A democratic society must exercise police powers to protect its citizens, yet it must not unduly restrict individual liberty. We will explore the problem of crime in society and how crime is defined and measured. We will also describe the constitutional rights of defendants and the role of the courts in protecting these rights, including the implementation of the death penalty. We will describe the economics of crime and explore a controversial question of whether more prisons mean less crime. An even more controversial question that will be addressed is the relationship between drugs and crime and whether drug use should be legalized. We will summarize economic, psychological, and social explanations of crime and violence. We will describe briefly the history of violence in American society and the role that violence has played in American struggles for power.

Globalization

Globalization, the development of an increasingly integrated global economy, has sweeping and increasing influence on power distribution. This trend has broad implications in economic systems, in government, in public health, in culture, and beyond. Globalization is shaping both the issues that social scientists examine and the manner in which they examine them. In addition to our increased interconnectedness fostered by increasingly integrated economies and by technology, we will examine world population growth and worldwide urbanization. We will examine some of the most important crises facing people throughout the world, including war, poverty, hunger, warfare, disease, and lack of personal freedom.

International Conflict

The struggle for power is global, involving all the nations and peoples of the world, whatever their goals or ideals. Nearly two hundred nations in the world claim **sovereignty**: authority over their internal affairs, freedom from outside intervention, and political and legal recognition by other nations. But sovereignty is a legal fiction; it requires power to make sovereignty a reality. Over the years, nations have struggled for power through wars and diplomacy. The struggle has led to attempts to maintain a fragile balance of power among large and small nations, as well as attempts to achieve collective security through the United Nations and other alliances. We will provide a brief history of the long Cold War between two nuclear "superpowers"—the United States and the former Soviet Union. We examine recent doctrines in U.S. foreign policy, including those implemented by Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama. We analyze the continued threat of terrorism faced by the United States and other western democracies. We will describe the especially dangerous issue of nuclear arms and efforts to bring them under control. The United States continues to face challenges related to global politics. We will take up the highly controversial question, "When should the United States use military force?"

sovereignty
a nation's authority over internal affairs, freedom from outside intervention, and recognition by other nations

Throughout the book, whether in discipline-specific discussions within the social sciences, or in the topical, interdisciplinary analysis, we see power as an important concept integral to all disciplines and issues in the social sciences. Chapters 2 and 3 continue to place the concept of power in perspective, and introduce the methodological and ideological framework that shapes the social sciences' analysis of this concept.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Ideology—that is, individuals' belief about the extent to which government should be involved in peoples' lives—and historical perspective provide the context in which power is exercised.

- Each of the social sciences—anthropology, political science, economics, psychology, and sociology—analyzes power within the framework of that discipline.

- Power is also a useful framework for examining various social problems in the United States, including inequality, poverty, crime and violence, and problems related to globalization and international conflict.

KEY TERMS

anthropology   the study of people and their ways of life

archaeology   the study of the physical and cultural characteristics of peoples and societies that existed prior to recorded history

authority   power that is exercised legitimately

behavioral psychology   the study of human and animal responses to stimuli

biological psychology   the study of electrical and chemical events in the brain and nervous system as determinants of behavior

cognitive psychology   an approach to psychology that emphasizes how people learn about themselves and their environment

culture   the ways of life that are common to a society

economics   the study of the production and distribution of scarce goods and services

elite and masses   the few who have power and the many who do not

history   the recording, narrating, and interpreting of human experience

humanistic psychology   the study of the growth and development of the human personality

ideology   integrated system of ideas about values in general, and the ideal role of government in particular

interdisciplinary   the study of a topic using ideas, methods, and data from all of the social sciences

legitimacy   belief that the exercise of power is right and proper

personality   all the enduring, organized ways of behavior that characterize an individual

political science   the study of government and politics

power   the capacity to affect the conduct of others through the real or threatened use of rewards and punishments

powerlessness   a sociopsychological condition of hopelessness, indifference, distrust, and cynicism

prehistory   the time before written records

psychoanalytic (Freudian) psychology   the study of the effects of subconscious feelings and early childhood experiences on behavior

psychology   the study of the behavior of people and animals

rational-legal authority   legitimacy conferred by rules that are agreed on by both leaders and followers

social psychology   the study of interpersonal behavior

social science   the study of human behavior

social stratification   the classification and ranking of members of a society

society   a group of people who depend on one another and share a common culture

sociology   the study of relationships among individuals and groups

sovereignty   a nation's authority over internal affairs, freedom from outside intervention, and recognition by other nations

ON THE WEB

EXPLORING POWER AND SOCIETY

The Internet is an invaluable tool for researching topics related to the study of power and society.

In this section at the end of each chapter, you will find suggestions for websites that can guide your research into topics discussed in that chapter. In addition, searching the Internet by using key terms on search engines will also yield an abundance of information. Of course, when using the Internet, one must be wary of the sources of information. Be skeptical of information that cannot be verified by several sources and consider the source of the information before relying on it in your research.

REVIEW QUIZ

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. Legitimacy conferred by rules that are agreed on by both leaders and followers is called what?
   a. power
   b. legitimacy
   c. rational-legal authority
   d. ideology

2. _____ is an integrated system of ideas about values in general, and the ideal role of government in particular.
   a. Authority   c. Power
   b. Ideology   d. Legitimacy

3. The study of people and their ways of life is known as _____.
   a. social science   c. economics
   b. political science   d. anthropology

4. What is known as the study of the physical and cultural characteristics of peoples and societies that existed prior to recorded history?
   a. prehistory
   b. archaeology
   c. cultural anthropology
   d. physical anthropology

5. The time before written records is called _____.
   a. prehistory
   b. archaeology
   c. cultural anthropology
   d. physical anthropology

6. What is the study of the behavior of people and animals?
   a. anthropology   c. sociology
   b. economics   d. psychology

7. What is the study of the production and distribution of scarce goods and services?
   a. anthropology   c. political science
   b. economics   d. psychology

8. Name the approach to psychology that emphasizes how people learn about themselves and their environment.
   a. social psychology
   b. psychoanalytic (Freudian) psychology
   c. humanistic psychology
   d. cognitive psychology

9. What is the study of the growth and development of the human personality called?
   a. social psychology
   b. psychoanalytic (Freudian) psychology
   c. humanistic psychology
   d. cognitive psychology

10. What is the study of government and politics called?
    a. anthropology
    b. economics
    c. political science
    d. psychology

FILL IN THE BLANK

11. _____ is the capacity to affect the conduct of others through the real or threatened use of rewards and punishments.

12. The few who have power and the many who do not are called _____.

13. The belief that the exercise of power is right and proper is called _____.

14. The study of a topic using ideas, methods, and data from all of the social sciences is said to be _____.

15. _____ is the classification and ranking of members of a society.

ANSWER KEY:
1. c; 2. b; 3. d; 4. b; 5. a; 6. d; 7. b; 8. d; 9. c; 10. c; 11. Power; 12. elites and masses; 13. legitimacy; 14. interdisciplinary; 15. Social stratification.

2

Social Sciences and the Scientific Method

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, students will be able to:

- Explain the purpose of the scientific method.
- Describe some of the difficulties that social scientists from each discipline face in applying the scientific method to the study of social problems.
- Describe methods that social scientists use to conduct research.

Science and the Scientific Method

science
broadly defined, any organized body of knowledge

scientific method
a method of explanation that develops and tests theories about how observable facts or events are related

A **science** may be broadly defined as any organized *body of knowledge*, or it may be more narrowly defined as a discipline that employs the scientific method. If we use the broad definition, we can safely say that all the social sciences are indeed sciences. However, if we narrow our definition to only those disciplines that employ the scientific method, then some questions arise about whether the social sciences are really scientific. In other words, if science is defined as a method of study, rather than a body of knowledge, then not all studies in the social sciences are truly scientific.

The **scientific method** develops and tests theories about how observable facts or events are related in order to explain them. What does this definition really mean? How is this method of study actually applied in the social sciences? To answer these questions, let's examine each aspect of the scientific method separately.

The Vocabulary of Social Science

Social science researchers use many special terms in their work, some of which have already been defined. While reading social science research reports, it helps to understand the specific meanings given to the following terms:

- **THEORY:** A causal explanation of the relationship between observable facts or events. A good theory fits the facts, explains why they occur, and allows us to predict future events.
- **HYPOTHESIS:** A tentative statement about a relationship between facts or events that should be derived from the theory and should be testable. Hypotheses typically are statements of relationships between variables.
- **VARIABLE:** A characteristic that varies among different individuals or groups.
- **INDEPENDENT VARIABLE:** Whatever is hypothesized to be the cause of something else.
- **DEPENDENT VARIABLE:** Whatever is hypothesized to be the effect of something else.
- **SIGNIFICANT:** Not likely to have occurred by chance.

- **CORRELATION:** Significant relationships found in the data.
- **CAUSATION:** A significant relationship wherein the presence of one variable (the independent variable) causes changes in another variable (dependent variable).
- **INFERENCE:** A causal statement based on data showing a significant relationship.
- **SPURIOUS:** Describing a relationship among facts or events that is not causal but is a product of the fact that both the independent and dependent variables are being caused by a third factor.

Questions for Critical Thinking:

1. What is the difference between causation and correlation?

2. Consider various innate characteristics of individuals—gender, race, or ethnicity, for example. Are these likely to be dependent or independent variables? Why?

Explaining Relationships

The goal of the scientific method is explanation. When using this method, we seek to answer *why*. Any scientific inquiry must begin by observing and classifying things. Just as biology begins with the careful observation, description, and classification of thousands upon thousands of different forms of life, the social sciences also must begin with the careful observation, description, and classification of various forms of human behavior. But the goal is explanation, not just description. Just as biology seeks to develop theories of evolution and genetics to explain the various forms of life upon the earth, the social sciences seek to develop theories to explain why human beings behave as they do.

hypothesis
a tentative statement about a relationship between observable facts or events

To answer the question of *why*, the scientific method searches for *relationships*. All scientific **hypotheses** assert some relationship between observable facts or events. The social sciences seek to find relationships that explain human behavior. The first question is whether two or more events or behaviors are related in any way—that is, do they occur together consistently? The second question is whether either event or behavior *causes* the other. Social scientists first try to learn whether human events have occurred together merely by chance or accident or whether they occur together so consistently that their relationship cannot be a mere coincidence. A relationship that is not likely to have occurred by chance is said to be **significant**. After observing a significant relationship, social scientists next ask whether there is a *causal relationship* between the phenomena (that is, whether the facts or events occurred together because one is the cause of the other) or whether both phenomena are being caused by some third factor. Focus: "The Vocabulary of Social Science" explains some of the terms used in scientific studies.

significant
not likely to have occurred by chance

Deductive and Inductive Reasoning

The scientific method seeks to develop statements (hypotheses) about how events or behaviors might be related and then determines the validity of these statements by careful, systematic, and logical tests. This process begins using logic and observing the phenomenon around us.

Essentially, deductive reasoning is based on the observation of relationships using linear logic. So:

All X are Y (first premise)
All Y are Z (second premise)
Hence, all X are Z (deductive conclusion, or hypothesis)

deductive reasoning
to infer from a general theory to a particular case

inductive reasoning
to observe one phenomenon or series of phenomena and make general assertions based on that observation

In the example above, we relied on **deductive reasoning**—or inferring from a general theory to a particular case. Social scientists also use **inductive reasoning**—that is observing one phenomenon or series of phenomena and making general assertions based on that observation. So, deductive reasons from general to specific, while inductive reasons from specific to general.

To make the differences between these two forms of logical reasoning clear, let's use a tried and true example, called a *syllogism*:

- General observation: All men are mortals.
- Specific observation: Socrates is a man.
- Deductive-derived hypothesis: Therefore, Socrates must be mortal.

Using inductive logic, reasoning would be flipped:

- Specific observation: Socrates is mortal.
- General observation: Other men also are mortal.
- Inductive-derived tentative conclusion: All men are mortal.

Developing and Testing Hypotheses

Scientific tests are really exercises in deductive or inductive logic. For example, if we wanted to find out something about the relationship between people's race and political party preference in voting, we might collect and record data from a national

sample of African American and white voters chosen at random.* If our data showed that *all* blacks voted Democratic and *all* whites Republican, it would be obvious that there was a perfect **correlation**, or a significant statistical relationship, between race and voting. In contrast, if both blacks and whites voted Republican and Democratic in the same proportions, then it would be obvious that there was no correlation.

But in the social sciences, we rarely have such obvious, clear-cut results. Generally our data will show a mixed pattern. For example, in the 2012 presidential election when Barack Obama, the first African American president in U.S. history, was seeking re-election for a second term in office, 93 percent of all African American voters supported the Democratic president, while 6 percent backed his Republican opponent, Mitt Romney. Among white voters, 39 percent voted for Obama, while 59 percent supported Romney. In 2008, Obama enjoyed an even larger portion—95 percent—of the African American vote, with four percent voting for the Republican opponent, John McCain. Obama won 43 percent of the white vote, while Romney garnered 57 percent. And in the 2004 presidential election between Democrat John Kerry and Republican George W. Bush, polls indicated that 88 percent of African Americans voted for Kerry and 11 percent voted for Bush. In that same election, 58 percent of whites voted Republican and only 41 percent voted Democratic. If there had been *no* relationship between race and voting, then blacks and whites would have voted Democratic and Republican in roughly the *same* proportions. But as we have just noted, blacks voted Democratic in far heavier proportions in both elections (95 percent and 88 percent) than whites (43 and 41 percent). This difference is not likely to have occurred by chance—thus, we consider it "significant." The same pattern of heavy Democratic voting among African Americans can be observed in other elections (Table 2-1). So we can make the inference that race is related to voting.

Note, however, that correlation (two events occurring together in a statistically significant relationship) does not equal causation (that one event necessarily *caused* the other to occur). Rather, both events could be caused by a third, as yet unidentified, characteristic or event. We must employ additional logic to find out which fact or event caused the other, or whether both were caused by a third fact or event. We can eliminate as illogical the possibility that voting Democratic causes one to become an African American. That leaves us with two possibilities: Being African American may cause Democratic voting, or voting Democratic may be caused by some third condition shared by many African Americans. For example, the real causal relationship may be between lower household incomes and Democratic voting: People with lower household incomes tend to identify with the Democratic Party. And while not all African Americans have lower household incomes, in general, African Americans constitute a larger proportion of lower-income households than their proportion of the population as a whole.

We can test this new hypothesis by looking at the voting behavior of both black and white low-income groups. It turns out that low-income black voters vote more heavily Democratic than low-income white voters, so we can reject the lower household income explanation. We may therefore infer that race is *independently*

correlation
a significant statistical relationship

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* Throughout this book we use the term *African American* when referring to specific individuals or the racial group, but in text and tables that compare African Americans and whites, we use parallel terms, *black* and *white*.

TABLE 2-1   VOTING BY RACE IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS
Testing the Hypothesis: African Americans Tend to Vote Democratic

Election Year	Candidates	All (%)*	Whites (%)	Blacks (%)
2012	Republican Romney	47	59	6
	Democrat Obama	51	39	93
2008	Republican McCain	47	57	4
	Democrat Obama	53	43	95
2004	Republican Bush	51	58	11
	Democrat Kerry	48	41	88
2000	Republican Bush	48	54	8
	Democrat Gore	48	42	90
1996	Republican Dole	41	46	12
	Democrat Clinton	49	43	84
	Independent Perot	8	9	4
1992	Republican Bush	38	41	11
	Democrat Clinton	43	39	82
	Independent Perot	19	20	7
1988	Republic Bush	54	60	11
	Democrat Dukakis	46	40	89
1984	Republican Reagan	59	66	9
	Democrat Mondale	41	34	90
1980	Republican Reagan	51	56	10
	Democrat Carter	41	36	86
	Independent Anderson	7	7	2
1976	Republican Ford	48	5	15
	Democrat Carter	50	46	85
1972	Republican Nixon	62	68	13
	Democrat McGovern	38	32	87

* Figures are percentages of the vote won by each candidate. Percentages in each election may not add
  up to 100 because of voting for minor-party candidates.
Source: Data from the *Gallup Opinion Poll* surveys, CNN Exit Poll results (2008), and Washington Post
Exit Poll results (2012).

related to voting behavior. But there may be other possible alternatives to our explanation of the relationship between race and voting behavior. For example, African American parents may socialize their children to be loyal Democrats. Social scientists must test as many alternative explanations as possible before asserting a causal relationship.

Every time that we can reject an alternative explanation for the relationship we have observed, we increase our confidence that the relationship (as between race and voting behavior) is a causal one. Of course, in the areas of interest to social scientists, someone can always think of new alternative explanations, so it is generally impossible to establish for certain that a causal relationship exists. Some social scientists react to the difficulties of proving "cause" by refusing to say that the relationships they find are anything more than correlations. The decision whether or not to call a relationship "causal" is difficult. Statistical techniques cannot guarantee that a relationship is causal; social scientists must be prepared to deal with probabilities rather than absolutes.

RESEARCH *THIS!*

Researchers in each of the social sciences rely on original data to help inform their theories of the world around us. In the United States, several important data sets are provided by the U.S. government. Every ten years (most recently in 2010), the federal government conducts a census, or survey, of the population. Data from this census, including details about the population, housing, poverty and income, and community information is available through the U.S. Census Bureau website: **www.census.gov**.

The following table shows recent changes in the U.S. population in the period from 2010 to 2014.

POPULATION CHANGE FOR THE UNITED STATES, REGIONS, STATES, AND PUERTO RICO: 2010 TO 2014.

Geographic Area	Population Estimate		Change, 2010 to 2014	
	2010	2014	Number	Percent
United States	308,758,105	318,857,056	10,098,951	3.3
Northeast	55,318,348	56,152,333	833,985	1.5
Midwest	66,929,898	67,745,108	815,210	1.2
South	114,562,951	119,771,934	5,208,983	4.5
West	71,946,908	75,187,681	3,240,773	4.5
Alabama	4,780,127	4,849,377	69,250	1.4
Alaska	710,249	736,732	26,483	3.7
Arizona	6,392,310	6,731,484	339,174	5.3
Arkansas	2,915,958	2,966,369	50,411	1.7
California	37,254,503	38,802,500	1,547,997	4.2
Colorado	5,029,324	5,355,866	326,542	6.5
Connecticut	3,574,096	3,596,677	22,581	0.6
Delaware	897,936	935,614	37,678	4.2
District of Columbia	601,767	658,893	57,126	9.5
Florida	18,804,623	19,893,297	1,088,674	5.8
Georgia	9,688,681	10,097,343	408,662	4.2
Hawaii	1,360,301	1,419,561	59,260	4.4
Idaho	1,567,652	1,634,464	66,812	4.3
Illinois	12,831,587	12,880,580	48,993	0.4
Indiana	6,484,192	6,596,855	112,663	1.7
Iowa	3,046,869	3,107,126	60,257	2.0
Kansas	2,853,132	2,904,021	50,889	1.8
Kentucky	4,339,349	4,413,457	74,108	1.7
Louisiana	4,533,479	4,649,676	116,197	2.6
Maine	1,328,361	1,330,089	1,728	0.1

(continued)

Maryland	5,773,785	5,976,407	202,622	3.5
Massachusetts	6,547,817	6,745,408	197,591	3.0
Michigan	9,884,133	9,909,877	25,744	0.3
Minnesota	5,303,925	5,457,173	153,248	2.9
Mississippi	2,968,103	2,994,079	25,976	0.9
Missouri	5,988,923	6,063,589	74,666	1.2
Montana	989,417	1,023,579	34,162	3.5
Nebraska	1,826,341	1,881,503	55,162	3.0
Nevada	2,700,692	2,839,099	138,407	5.1
New Hampshire	1,316,466	1,326,813	10,347	0.8
New Jersey	8,791,936	8,938,175	146,239	1.7
New Mexico	2,059,192	2,085,572	26,380	1.3
New York	19,378,112	19,746,227	368,115	1.9
North Carolina	9,535,691	9,943,964	408,273	4.3
North Dakota	672,591	739,482	66,891	9.9
Ohio	11,536,725	11,594,163	57,438	0.5
Oklahoma	3,751,616	3,878,051	126,435	3.4
Oregon	3,831,073	3,970,239	139,166	3.6
Pennsylvania	12,702,884	12,787,209	84,325	0.7
Rhode Island	1,052,931	1,055,173	2,242	0.2
South Carolina	4,625,401	4,832,482	207,081	4.5
South Dakota	814,191	853,175	38,984	4.8
Tennessee	6,346,275	6,549,352	203,077	3.2
Texas	25,146,104	26,956,958	1,810,854	7.2
Utah	2,763,885	2,942,902	179,017	6.5
Vermont	625,745	626,562	817	0.1
Virginia	8,001,023	8,326,289	325,266	4.1
Washington	6,724,543	7,061,530	336,987	5.0
West Virginia	1,853,033	1,850,326	-2,707	-0.1
Wisconsin	5,687,289	5,757,564	70,275	1.2
Wyoming	563,767	584,153	20,386	3.6
Puerto Rico	3,726,157	3,548,397	-177,760	-4.8

Source: Table 2. Cumulative Estimates of Resident Population Change for the United States, Regions, States, and Puerto Rico and Region and State Rankings: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2014 (NST-EST2014-02)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

Release Date: December 2014

Your Analysis:

1. Examine the population for your geographic region, and based on your region's trend, use deductive reasoning to assert a hypothesis about how the population has changed in your state.

   - General observation:
   - Specific observation:
   - Deductive-derived hypothesis:

2. Examine the data for your state, and solely on your state's trend, use inductive reasoning to assert a hypothesis about how the population has changed in your region.

   - Specific observation:
   - General observation:
   - Inductive-derived tentative conclusion:

   Are both forms of reasoning equally useful? In this case, did they produce accurate results?

Dealing with Observable Phenomena

The scientific method deals only with observable—**empirical**—*facts and events.* In other words, the scientific method deals with what is, rather than what should be. It cannot test the validity of values, norms, or feelings, except insofar as it can test for their existence in a society, group, or individual. For example, the scientific method can be employed to determine whether voting behavior is related to race, but it cannot determine whether voting behavior should be related to race. The latter question is a normative one (dealing with "ought" and "should"), rather than an empirical one (dealing with "is"). The scientific method is descriptive and explanatory, but not **normative**. The social sciences can explain many aspects of human behavior but cannot tell human beings how they ought to behave. For guidance in values and norms—for prescriptions about how people should live—we must turn to ethics, religion, or philosophy.

empirical
referring to observable facts and events; what is

normative
referring to values or norms; what should be

Developing Theory

The scientific method strives to develop a systematic body of theory. Science is more than crude empiricism—the listing of facts without any statement of relationships among them. Of course, especially in the early stages of a science, research may consist largely of collecting data, but the ultimate goal of the scientific method is to develop **theory**, or verifiable statements about relationships among facts and events. It is the task of social scientists to find patterns and regularities in human behavior, just as it is the task of physicists and chemists to find patterns and regularities in the behavior of matter and energy. The social scientist's use of the scientific method, then, assumes that human behavior is not random,

theory
verifiable statements about relationships among facts and events

rather that it is regular and predictable. Social scientists' development of theory, however, must be more normative than in the natural sciences. For example, underlying much theory in the social sciences are assumptions about human nature—whether it is inherently good or inherently selfish. These assumptions oftentimes form the building blocks of theory.

Theories are developed at different levels of generality. Theories with low levels of generality explain only a small or narrow range of behaviors. For example, we might theorize that conservative Christian voters tend to vote Republican, and this theory has a fairly low-level generality about political behavior; that is, it is a narrow and quite specific theory about one group's voting behavior. Theories with higher levels of generality explain a greater or wider range of behavior. For example, the statement that religious differences cause political conflict has a higher level of generality. Strictly speaking, a theory is a set of interrelated concepts at a fairly high level of generality. Some social scientists concentrate on theory building rather than on empirical research; they try to develop sweeping social theories to explain all, or a large part, of human behavior. Still other social theorists provide insights, hunches, or vague notions that suggest possible explanations of human behavior, thus developing new hypotheses for empirical research.

Maintaining a Scientific Attitude

Perhaps more than anything else, *the scientific method is an attitude of doubt or skepticism*. It is an insistence on careful collection of data and systematic testing of ideas; a commitment to keep bias out of one's work, to collect and record all relevant facts, and to interpret them rationally regardless of one's feelings. Admittedly, it is difficult to maintain a truly **scientific attitude** when examining social behavior. For the social scientist, it is the determination to test explanations of human behavior by careful observations of real-world experiences. It is a recognition that any explanation is tentative and may be modified or disproved by careful investigation. Even the scientific theories that constitute the core knowledge in any discipline are not regarded as absolutes by the true social scientist; rather, they are regarded as probabilities or generalizations developed from what is known so far.

scientific attitude
doubt or skepticism about theories until they have been scientifically tested

What Is a "Fact"?

In the social sciences, very few statements can be made that apply to *every* circumstance. We cannot say, for example, that "all evangelical/born-again Christians vote Republican." This is a **universal statement** covering every evangelical or born-again Christian, and universal statements are seldom true in the social sciences. Moreover, it would be difficult to examine the voting behavior of every evangelical or born-again Christian voter in the past and in the future to prove that the statement is true.

universal statement
a statement that applies to every circumstance

A more accurate statement might be "most white evangelical/born-again Christians vote Republican." This is a **probabilistic statement**; it does not exclude the possibility that some white evangelical/born-again Christians vote Democratic. An even more accurate statement would be that "78 percent of white evangelical/born-again Christians cast their ballots for Republican candidate Mitt Romney

probabilistic statement
a statement that applies to some proportion of circumstances

in the 2012 presidential election." This means there was a 78 percent *probability* of a white evangelical/born-again Christian voter casting his or her ballot for Republican Mitt Romney.

A probabilistic statement is a fact, just like a universal statement. Students in the physical sciences deal with many universal statements—for example, "Water boils at 100 degrees Celsius." Water always does this. But social science students must learn to think in probabilities rather than in absolute terms.

Social scientists must also beware of substituting individual cases for statements of probability. They must be careful about reasoning from one or two observed cases. A statement such as "I know an evangelical family who always votes Democratic" may be true, but it would be very dangerous to generalize about the voting habits of all evangelicals on the basis of this one case. We always build tentative generalizations from our own world of experiences. However, as social scientists, we must ensure that our own experiences are typical. We should keep in mind that the "facts" of the social sciences are seldom absolute—they rarely cover the complexity of any aspect of human behavior. So we must be prepared to study probabilities.

The Classic Scientific Research Design

An **experiment** is a scientific test that is controlled by the researcher and designed to observe the effect of a program or treatment. The classic scientific research design involves the comparison of specific changes in two or more carefully selected groups, both of which are identical in every way, except that one has been given the program or treatment under study while the other has not.[1]

This design involves the following:

- Identification of the goals of the study and the selection of specific hypotheses to be tested.
- Selection of the groups to be compared—the **experimental group**, which will participate in the program or undergo the treatment being studied, and the **control group**, which is similar to the experimental group in every way, except that it will *not* participate in the program or undergo the treatment being studied.
- Measurement of the characteristics of both the experimental and control groups *before* participation in the experiment.
- Application of the program or treatment to the experimental group, but not to the control group. (Members of the control group may be given a *placebo*—some activity or program known to have no effect—to make them believe that they are participating in the experiment. Indeed, the scientific staff administering the experiment may not know which group is the real experimental group and which group is the control group. When neither the staff nor the group members themselves know who is really receiving the treatment, the experiment is called a *double-blind experiment*.)
- Measurement of the condition of both the experimental and control groups *after* the program or treatment. If there are measurable differences between the experimental and control groups, the scientist can begin to infer that the program or treatment has a specific effect. If there are *no* measurable

experiment
a scientific test controlled by the researcher to observe effects of a specific program or treatment

experimental group
the group that will participate in the program or undergo the treatment under study

control group
a group, similar to the experimental group, which does not undergo treatment; used for comparison

https://www.facebook.com/Smithsonian

Inquiry:

1. On the Smithsonian's Facebook page, find one post that describes the scientific method used in a research experiment.

2. Is the research experiment that you found concerning the social sciences or the hard sciences? Would the research design differ if the experiment investigated a topic in the other area of study? Why or why not?

null hypothesis
a statement that the program or treatment has no effect

differences, then the scientist must accept the **null hypothesis**—the statement that the program or treatment has no effect.

- Comparison of the preprogram/pretreatment status versus the postprogram/posttreatment status in both groups. This is a check to see if the difference between the experimental and control groups occurred during the experiment (see Case Study: "Scientific Research Design: An Experiment in Preventing PTSD"). If there is no control group and only the experimental group is studied, this method is often called a "before–after" study.
- A search for plausible explanations for differences after treatment between the control and experimental groups that might be due to factors other than the treatment itself.

The classic research design is not without its problems. Social scientists must be aware of the more difficult problems in applying this research design to social science research and must be prepared on occasion to change their procedures accordingly. These problems include the following:

- Members of the experimental group may respond differently to a program if they know it is an experiment. Members of a control group are often told they are participating in an experiment, even though nothing is really being done to the control group.
- If the experimental group is only one part of a larger city, state, or nation, the response to the experiment may be different from what it would have been had all parts of the city, state, or nation been receiving the program. For example, if only one part of a city receives streetlights, criminals may simply operate as usual (even with the lights), and total crime rates will be unaffected.
- If persons are allowed to *volunteer* for the experiment, then experimental and control groups may not be representative of the population as a whole.
- In some situations, political pressures may make it possible to provide one neighborhood or group with certain services while denying these same services to the rest of the city, state, or nation. If everyone *thinks* the program is beneficial before the experiment begins, no one will want to be in the control group.

Scientific Research Design: An Experiment in Preventing PTSD

Let's consider an example of applying the classic scientific research design to a specific social problem—post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Researchers are examining ways of preventing the onset of PTSD after a traumatic event. Several hypotheses have been developed: Some researchers assert that prolonged exposure therapy, which involves breath control training as victims of trauma imagine the trauma they have experienced, will help victims of trauma combat the onset of PTSD symptoms. Other researchers advocate cognitive training designed to teach those who have experienced trauma to reduce negative thoughts. Some researchers hypothesize that victims of trauma should undergo prolonged exposure therapy only if they still show signs of stress disorder problems after five months. Still others advocate for the prevention of PTSD through the use of antidepressant medications.

In order to determine the best course of action, researchers at Hadassah University Hospital in Jerusalem, Israel, selected 242 patients who had suffered from a recent traumatic event (an average of about 10 days prior), and then had experienced subsequent acute stress, to participate in a study. The participants were divided into four groups, and each group received one of five treatments.

Group	Treatment
1	Prolonged exposure therapy
2	Cognitive training
3	Prolonged exposure therapy (delayed five months)
4	Antidepressant medication Lexapro*
Control group	Placebo

After treatment and nine months of follow-up, researchers assessed the effectiveness of various treatments, essentially assessing the validity of the various hypotheses. The researchers found that between 21 percent and 23 percent of the participants in groups one, two, and three who received psychotherapy developed PTSD (including those who delayed treatment until five months after the event), while 42 percent of those in group four, the antidepressant group, and 47 percent of those who took the placebo developed symptoms.

In evaluating the treatment methods, researchers concluded that prolonged exposure, cognitive therapy, and delayed prolonged exposure effectively prevent chronic PTSD in recent survivors. They also stated that lack of improvement from treatment with the antidepressant medication requires further evaluation. These conclusions can now be further evaluated by other researchers, and practitioners can formulate new hypotheses concerning the best avenues for preventing PTSD, including therapies that combine treatments.

Source: Arieh Y. Shalev, Yael Ankri, Yossi Israeli-Shalev, Tamar Peleg, Rhonda Adessky, Sara Freedman. "Prevention of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder by Early Treatment: Results from the Jerusalem Trauma Outreach and Prevention Study," Archives of General Psychiatry. Published online October 3, 2011. (http://archpsyc.amaassn.org/cgi/content/full/archgenpsychiatry.2011.127)

* The study received funding from Lundbeck Pharmaceuticals, the manufacturer of Lexapro, the U.S. National Institute of Health, and other sources.

- It may be considered morally wrong to provide some groups or persons with services, benefits, or treatment while denying the same to other groups or persons (control groups) who are identical in their needs or problems.
- Careful research is costly and time consuming. Public officials often need to make immediate decisions. They cannot spend time or money on research even if they understand the long-term benefits of careful investigation. Too often, politicians and other policy makers must operate on "short-run" rather than "long-run" considerations.

Gathering Data: Survey Research

How do social scientists go about observing the behaviors of individuals, groups, and societies? There are a variety of methods for gathering data (Table 2-2); some fields rely more heavily on one particular method than on another. The *controlled experiment*, described earlier, is often used in psychology; the *survey* is frequently employed in political science and sociology; *field research*, or participant observation, is a major source of data in anthropology; and *secondary data* analysis is employed in all social sciences.[2]

sample
in survey research, the people chosen to represent the opinions of a larger group

Survey Research

Most surveys ask questions of a representative sample of the population rather than question the entire population. A selected number of people, the **sample**, is chosen in a way that ensures that this group is representative of the **universe**, the

universe
the whole group about which information is desired

TABLE 2-2   GATHERING DATA IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Research Method	Operationalization	Example
Classical scientific experiment	Uses the scientific method; includes both an experimental and a control group; measures the impact of the application of the program or treatment on both groups.	See Case Study: "Scientific Research Design: An Experiment in Preventing PTSD"
Survey research	Uses the scientific method; asks opinions of a randomly selected sample of the population.	Gallup polls.
Field research: participant observation	Researchers both observe and participate in the behavior being studied.	Political scientist works as a campaign consultant while researching the decision-making structure in campaigns.
Field research: unobtrusive observer	Researchers observe the behavior being studied but try not to intrude or partake in the behavior.	Sociologist researching children's sex roles at play observes children while going unnoticed.
Field research: ethnography	A systematic description of a society's customary behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes.	Anthropologist lives with, interviews, and observes people of another culture.
Secondary-source data	Data used by social scientists that have been collected by other organizations or governments or researchers	U.S. Census data (see Research This!).

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whole group of people about which information is desired. To ensure that the sample is representative of the universe, most surveys rely on random selection. In a **random sample**, each person in the universe has an equal chance of being selected for interviewing. Random sampling improves the likelihood that the responses obtained from the sample would be the same as those obtained from the universe if everyone were questioned. Hypothetically, we must obtain a random sample of American voters by throwing every voter's name in a giant box and blindly picking out one thousand names to be interviewed. A more common method is to randomly select telephone area codes and then numbers from across the nation.

There is always the chance that the sample selected will *not* be representative of the universe (see International Perspective: "Polling the World"). But survey researchers can estimate this **sampling error** through the mathematics of probability. The sampling error is usually expressed as a range above and below the sample response, within which there is a 95 percent likelihood that the universe response would be found if the entire universe was questioned. For example, if 63 percent of the people questioned (the sample) say they approve of the way that the president is handling his job and the sampling error is calculated at ±3 percent (said "plus or minus 3 percent"), then we can say that there is a 95 percent likelihood that the president's approval rating among the whole population (the universe) stands somewhere between 60 and 66 percent (63 − 3 and 63 + 3).

Large samples are not really necessary to narrow the sampling error. Large samples are not much more accurate than small samples. A sample of a few thousand—even one thousand—is capable of reflecting the opinions of

One common way the classic research design effects our everyday lives is its use in the federal drug approval process. Angel Raich (second from the left) 41, of Oakland, California, sued the U.S. Attorney General and Drug Enforcement Administration director to block them from interfering with her medical marijuana use and sought to end the federal monopoly on the supply of marijuana that can be used in FDA-approved research. Raich suffers from an inoperable brain tumor.

Alex Wong/Getty Images News/Getty Images

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Polling the World

Imagine surveying a Zambian about whether she experienced boredom yesterday. Or asking a Paraguayan if he would recommend the area he lives in to others as a place to live. Or perhaps inquiring of an Icelander if she had smiled or laughed in the last day.

Imagine collecting the data on over one hundred questions in a scientific manner that will allow for comparisons between nations, that are inclusive of various populations, that facilitate the creation of indices (such as a Well Being Index, or a Law and Order Index) based on individuals' responses to questions. Imagine conducting such a survey in war-torn regions, in desert conditions, in respondents' native tongues, sometimes using telephones (in places where at least 80 percent of the population has a phone), or in face-to-face interviews. (See the following table.)

As part of their World Poll, the Gallup organization continuously polls individuals in more than 150 nations and seeks to represent the opinions of 98 percent of the world's population. Gallup's sample in each country is approximately 1,000 residents, consisting of the entire civilian, non-institutionalized population, aged 15 and older. "Gallup asks everyone from Australia to Pakistan the same questions, every time, in the same way, with the same meaning, and asks them in his or her own language to produce statistically comparable results."* Accurate surveys enable social scientists, world leaders, and policymakers to understand citizens' concerns, attitudes, behaviors, and to gauge their sense of well-being.

GALLUP WORLDWIDE RESEARCH DATA COLLECTED (SELECTED)

Country	Data							Exclusions
	Collection Dates	Number of Interviews	Design Effect[a]	Margin of Error[b]	Mode of Interviewing	Languages	Over-sample[c]	(Samples are nationally representative unless noted otherwise.)
Afghanistan	Apr 13 – Apr 22, 2010	1,000	1.72	4.1	Face-to-Face	Dari, Pashto		Gender-matched sampling was used during the final stage of selection.
Albania	Jul 2 – Jul 19, 2010	1,000	1.7	4	Face-to-Face	Albanian		
Algeria (5.1)	Feb 1 – Mar 7, 2010	1,001	1.41	3.7	Face-to-Face	Arabic		The sparsely populated deep South and governorates that represent security risks within Algiers were excluded. The excluded areas represent approximately 25% of the population.
Algeria (5.2)	Sep 2 – Oct 22, 2010	1,000	1.29	3.5	Face-to-Face	Arabic		The sparsely populated deep South and governorates that represent security risks within Algiers were excluded. The excluded areas represent approximately 25% of the population.
Argentina	Jul 1 – Jul 30, 2010	1,000	1.45	3.7	Face-to-Face	Spanish		
Armenia	Jun 26 – Jul 28, 2010	1,000	1.25	3.5	Face-to-Face	Armenian		
Australia	Feb 17 – Mar 10, 2010	1,000	1.5	3.8	Landline and Cellular Telephone	English		
Azerbaijan	Jul 14 – Jul 28, 2010	1,000	1.3	3.5	Face-to-Face	Azeri, Russian		Nagorno-Karabakh and territories not included for safety of interviewers. These areas represent less than 10% of the total population.
Bahrain (5.1)	Mar 31 – Apr 30, 2010	1,031	1.5	3.7	Face-to-Face	Arabic		Includes Bahrainis and Arab expatriates; non-Arabs were excluded. It's estimated that approximately one-fourth of the adult population is excluded.

Source: www.gallup.com/se/128171/Country-Data-Set-Details-May-2010.aspx

In Perspective:

1. Describe some of the obstacles researchers face in collecting data in the various countries described.

2. What other issues might researchers face in collecting survey data internationally?

* http://www.gallup.com/poll/128189/Gallup-global-polling-work.aspx

1 million or 100 million voters fairly accurately. For example, a random sample of one thousand voters across the United States can produce a sampling error (plus or minus) of only 3 percent.

Problems in Survey Research

If a poll is constructed scientifically and thoughtfully, it can provide accurate information about the opinions of a population. When well-constructed polls are inaccurate, it is usually because public opinion is unformed, weakly held, or changing rapidly. If public opinion is really unformed on a topic, as may be the case in early presidential preference polls, people may choose a familiar name or a celebrity who is frequently mentioned in the news. As the campaign progresses and people learn about the candidates and form opinions on them, candidates who were once unknown and rated only a few percentage points in early polls can emerge as front-runners. Weakly held opinions are more likely to change than strongly held opinions. Political commentators sometimes say a particular candidate's support is "soft," meaning that his or her supporters are not very intense in their commitment; therefore, the polls could swing quickly away from the candidate. Finally, widely reported news events may change public opinion very rapidly. A survey can measure opinions only at the time it is taken. A few days later, public opinion may change, especially if major events are receiving heavy television coverage. Some political pollsters conduct continuous surveys until election night in order to catch last-minute opinion changes.

But today pollsters and public opinion researchers who rely on telephone polling face a large obstacle in the data collection process: With many people relying exclusively on cell phones—especially younger and less affluent individuals—and with caller identification becoming increasingly common, polls struggle to find representative samples. Pollsters are attempting to remedy this problem in several ways, including polling using cell phones, or rectifying the underrepresentation of these individuals by including a larger number of landline-surveyed younger people and those with lower incomes in their samples.

Assessing Public Opinion

Public opinion in democracies is given a great deal of attention. Indeed, survey research on public opinion is a thriving industry. There are some "hot-button" issues about which virtually everyone has an opinion and many people feel very intensely. And survey results on these issues command the attention of politicians and the news media as well as social scientists. **Salient issues** are those that people think about most and about which they hold strong and stable opinions.

In assessing public opinion polls, the construction of a poll merits scrutiny. It is important to realize that the wording or phrasing of public opinion questions can often determine the outcome of a poll. Indeed, "loaded" or "leading" questions are often asked by unprofessional pollsters simply to produce results favorable to their political candidate or to their side of an argument. Called **push polls**, these efforts really constitute more of

public opinion
the aggregate of opinions of individuals on topics in survey research

salient issue
an issue about which most people have thoughts and hold strong and stable opinions

push poll
a survey that asks leading questions in order to sway opinion for a particular candidate or position

One way that social scientists assess public opinion is through the use of public opinion polls, including election day exit polls. These surveys, which rely on random sampling, predict which candidate will win an election before polls close. One such poll was taken in Indiana, where Gabe and Kathy Gouvas indicated which candidate they voted for in a Democratic primary election. Exit polls also shed light on why individuals prefer one candidate over another.

Christopher Fitzgerald/Chris Fitzgerald/CandidatePhotos/Newscom

a campaign tactic than a scientific public opinion survey. A push poll might sound something like this:

PUSH POLLER: *In Tuesday's upcoming election between Rose Fitzgerald and Fred Foley, would you say that you are more likely to vote for Rose Fitzgerald or Fred Foley for mayor?*

VOTER: *Fred Foley.*

PUSH POLLER: *If you were informed that Fred Foley had multiple arrests for disorderly conduct and lewd behavior, would you be more or less likely to vote for him?*

The purpose of a push poll, as you can see, is not to gauge public opinion about a candidate but to unscrupulously smear the name of a candidate, oftentimes with baseless charges. Note that the push poller is not claiming any of the statements are facts but is saying, "If they were. . . ." Nonetheless, the voter is left with the impression that the charges have merit.

In scientific public opinion polls, ideally, questions should be clear and precise, easily understood by the respondents, and as neutral and unbiased as possible. But because all questions have a potential bias, it is usually better to examine changes over time in responses to identically worded questions.

Even the most scientific surveys are not error free, however. We have already noted that weakly held opinions can change rapidly. Thus, by the time poll results are reported in the media, those results may no longer reflect public opinion. Also, many opinion surveys ask questions that people had not considered before being interviewed. Few people are willing to admit that they know nothing about the topic or that they really have "no opinion." They believe they should provide an answer even if they have little interest in the topic itself. The result is that polls often seem to "create" public opinion. Another problem is the **halo effect**—the tendency of respondents to give "good-citizen" responses, whether the responses are truthful or not. For example, people do not like to admit that they do not vote or that they do not care about politics. Surveys regularly report higher percentages of people *saying* they voted in an election than the *actual* number of ballots cast

halo effect
the tendency of respondents to give "good-citizen" responses to pollsters

would indicate. Many people give socially respectable answers, even to an anonymous interviewer, rather than answers that suggest prejudice, hatred, or ignorance.

Field Research

Fieldwork is the cornerstone of modern anthropology. Many sociologists and political scientists also obtain their information through field work. These social scientists study by direct, personal observation of people, events, and societies. **Field research** is essentially going where the action is, watching closely, and taking notes.[3]
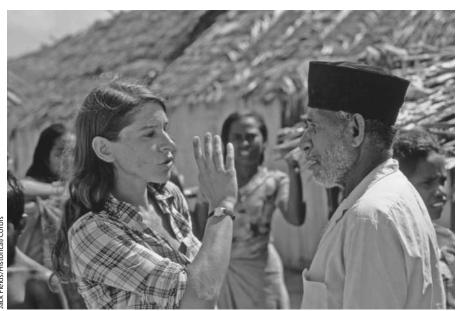
    Fieldwork is usually less structured than either experimental or survey research. Oftentimes, field research enables a more in-depth examination of the causes of behaviors than quantitative research allows. However, in field research, the scientist cannot control many variables, as in experimental research. Nor can the scientist know whether the peoples or societies being studied are truly representative of all other peoples or societies, as in survey research. However, careful field reports can provide qualitative information that is often missing from experimental and survey research. Researchers can report on emotions, feelings, and beliefs that underlie people's behavioral responses. Researchers can also report on attitudes, myths, symbols, and interpersonal relationships that could not be detected by other research methods. Most important, they can observe individuals, groups, and societies as they live in their subjects' environment.

    Field research often involves **participant observation**, where the researcher both observes and participates in the society being studied. Direct participation (moving to Appalachia and getting a job as a coal miner, for example) can provide insights that would otherwise escape a researcher. However, personal

field research
directly observing social behavior

participant observation
researchers both observe and participate in the behavior being studied

Participant-observation research involves the integration of the researcher into the field. The researcher observes and actually participates in the behavior being studied. Here a French anthropologist studies Aru Island villagers in Indonesia. What are the advantages of this type of research?

Jack Fields/Historical/Corbis