

Sociological Inquiry
Sociology 30002
University of Chicago
Graduate Class: Winter 2009
John Levi Martin

Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:30-2:50, SS 404

Course Description

How do you make knowledge in sociology? That's what this class is about. We are going to look at issues of research design and process while also exploring the diversity of methods of sociological analysis. We will be doing three sorts of things in this all-too-brief quarter. We will be reading a bit about, and discussing, general issues of research design. We will be reading exemplary works using different sorts of methods. We will be doing exercises trying out different methods and seeing what kinds of things we can learn using them. I hope that at the conclusion you understand (1) how to choose a sociological research project that will not be a dead end; (2) how to choose a method that will help you answer your questions and will also be fun for you; (3) how to critically evaluate the presentation of evidence in support of theoretical claims.

Structure

We will go through a number of different methods, namely historical, ethnography, experimental, and interviewing, spending time that is roughly in proportion to the distribution of use among Chicago students. But first we will start with some general aspects of method in sociology. We will also close with a discussion of the presentation of results, which may be different from the process of obtaining results.

Now it has become typical in these sorts of courses to assign readings *about* different aspects of the research process. So Prof. X. writes an article about "sampling" and gets it published, I make you guys read it, and so everyone but you is happy. X got a publication, and I avoided preparing anything and teaching you. But such pieces are generally dry as toast. So instead, I will be going through different themes in a more lecture-y way. That is, on different days I will not only be talking about certain methodological approaches, but how this helps us think about some of the key issues in research that cut across methods.

Regarding every method I will have something prepared regarding 1) what is distinctive about a certain method, its advantages and disadvantages; 2) who uses these methods and why; 3) how the common methodological themes play out here; 4) how the works we read illustrate the methods. Then we will discuss the works in question, paying attention to 1) do the methods work? 2) were the methods done well? 3) do the methods match the questions? 4) do we see advantages or disadvantages to the method come out in the examples?

I will also be returning to the key analytic issues that I think are common to sociological research; I will be trying to make use of the strengths of different readings, so that we will be

able to think things we couldn't have guessed at the beginning of the class. I will tend to front load these on the "1" parts of units (often the later part of the week).

Finally, every week I will give a "tip for the week"—a little handy piece of wisdom that could save you a few years of wasted effort.

Requirements

- 1) Active attendance. That means (a) coming prepared (doing "all" the reading); (b) discussing the works and the results of the exercises.
- 2) Writing up weekly musings on the reading (i.e. you are to keep a journal in which you critically analyze the methods as they whizz past). We're talking just a two-page reaction to the readings: you need to do one for all the sections that are numbered with a "2." These are due in my box or electronically submitted 18 hours before class starts.
- 3) Completion of exercises. You will have to carry out mini-projects using interviewing and ethnographic methods. You will have a final exercise which is a critique of a recent paper. TAKE ALL OF THESE SERIOUSLY, which means think of a serious topic and how it is linked to the method in question.* THERE IS NO FINAL PAPER, although I would be happy to read any paper you are working on for a different class that employs one of these methods.

YES, there are a lot of books to read, and the price adds up too. But a small investment in terms of the development of a methodological sense repays itself a thousand fold. As they say. The following books are going to be at the Seminary Co-Op book store. If you can't afford them, you can probably squeeze by using the library and borrowing from other people, but talk to me. Every one of these books is something any sociologist should have anyway. All the other things will appear a bit before they are assigned on CHALK; if that doesn't work for you let me knjw. Also, the recommended readings given below are to get anyone started who wants to pursue one method in greater detail. They are a combination of classics and personal favorites.

Speaking of reading each and every one, in case I forget to say it the first day, I am aware that some weeks the amount of assigned reading exceeds reasonable expectations even for graduate student rite-of-passage overload. When the reading is huge and multiple, it is quite acceptable to focus on a subset of the works, but to try to familiarize yourself with the methods and arguments of the others. Where we read a large book, I will usually suggest parts to concentrate on, but if I don't, read selectively if you must, so as to focus on the methods, argument, and connection of the two.

Required Books:

Making It Count by Stanley Lieberman \$15.95

Street Corner Society by William Foote Whyte \$14.95

The Fabrication of Labor, by Richard Biernacki—okay, last time I taught this they were giving this away at Moe's. Now it's \$144 for a used copy. I'll Photostat it...

The Abolition of Feudalism by John Markoff, \$29.95

Money, Morals, and Manners by Michele Lamont \$12.95

Forgive and Remember, by Charles L. Bosk \$18.00

Here is the overview of the analytic plan of the class: after this I'll go through things in more detail with readings and dates and all that.

I. RESEARCH DESIGN I

Basic do's and don't and wills....I will outline the main repeating themes. The class is not organized to follow these, but I indicate in the bigger part of the syllabus where these themes re-appear for reconsideration.

A. Concepts

- 1) What are Theories? (Revisited IV1).
- 2) What is real, what can act? (Revisited IV1).
- 3) Operationalization (revisited IIIA1).
- 4) Relations between concepts (Revisited VI2).
- 5) Objectivity vs. bullshit (Revisited IIB2)

B. Causality (Revisited VII).

- 1) Experiments
- 2) Causality
- 3) Randomization
- 4) Manipulation
- 5) Counterfactual

C. Other Regularities

- 1) Mechanisms (Revisited IIIA2).
- 2) Patterns (Revisited IIA2).
- 3) Subsumptions; this is a case of...? (Revisited VA1).
- 4) Floors, ceilings and regressions-to-the-mean (Revisited IIIB1).

D. Sampling (Revisited IIA1).

- 1) Universe / population / sample
- 2) Inference
- 3) Risk
- 4) Law of large numbers
- 5) Your theory doesn't fit my case

E. Measurement

- 1) Quantities and Qualities. (Revisited IIB1).
- 2) What is Measurement? (Revisited VA2).
- 3) What is a Variable? (Revisited VB2).
- 4) Validity and reliability (Revisited VB2).
- 5) Indices (Revisited VB2).

F. Designs

- 1) Testing Theories and other Fast Tracks to Unemployment (Revisited VB1.)
- 2) Impossible Case (Revisited VB1.)
- 3) Loaded Comparison (Revisited IIIB1).

- 4) Grudge Match (Revisited VB1.)
 - 5) Synthetic Cohort and Kin (Revisits IV2).
 - 6) Causes of Effects and Effects of....? (Revisited IIIA2),
- II. WHY NOT WATCH? (*Ethnography*)
 - A. And Stay Out – Non-participant observation.
 - B. And Butt In – Participant Observation
 - III. IS IT IN THE LIBRARY? (*Historical*)
 - A. Why not see? – Systematic historical sociology
 - B. Why not compare? – Comparative historical
 - IV. IS IT IN THE BUREAU? (*Demography*)
 - V. WHY NOT ASK? (*Interviewing*)
 - A. Why not listen? – In-depth
 - B. Why not test? – Survey
 - VI. WHY NOT MESS AROUND WITH THEM? (*Experimental*)
 - VII. RESEARCH DESIGN II

Schedule of things that will happen because you make them happen....

OK, now for the details, with readings and dates! And assignments! Note that a 📖 means that your reaction paper is due 5:00 the day before this class, on the major reading for this day. A 📖📖 means that a bigger paper is due.

I. RESEARCH DESIGN I

- 1) A Conversation About Theory? Can we go over what we have learned about The Logic of Sociological Methods: Selective abstraction; Conventional ways of thinking about sociological explanation. Variables, Cause and Effect, Deduction, Testing, Sampling. We will talk about some of the common issues and how we will be looping back to them over time (**Monday, January 5**)
- 2) Do you want to stick with what you have, or try for what's behind curtain number three? (**Wednesday, January 7**)

Required Reading: Lieberman, Making it Count. Read it all...or as much as you can!

Further recommended reading:

Regarding selective abstraction, you might want to take a good look at Max Weber's On the Methodology of the Social Sciences, a collection of three fine polemics. It also gives you a good inoculation against the "variable" language we'll generally be slipping into. If you need "help" with Weber on concept formation, probably the best

secondary treatment is Thomas Burger's Max Weber's Theory of Concept Formation, though you might look to Hans Henrik Bruun, Science, Values and Politics in Max Weber's Methodology for important corrections. Regarding the normal ways of talking about variables and all that, there are a number of standard works, but all go pretty quickly into survey analysis, statistics, or both (indeed, the more focused they are on survey analysis or statistics, often the better the initial discussions). Classic examples are Hubert Blalock, Social Statistics; Morris Rosenberg, The Logic of Survey Analysis, Earl Babbie, The Language of Social Research.

There are also some books on sociological methodology that are collections of insight and wisdom and all that. The best I've read is Howard Becker's Tricks of the Trade, but there are too few tricks per column inch to justify assigning it. Also, a great collection on sociological methodology—the hows, whys, and is-it-okays, (I'm sure long out of print, otherwise I would have assigned it) is Fist-Fights in the Kitchen edited by George H. Lewis. Regarding the issues Lieberman raises, a recent volume: Causality in Crisis, edited by Vaughn McKim & Stephen Turner (U of Notre Dame) might prove helpful.

II. WHY NOT WATCH?

A. And Stay Out

- 1) In which Christopher Robin makes Some Observations about Observation, and talks about very interesting things that you can see in the five acre wood if you look carefully. Discussions of Ethology (**Monday, January 12**). Here we will also revisit ID (sampling).

☰ Required Reading: Charles L. Bosk, Forgive and Remember; McGrew, An Ethological Approach to Children's Behavior, selections*, Blau, The Dynamics of Bureaucracy, selections*.

Further recommended reading:

An important ethnography is Paul Willis's Learning to Labor; the problem is that the ethnography is mostly interviewing and he seems to have had the theory before he began. Colin Turnbull, The Forest People, has wonderful anecdotes of learning to overcome his own preconceptions about the purity of other cultures. I previously used Lloyd Warner's Yankee City which is an interesting sort of community fieldwork, and Howard Pinderhughes's Race in the Hood which has some wonderful examples of interviewing technique.

- 2) Where is the close observation hiding in sociology these days? Conversation Analysis and its near kin (**Wednesday, January 14**). Here we will revisit IC2.

Required Reading: John Heritage and Geoffrey Raymond, "The Terms of Agreement: Indexing Epistemic Authority and Subordination in Assessment Sequences," Social Psychology Quarterly; David Gibson. 2003. "Participation Shifts: Order and Differentiation in Group Conversation." Social Forces 81: 1135-81

B. And Butt In

- 1) Watching, playing, asking, walking and so on (**Wednesday, January 21**). Here we revisit IE1.

☰ Required Reading: William. H. Whyte, Streetcorner Society, Intro, Ch 1, Ch 5, Conclusion, Appendices A and B, Whyte, “Revisiting Street Corner Society.” Not required but available and I’ll briefly mention: You may look at Harriet Whitehead, Renunciation and Reformulation, selection*--it’s one of my favorite examples of ethnography, but it’s hard to get from this excerpt.

Further recommended reading:

Michael Burawoy; Manufacturing Consent is another good example of P-O leading to strong theoretical claims. Come to think of it, so is his Politics of Production. He lays out his manifesto in “The Extended Case Method,” Sociological Theory16(1998):4-33 and in portions of Ethnography Unbound, referred to in Week 8. There are too many great ethnographies to privilege a few here, and also lots of anguished self-analyses of fieldworkers. Look perhaps at Paul Rabinow’s Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco.

Other great works are Mitchell Duneier, Sidewalk; Sudhir Venkatesh, American Project. A great tradition of community studies, reaching from Lloyd Warner to Michael Bell (Childerly) should be looked at, but here the methods are generally less visible. Benajmin Zablocki’s Joyful Community is an interesting twist on this take. Loïc Wacquant (Body and Soul) proposes a new kind of carnal ethnography—another recent example here is Matthew Desmond, On The Fireline (an MA thesis that became a book). I think another of the all-time great examples of participant observation is Martin Sanchez-Jankowski, Islands in the Street.

- 2) Ethical ethnography (**Monday, January 26**). Here we revisit IA5.

Required Reading: Kai Erikson, “A Comment on Disguised Observation in Sociology”*; Laud Humphreys, Tearoom Trade, selections**; Carolyn Ellis, “Emotional and Ethical Quagmires in Returning to the Field.” Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 1995, 24(1):68-98; Julia O’Connell Davidson, “Pretty Woman, Ugly Man: Interpretivism and the Study of Prostitution,” p. 212-215, 224-229; Charlie Kurzman, “Convincing Sociologists,” from Ethnography Unbound, Bob Altemeyer, Enemies of Freedom, brief selection.* (may be in lied-to packet below).

Suggested and Available Reading: **PACKET ON LYING**: Richard A. Leo, “Trial and Tribulations: Courts, Ethnography, and the Need for an Evidentiary Privilege for Academic Researchers.” American Sociologist, 1995 26(1):113-134, Kai Erikson, “Commentary”. American Sociologist, 1995, 26(2): 4-11; Leo, “The Ethics of Deceptive Research Roles Reconsidered: A Response to Kai Erikson.” American Sociologist, 1996, 27(1):122-128; Erikson, “A Response to Richard

Leo.” American Sociologist, 1996, 27:129-130; “spies like us” article from Lingua Franca; **PACKET ON BEING LIED TO**: Evans-Pritchard, The Nuer, selections*, Freedman, The Hoaxing of Margaret Mead, brief selection.* Paul Stoller and Cheryl Olkes, In Sorcery's Shadow, p. 9-11**

Further recommended reading:

For an example of ethnography without the usual form of rapport, see Colin Turnbull, The Mountain People, introduction. For a glimpse of the other side, see Frederik Barth’s criticism, “On Responsibility and Humanity: Calling a Colleague to Account,” Contemporary Anthropology 15:99-102 (and Turnbull’s non-response on the next page). Leon Festinger’s When Prophecy Fails has a classic instance of a serious problem in covert ethnography—the researchers change the evolution of the group they are studying. There is a recent collection of problems like that experienced by Ellis entitled When They Read What We Write, edited by Caroline B. Brettell, Bergin and Garvey Publishers 1993. A widely cited guide to organizing ethnographic data is John Lofland and Lyn H. Lofland, Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis (Wadsworth).

BEGIN Ethnographical Exercise: Choose a site and do observations. You may, if necessary, select a site in which you are simply observing people, or one to which you have pre-existing ties, but far, far, better will be participant-observation in a previously unfamiliar site, one chosen because of theoretical interest. Write up the results as follows: 1) did you have a hypothesis or hunch when you began? If so, what was it? If not, why did you pick the site (and here, “convenience” is deadly!)? 2) What did you find that was interesting? 3) If you had a hypothesis or question, was it addressed by what you found? If so, what is the result? 4) If you didn’t have a hypothesis or question when you began, did you get one after the fact? What is it? 5) Ethnographers in contrast to other sociologists **are** permitted to reflect upon their research in each and every work. Tell about your personal experience as it relates to your conclusions: did you feel phony? Did you establish rapport? Are you confident that people were telling you the truth? Did you have main informants?

Due Monday, February 16!

III. IS IT IN THE LIBRARY?

A. Why not see?

- 1) Where does Data Come From? (**Wednesday, January 28**). Here we revisit IA3.

Required Reading: Jan DeVries, The Industrious Revolution or Carole Shammas, The Pre-Industrial Consumer, selections; W. F. Rothenberg, From Market Places to a Market Society, xi-4, 20-23, 28-33, 56-69, 72-111, 163-167.

Further recommended reading:

Jennifer Platt's Articles on "Evidence and Proof in Documentary Research I and II" (Sociological Research (1981:31-66) are well regarded and widely cited, but you don't need to read these "Plattitudes" until you're a little further along—if ever. (There's a bit too much about antiques for scholars of your tender years.). Her History of Sociological Research Methods in America (Cambridge) might be interesting. On the problem of small Ns, see Charles Tilly, Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons. (*Selections from this may be added to this week's reading.*) Before I used Goran Ohlin, "No Safety in Numbers: Some Pitfalls of Historical Statistics," in Henry Rosovsky, ed, Industrialization in Two Systems. (NY: Wiley, 1966), p. 68-90 (it's boring, but it shows how nit picky you have to be....) and Hyman Mariampolski and Dana C. Hughes, "The Use of Personal Documents in Historical Sociology" The American Sociologist 13(1978):104-113 (sometimes too obvious). On comparative methods, see the recent article by James Mahoney, "Nominal, Ordinal, and Narrative Appraisal in Macrocausal Analysis," AJS 104(1999):1154-1196.

- 2) What Can you do with Data? (**Monday, February 2**). Here we revisit IC1 and IF6.

☰ Required Reading: John Markoff, The Abolition of Feudalism, 1-15, 20-42, 145-153, 203-229, 337-426.

Further recommended reading:

For classics, see Charles Tilly, The Vendée, and Ferdinand Braudel's The Mediterranean. You may compare a short piece by Markoff in the AJS in 1996 or 7. A recent fascinating work is Paul McLean, The Art of the Network. We might consider using Roger Gould, Insurgent Identities. Another interesting work might be: City of Capital by Bruce Carruthers. Most of the non-comparative but systematic is really done by historians. Another personal fave: Michael Katz, Michael Docet, and Mark J. Stern, The Social Organization of Early Industrial Capitalism. With this last work, and with social history such as Claude Fischer's America Calling, one doesn't use multiple cases so much as multiple sources of data. Kai Erikson's Wayward Puritans is a classic of a different type of historical sociology; Carlo Ginzburg's The Cheese and the Worms is another exemplar of a different approach. I'm not sure if we could really defend them these days, but we sure could Peter Bearman's wonderful Relations into Rhetorics. If we had more time, I would also use Michael Rogin, The Intellectuals and McCarthy, 1-20, 26-31, 59-103.

B. Why not compare?

- 1) The Logic of Comparison (**Wednesday, February 4**). Here we revisit IF3 and IC4.

Required Reading: J.S. Mill, Selections; William Whewell, Selections; Charles Ragin's The Comparative Method, selections**,

Further recommended reading:

A great insider's critique of the Millsian method comes from Goldstone, Revolution and Rebellion. A great outsider's is: Stanley Lieberman, "Small Ns, big conclusions"*; What is a Case?; Bourdieu, Homo Academicus, postscript (p. 194-225). A collected volume of essays (Skocpol, editor), Vision and Method in Historical Sociology has some interesting contributions in the form of critical analyses of famous guys, and especially her fighting retreat in Theda Skocpol, "Emerging Agendas and Recurrent Strategies in Historical Sociology."

- 2) What can we get out of comparison? (**Monday, February 9**)

☰ Required Reading: The Fabrication of Labor, by Richard Biernacki.

Further recommended reading:

Some of the most famous comparative-historical works are the following: Theda Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions; Barrington Moore, Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy; Perry Anderson, Lineages of the Absolutist State, and Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism; Philip Gorski, The Disciplinary Revolution; Thomas Ertmann, Birth of the Leviathan. Guy Swanson's Religion and Regime is also a fascinating comparative study. Mary Fulbrook, Piety and Politics is also a meso-classic.

IV. IS IT IN THE BUREAU?

- 1) The case of Durkheim, state statistics, and the founding of scientific sociology (**Wednesday, February 11**). Here we revisit IA1-2.

Required Reading: Emile Durkheim, Suicide, [41-46], 46-52, 104-122, 152-160, 171-202 (especially), [208-216], [246-258], 259-276 (especially). Note that it is assumed that students have read much of Suicide for their theory class. The assigned page numbers are to brush up on the methodological aspects. Those who have not already read Suicide should add the page numbers in brackets.

- 2) What can official statistics tell us? (**Monday, February 16**). Here we revisit IF5.

☰, ☰ Required Reading: Valerie Kincade Oppenheimer, The Female Labor Force in the United States (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1970), 1-27, 52, 56-63, 141-189. **MAY BE SUBSTITUTED WITH:** Michael Rosenfield, Age of Independence.

Further recommended reading:

Stanley Lieberman, A Matter of Taste, uses public data on names to explore the logic of cultural change. Eric Oliver's dissertation includes a lovely analysis of the causes

of decreased civic participation in the suburbs. is a definitive study of the reasons for the growth in female labor force participation, basically using economic statistics and a few reasonable assumptions about human motivation.

V. WHY NOT ASK?

A. Why not listen?

- 1) How does one talk anyway? (**Wednesday, February 18**). Here we revisit IV3.

Required Reading: Helen Rose Fuchs Ebaugh, Becoming an Ex, selections and Appendix B**,

Further recommended reading:

James Spradley's The Ethnographic Interview is an interesting manual for question-asking, but the technique advocated really is focused around interviewing informants when one doesn't know much, as opposed to the more focused interview style. Robert S. Weiss, Learning from Strangers might be a better one for most purposes.

- 2) To whom does one talk? (**Monday, February 23**). Here we revisit IE2.

☰ Required Reading: Michele Lamont, Money Morals Manners: This is an extremely pleasant book to read, but make sure to concentrate on the note to the reader, prologue, chapters 1 through 4, and the Appendixes.

Further recommended reading:


Ann Swidler's Talk of Love shows another way of using interview data to learn things that you might not be able to understand in other ways. Lone Pursuit: Distrust and Defensive Individualism Among the Black Poor by Sandra Susan Smith also couples in-depth interviewing with an intriguing research design. The Stars Are Not Enough: Scientists--Their Passions and Professions by Joseph C. Hermanowicz may be another cool exemplar.

BEGIN Interviewing exercise. Think of a question that you might be able to answer by asking people. And not a whole bunch of people, just some. Who would you interview? How would you get this information? Do two in-depth interviews. The first should be with someone who is not a sociologist. I understand you'll probably have to hit on someone you know pretty well, but the more distant the better. For the second, interview someone in the class (I will assign your interviewee). For both, try to get the information you want to answer your question. (I suggest you tape record the interview, unless you are an expert note-taker. Give yourself an hour or so for each interview.) When you're done, write up your report as follows: 1) the question or hunch; 2) whom you would interview if this was a real project; 3) whom you actually chose to interview; 4) how you think the interview went; 5) what you learned. Do you think you could answer your question with more of these interviews? Give snippets. **NOW ATTACH A SECOND PART**—tell me about the interview in which you were the subject. Did you think it went well? Did the questions make sense? Did the interviewer establish rapport? Did they get information that was misleading? Did you ever withhold information or lie?

Due Monday, March 9.

B. Why not test?

- 1) How do you analyze surveys? What can they tell you as opposed to not tell you? (**Wednesday, February 25**). Here we revisit IF1,2,4.

 Required Reading: Erik Olin Wright, Classes, 6-18, 137-156, 163-173*; “Catholic/Protestant Trends on Abortion, Convergences and Polarity” in JSSR 38, no .3, (1999).

- 2) How do you make surveys? (**Monday, March 2**). Here we revisit IE3-5.

Required Reading: Laumann et al, The Social Organization of Sexuality, 35-71, 96-118, 124-133, 606-608, 622-649, 670-677*, Sniderman and Carmines, Reaching Beyond Race, 11-14, 37-53*,

Further recommended reading:



A note on question writing. The course will focus on those methods that graduate students are likely to use. It is not likely that many students will write closed-choice questionnaires (standard surveys), and hence I haven’t focussed on writing them. If you ever go on to do that, you will have to learn this—it’s not easy. The best book on this is still Payne’s The Art of Asking Questions. One of my favorite works of survey research is Sal Oropesa, “Consumer Possession, Consumer Passions, and Subjective Well Being.” 1995 Sociological Forum.

VI. WHY NOT MESS AROUND WITH THEM?

- 1) Do you have society in a tin? The logic of experiments, true and false (**Wednesday, March Forth!**). Here we revisit IB.

Required Reading: Deevah Pager, “The Mark of a Criminal Record,” American Journal of Sociology 108: 900 or so; review Lieberman! If you never finished it, now is a good time....

- 2) Discussion of exemplary experiments (**Monday, March 9**). Here we revisit IA4.

  Required Reading: Gerald Marwell and Ruth E. Ames, 1979, “Experiments on the Provision of Public Goods I” American Journal of Sociology 84: 1335-1360*; “Experiments on the Provision of Public Goods II”, AJS 85: 926-927*, Lovaglia et al, “Mental Ability Test Scores, AJS 104/1**

Further recommended reading:

Classic experiments are by Solomon Asch (see his Social Psychology for a bunch of them), Muzafer Sherif (“The Autokinetic Effect,” a version is in his Social Interaction), and Stanley Milgram, Obedience to Authority. Regarding a discussion of the uses and limitations of experiments, I am fond of “Can You Really Study an Army in the Laboratory?” by Morris Zelditch, Jr., in Amitai Etzioni and Edward Lehman, eds., A Sociological Reader on Complex Organizations. One of my favorite experimental studies is the incredibly bold sociology of knowledge by Breer and Locke, Task Experience as a Source of Attitudes. And the wonderful

“A Preliminary Laboratory Study of the Acting Crowd” by Guy Swanson, which has to be read to be believed. Those were the glory days of the ASR!

VII. RESEARCH DESIGN II

Now that I know that, what do I do? (**Wednesday, March 11**). Here we will return to some of the main themes and see to what extent we have a coherent view.

BEGIN Final exercise. Take the most recent *American Sociological Review*. What is **the worst** article there in terms of problems with research design, or slippage between the claims and the evidence? Please write a critical (though not hostile) review. You want to (1) show the problems; (2) discuss how the research could have been improved using the basic approach of the author, if possible; (3) and/or could a different methodological approach have led to better connection with the claims?

Due Monday March 16!

ADDENDUM:

What else do you need to write a great sociological paper or book besides all the work? Maybe a bit on how to phrase your argument. This brings us to the art of rhetoric, for which I do not have time in this quarter. There are conventions of presentation and argumentation which are necessary (though not sufficient) for scholarly communication in sociology. I suggest that you take a look at the followings: Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, Laboratory Life; Latour, Science in Action, Charles Kurzman, "The Rhetoric of Science: Strategies for Logical Leaping," *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 33, 1988, pp. 131-158; Donald McCloskey, The Rhetoric of Economics, Michael Lynch, "Pictures of Nothing? Visual Constructs in Social Theory" Sociological Theory 9 (1991):1-21 has a nice analysis of the rhetoric of visual presentation. Bruno Latour, in "Visualization and Cognition" (Knowledge and Society 6:1-40) stresses the importance of distilling complexity into visual form so as to triumph in agonistic encounters with competing would-be truth-tellers. And in fact, in his Pasteurization of France, he has some great examples of this, but not for sociology. You also might want to look at Alvin Gouldner's explanation for Talcott Parsons's rhetorical style in The Coming Crisis in Western Sociology. There is a growing body of explicit work on rhetoric and/in sociology. In the Hunter edited volume, The Rhetoric of Social Research, you might want to look at James Bennett's analysis of the rhetoric of Merton's paper on anomie; in the same volume Kai Erikson has a nice and reasonable discussion of the pros and cons of scientific-y voice. (Which reminds me of Ira Cohen's analysis of "Voice as Method," comparing the rhetorical strategies of Goffman and Garfinkle.) Other things I haven't read: Richard H. Brown, A Poetic for Sociology, Ricca Edmondson, Rhetoric in Sociology, and Andrew Weigert, "The Immoral Rhetoric of Scientific Sociology", American Sociologist 5(1970):111-116.

Have a nice life ☺!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: This course is based on a methods course I previously taught at Rutgers University which was based on one that I took with Claude Fischer.