Sociology 201: Social Research Design
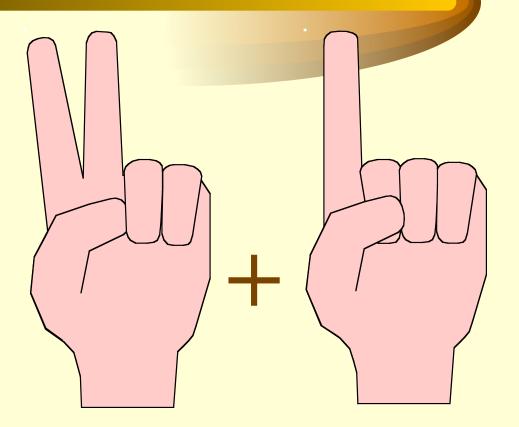
7. Research Design I

Total = 18 slides

- *Workbook assignments due:*
  - 4.2(20 pts)
- From last time, any further thoughts about determinism?
- Purposes of Research
  - Will do some computer analyses
- Topics of research
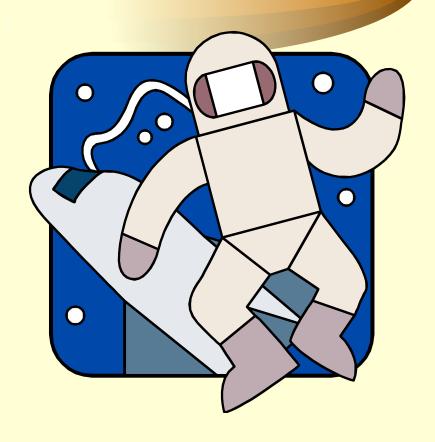- The time dimension
- Motivations for research

Total = 18 slides

Three Purposes of Research

- Exploration

-

- Description

-

- Explanation

Total = 18 slides

Exploration

- Get more grounded in a topic
- Uncover some of the dimensions
- Gain insights into it
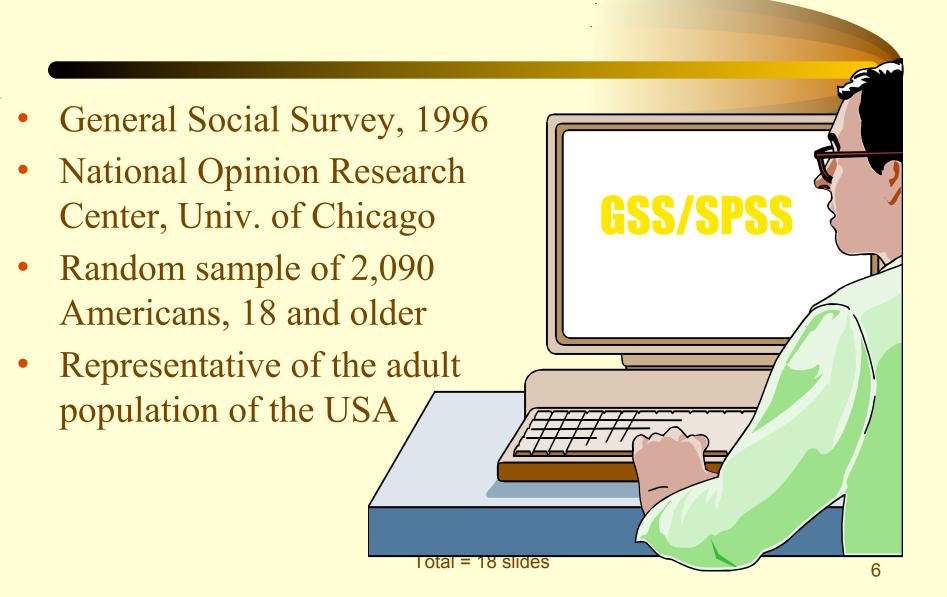- Get clearer about where to look

Total = 18 slides

Description

- Ethnography
- Can be very rigorous
  - Sampling critical
  - Precisely what are you saying and about whom?
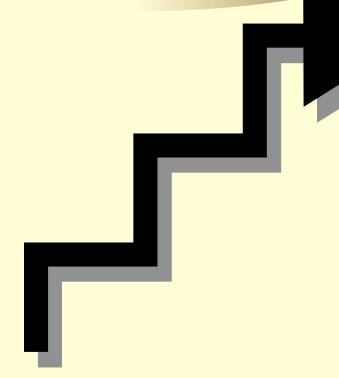- Census reports
- Political Polls
- Nielsen ratings

Total = 18 slides

Example: Attitudes toward Abortion

- General Social Survey, 1996
- National Opinion Research Center, Univ. of Chicago
- Random sample of 2,090 Americans, 18 and older
- Representative of the adult population of the USA

GSS/SPSS

Total = 18 slides

Explanation

REVIEW: Criteria of causation

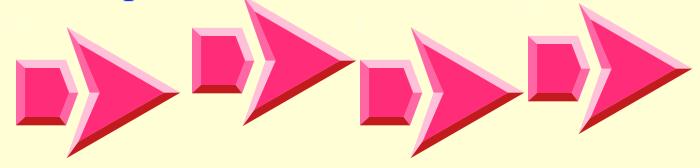– Correlation
– Time order
– Non-spurious

False criteria of causation

- Doesn't have to be 100%
- Even if few Xs are Y, if Xs are more Y than non-Xs are, then it may be a causal relationship
- Fundamentalism => anti-semitism
- Broken homes => delinquency

Total = 18 slides

Necessary and sufficient causes

- Necessary: gender => pregnancy
- Sufficient: Skip the exams => fail the course
  - Could have skipped the workbooks
- Necessary and sufficient best but rare
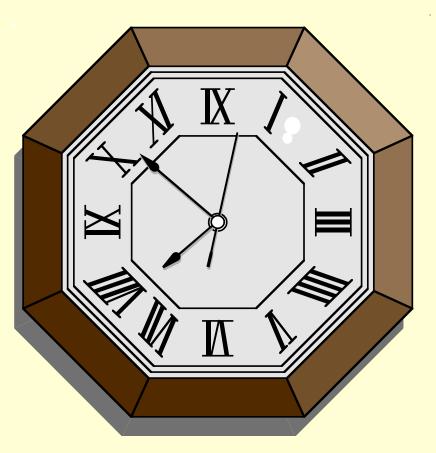- Can explain when we can't even describe

Total = 18 slides

Topics for Research

- Conditions

- Orientations

- Actions

-

- Not important to split hairs about these

Total = 18 slides

The Time Dimension

- Cross-sectional
- Longitudinal
  - Trend
  - Cohort
  - Panel
-

Cross-sectional

- Snapshot in time

- Pick a sample from a population and measure them

Total = 18 slides

Longitudinal:Trend

- Select different samples over time
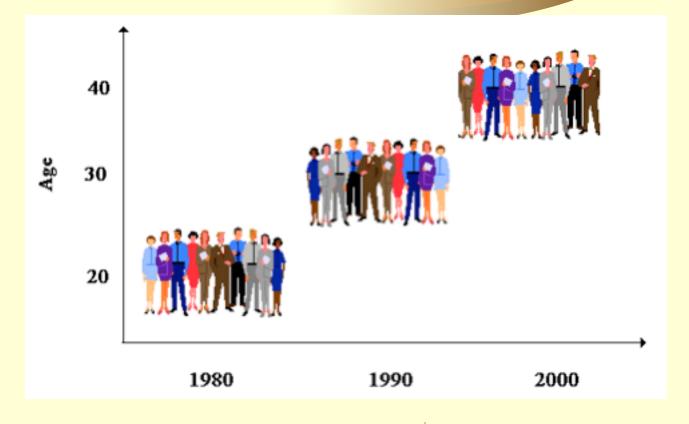- Compare them to detect changes in the population

| May | June | July |

--> Time -->

Total = 18 slides

Longitudinal:Panel

- Examine the *same sample* of people over time
- Detect processes of change at work

May   **June**   **July**

--> Time -->

Total = 18 slides

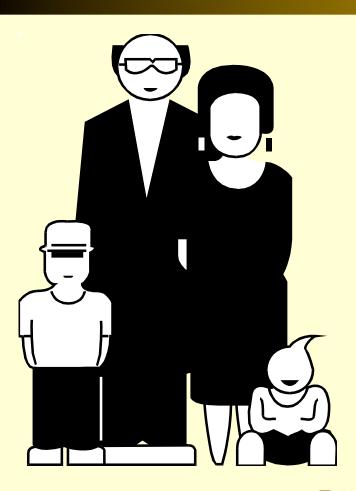# *Longitudinal:Cohort*

- Select different samples from the same age group (cohort)

✔ Detect maturation processes in the cohort
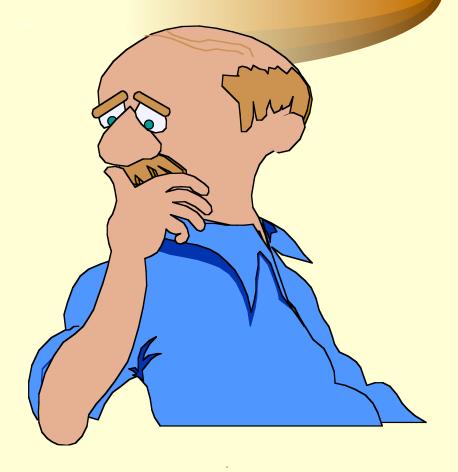

Total = 18 slides

Approximating longitudinal

- Compare people of different ages at one point in time
- Infer that their differences are a result of aging
- Compare:
  - Freshmen
  - Sophomores
  - Juniors

Total = 18 slides

Motivations for Research

- Testing formal theories
- Testing limited hypotheses
- Exploring unstructured interests
- Contracted research
- Involuntary research
-

Total = 18 slides

Next Time

- **Research Design II**

- Review Chapter 4

Total = 18 slides