SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

What do you think?

- What was the definition of theory?
- How do we know about the world (personal experience, tradition, authority, religion, science)
- How might scientists offer explanations of understandings different from personal experience, etc?

WHY IS SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH NECESSARY?

- SOCIOLOGISTS OBTAIN THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF **HUMAN BEHAVIOUR** THROUGH RESEARCH, WHICH RESULTS IN A BODY OF INFORMATION THAT HELPS US MOVE **BEYOND GUESSWORK** AND **COMMON SENSE** IN UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY.

- THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE INCORPORATES **THEORY** AND **RESEARCH** TO ARRIVE AT A MORE **INFORMED UNDERSTANDING** OF THE "**HOWS**" AND "**WHYS**" OF **HUMAN SOCIAL INTERACTION**. SOCIAL RESEARCH, THEN, IS A KEY PART OF SOCIOLOGY.

Information Scavenger Hunt (HA!)

- Use pages **Pg 36 – 40** to find the missing information on your handout

Five Ways of Knowing the World

- 1. Personal: we discover for ourselves the things we know.
- 2. Tradition: people hold to a belief because everyone knows it to be true.
- 3. Authority: experts tell us that something is true.
- 4. Religion: we accept the truths that our particular scriptures and religious officials advocate.
- 5. Science: the scientific way of knowing which involves controlled, systematic observation; and thorough, public, testing of all statements.

Fundamental ways in which scientific explanations differ from the other ways of knowing

- 1. Science uses the empirical approach – findings are based on the assumption that knowledge is best gained by direct, systematic observation.

- 2. Scientific knowledge is systematic and public – procedures used by scientists are organized, public, and recognized by other scientists. The scientific community will not accept claims that cannot be publicly verified. The findings and methods by which scientists reached those finding must be open to scrutiny.

- 3. Science has a built-in mechanism for self-correction. Scientists do not claim that their findings represent eternal truths, but rather they present hypotheses (tentative statements of the relationship between two or more concepts or variables) that are subject to verification by themselves and by others. What is accepted as scientific truth may change over time as more evidence accumulates.

- 4. Science is objective. Scientists try to ensure their biases and values do not affect their research.

The difference between empirical and normative approaches

- Empirical approach – findings are based on the assumption that knowledge is best gained by direct, systematic observation.
- Normative approach - uses religion, tradition or authority to answer important questions.
- Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8tERLHhHJ-w

Descriptive Studies and Explanatory Studies

- Descriptive studies attempt to describe social reality or provide facts about some group, practice, or event. (Example: Descriptive study of altruism might attempt to determine what percentage of people would return a lost wallet to a stranger).

- Explanatory studies attempt to explain the cause and effect relationships and to provide information on why certain events do or do not occur. (Example: Explanatory study of altruism might ask why some people are more willing than others to offer help).

Four Stages of the Deductive Approach

- In the deductive approach the researcher begins with a theory and uses research to test it.

- The process:

- (1) theories generate hypothesis;
- (2) hypothesis lead to observations (data gathering);
- (3) observations lead to the formation of generalizations;
- (4) generalizations are used to support the theory, suggest modifications, or to refute it.

THE FOUR STAGES OF THE INDUCTIVE APPROACH

- In the inductive approach the researcher collects information or data (facts or evidence) and then generates theories from the analysis of that data.

- The process:
- (1) specific observations suggest generalizations;
- (2) generalizations produce a tentative theory;
- (3) the theory is tested through the formation of hypotheses, and
- (4) hypotheses may provide suggestions for additional observations.

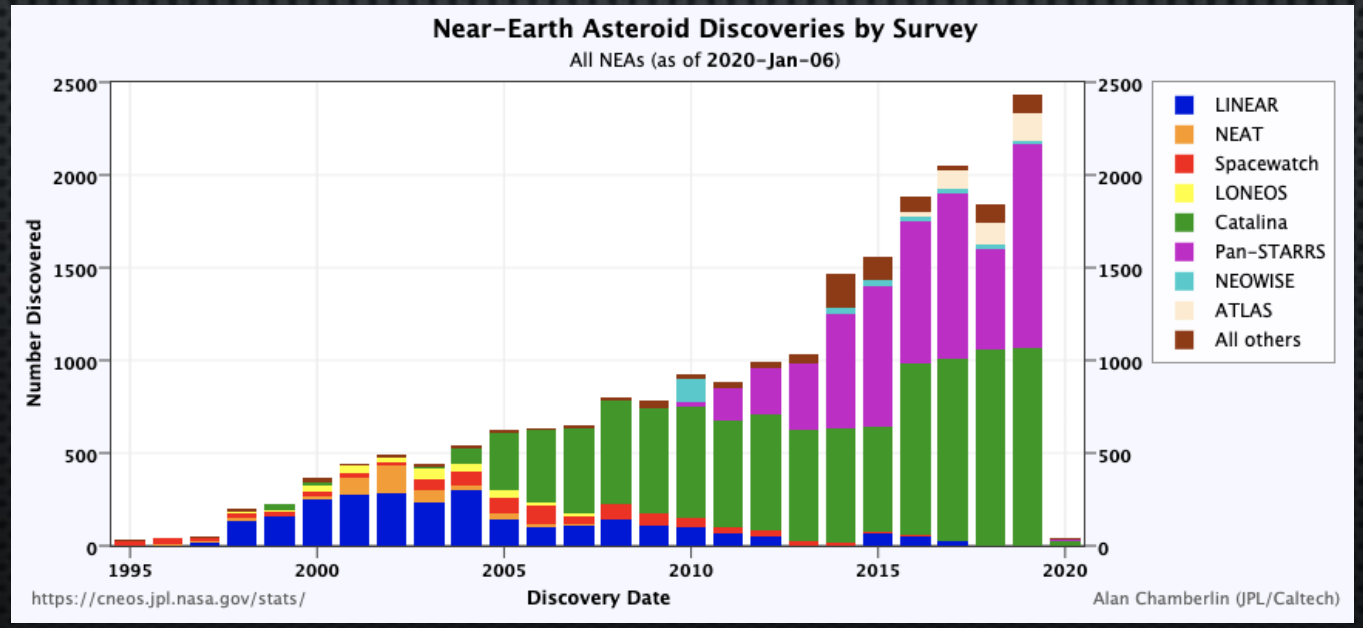
RESEARCH METHODS

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF QUANTITATIVE OR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH?

- Not all sociologists conduct research in the same manner. Some researchers engage primarily in quantitative research while others engage in qualitative research. Each type contributes to our knowledge of society and social Interaction.

QUANTITATIVE

- WITH QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH, THE GOAL IS SCIENTIFIC OBJECTIVITY, AND THE FOCUS IS ON DATA THAT CAN BE MEASURED NUMERICALLY.



QUALITATIVE

- WITH QUALITATIVE RESEARCH INTERPRETIVE DESCRIPTION (WORDS) RATHER THAN STATISTICS (NUMBERS) IS USED TO ANALYZE UNDERLYING MEANINGS AND PATTERNS OF SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS BECAUSE IT DOES NOT EASILY LEND ITSELF TO NUMBERS AND STATISTICAL METHODS.

A UNIQUE APPROACH?

- **THREE UNIQUE FEATURES THAT ARE FOUND IN THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH MODEL THAT ARE IN CONTRAST TO QUANTITATIVE MODEL.**
- A. RESEARCHER BEGINS WITH GENERALIZED APPROACH NOT A DETAILED PLAN.
- B. RESEARCHER DECIDES WHEN LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORY APPLICATION TAKE PLACE.
- C. THE STUDY PRESENTS A DETAILED VIEW OF THE TOPIC – NORMALLY A SMALLER NUMBER OF CASES IS INVOLVED AND MULTIPLE VARIABLES.

ACTIVITY

- TO TURN IN FOR A MARK!