

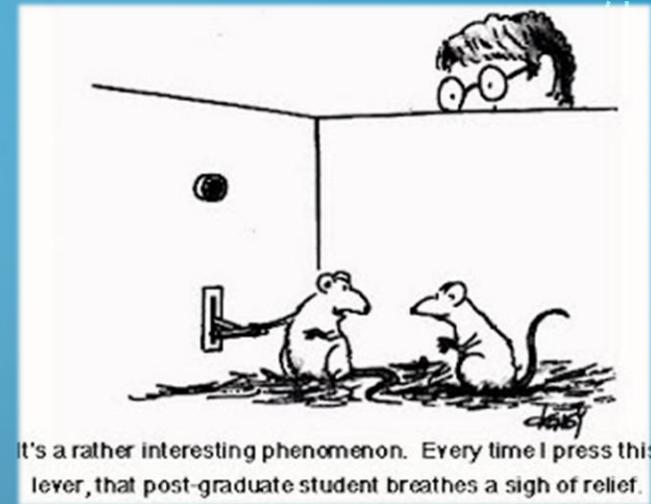


SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH PART II

If you've got the truth you can demonstrate it. Talking doesn't
prove it.

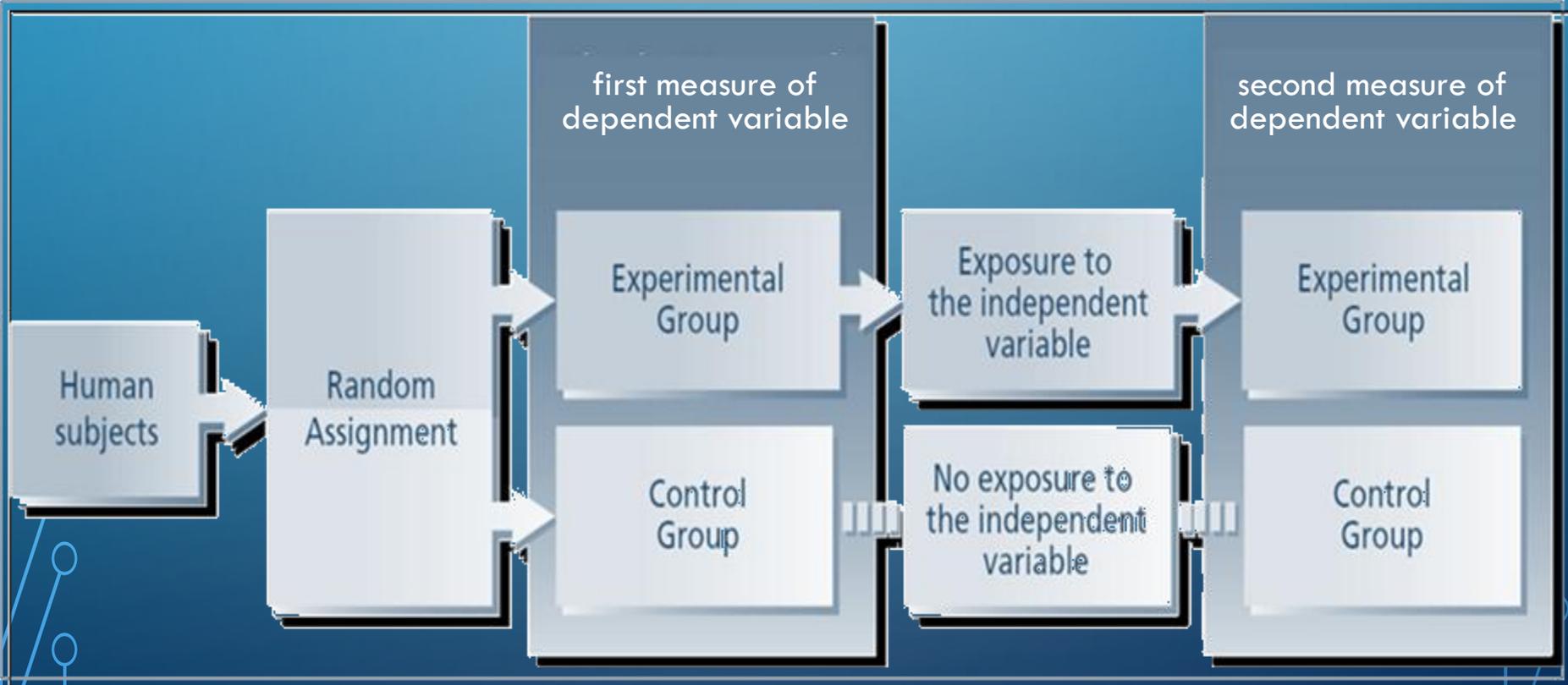
Robert A. Heinlein

RESEARCH DESIGNS: EXPERIMENTS



- ...artificially created situations that allow researcher to manipulate variables
 - **experimental group**: exposed to independent variable
 - **control group**: not exposed to independent variable ... held constant to test the impact of the independent variable on the experimental group
 - **Hawthorne effect**: subjects modify or improve behavior in response to their awareness of being observed
- Sociologists use experiments to understand a cause-and-effect relationship.

RESEARCH DESIGNS: EXPERIMENTS





RESEARCH DESIGNS: SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

- ...research technique that makes use of previously collected and publicly accessible information and data
- **content analysis:** systematic coding and objective recording of data, guided by some rationale
- The most common sources of information are the various agencies of the government.
- Researcher cannot be sure of data quality.
- limited scope
- cannot study topic unless access is granted



RESEARCH DESIGNS: SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

Most Frequently Used Sources

Census data

Crime statistics

Birth, death, marriage, divorce, and health statistics

Other Sources

Newspapers and periodicals

Personal journals, diaries, e-mail, and letters

Records and archival material of religious organizations, corporations, and other organizations

Transcripts of radio programs

Videotapes of motion pictures and television programs

Webpages, weblogs, and chatrooms

Song lyrics

Scientific records (such as patent applications)

Speeches of public figures (such as politicians)

Votes cast in elections or by elected officials on specific legislative proposals

Attendance records for public events

Videotapes of social protests and rallies

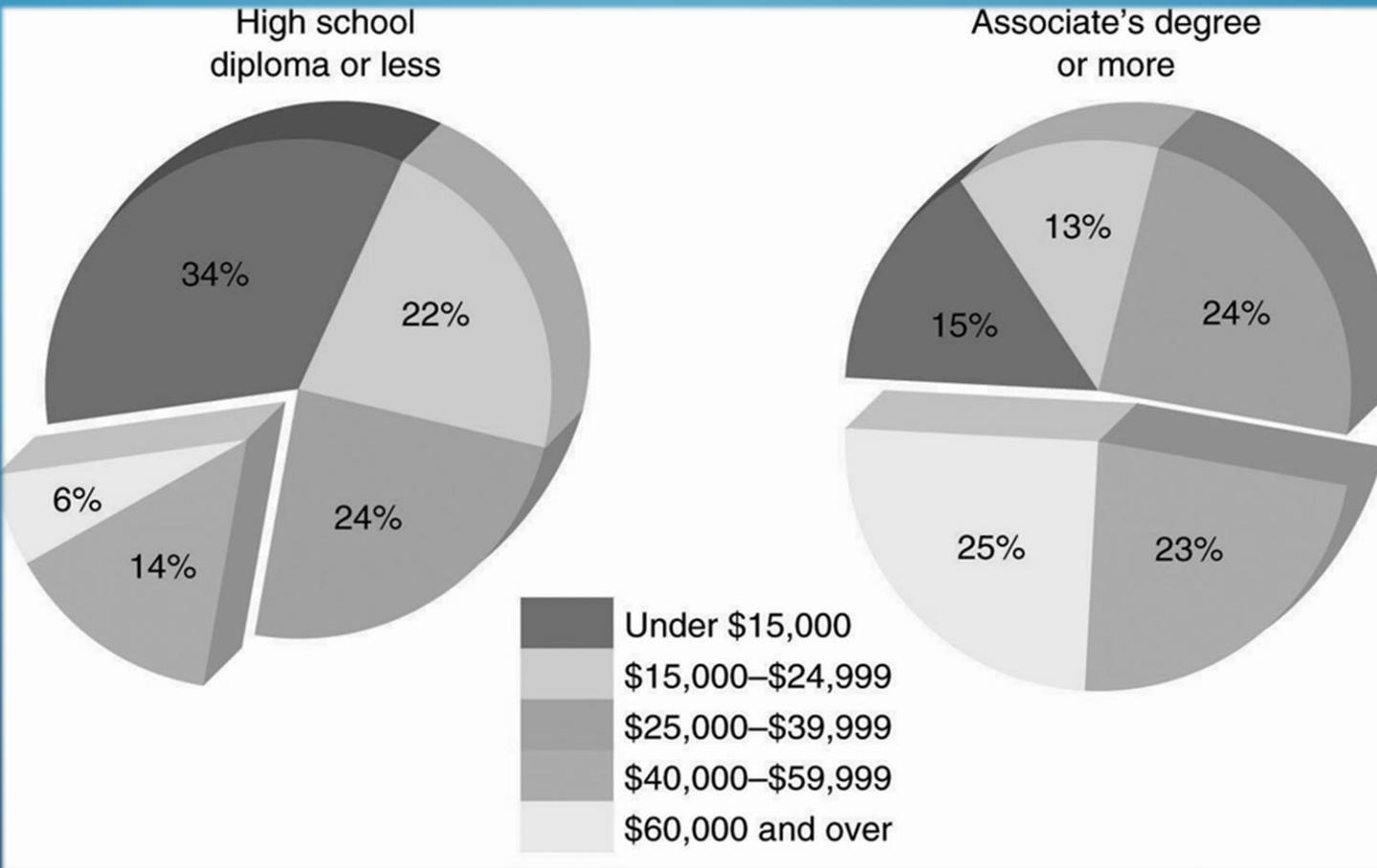
Literature, including folklore

RESEARCH DESIGNS: SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

Income by Education
(Percentage of Graduates in Each Income Group)

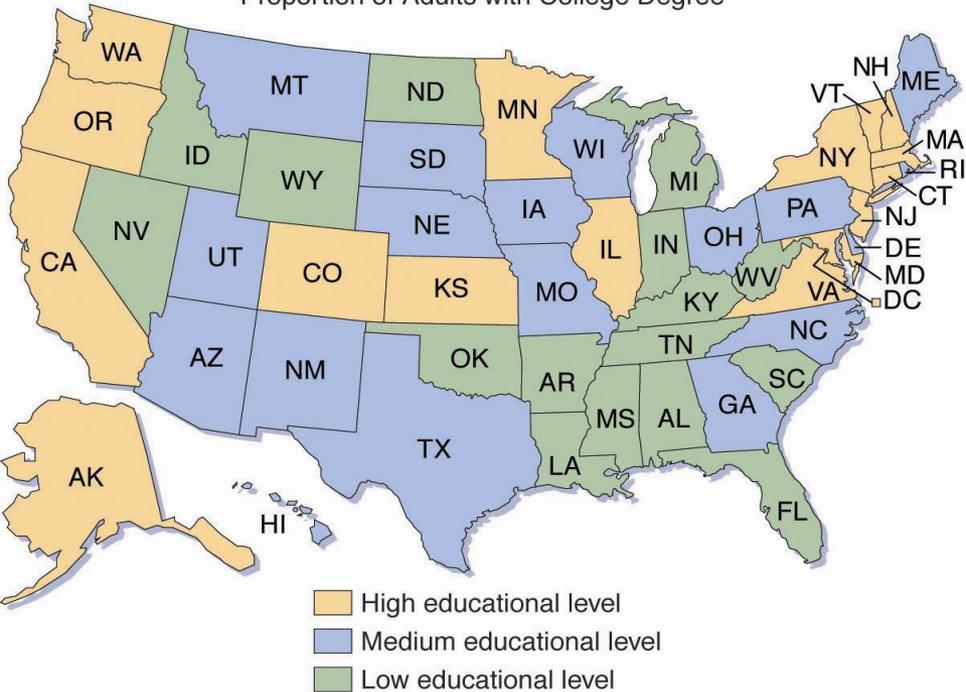
Income Group	Less Than High School Education	High School Diploma	Associate's Degree	BA/BS	Graduate Degree
Under \$15,000	50%	31%	11%	17%	11%
\$15,000–\$24,999	25	22	18	12	8
\$25,000–\$34,999	14	26	32	22	17
\$35,000–\$59,999	7	15	18	23	25
\$60,000 and over	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>39</u>
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

RESEARCH DESIGNS: SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

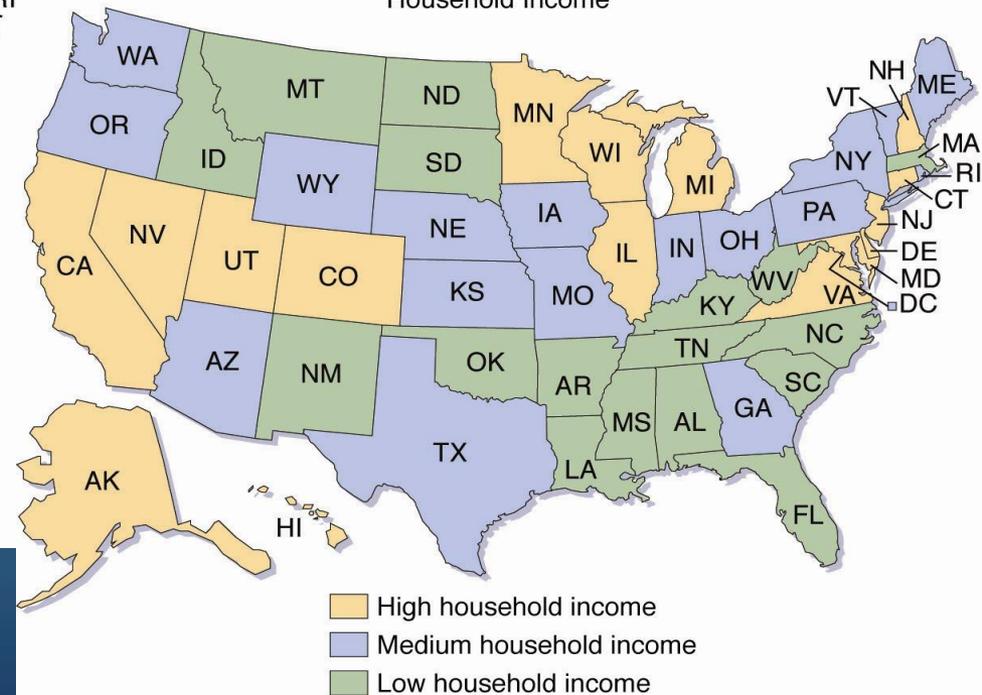


RESEARCH DESIGNS: SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

Proportion of Adults with College Degree



Household Income



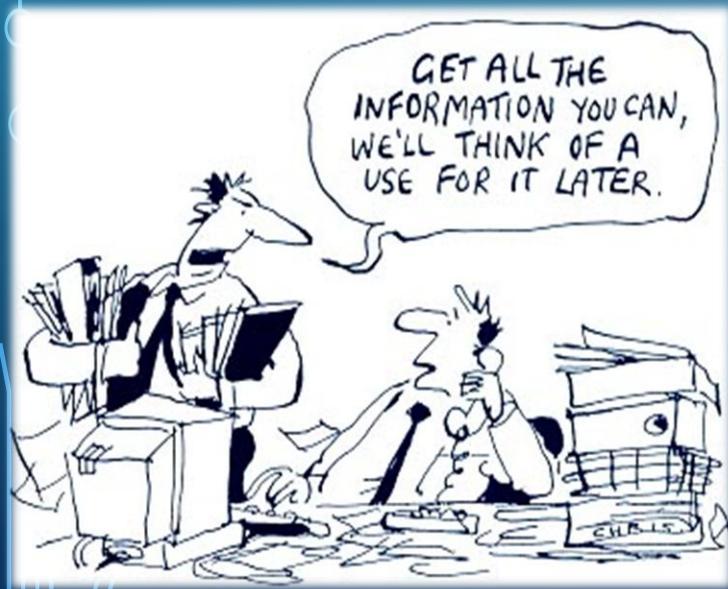
THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD: COLLECT AND ANALYZE THE DATA

- select a sample
 - **sample**: selection of subjects from a larger population that are statistically typical of that population
 - **random sample**: when every member of an entire population has the same chance of being selected

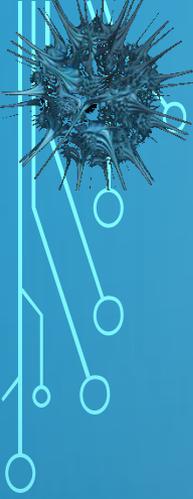


THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD: COLLECT AND ANALYZE THE DATA

- **controlling for other factors:** To ensure the measured effect is not influenced by external factors, other variables (control variables) must be held constant.
- ensure validity and reliability



- **validity:** degree to which a measure truly reflects the phenomenon being studied
- **reliability:** extent to which a measure provides consistent results



THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD: DEVELOP THE CONCLUSION



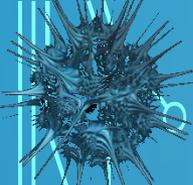
- ... the final and most important part of the process
- Researchers summarize what has been learned from the research and try to assess the strength of the hypothesis.
- Research doesn't always generate data that support the original hypothesis. When this happens, the hypothesis needs to be revised and the process starts over.
 - Both accepting and rejecting the hypothesis provides useful information.
- Most research uncovers more questions than answers, suggesting interesting directions for further study.



TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

- Technology today plays an important role in sociological research, whether it be a computer database or information from the internet.
- Computers allow large amounts of information to be stored and analyzed.
 - used for quantitative and qualitative research
- The internet affords excellent opportunities to communicate with fellow researchers.
- Social media has opened many new avenues for research.



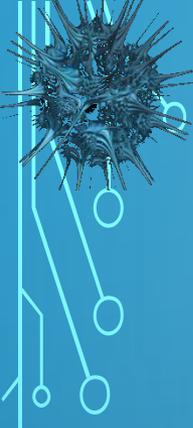


VALUE NEUTRALITY IN SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

- Max Weber urged sociologists to practice **value neutrality** in their research by ensuring that their personal feelings don't influence the interpretation of data.
 - Sociology should be value-free.
 - Sociology should be objective.
 - Research should involve **replication**: process of repeating a study using the same methods, different subjects and different experimenters.
- Researchers should remain **autonomous** and not bound to any one segment of society, including the government.

VALUE NEUTRALITY IN SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH





VALUE NEUTRALITY IN SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

- Although true value neutrality is impossible in the social sciences, bias is minimized by the norms of science.
- The goal of value neutrality can be attacked.
 - Scientists should not be morally indifferent to the implications of their research. Such a stance is impossible.
 - The type of problems researched and the strategies used tend either to support the existing societal arrangements or to undermine them.

SOCIAL POLICY AND SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

- issue: Human sexuality is a difficult topic to research because of preconceptions, myths and beliefs people bring to the subject.
- setting: little reliable national data on patterns of sexual behavior in US ... difficult to obtain accurate information about a sensitive subject ... Government funding for sexual studies is controversial.



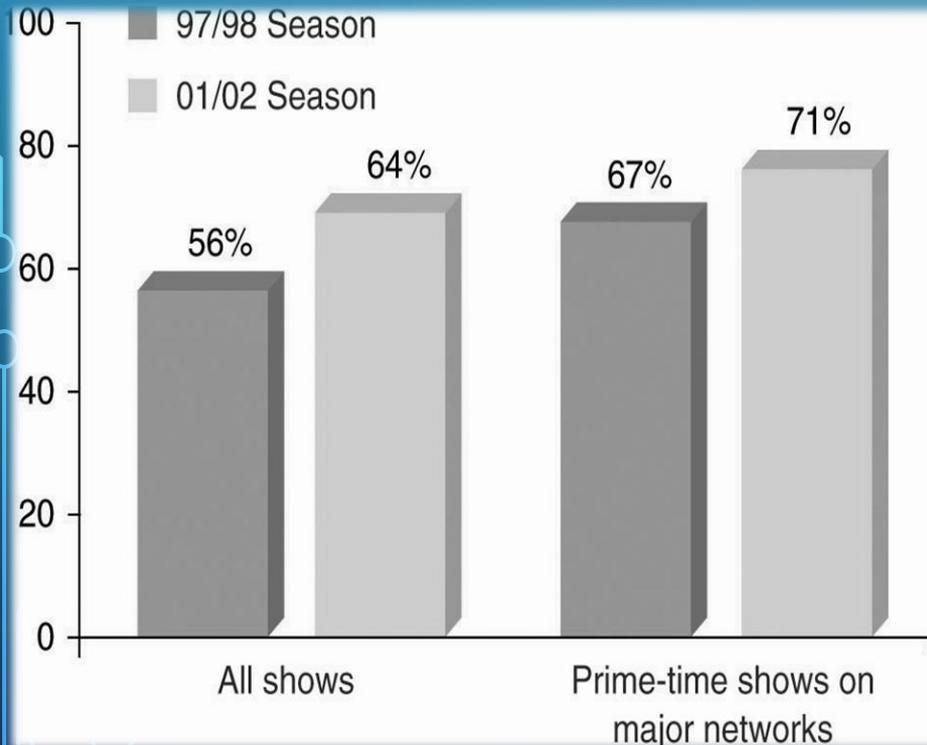


SOCIAL POLICY AND SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH



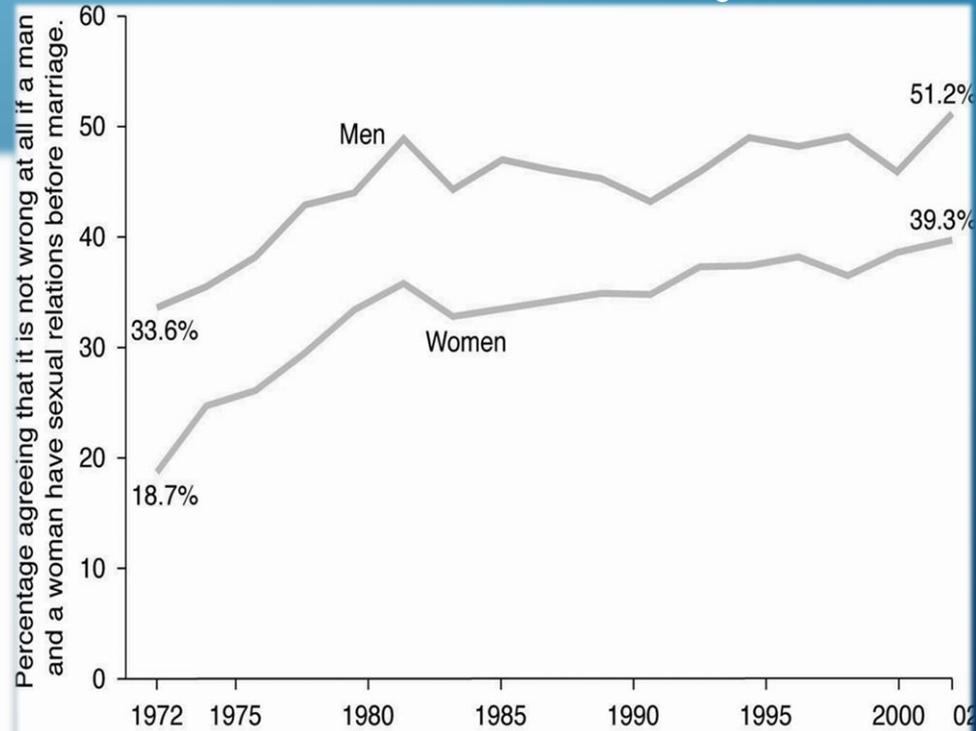
- sociological insights: Government is major source of funding for sociological research and maintaining objectivity may be difficult if sociologists fear their findings will jeopardize their chances of obtaining federal support for new research projects.
 - policy initiative: US Senate forbade funding a national survey of sexual behavior by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development but researchers acquired private funding to complete survey.
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SOCIAL POLICY AND SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH



Percent of Television Shows that Contain Sexual Content

Views on Sex before Marriage

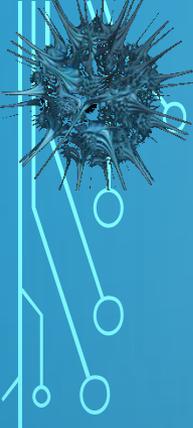


PROBLEMS IN SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

- Research and reports of research must **reflect reality**, not what a researcher wants it to be.
- Sociologists must display **scientific integrity**: requires recognizing biases in such a way that these biases do not invalidate the data.
- openness, honesty and truthfulness forbids falsifying results and plagiarism
- professional incompetence
- threatens those with a stake in the system



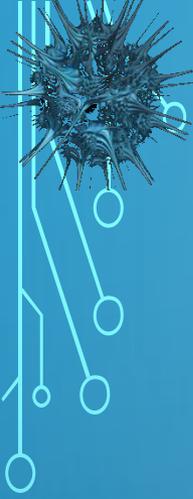
"Of course, I'm not asking you to lie. I'm asking you to give the truth an extreme makeover."



PROBLEMS IN SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH



- subjects in sociological research
 - **informed consent:** voluntary agreement to participate in research, about which the subject has an understanding of the research and its risks
 - protecting confidentiality and anonymity
 - lack of respect for people's rights, dignity and diversity
 - **protecting subjects:** Researcher Mario Brajuha refused to turn over his field notes to arson investigators after a fire in the facility in which he was conducting participant observation.



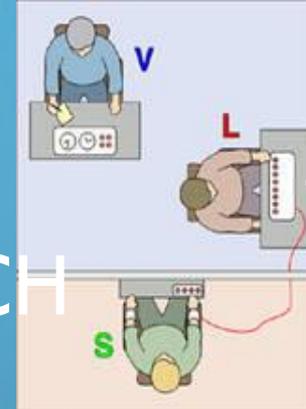
PROBLEMS IN SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH



- subjects in sociological research
 - **misleading subjects:** Laud Humphreys studied male homosexual sex that took place in public bathrooms without telling those under study that he was a researcher.
 - gender in sociological research
 - affects orientation and attitudes
 - interviewer bias
 - women and men lead different lives
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ETHICAL CHALLENGES IN SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

researcher



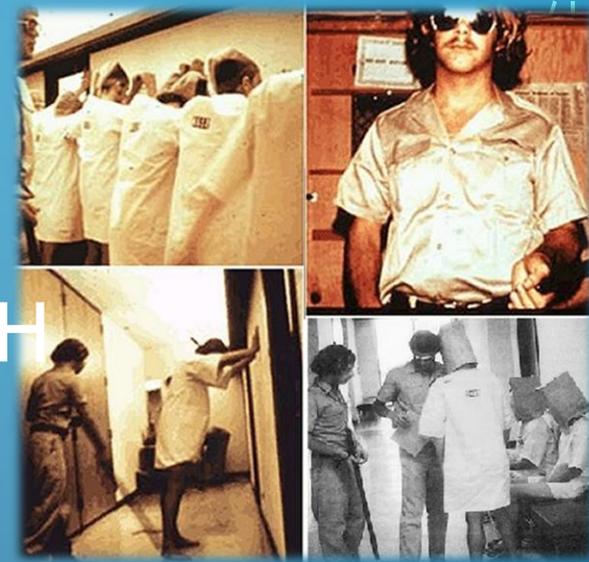
research subject:
"teacher" with fake
shock generator

"student" who was supposedly
receiving electric shocks from
"teacher"

- experiments on obedience to authority
- **Milgram experiment (1961)**
 - Researcher told research subject to deliver increasing shocks when the "student" gave incorrect answers.
 - How many of the 100 research subjects would obey and deliver what they thought was the maximum XXX shock to the "student"?
 - **results:** greater understanding of obedience but research subjects suffered psychological injury

ETHICAL CHALLENGES IN SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

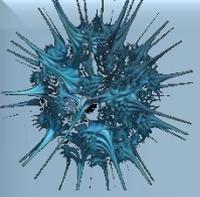
- **Zimbardo prison experiment**
 - mock prison at Stanford with 24 students randomly assigned to play prisoners or guards
 - 6x9 cells with 3 prisoners each for 24 hours/day, guards on 8-hour shifts
 - term of experiment: 14 days but stopped after 6
 - **results:** abusive guards, stressed and anxious prisoners, dehumanizing and abusive interaction, loss of clear notion that this was just an experiment



AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION CODE OF ETHICS

- Maintain objectivity and integrity in research.
- Respect the subject's right to privacy and dignity.
- Protect subjects from personal harm.
- Preserve confidentiality.
- Seek informed consent.
- Acknowledge research collaboration and assistance.
- Disclose all sources of financial support.





THE END

