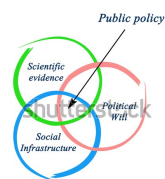## Social Policy Research

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Policy Research

Research for Policy

- Research is an essential part of the study of social policy.
- Understanding social conditions, and the effects which responses have on them, depends strongly on being able to draw on good information about what is happening.

Public policy

Scientific evidence

Political Will

Social Infrastructure

Nature of Policy Research

- Policy research is applied in nature and provide useful recommendations for solution of problems faced by communities and policy makers

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Aims of Policy Research

- ✓ To find out what is happening in a process
- ✓ To identify and record the contribution made by different agencies to a policy
- ✓ To establish the views of key stakeholders
- ✓ To see what people make of a service, or
- ✓ To evaluate the work of an agency.

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Types of Applied Research

1. *Contextual*, reviewing experiences, needs or the relationships between parts of a system
2. *Diagnostic*, looking for reasons and explanations of current issues
3. *Evaluative*, examining whether aims have been met or issues in service delivery
4. *Strategic*, considering alternative approaches and options for improvement

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Social Science research

- Generalization
- Theory building
- Disciplinary perspective
- Research design

Policy research

- Tend to focus particular issue or a problem
- Practical solution
- A lot of work in policy analysis is 'quick and dirty'
- Instrumental
- Research design begins, not with a fixed model or approach, but with the questions that have to be addressed.
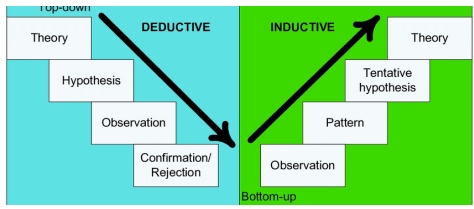
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Methodology

- Methodology is the study of research methods
- Methodology of a particular study consists not so much of an account of the process, as a rationale for what is done and why it has been done in that way.

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Approaches

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Approaches

Inductive

- Inductive' approaches begin by collecting material and seeking to classify and organise it after it is collected
- What induction is really about is gathering facts and looking for possible connections. A better name for this process might be 'exploratory research
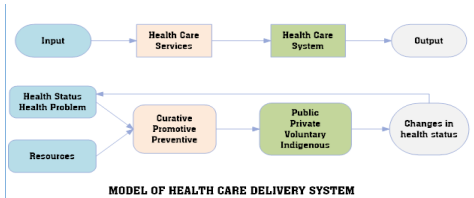
Deductive

- The 'deductive' approach relies on the generation of propositions which can be tested

1. Testing hypotheses
2. Examining models

The facts are compared to the model; the model is gradually refined to improve its descriptive or predictive power.

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Examining models

MODEL OF HEALTH CARE DELIVERY SYSTEM

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SERVICES

- The model of health care delivery is adopted from Steven's System Model (1952) general system theory is used to accomplish the purpose.

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Policy Research

◻ 'There are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns – the ones we don't know we don't know.' (Donald Rumsfeld)

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Policy Research

◻ Hypothesis testing ... has little place in policy research. While such an approach fosters thoroughness in scientific exploration, the potential loss and misperception engendered by taking a singular perspective on a multidimensional problem is too great a risk and luxury for policy researchers

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Policy Research

◻ Policy research in practice is typically exploratory; it looks for whatever might be found, rather than hunting for a specific, closed set of information.

◻ The research needs to be open to unanticipated findings, and it has to be designed so as to allow definitions to be formed or reconsidered.

◻ It tends to rely on key informants and insights from stakeholders

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Policy Research

◻ Often, that implies that policy research should be *abductive*

✓ Drawn from the perceptions and understandings of those involved in the process

✓ discussing issues with people who are affected

✓ who have a particular role or expertise

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Operationalizing the problem

Concepts have to be translated into operational terms – terms which can be investigated, observed, worked with

✓ *Definition of terms*

✓ *Validity* :'Concept validity' is the question of whether the issue which is being tested is the same as the issue which was supposed to be tested.

✓ *Reliability* Reliability is also known as 'predictive validity'. Results are said to be 'reliable' if they consistently show the same thing. *Dr. Farah Naz*

Intensive/ Extensive Research

◻ Intensive research is concerned with questions like why and how something happens.

◻ 'Extensive' research is concerned with the context and relationships within which an issue occurs; it is concerned with the extent of problems and associations between problems and issues.

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Qualitative/ Quantitative research

◻ Qualitative research is commonly aimed at producing material to help explain issues, answering questions beginning with 'why?', 'who?, 'how?', as well as some questions about process – like 'what is happening?'.

◻ Quantitative research is research which measures effects. The characteristic methods are censuses and questionnaires. Numbers are used to answer questions like 'how much?','to what extent?,'what proportion?' and 'what are the differences?'.   *Dr. Farah Naz*

Data Collection

1. The first, and most obvious source, is the material that other people have collated. A literature review in policy research is mainly used

✓ to avoid 'reinventing the wheel'

✓ to identify methods and approaches which might be useful for the analysis of the issues.

✓ to bring evidence to bear which may reinforce or question findings from the policy analysis.

2. The most common forms of empirical research, as a result, are concerned with human activity – chiefly people's behaviour, beliefs and opinions.   *Dr. Farah Naz*

Sampling

◻ Representative Sampling

◻ Purposive Sampling: Many samples in policy research – arguably most – are *purposive* rather than numerically representative; they focus on a narrow group as a way of illustrating the major issues, rather than trying to reproduce distributions in miniature.

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Examples of purposive samples include

◻ *Illustrative cases* Individuals or groups can be selected as illustrative cases.

◻ *Extreme cases*

◻ *Self-selected samples*

◻ *Key groups*

◻ *Stakeholder*

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The analysis of data

◻ Qualitative data analysis

◻ Quantitative data analysis

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Ethical issues in research

◻ The impact of research

◻ Treatment of participant

◻ Disciplinary considerations

◻ Research relationships

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Check Points

- ✓ What is the study for? The purpose of a study can affect both the perceptions of the researcher and the types of method undertaken.

- ✓ What assumptions have been made? In other words, what are

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Check Points

- ✓ the premises of the argument? How have terms been defined?

- ✓ Is the process which has been followed appropriate to the problem?

- ✓ Is the study valid? Is it examining what it was supposed to be examining?

- ✓ Do the conclusions the researcher draws follow from the results?

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