



Chapter 11



Unobtrusive Research

Unobtrusive Research

- ▶ Unobtrusive Research – methods of studying social behavior without affecting it. OR Not “in your face” research.
 - ▶ Example: Durkheim’s analysis of suicide

- ▶ Types of Unobtrusive Research
 1. Content Analysis
 2. Analysis of Existing Statistics
 3. Comparative and Historical Analysis



Content Analysis

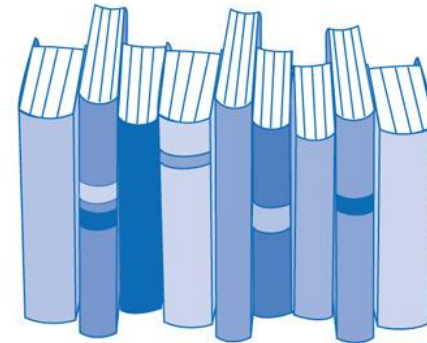
- ▶ Content Analysis – the study of recorded human communications (i.e., books, websites, paintings, laws).
- ▶ **Appropriate Topics**
 - ▶ “Who says what, to whom, why, how, and with what effect?”



Content Analysis

- ▶ Sampling in Content Analysis
 - ▶ Units of Analysis

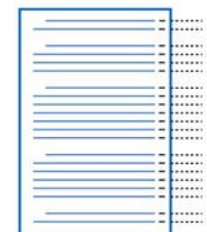
Books



Pages



Paragraphs



Lines

Content Analysis

- ▶ **Identify the unit of analysis:**
 - ▶ You are interested in how children's literature portrays gender roles.
 - ▶ You are interested in popular films' portrayals of drugs and alcohol.
 - ▶ You are interested in sociology textbooks' definitions of race.



Content Analysis

- ▶ **Sampling Techniques**

- ▶ A conventional sampling technique may be used for content analysis.



Content Analysis

- ▶ **Coding in Content Analysis**
 - ▶ Coding – the process whereby raw data are transformed into a standardized form suitable for machine processing and analysis.



Content Analysis

- ▶ Strengths of Content Analysis
 - ▶ Economy of time and money
 - ▶ Allows for the correction of errors – flexible
 - ▶ Permits the study of processes occurring over time
 - ▶ Research has little (if any) effect on subjects
 - ▶ Reliability
 - ▶ Weaknesses of Content Analysis
 - ▶ Limited to recorded communications
 - ▶ Validity
-

Analyzing Existing Statistics

- ▶ The analysis of existing statistics is not the same as the analysis of secondary data.
- ▶ Sources of Existing Statistics
 - ▶ Statistical Abstract of the United States
 - ▶ World Population Data Sheet
 - ▶ United Nations Demographic Yearbook



Comparative and Historical Research

- ▶ Comparative and Historical Research – the examination of societies (or other social units) over time and in comparison with one another.
- ▶ Example: John Hall's Work
 - ▶ *Civil Society: Theory, History, Comparison*
 - ▶ *National Identity and the Varieties of Capitalism*

