

interviewer will have similar difficulties with richer respondents. To the extent that the interviewer's dress and grooming differ from those of the respondents, it should be in the direction of cleanliness and neatness in modest apparel. If cleanliness is not next to godliness, it appears at least to be next to neutrality. Although middle-class neatness and cleanliness may not be accepted by all sectors of U.S. society, they remain the primary norm and are the most likely to be acceptable to the largest number of respondents.

Dress and grooming are typically regarded as signs of a person's attitudes and orientations. Torn jeans, green hair, and razor blade earrings may communicate—correctly or incorrectly—that the interviewer is politically radical, sexually permissive, favorable to drug use, and so forth. Any of these impressions could bias responses or affect the willingness of people to be interviewed.

In demeanor, interviewers should be pleasant if nothing else. Because they'll be prying into a respondent's personal life and attitudes, they must communicate a genuine interest in getting to know the respondent, without appearing to spy. They must be relaxed and friendly, without being too casual or clinging. Good interviewers also have the ability to determine very quickly the kind of person the respondent will feel most comfortable with, the kind of person the respondent would most enjoy talking to. Clearly, the interview will be more successful if the interviewer can become the kind of person the respondent is comfortable with. Further, because respondents are asked to volunteer a portion of their time and to divulge personal information, they deserve the most enjoyable experience the researcher and interviewer can provide.

### *Familiarity with the Questionnaire*

If an interviewer is unfamiliar with the questionnaire, the study suffers and the respondent faces an unfair burden. The interview is likely to take more time than necessary and be unpleasant. Moreover, the interviewer cannot acquire familiarity by skimming through the questionnaire two or three times. He or she must study it carefully, question by question, and must practice reading it aloud.

Ultimately, the interviewer must be able to read the questionnaire items to respondents without error, without stumbling over words and phrases. A good model is the actor reading lines in a play or movie. The lines must be read as though they constituted a natural conversation, but that conversation must follow exactly the language set down in the questionnaire.

By the same token, the interviewer must be familiar with the specifications prepared in conjunction with the questionnaire. Inevitably some questions will not exactly fit a given respondent's situation, and the interviewer must determine how the question should be interpreted in that situation. The specifications provided to the interviewer should give adequate guidance in such cases, but the interviewer must know the organization and contents of the specifications well enough to refer to them efficiently. It would be better for the interviewer to leave a given question unanswered than to spend five minutes searching through the specifications for clarification or trying to interpret the relevant instructions.

### *Following Question Wording Exactly*

The first part of this chapter discussed the significance of question wording for the responses obtained. A slight change in the wording of a given question may lead a respondent to answer "yes" rather than "no." It follows that interviewers must be instructed to follow the wording of questions exactly. Otherwise all the effort that the developers have put into carefully phrasing the questionnaire items to obtain the information they need and to ensure that respondents interpret items precisely as intended will be wasted.

### *Recording Responses Exactly*

Whenever the questionnaire contains open-ended questions, those soliciting the respondent's own answers, the interviewer must record those answers exactly as given. No attempt should be made to summarize, paraphrase, or correct bad grammar.

This exactness is especially important because the interviewer will not know how the responses are to be coded. Indeed, the researchers themselves



may not know the coding until they've read a hundred or so responses. For example, the questionnaire might ask respondents how they feel about the traffic situation in their community. One respondent might answer that there are too many cars on the roads and that something should be done to limit their numbers. Another might say that more roads are needed. If the interviewer recorded these two responses with the same summary—"congested traffic"—the researchers would not be able to take advantage of the important differences in the original responses.

Sometimes, verbal responses are too inarticulate or ambiguous to permit interpretation. However, the interviewer may be able to understand the intent of the response through the respondent's gestures or tone. In such a situation, the interviewer should still record the exact verbal response but also add marginal comments giving both the interpretation and the reasons for arriving at it.

More generally, researchers can use any marginal comments explaining aspects of the response not conveyed in the verbal recording, such as the respondent's apparent anger, embarrassment, uncertainty in answering, and so forth. In each case, however, the exact verbal response should also be recorded.

### *Probing for Responses*

Sometimes respondents in an interview will give an inappropriate or incomplete answer. In such cases, a **probe**, or request for an elaboration, can be useful. For example, a closed-ended question may present an attitudinal statement and ask the respondent to strongly agree, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or strongly disagree. The respondent, however, may reply: "I think that's true." The interviewer should follow this reply with "Would you say you strongly agree or agree somewhat?" If necessary, interviewers can explain that they must check one or the other of the categories provided. If the respondent adamantly refuses to choose, the interviewer should write in the exact response given by the respondent.

Probes are more frequently required in eliciting responses to open-ended than closed-ended

questions. For example, in response to a question about traffic conditions, the respondent might simply reply, "Pretty bad." The interviewer could obtain an elaboration on this response through a variety of probes. Sometimes the best probe is silence; if the interviewer sits quietly with pencil poised, the respondent will probably fill the pause with additional comments. (This technique is used effectively by newspaper reporters.) Appropriate verbal probes might be "How is that?" or "In what ways?" Perhaps the most generally useful probe is "Anything else?"

Often, interviewers need to probe for answers that will be sufficiently informative for analytical purposes. In every case, however, such probes *must* be completely neutral; they must not in any way affect the nature of the subsequent response.

Whenever you anticipate that a given question may require probing for appropriate responses, you should provide one or more useful probes next to the question in the questionnaire. This practice has two important advantages. First, you'll have more time to devise the best, most neutral probes. Second, all interviewers will use the same probes whenever they're needed. Thus, even if the probe isn't perfectly neutral, all respondents will be presented with the same stimulus. This is the same logical guideline discussed for question wording. Although a question should not be loaded or biased, it's essential that every respondent be presented with the same question, even if it's biased.

### *Coordination and Control*

Most interview surveys require the assistance of several interviewers. In large-scale surveys, interviewers are hired and paid for their work. Student researchers might find themselves recruiting friends to help them interview. Whenever more

**probe** A technique employed in interviewing to solicit a more complete answer to a question. It is a nondirective phrase or question used to encourage a respondent to elaborate on an answer. Examples include "Anything more?" and "How is that?"



than one interviewer is involved in a survey, their efforts must be carefully controlled. This control has two aspects: training interviewers and supervising them after they begin work.

The interviewers' training session should begin with the description of what the study is all about. Even though the interviewers may be involved only in the data-collection phase of the project, it will be useful to them to understand what will be done with the interviews they conduct and what purpose will be served. Morale and motivation are usually lower when interviewers don't know what's going on.

The training on how to interview should begin with a discussion of general guidelines and procedures, such as those discussed earlier in this section. Then the whole group should go through the questionnaire together—question by question. Don't simply ask if anyone has any questions about the first page of the questionnaire. Read the first question aloud, explain the purpose of the question, and then entertain any questions or comments the interviewers may have. Once all their questions and comments have been handled, go on to the next question in the questionnaire.

It's always a good idea to prepare specifications to accompany an interview questionnaire. *Specifications* are explanatory and clarifying comments about handling difficult or confusing situations that may occur with regard to particular questions in the questionnaire. When drafting the questionnaire, try to think of all the problem cases that might arise—the bizarre circumstances that might make a question difficult to answer. The survey specifications should provide detailed guidelines on how to handle such situations. For example, even as simple a matter as age might present problems. Suppose a respondent says he or she will be 25 next week. The interviewer might not be sure whether to take the respondent's current age or the nearest one. The specifications for that question should explain what should be done. (Probably, you would specify that the age as of last birthday should be recorded in all cases.)

If you've prepared a set of specifications, review them with the interviewers when you go over the individual questions in the questionnaire.

Make sure your interviewers fully understand the specifications and the reasons for them as well as the questions themselves.

This portion of the interviewer training is likely to generate many troublesome questions from your interviewers. They'll ask, "What should I do if . . . ?" In such cases, avoid giving a quick, offhand answer. If you have specifications, show how the solution to the problem could be determined from the specifications. If you do not have specifications, show how the preferred handling of the situation fits within the general logic of the question and the purpose of the study. Giving unexplained answers to such questions will only confuse the interviewers and cause them to take their work less seriously. If you don't know the answer to such a question when it's asked, admit it and ask for some time to decide on the best answer. Then think out the situation carefully and be sure to give all the interviewers your answer, explaining your reasons.

Once you've gone through the whole questionnaire, conduct one or two demonstration interviews in front of everyone. Preferably, you should interview someone other than one of the interviewers. Realize that your interview will be a model for those you're training, so make it good. It would be best, moreover, if the demonstration interview were done as realistically as possible. Don't pause during the demonstration to point out how you've handled a complicated situation: Handle it, and then explain later. It's irrelevant if the person you're interviewing gives real answers or takes on some hypothetical identity for the purpose, as long as the answers are consistent.

After the demonstration interviews, pair off your interviewers and have them practice on each other. When they've completed the questionnaire, have them reverse roles and do it again. Interviewing is the best training for interviewing. As your interviewers practice on each other, wander around, listening in on the practice so you'll know how well they're doing. Once the practice is completed, the whole group should discuss their experiences and ask any other questions they may have.

The final stage of the training for interviewers should involve some "real" interviews. Have



them conduct some interviews under the actual conditions that will pertain to the final survey. You may want to assign them people to interview, or perhaps they may be allowed to pick people themselves. Don't have them practice on people you've selected in your sample, however. After each interviewer has completed three to five interviews, have him or her check back with you. Look over the completed questionnaires for any evidence of misunderstanding. Again, answer any questions that the interviewers have. Once you're convinced that a given interviewer knows what to do, assign some actual interviews, using the sample you've selected for the study.

It's essential to continue supervising the work of interviewers over the course of the study. You should check in with them after they conduct no more than 20 or 30 interviews. You might assign 20 interviews, have the interviewer bring back those questionnaires when they're completed, look them over, and assign another 20 or so. Although this may seem overly cautious, you must continually protect yourself against misunderstandings that may not be evident early in the study.

If you're the only interviewer in your study, these comments may not seem relevant. However, it would be wise, for example, to prepare specifications for potentially troublesome questions in your questionnaire. Otherwise, you run the risk of making ad hoc decisions, during the course of the study, that you'll later regret or forget. Also, the emphasis on practice applies equally to the one-person project and to the complex funded survey with a large interviewing staff.

## Telephone Surveys

For years telephone surveys had a rather bad reputation among professional researchers. Telephone surveys are limited by definition to people who have telephones. Years ago, this method produced a substantial social-class bias by excluding poor people from the surveys. This was vividly demonstrated by the *Literary Digest* fiasco of 1936. Recall that, even though voters were contacted by mail, the sample was partially selected from telephone

subscribers, who were hardly typical in a nation just recovering from the Great Depression. By 1993, however, the Census Bureau (1996: Table 1224) estimated that 93.4 percent of all housing units had telephones, so the earlier form of class bias has been substantially reduced.

A related sampling problem involved unlisted numbers. A survey sample selected from the pages of a local telephone directory would totally omit all those people—typically richer—who requested that their numbers not be published. This potential bias has been erased through a technique that has advanced telephone sampling substantially: random-digit dialing.

Telephone surveys offer many advantages that underlie the growing popularity of this method. Probably the greatest advantages are money and time, in that order. In a face-to-face, household interview, you may drive several miles to a respondent's home, find no one there, return to the research office, and drive back the next day—possibly finding no one there again. It's cheaper and quicker to let your fingers make the trips.

Interviewing by telephone, you can dress any way you please without affecting the answers respondents give. And sometimes respondents will be more honest in giving socially disapproved answers if they don't have to look you in the eye. Similarly, it may be possible to probe into more sensitive areas, though this isn't necessarily the case. People are, to some extent, more suspicious when they can't see the person asking them questions—perhaps a consequence of “surveys” aimed at selling magazine subscriptions and time-share condominiums.

Interviewers can communicate a lot about themselves over the phone, however, even though they can't be seen. For example, researchers worry about the impact of an interviewer's name (particularly if ethnicity is relevant to the study) and debate the ethics of having all interviewers use bland “stage names” such as Smith or Jones. (Female interviewers sometimes ask permission to do this, to avoid subsequent harassment from men they interview.)

Telephone surveys can allow greater control over data collection if several interviewers are engaged in the project. If all the interviewers are



calling from the research office, they can get clarification from the person in charge whenever problems occur, as they inevitably do. Alone in the boondocks, an interviewer may have to wing it between weekly visits with the interviewing supervisor.

Finally, another important factor involved in the growing use of telephone surveys has to do with personal safety. Don Dillman (1978: 4) describes the situation this way:

Interviewers must be able to operate comfortably in a climate in which strangers are viewed with distrust and must successfully counter respondents' objections to being interviewed. Increasingly, interviewers must be willing to work at night to contact residents in many households. In some cases, this necessitates providing protection for interviewers working in areas of a city in which a definite threat to the safety of individuals exists.

Concerns for safety, thus, work in two ways to hamper face-to-face interviews. Potential respondents may refuse to be interviewed, fearing the stranger-interviewer. And the interviewers themselves may incur some risks. All this is made even worse by the possibility of the researchers being sued for huge sums if anything goes wrong.

There are problems involved in telephone interviewing, however. As I've already mentioned, the method is hampered by the proliferation of bogus "surveys" that are actually sales campaigns disguised as research. If you have any questions about any such call you receive, by the way, ask the interviewer directly whether you've been selected for a survey only or if a sales "opportunity" is involved. It's also a good idea, if you have any doubts, to get the interviewer's name, phone number, and company. Hang up if the caller refuses to provide any of these.

For the researcher, the ease with which people can hang up is another shortcoming of telephone surveys. Once you've been let inside someone's home for an interview, the respondent is unlikely to order you out of the house in midinterview. It's much easier to terminate a telephone interview abruptly, saying something like, "Whoops! Someone's at the door. I gotta go." or "Omigod!

The pigs are eating my Volvo!" (That sort of thing is much harder to fake when the interviewer is sitting in your living room.)

Another potential problem for telephone interviewing is the prevalence of answering machines. A study conducted by Walker Research (1988) found that half of the owners of answering machines acknowledged using their machines to "screen" calls at least some of the time. Research by Peter Tuckel and Barry Feinberg (1991), however, showed that answering machines had not yet had a significant effect on the ability of telephone researchers to contact prospective respondents. Nevertheless, the researchers concluded that as answering machines continued to proliferate, "the sociodemographic characteristics of owners will change." This fact made it likely that "different behavior patterns associated with the utilization of the answering machine" could emerge (1991: 216).

More-recent research has shown that several factors, including answering machines, have reduced response rates in telephone surveys. Peter Tuckel and Harry O'Neill (2002) and others have examined the impact of such factors as Caller ID, answering machines, telemarketing, and phone lines being tied up by faxes and Internet access. All these constitute difficulties modern survey researchers must deal with.

## Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI)

In Chapter 14, we'll see some of the ways computers have influenced the conduct of social research—particularly data processing and analysis. Computers are also changing the nature of telephone interviewing. One innovation is computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). This method is increasingly used by academic, government, and commercial survey researchers. Though there are variations in practice, here's what CATI can look like.

Imagine an interviewer wearing a telephone headset, sitting in front of a computer terminal and its video screen. The central computer selects a telephone number at random and dials it. (Recall that random-digit dialing avoids the problem of





## Voice Capture

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The development of various CATI techniques has been a boon to survey and marketing research, though mostly it has supported the collection, coding, and analysis of data as usual. The Voice Capture technique developed by Survey Systems, however, offers quite unusual possibilities, which we are only beginning to explore.

In the course of a CATI-based telephone interview, the interviewer can trigger the computer to begin digitally recording the conversation with the respondent. Having determined that the respondent has recently changed his or her favorite TV news show, for example, the interviewer can ask, "Why did you change?" and begin recording the verbatim response. (Early in the interview, the interviewer has asked permission to record parts of the interview.)

Later on, coders can play back the responses and code them—much as they would do with the interviewer's typescript of the responses. This offers an easier and more accurate way of accomplishing a conventional task. But that's a tame use of the new capability.

It's also possible to incorporate such oral data as parts of a cross-tabulation during analysis. We may create a table of gender by age by

reasons for switching TV news shows. Thus, we can hear, in turn, the responses of the young men, young women, middle-aged men, and so forth. In one such study we found the younger and older men tending to watch one TV news show, while the middle-aged men watched something else. Listening to the responses of the middle-aged men, one after another, we heard a common comment: "Well, now that I'm older . . ." This kind of aside might have been lost in the notes hastily typed by interviewers, but such comments stood out dramatically in the oral data. The middle-aged men seemed to be telling us they felt "maturity" required them to watch a particular show, while more years under their belts let them drift back to what they liked in the first place.

These kinds of data are especially compelling to clients, particularly in customer satisfaction studies. Rather than summarize what we feel a client's customers like and don't like, we can let the respondents speak directly to the client in their own words. It's like a focus group on demand. Going one step further, we have found that letting line employees (bank tellers, for example) listen to the responses has more impact than having their supervisors tell them what they are doing right or wrong.

As exciting as these experiences are, I have the strong feeling that we have scarcely begun to tap into the possibilities for such unconventional forms of data.

unlisted telephone numbers.) On the video screen is an introduction ("Hello, my name is . . .") and the first question to be asked ("Could you tell me how many people live at this address?").

When the respondent answers the phone, the interviewer says hello, introduces the study, and asks the first question displayed on the screen. When the respondent answers the question, the interviewer types that answer into the computer terminal—either the verbatim response to an open-ended question or the code category for the appropriate answer to a closed-ended question. The answer is immediately stored in the computer. The second question appears on the video screen, is asked, and the answer is entered into the computer. Thus, the interview continues.

In addition to the obvious advantages in terms of data collection, CATI automatically prepares the data for analysis; in fact, the researcher can begin

analyzing the data before the interviewing is complete, thereby gaining an advanced view of how the analysis will turn out. Still another innovation that computer technology makes possible is described in "Voice Capture."

### Response Rates in Interview Surveys

Earlier in this chapter we looked at the issue of response rates in mail surveys, and this is an equally important issue for interview surveys. In Chapter 7, when we discussed formulas for calculating sampling error to determine the accuracy of survey estimates, the implicit assumption was that everyone selected in a sample would participate—which is almost never the case. Lacking perfection, researchers must maximize participation by those selected. Although interview surveys tend to produce



higher response rates than mail surveys do, interview success has recently declined.

By analyzing response-rate trends in the University of Michigan's Survey of Consumer Attitudes, Richard Curtin, Stanley Presser, and Eleanor Singer (2005) have sketched a pattern of general decline over recent years. Between 1979 and 1996, the response rate in this telephone survey dropped from 72 to 60 percent, representing an average annual decline of three-quarters of a percent. Since 1996, the rate of decline has doubled. The increased nonresponses reflected both refusals and those they were unable to contact.

By contrast, the General Social Survey, using personal interviews, experienced response rates between 73.5 and 82.4 percent in the years from 1975 to 1998. In the 2000 and 2002 surveys, however, the GSS completion rate was 70 percent. Their decline came primarily from refusals, because household interviews produce higher rates of contact than telephone surveys.

Most researchers believe that the widespread growth of telemarketing has been a big part of the problems experienced by legitimate telephone surveys, and there are hopes that the state and national "do not call" lists may ease that problem. Further, we saw that other factors such as answering machines also contribute to these problems (Tuckel and O'Neill 2002). Response rate is likely to remain an issue of high concern in survey research.

## New Technologies and Survey Research

As we have already seen in the case of computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI), many of the new technologies affecting people's lives also open new possibilities for survey research. For example, recent innovations in self-administered questionnaires make use of the computer. Among the techniques that are being tested are these (Nicholls, Baker, and Martin 1996):

*CAPI* (computer-assisted personal interviewing): Similar to CATI but used in face-to-face interviews rather than over the phone.

*CASI* (computer-assisted self-interviewing): A research worker brings a computer to the respondent's home, and the respondent reads questions on the computer screen and enters his or her own answers.

*CSAQ* (computerized self-administered questionnaire): The respondent receives the questionnaire via CD-ROM, bulletin board, or other means and runs the software, which asks questions and accepts the respondent's answers. The respondent then returns the data file.

*TDE* (touchtone data entry): The respondent initiates the process by calling a number at the research organization. This prompts a series of computerized questions, which the respondent answers by pressing keys on the telephone keypad.

*VR* (voice recognition): Instead of asking the respondent to use the telephone keypad, as in TDE, this system accepts spoken responses.

Nicholls and his colleagues report that such techniques are more efficient than conventional techniques and that they do not appear to result in a reduction of data quality.

Jeffery Walker (1994) has explored the possibility of conducting surveys by fax machine. Questionnaires are faxed to respondents, who are asked to fax their answers back. Of course, such surveys can only represent that part of the population who have fax machines. Walker reports that fax surveys don't achieve as high a response rate as face-to-face interviews do, but, because of the perceived urgency, they do produce higher response rates than mail or telephone surveys do. In one test case, all those who had ignored a mail questionnaire were sent a fax follow-up, and 83 percent responded.

I've already noted that, as a consumer of social research, you should be wary of "surveys" whose apparent purpose is to raise money for the sponsor. This practice has already invaded the realm of "fax surveys," evidenced by a fax entitled "Should Hand Guns Be Outlawed?" Two fax numbers were provided for expressing either a "Yes" or "No" opinion. The smaller print noted, "Calls to these numbers cost \$2.95 per minute, a small price for greater



democracy. Calls take approx. 1 or 2 minutes." You can imagine where the \$2.95 went.

The new technology of survey research includes the use of the Internet and the World Wide Web—two of the most far-reaching developments of the late twentieth century. Some researchers feel that the Internet can also be used to conduct meaningful survey research.

Mick Couper (2001: 464) provides an excellent overview of the issues concerning the present and prospective state of online surveys.

The rapid development of surveys on the World Wide Web (WWW) is leading some to argue that soon Internet (and, in particular, Web) surveys will replace traditional methods of survey data collection. Others are urging caution or even voicing skepticism about the future role Web surveys will play. Clearly, we stand at the threshold of a new era for survey research, but how this will play out is not yet clear.

As we have seen, one immediate objection that many social researchers make to online surveys concerns representativeness: Will the people who can be surveyed online be representative of meaningful populations, such as all U.S. adults, all voters, and so on? This is the criticism raised with regard to surveys via fax and, earlier, with regard to telephone surveys.

Camilo Wilson (1999), founder of Cogix (<http://www.cogix.com>), points out that some populations are ideally suited to online surveys: specifically, those who visit a particular website. For example, Wilson indicates that market research for online companies *should* be conducted online, and his firm has developed software called ViewsFlash for precisely that purpose. Although website surveys could easily collect data from all who visit a particular site, Wilson suggests that survey sampling techniques can provide sufficient consumer data without irritating thousands or millions of potential customers.

But how about general population surveys? As I write this, a debate is brewing within the survey research community. Humphrey Taylor and George Terhanian (1999) prompted part of the debate with an article, "Heady Days Are Here Again."

Acknowledging the need for caution, they urged that online polling be given a fair hearing:

One test of the credibility of any new data collection method hinges on its ability to reliably and accurately forecast voting behavior. For this reason, last fall we attempted to estimate the 1998 election outcomes for governor and US Senate in 14 states on four separate occasions using internet surveys.

(1999: 20)

The researchers compared their results with 52 telephone polls that addressed the same races. Online polling correctly picked 21 of the 22 winners, or 95 percent. However, simply picking the winner is not a sufficient test of effectiveness: How close did the polls come to the actual percentages received by the various candidates? Taylor and Terhanian report their online polls missed the actual vote by an average of 6.8 percentage points. The 52 telephone polls missed the same votes by an average of 6.2 percentage points.

Warren Mitofsky (1999) is a critic of online polling. In addition to disagreeing with the way Taylor and Terhanian calculated the ranges of error just reported, he has called for a sounder, theoretical basis on which to ground the new technique.

One key to online polling is the proper assessment and use of weights for different kinds of respondents—as we discussed in the context of quota sampling in Chapter 7. Taylor and Terhanian are aware of the criticisms of quota sampling, but their initial experiences with online polling suggest to them that the technique should be pursued. Indeed, they conclude by saying, "This is an unstoppable train, and it is accelerating. Those who don't get on board run the risk of being left far behind" (1999: 23).

Many of the cautions urged in relation to online surveys today are similar to those urged in relation to telephone surveys in the first edition of this book, in 1975. Mick Couper (2001: 466) makes a similar observation:

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Whether online surveys will gain the respect and extensive use enjoyed by telephone surveys today remains to be seen. Students who consider using this technique should do so in full recognition of its potential shortcomings.

In the meantime, researchers are amassing a body of experience with this new technique, yielding lessons for increasing success. For example, Survey Sampling, Inc., suggests the following dos and don'ts for conducting online surveys:

**Do** use consistent wording between the invitation and the survey. Don't use terms such as "unique ID number" in the invitation, then ask respondents to type their "password" when they get to the survey. Changing terminology can be confusing.

**Do** use plain, simple language.

**Don't** force the respondent to scroll down the screen for the URL for the study location.

**Do** offer to share selected results from the study with everyone who completes the survey. Respondents will often welcome information as a reward for taking the study, especially when they are young adults and teens.

**Do** plan the time of day and day of week to mail, depending on the subject of the study and type of respondent. Send the invitation late

afternoon, evening, or weekend, when respondents are most likely to be reading mail at home, especially if the study requests respondents to check an item in the kitchen or other area in the home. If a parent-child questionnaire is planned, send the invitation late afternoon when children are home, not early in the day, when respondents can't complete the study because children are at school.

**Do** be aware of technical limitations. For example, WebTV users currently cannot access surveys using Java. If respondents' systems need to be Java-enabled or require access to streaming video, alert panelists at the beginning of the study, not midway through.

**Do** test incentives, rewards, and prize drawings to determine the optimal offer for best response. Longer surveys usually require larger incentives.

**Do** limit studies to 15 minutes or less.\*

The web is already seeing extensive use as a marketplace for surveys and other research techniques. As only a few illustrative examples, see the following:

The Gallup Organization:

<http://www.gallup.com/>

Harris Poll Online:

<http://www.harrisinteractive.com/>

SMS Research: <http://www.smshawaii.com/>

The Survey/Marketing Research e-Store:

<http://www.streamlinesurveys.com/>

[Streamline/estore/index.htm](http://www.streamlinesurveys.com/Streamline/estore/index.htm)

Zogby International: <http://www.zogby.com/>

In another study of ways to improve response rates in online surveys, Stephen Porter and Michael Whitcomb (2003) found that some of the techniques effective in mail surveys, such as personalizing the appeal or varying the apparent status of the researcher, had little or no impact in the new medium. At the same time, specifying that the respondents had been specially selected for the survey

\*Source: [http://www.worldopinion.com/the\\_frame/frame4.html](http://www.worldopinion.com/the_frame/frame4.html). Reprinted with permission.



and setting a deadline for participation did increase response rates. The years ahead will see many experiments aimed at improving the effectiveness of online surveys.

## Comparison of the Different Survey Methods

Now that we've seen several ways to collect survey data, let's take a moment to compare them directly.

Self-administered questionnaires are generally cheaper and quicker than face-to-face interview surveys. These considerations are likely to be important for an unfunded student wishing to undertake a survey for a term paper or thesis. Moreover, if you use the self-administered mail format, it costs no more to conduct a national survey than a local one of the same sample size. In contrast, a national interview survey (either face-to-face or by telephone) would cost far more than a local one. Also, mail surveys typically require a small staff: You could conduct a reasonable mail survey by yourself, although you shouldn't underestimate the work involved. Further, respondents are sometimes reluctant to report controversial or deviant attitudes or behaviors in interviews but are willing to respond to an anonymous self-administered questionnaire.

Interview surveys also offer many advantages. For example, they generally produce fewer incomplete questionnaires. Although respondents may skip questions in a self-administered questionnaire, interviewers are trained not to do so. In CATI surveys, the computer offers a further check on this. Interview surveys, moreover, have typically achieved higher completion rates than self-administered questionnaires have.

Although self-administered questionnaires may be more effective for sensitive issues, interview surveys are definitely more effective for complicated ones. Prime examples include the enumeration of household members and the determination of whether a given address corresponds to more than one housing unit. Although the concept of housing unit has been refined and standardized by

the Census Bureau and interviewers can be trained to deal with the concept, it's extremely difficult to communicate in a self-administered questionnaire. This advantage of interview surveys pertains generally to all complicated contingency questions.

With interviews, you can conduct a survey based on a sample of addresses or phone numbers rather than on names. An interviewer can arrive at an assigned address or call the assigned number, introduce the survey, and even—following instructions—choose the appropriate person at that address to respond to the survey. In contrast, self-administered questionnaires addressed to “occupant” receive a notoriously low response.

Finally, as we've seen, interviewers questioning respondents face-to-face can make important observations aside from responses to questions asked in the interview. In a household interview, they may note the characteristics of the neighborhood, the dwelling unit, and so forth. They can also note characteristics of the respondents or the quality of their interaction with the respondents—whether the respondent had difficulty communicating, was hostile, seemed to be lying, and so on.

The chief advantages of telephone surveys over those conducted face-to-face center primarily on time and money. Telephone interviews are much cheaper and can be mounted and executed quickly. Also, interviewers are safer when interviewing people living in high-crime areas. Moreover, the impact of the interviewers on responses is somewhat lessened when the respondents can't see them. As only one indicator of the popularity of telephone interviewing, when Johnny Blair and his colleagues (1995) compiled a bibliography on sample designs for telephone interviews, they listed over 200 items.

Online surveys have many of the strengths and weaknesses of mail surveys. Once the available software has been further developed, they will likely be substantially cheaper. An important weakness, however, lies in the difficulty of assuring that respondents to an online survey will be representative of some more general population.

Clearly, each survey method has its place in social research. Ultimately, you must balance the advantages and disadvantages of the different



methods in relation to your research needs and your resources.

## Strengths and Weaknesses of Survey Research

Regardless of the specific method used, surveys—like other modes of observation in social research—have special strengths and weaknesses. You should keep these in mind when determining whether a survey is appropriate for your research goals.

Surveys are particularly useful in describing the characteristics of a large population. A carefully selected probability sample in combination with a standardized questionnaire offers the possibility of making refined descriptive assertions about a student body, a city, a nation, or any other large population. Surveys determine unemployment rates, voting intentions, and the like with uncanny accuracy. Although the examination of official documents—such as marriage, birth, or death records—can provide equal accuracy for a few topics, no other method of observation can provide this general capability.

Surveys—especially self-administered ones—make large samples feasible. Surveys of 2,000 respondents are not unusual. A large number of cases is very important for both descriptive and explanatory analyses, especially wherever several variables are to be analyzed simultaneously.

In one sense, surveys are flexible. Many questions can be asked on a given topic, giving you considerable flexibility in your analyses. Whereas an experimental design may require you to commit yourself in advance to a particular operational definition of a concept, surveys let you develop operational definitions from actual observations.

Finally, standardized questionnaires have an important strength in regard to measurement generally. Earlier chapters have discussed the ambiguous nature of most concepts: They have no ultimately real meanings. One person's religiosity is quite different from another's. Although you must be able to define concepts in those ways most relevant to your research goals, you may not find it

easy to apply the same definitions uniformly to all subjects. The survey researcher is bound to this requirement by having to ask exactly the same questions of all subjects and having to impute the same intent to all respondents giving a particular response.

Survey research also has several weaknesses. First, the requirement of standardization often seems to result in the fitting of round pegs into square holes. Standardized questionnaire items often represent the least common denominator in assessing people's attitudes, orientations, circumstances, and experiences. By designing questions that will be at least minimally appropriate to all respondents, you may miss what is most appropriate to many respondents. In this sense, surveys often appear superficial in their coverage of complex topics. Although this problem can be partly offset by sophisticated analyses, it is inherent in survey research.

Similarly, survey research can seldom deal with the context of social life. Although questionnaires can provide information in this area, the survey researcher rarely develops the feel for the total life situation in which respondents are thinking and acting that, say, the participant observer can (see Chapter 10).

In many ways, surveys are inflexible. Studies involving direct observation can be modified as field conditions warrant, but surveys typically require that an initial study design remain unchanged throughout. As a field researcher, for example, you can become aware of an important new variable operating in the phenomenon you're studying and begin making careful observations of it. The survey researcher would probably be unaware of the new variable's importance and could do nothing about it in any event.

Finally, surveys are subject to the artificiality mentioned earlier in connection with experiments. Finding out that a person gives conservative answers in a questionnaire does not necessarily mean the person is conservative; finding out that a person gives prejudiced answers in a questionnaire does not necessarily mean the person is prejudiced. This shortcoming is especially salient in the realm of action. Surveys cannot measure social action;



they can only collect self-reports of recalled past action or of prospective or hypothetical action.

The problem of artificiality has two aspects. First, the topic of study may not be amenable to measurement through questionnaires. Second, the act of studying that topic—an attitude, for example—may affect it. A survey respondent may have given no thought to whether the governor should be impeached until asked for his or her opinion by an interviewer. He or she may, at that point, form an opinion on the matter.

Survey research is generally weak on validity and strong on reliability. In comparison with field research, for example, the artificiality of the survey format puts a strain on validity. As an illustration, people's opinions on issues seldom take the form of strongly agreeing, agreeing, disagreeing, or strongly disagreeing with a specific statement. Their survey responses in such cases must be regarded as approximate indicators of what the researchers had in mind when they framed the questions. This comment, however, needs to be held in the context of earlier discussions of the ambiguity of validity itself. To say something is a valid or an invalid measure assumes the existence of a "real" definition of what's being measured, and many scholars now reject that assumption.

Reliability is a clearer matter. By presenting all subjects with a standardized stimulus, survey research goes a long way toward eliminating unreliability in observations made by the researcher. Moreover, careful wording of the questions can also significantly reduce the subject's own unreliability.

As with all methods of observation, a full awareness of the inherent or probable weaknesses of survey research can partially resolve them in some cases. Ultimately, though, researchers are on the safest ground when they can employ several research methods in studying a given topic.

## Secondary Analysis

As a mode of observation, survey research involves the following steps: (1) questionnaire construction, (2) sample selection, and (3) data collection,

through either interviewing or self-administered questionnaires. As you've gathered, surveys are usually major undertakings. It's not unusual for a large-scale survey to take several months or even more than a year to progress from conceptualization to data in hand. (Smaller-scale surveys can, of course, be done more quickly.) Through a method called *secondary analysis*, however, researchers can pursue their particular social research interests—analyzing survey data from, say, a national sample of 2,000 respondents—while avoiding the enormous expenditure of time and money such a survey entails.

**Secondary analysis** is a form of research in which the data collected and processed by one researcher are reanalyzed—often for a different purpose—by another. Beginning in the 1960s, survey researchers became aware of the potential value that lay in archiving survey data for analysis by scholars who had nothing to do with the survey design and data collection. Even when one researcher had conducted a survey and analyzed the data, those same data could be further analyzed by others who had slightly different interests. Thus, if you were interested in the relationship between political views and attitudes toward gender equality, you could examine that research question through the analysis of any data set that happened to contain questions relating to those two variables.

The initial data archives were very much like book libraries, with a couple of differences. First, instead of books, the data archives contained data sets: first as punched cards, then as magnetic tapes. Today they're typically contained on computer disks, CD-ROMs, or online servers. Second, whereas you're expected to return books to a conventional library, you can keep the data obtained from a data archive.

**secondary analysis** A form of research in which the data collected and processed by one researcher are reanalyzed—often for a different purpose—by another. This is especially appropriate in the case of survey data. Data archives are repositories or libraries for the storage and distribution of data for secondary analysis.



The best-known current example of secondary analysis is the General Social Survey (GSS). The National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago conducts this major national survey, currently every other year, to collect data on a large number of social science variables. These surveys are conducted precisely for the purpose of making data available to scholars at little or no cost and are supported by a combination of private and government funding. Recall that the GSS was created by James A. Davis in 1972; it is currently directed by Davis, Tom W. Smith, and Peter V. Marsden. Their considerable ongoing efforts make an unusual contribution to social science research and to education in social science. You can learn more about the GSS at <http://webapp.icpsr.umich.edu/GSS/>.

Numerous other resources are available for identifying and acquiring survey data for secondary analysis. The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research (<http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/>) at the University of Connecticut is one excellent resource. The center also publishes the journal *Public Perspective*, on public opinion polling. Polling the Nations (<http://www.pollingthenations.com/>) is an

online repository for thousands of polls conducted in the United States and 70 other nations. A paid subscription allows users to obtain specific data results from studies they specify, rather than obtaining whole studies. Although the cost of the subscription may be too steep for the average student, you might check to see if your school's library has subscribed.

Because secondary analysis has typically involved obtaining a data set and undertaking an extensive analysis, I would like you to consider another approach as well. Often you can do limited analyses by investing just a little time. Let's say you're writing a term paper about the impact of religion in contemporary American life. You want to comment on the role of the Roman Catholic church in the debate over abortion. Although you might get away with an offhand, unsubstantiated assertion, imagine how much more powerful your paper would be with this addition:

1. Go to the General Social Survey website (see Figure 9-7):  
<http://webapp.icpsr.umich.edu/GSS/>
2. Click "Subject" under "Codebook Indexes," then go to "Abortion." This will show you the



**FIGURE 9-7**

The General Social Survey Codebook Website



**SDA Tables Program**  
 (Selected Study: GSS 1972–2000 Cumulative Datafile)  
 Help: [General](#) / [Recoding Variables](#)

*REQUIRED Variable names to specify*  
**Row:**

*OPTIONAL Variable names to specify*  
**Column:**   
**Control:**   
**Selection Filter(s):**  *Example: age (18–50) gender(1)*  
**Weight:**

**Percentaging:**  Column  Row  Total

**Other options**  
 Statistics  Suppress table  Question text  
 Color coding  Show T-statistic

**FIGURE 9-8**

Entering the Table Request

- questions asked about attitudes on abortion (e.g., ABANY asks if a women should be permitted a legal abortion for any reason).
- Click the “Analyze” button.
  - Select “Frequencies or crosstabulation” and click the “Start” button.
  - Enter ABANY as the dependent (“Row”) variable and RELIG as the independent (“Column”) variable. In the “Selection Filter” field, enter “YEAR(2000)” to limit the analysis to that year’s survey, as shown in Figure 9-8.
  - Press “Run the Table” to run the requested analysis.

The results of your analysis, shown in Figure 9-9, may surprise you. Whereas Catholics are less supportive of abortion (33.3 percent) than Jews (76.1 percent) and those with no religion (57.3 percent) are, they do not differ substantially from American Protestants (35.2 percent).

Imagine a term paper that says, “Whereas the Roman Catholic Church has taken a strong, official position on abortion, many Catholics do not

necessarily agree, as shown in Table . . .” Moreover, this might be just the beginning of an analysis that looks a bit more deeply into the matter, as described in Chapter 14, on quantitative analysis.

The key advantage of secondary analysis is that it’s cheaper and faster than doing original surveys, and, depending on who did the original survey,

		Variables				
Role	Name	Label			Range	
Row	abany	ABORTION IF WOMAN WANTS FOR ANY REASON			1-2	
Column	relig	RS RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE			1-5	
Filter	year(2000)	GSS YEAR FOR THIS RESPONDENT			1972-2000	

  

Cells contain:						
-Column percent		1	2	3	4	5
-N of cases		PROTESTANT	CATHOLIC	JEWISH	NONE	OTHER (SPECIFY)
abany	1: YES	35.2 337	33.3 142	76.1 35	57.3 141	75.2 16
	2: NO	64.8 621	66.7 264	23.9 11	42.7 105	23.8 5
<b>COL TOTAL</b>		<b>100.0 938</b>	<b>100.0 428</b>	<b>100.0 49</b>	<b>100.0 248</b>	<b>100.0 21</b>

**FIGURE 9-9**

Impact of Religion on Attitude toward Abortion



you may benefit from the work of topflight professionals. The ease of secondary analysis has also enhanced the possibility of *meta-analysis*, in which a researcher brings together a body of past research on a particular topic. To gain confidence in your understanding of the relationship between religion and abortion, for example, you could go beyond the GSS to analyze similar data collected in dozens or even hundreds of other studies.

There are disadvantages inherent in secondary analysis, however. The key problem involves the recurrent question of validity. When one researcher collects data for one particular purpose, you have no assurance that those data will be appropriate for your research interests. Typically, you'll find that the original researcher asked a question that "comes close" to measuring what you're interested in, but you'll wish the question had been asked just a little differently—or that another, related question had also been asked. Your question, then, is whether the question that was asked provides a valid measure of the variable you want to analyze. Nevertheless, secondary analysis can be immensely useful. Moreover, it illustrates once again the range of possibilities available in finding the answers to questions about social life. Although no single method unlocks all puzzles, there is no limit to the ways you can find out about things. And when you zero in on an issue from several independent directions, you gain that much more expertise.

I've discussed secondary analysis in this chapter on survey research because it's the type of analysis most associated with the technique. However, there is no reason that the reanalysis of social research data needs to be limited to those collected in surveys. Nigel Fielding (2004), for example, has examined the possibilities for the archiving and reanalysis of qualitative data as well.

## MAIN POINTS

### Introduction

- Survey research, a popular social research method, is the administration of questionnaires to a sample of respondents selected from some population.

### Topics Appropriate for Survey Research

- Survey research is especially appropriate for making descriptive studies of large populations; survey data may be used for explanatory purposes as well.
- Questionnaires provide a method of collecting data by (1) asking people questions or (2) asking them to agree or disagree with statements representing different points of view. Questions may be open-ended (respondents supply their own answers) or closed-ended (they select from a list of provided answers).

### Guidelines for Asking Questions

- Items in a questionnaire should follow several guidelines: (1) The form of the items should be appropriate to the project; (2) the items must be clear and precise; (3) the items should ask only about one thing (i.e., double-barreled questions should be avoided); (4) respondents must be competent to answer the item; (5) respondents must be willing to answer the item; (6) questions should be relevant to the respondent; (7) items should ordinarily be short; (8) negative terms should be avoided so as not to confuse respondents; (9) the items should be worded to avoid biasing responses.

### Questionnaire Construction

- The format of a questionnaire can influence the quality of data collected.
- A clear format for contingency questions is necessary to ensure that the respondents answer all the questions intended for them.
- The matrix question is an efficient format for presenting several items sharing the same response categories.
- The order of items in a questionnaire can influence the responses given.
- Clear instructions are important for getting appropriate responses in a questionnaire.
- Questionnaires should be pretested before being administered to the study sample.
- Questionnaires may be administered in three basic ways: through self-administered questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, or telephone surveys.



### Self-Administered Questionnaires

- It's generally advisable to plan follow-up mailings in the case of self-administered questionnaires, sending new questionnaires to those respondents who fail to respond to the initial appeal. Properly monitoring questionnaire returns will provide a good guide to when a follow-up mailing is appropriate.

### Interview Surveys

- The essential characteristic of interviewers is that they be neutral; their presence in the data-collection process must have no effect on the responses given to questionnaire items.
- Interviewers must be carefully trained to be familiar with the questionnaire, to follow the question wording and question order exactly, and to record responses exactly as they are given.
- Interviewers can use probes to elicit an elaboration on an incomplete or ambiguous response. Probes should be neutral. Ideally, all interviewers should use the same probes.

### Telephone Surveys

- Telephone surveys can be cheaper and more efficient than face-to-face interviews, and they can permit greater control over data collection. The development of computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) is especially promising.

### New Technologies and Survey Research

- New technologies offer additional opportunities for social researchers. They include various kinds of computer-assisted data collection and analysis as well as the chance to conduct surveys by fax or over the Internet. The latter two methods, however, must be used with caution because respondents may not be representative of the intended population.

### Comparison of the Different Survey Methods

- The advantages of a self-administered questionnaire over an interview survey are economy, speed, lack of interviewer bias, and

the possibility of anonymity and privacy to encourage candid responses on sensitive issues.

- The advantages of an interview survey over a self-administered questionnaire are fewer incomplete questionnaires and fewer misunderstood questions, generally higher return rates, and greater flexibility in terms of sampling and special observations.
- The principal advantages of telephone surveys over face-to-face interviews are the savings in cost and time. Telephone interviewers have more safety than in-person interviewers do, and they may have a smaller effect on the interview itself.
- Online surveys have many of the strengths and weaknesses of mail surveys. Although they're cheaper to conduct, ensuring that the respondents represent a more general population can be difficult.

### Strengths and Weaknesses of Survey Research

- Survey research in general offers advantages in terms of economy, the amount of data that can be collected, and the chance to sample a large population. The standardization of the data collected represents another special strength of survey research.
- Survey research has several weaknesses: It is somewhat artificial, potentially superficial, and relatively inflexible. Using surveys to gain a full sense of social processes in their natural settings is difficult. In general, survey research is comparatively weak on validity and strong on reliability.

### Secondary Analysis

- Secondary analysis provides social researchers with an important option for "collecting" data cheaply and easily but at a potential cost in validity.

### KEY TERMS

The following terms are defined in context in the chapter and at the bottom of the page where the term is introduced, as well as in the comprehensive glossary at the back of the book.



bias	probe
closed-ended questions	questionnaire
contingency question	respondent
interview	response rate
open-ended questions	secondary analysis

### REVIEW QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

- For each of the following open-ended questions, construct a closed-ended question that could be used in a questionnaire.
  - What was your family's total income last year?
  - How do you feel about the space shuttle program?
  - How important is religion in your life?
  - What was your main reason for attending college?
  - What do you feel is the biggest problem facing your community?
- Construct a set of contingency questions for use in a self-administered questionnaire that would solicit the following information:
  - Is the respondent employed?
  - If unemployed, is the respondent looking for work?
  - If the unemployed respondent is not looking for work, is he or she retired, a student, or a homemaker?
  - If the respondent is looking for work, how long has he or she been looking?
- Find a questionnaire printed in a magazine or newspaper (for a reader survey, for example). Consider at least five of the questions in it and critique each one either positively or negatively.
- Look at your appearance right now. Identify aspects of your appearance that might create a problem if you were interviewing a general cross section of the public.
- Locate a survey being conducted on the web. Briefly describe the survey and discuss its strengths and weaknesses.

### ADDITIONAL READINGS

- Babbie, Earl. 1990. *Survey Research Methods*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. A comprehensive overview of survey methods. (You thought I'd say it was lousy?) This textbook, although overlapping the present one somewhat, covers aspects of survey techniques omitted here.
- Bradburn, Norman M., and Seymour Sudman. 1988. *Polls and Surveys: Understanding What They Tell Us*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. These veteran survey researchers answer questions about their craft the general public commonly ask.
- Couper, Mick P., Michael W. Traugott, and Mark J. Lamias. 2001. "Web Survey Design and Administration." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 65: 230–53. An experimental study to determine which of three different web survey designs elicited the best results.
- Dillman, Don A. 1999. *Mail and Telephone Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*. 2nd ed. New York: Wiley. An excellent review of the methodological literature on mail and telephone surveys. Dillman makes many good suggestions for improving response rates. (This classic book was originally published in 1978 under the name *Mail and Telephone Surveys: The Total Design Method*.)
- Elder, Glen H., Jr., Eliza K. Pavalko, and Elizabeth C. Clipp. 1993. *Working with Archival Data: Studying Lives*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. This book discusses the possibilities and techniques for using existing data archives in the United States, especially those providing longitudinal data.
- Feick, Lawrence F. 1989. "Latent Class Analysis of Survey Questions that Include Don't Know Responses." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 53: 525–47. "Don't know" can mean a variety of things, as this analysis indicates.
- Fowler, Floyd J., Jr. 1995. *Improving Survey Questions: Design and Evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. A comprehensive discussion of questionnaire construction, including many suggestions for pretesting questions. This book discusses the logic of obtaining information through survey questions and gives numerous guidelines for being effective. It also offers several examples of questions you might use.
- Groves, Robert M. 1990. "Theories and Methods of Telephone Surveys." Pp. 221–40 in *Annual Review of Sociology* (vol. 16), edited by W. Richard Scott and Judith Blake. Palo Alto, CA: Annual



Reviews. An attempt to place telephone surveys in the context of sociological and psychological theories and to address the various kinds of errors common to this research method.

Holbrook, Allyson L., Melanie C. Green, and Jon A. Krosnick. 2003. "Telephone versus Face-to-Face Interviewing of National Probability Samples with Long Questionnaires: Comparisons of Respondent Satisficing and Social Desirability Response Bias." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 67: 79–125. A detailed examination of the differences to be expected from these two methods of conducting interview surveys.

Miller, Delbert. 1991. *Handbook of Research Design and Social Measurement*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. A powerful reference work, this book, especially Part 6, cites and describes a wide variety of operational measures used in earlier social research. In several cases, the questionnaire formats used are presented. Though the quality of these illustrations is uneven, they provide excellent examples of possible variations.

Moore, David W. 2002. "Measuring New Types of Question-Order Effects: Additive and Subtractive." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 66: 80–91. An extensive examination of the various ways that question wording can affect responses.

Sheatsley, Paul F. 1983. "Questionnaire Construction and Item Writing." Pp. 195–230 in *Handbook of Survey Research*, edited by Peter H. Rossi, James D. Wright, and Andy B. Anderson. New York: Academic Press. An excellent examination of the topic by an expert in the field.

Smith, Eric R. A. N., and Peverill Squire. 1990. "The Effects of Prestige Names in Question Wording." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 54: 97–116. Not only do prestigious names affect the overall responses given to survey questionnaires, they also affect such things as the correlation between education and the number of "don't know" answers.

Swafford, Michael. 1992. "Soviet Survey Research: The 1970's vs. the 1990's." *AAPOR News* 19 (3): 3–4. The author contrasts the general repression of survey research during his first visit in 1973–1974 with the renewed use of the method in more recent times. He notes, for example, that the Soviet government commissioned a national survey to determine public opinion on the possible reunification of Germany.

Tourangeau, Roger, Kenneth A. Rasinski, Norman Bradburn, and Roy D'Andrade. 1989. "Carry-over Effects in Attitude Surveys." *Public Opinion*

*Quarterly* 53: 495–524. The authors asked six target questions in a telephone survey of 1,100 respondents, varying the questions immediately preceding the target questions. They found substantial differences.

Williams, Robin M., Jr. 1989. "The American Soldier: An Assessment, Several Wars Later." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 53: 155–74. One of the classic studies in the history of survey research is reviewed by one of its authors.

### SPSS EXERCISES

See the booklet that accompanies your text for exercises using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). There are exercises offered for each chapter, and you'll also find a detailed primer on using SPSS.

## Online Study Resources

### Sociology Now™: Research Methods

1. Before you do your final review of the chapter, take the *SociologyNow: Research Methods* diagnostic quiz to help identify the areas on which you should concentrate. You'll find information on this online tool, as well as instructions on how to access all of its great resources, in the front of the book.
2. As you review, take advantage of the *Sociology Now: Research Methods* customized study plan, based on your quiz results. Use this study plan with its interactive exercises and other resources to master the material.
3. When you're finished with your review, take the posttest to confirm that you're ready to move on to the next chapter.

### WEBSITE FOR THE PRACTICE OF SOCIAL RESEARCH 11TH EDITION

Go to your book's website at [http://sociology.wadsworth.com/babbie\\_practice11e](http://sociology.wadsworth.com/babbie_practice11e) for tools to aid you in studying for your exams. You'll find *Tutorial Quizzes* with feedback, *Internet Exercises*, *Flashcards*, and *Chapter Tutorials*, as well as *Extended Projects*, *InfoTrac College Edition* search terms, *Social Research in Cyberspace*, *GSS Data*, *Web Links*, and primers for us-



ing various data-analysis software such as SPSS and NVivo.

### WEB LINKS FOR THIS CHAPTER



Please realize that the Internet is an evolving entity, subject to change. Nevertheless, these few websites should be fairly stable.

Also, check your book's website for even more *Web Links*. These websites, current at the time of this book's

publication, provide opportunities to learn about survey research.

#### **UC Berkeley Survey Research Center**

<http://srcweb.berkeley.edu/>

#### **Polling the Nations**

<http://www.pollingthenations.com>

#### **Web Survey Methodology**

<http://www.websm.org/>