

# Social Science and Its Methods

## chapter 1



After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- Define social science and explain why it is important
- List the various social sciences
- State the nine steps that make up the scientific method
- Discuss some reasonable approaches to problems in social science
- Differentiate the historical method from the case method and the comparative method
- Distinguish educated common sense from common sense
- Explain why a good scientist is always open to new ways of looking at issues

*Theories should be as simple as possible, but not more so.*

—Albert Einstein

On September 11, 2001, eighteen men boarded airplanes with the intent of crashing them into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and the White House or Capitol. They succeeded with three of the planes, causing enormous destruction. The fourth plane crashed, but thanks to passengers who discovered the hijackers' plans and attacked the hijackers, the destruction of the White House or Capitol was prevented. What forces drove the hijackers to undertake such action? What forces led the passengers to organize together to thwart them? What might have prevented the hijackings? Such questions fall under the purview of **social science**—the scientific study of social, cultural, psychological, economic, and political forces that guide individuals in their actions.

Formal social science is relatively new. Nevertheless, a vast amount of information has been accumulated concerning the social life of human beings. This information has been used in building a system of knowledge about the nature, growth, and functioning of human societies. Social science is the name given to that system of knowledge.

All knowledge is (1) knowledge of human beings, including their culture and products, and (2) knowledge of the natural environment. Human culture has been changing, and knowledge about it has been gradually accumulating ever since the far distant time when humans first assumed their distinctively human character. But until rather recent times, this knowledge was not scientific in the modern sense. Scientific knowledge is knowledge that has been systematically gathered, classified, related, and interpreted. Science is concerned with learning the concepts and applying those concepts to particulars, rather than just learning a vast amount of information.

Primitive peoples acquired much of their knowledge unconsciously, just as we today still begin the use of our native language and acquire many of the basic elements in our culture unconsciously. For the most part, they accepted the world as they found it, and if any

# Chapter 1 Social Science And Its Methods

**John Neville Keynes**



## Chapter 1 Social Science And Its Methods:

*Science and Social Science* Malcolm Williams, 2012-10-02 Is social science really a science at all and if so in what sense This is the first question that any course on the philosophy of the social sciences must tackle In this brief introduction Malcolm Williams gives students the grounding that will enable them to discuss the issues involved with confidence He looks at The historical development of natural science and its distinctive methodology the case in favour of an objective science of the social which follows the same rules The arguments of social constructionists interpretative sociologists and others against objectivity and even science itself recent developments in natural science for instance the rise of complexity theory and the increased questioning of positivism which bring it closer to some of the key arguments of social science Throughout the book is illustrated with short clear examples taken from the actual practice of social science research and from popular works of natural science which will illuminate the debate for all students whatever their background Of Money, the Instrument of Association Henry Carey Baird, 1890 **Financial pamphlets**, 1876 **Bulletin - National Council for the Social Studies** National Council for the Social Studies, 1969 Social Science Elgin F. Hunt, David C. Colander, 1987 **Politics and Science** William Esslinger, 1955 SCOTT Copy 1 From the John Holmes Library collection **The Elements of Economics** Henry Dunning Macleod, 1899 **Book Catalogues: 1894**, 1894 **Quantitative Methods in Politics** Stuart Arthur Rice, 1928 **The Fields and Methods of Knowledge** Raymond Frank Piper, Paul William Ward, 1929 Science of Science Alexander Krauss, 2024-12-10 This is an open access title available under the terms of a CC BY NC ND 4.0 International licence It is free to read on the Oxford Academic platform and offered as a free PDF download from OUP and selected open access locations How do we drive new knowledge and science What are their present boundaries And how can we improve science We still do not understand these essential questions about science well even though science is at the foundation of modern society The emerging field of the science of science can provide answers The central challenge of the field is accounting for and integrating the different empirical and theoretical knowledge across disciplines into a holistic field and uncovering the general mechanism driving science Science of Science is the first book to provide an integrated framework for the field and thus aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the foundations and limits of science The book integrates 14 scientific fields and illustrates how our evolved mind that enables us to observe experiment and solve problems makes doing science possible but also shapes what and how we observe Our scientific methods and instruments such as statistics and electron microscopes enable us to study a much larger range of phenomena but also puts constraints on how we measure them Institutions and funding shape what knowledge we produce and how we evaluate our evidence among other influences Here taking an interdisciplinary approach Krauss explains how the sophisticated scientific tools we develop are the main driving force of creating new knowledge and advancing science This methodological toolbox sets the scope and limits of what we can know and what is possible in science while economic social

and historical influences help shape what we study within that scope and those limits The book provides a unifying theory for the field of science of science the new methods drive science theory By better understanding the foundations of science we will also show how we can reduce the constraints and biases that we and our scientific methods and instruments face to advance science and push its present boundaries

**Principles of Social Economy** Yves Guyot,1884 Research Methods in Education William Wiersma,1976 *The Scope and Method of Political Economy* John Neville Keynes,1891

*The scope and method of political economy* Keynes,1891 Notes on books Longmans, Green and co,1909 **Right and Reason** Austin Fagothey,1963 With the modern value theory as basis the point of discussion is Aristotelian Thomistic

**Sociology** CN Shankar Rao,2012 This textbook has been comprehensively written to acquaint the students with the fundamental concepts of sociology as well as provide an introduction to the diverse field of sociology Students will be introduced to the origins of sociology as a discipline and would get acquainted with relevant topics such as inequality institutions control change disorganisation problems in the society Topics such as applied sociology and social thought have also been provided to give a complete overview of the subject This textbook not only caters as a primary text to the undergraduate students of Sociology but is also a useful reference for postgraduate students and aspirants appearing for various competitive examinations

**Principles of Macroeconomics** Ryan C. Amacher,Holley H. Ulbrich,1989 **Research Methods in Psychology: Ideas, Techniques, and Reports** Chris Spatz,Edward Kardas,2007-02-12 Foundational material on the nature of science psychological research ethics measurement and statistical methods are covered in this title

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