BRIEF CHAPTER OUTLINE

I. Introduction

II. Some Social Science Paradigms
   A. Macrotheory and microtheory
   B. Early positivism
   C. Conflict paradigm
   D. Symbolic interactionism
   E. Ethnomethodology
   F. Structural functionalism
   G. Feminist paradigms
   H. Critical Race Theory
   I. Rational objectivity reconsidered

III. Two Logical Systems Revisited
   A. The traditional model of science
      1. Theory
      2. Operationalization
      3. Observation
   B. Deduction and induction compared
      1. A case illustration
      2. A graphic contrast

IV. Deductive Theory Construction
   A. Getting started
   B. Constructing your theory
   C. An example of deductive theory: distributive justice

V. Inductive Theory Construction
   A. An example of inductive theory: Why do people smoke marijuana?

VI. The Links Between Theory and Research

VII. The Importance of Theory in the “Real World”

VIII. Research Ethics and Theory

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this chapter, the student should be able to:

1. List the three functions of theory for research.
2. Define paradigm and describe its role in science.
3. Differentiate macro-level theory from micro-level theory.
4. Provide a synopsis for each of the following paradigms: early positivism, conflict paradigm, symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, structural-functionalism, feminist paradigms, and critical race theory.
5. Show the role of theory, operationalization, and observation in the traditional model of science.
6. Define hypothesis testing.
7. Differentiate inductive logic from deductive logic by definition and example.
8. Outline the steps in deductive theory construction.
9. Outline the steps in inductive theory construction.
10. Discuss the links between social science theory and research.
11. Discuss the links between research ethics and theory or paradigm selection.

**TEACHING SUGGESTIONS AND RESOURCES**

1. A method for demonstrating the steps in the traditional model of science comes from the ASA's "EIGHTY-ONE TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING SOCIOLOGICAL CONCEPTS." The technique was written by Reed Geertsen. See the preface for ASA Teaching Resources address.

   The demonstration requires two clear glasses. Fill one glass with water and the other with rubbing alcohol. You will also need several ice cubes. The students should be unaware as to what the materials are.

   Write on the blackboard, PROBLEM or TOPIC OF INTEREST. Tell the students you want to know what will happen when the CUBES are placed in the LIQUID. Ask them for their suggestions and write these on the board. When the students are done, label these HYPOTHESES. Explain to them that their suggestions are hypotheses. Ask the students how to TEST these hypotheses. As you go through the list you will find the issue of MEASUREMENT coming up. For example, a typical hypothesis is that the temperature of the liquids will change. Ask them how they will test that. This will lead into a discussion of a before and after thermometer measurement of temperature. After going through the hypotheses list with the issues of testing and measurement in mind, select one to test. An easy one to test in class is the hypothesis that the cubes will float. Define *float* and *sink*. Place the cubes in the liquids. Ask what happened and write FINDINGS on the board. Ask what CONCLUSIONS they draw from these findings. Typically, they will respond that the liquids are different or that the cubes are different. Write ADDITIONAL RESEARCH on the board and ask them what they would call their suggestions—HYPOTHESES. Point out that they are back into the research process. You might switch the cubes and go through the process again.

   After going through the stages with this demonstration, go through them with a sociological example.

2. A wonderful demonstration for teaching students about the blind spots of our perceptions/paradigms is developed by Reed Geertsen. 1993. "Simulating the Blind Spot of Everyday Experience." *Teaching Sociology* 21:392-396. All you need is chalk and a board. The demonstration is done in several rounds during which you tell the students which word is part of the pattern and which word is not. You ask students to guess the pattern. So, the first round might include a pattern of words that begin with a vowel (e.g., around, extra, interesting, Ann but not guess, child, or Tom). The second round might have a pattern of words that include double letters (e.g., teen, letters, Sally but not Fred, tired, or theory). The
third round might include a pattern of 3 letter words (e.g., Tom, try, or cry but not Sally, theory, or Marx). You can develop any patterns in this part as long as the focus is on the word (though you do not tell the students to focus on the word). Finally, start writing words on the board in the last round and again tell the students which words are in the pattern and which are not. However, this time the pattern is determined by where you stand when you write the word. If you’re on the left of the word, for example, it’s “in” and if you’re on the right it’s not. Students will have a tough time switching from focusing on the words to focusing on your position. Gradually you may need to exaggerate your stance. The demonstration clearly illustrates that once our attention is focused we have difficulty seeing other patterns.

FILMS

*Application of the Scientific Method*
Applies the scientific method to four different experiments: (1) Bernard's discovery of the cause of diabetes, (2) Priestley's discovery of the need for oxygen in healthy air, (3) Leverrier's discovery of the planet Neptune, and (4) Freud's theory of the cause of dreams.

*Methodology: The Psychologist and the Experiment*
The scientific method is demonstrated in two different experiments. Steps illustrated are (1) generation of hypotheses; (2) manipulation of relevant environmental conditions; (3) random assignment of subjects; (4) experimental control; (5) observation of the effects of manipulation on the behavior under study; (6) interpretation of the findings; (7) replicability and generalizations.

*Research Methods for the Social Sciences*
33 min. 1995. Insight Media
An introduction to research methods for the social sciences. The video details 7 steps of the scientific method and explains how to gather and interpret data.

*Sociological Thinking and Research*
30 min. 1991. Insight Media Phone: (212)721-6316
This program describes how to structure a research study by defining the problem to be studied, reviewing the relevant literature, formulating a hypothesis, and selecting a research design. William Kornblum explains his methods for studying the effects of planned renewal on the Times Square neighborhood.
Paradigms, Theory, and Research

The Scientific Method
This 2-part video and CD-ROM series examines the basic elements of the scientific method
including defining and researching the problem, forming a hypothesis, using experiments and
observations to gather information, analyzing the data, forming a conclusion, and
communicating the results. The CD-ROM looks at the way in which scientists work in exploring
new areas of knowledge, or new aspects of existing knowledge, and teaches students how to
analyze evidence and data. A Cambridge Educational Production.

INFOTRAC EXERCISES

1. Feminist theory and sociology: underutilized contributions for mainstream theory. Janet
the author use to select theories for this analysis?

Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, May 1996 v33 n2 p 143(16). What are the
criteria by which the authors define positivism?

Behavioral Scientist, Jan 1995 v38 n3 P421(21). Who are some of the key founders of
symbolic interactionism?

Susan A. Mann; Michael D. Grimes; Alice Abel Kemp; Pamela J. Jenkins. Journal of Family
Issues, May 1997 v18 n3 p315(35). What perspective do the authors claim drives most of
the discourse on family and why?

British Journal of Political Science, Oct 2003 v33 i4 p607(14). According to the author how
and why do people draw a distinction between friend and foe?

6. Using the key word option, ask students to select the theoretical perspective that comes
closest to their world view and to read a social science article that uses that perspective. Ask
students to critique the article and its use of the perspective. Ask them how someone using
one of the other paradigms would apply that paradigm to the topic under inquiry.

7. Ask students to select a theoretical perspective that DOES NOT resonate with their world
view and to find an article that uses that perspective. Ask students to critique the article and
whether the author(s) correctly applied the perspective to the topic of inquiry. Would
another perspective be useful in studying the topic? If so, which paradigm and why? If no,
why not?
INTERNET EXERCISES

1. Ask students to access sociosite, a social science information system out of the University of Amsterdam at: http://www.sociosite.net/topics/index.php Tell them to select THEORY from the sociological subjects listing and to select one. Ask them to read and report on the selected theoretical perspective.

2. Ask students to visit the Marx/Engels Internet Archive site. http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/ Once accessed ask students to review the site and to select and summarize the information presented on a topic of their choice. For example, after accessing the site they could select the subject index and then review an article on a subject of their choice. A similar exercise appears in the Study Guide.

3. Ask students to go to the following site for a discussion of the scientific method. http://www.scientificmethod.com/index_nofla.html Tell students to read the following three sections: 1) scientific methods vs scientific method, 2) the 11 stages and 3 supporting ingredients of the SM-14 formula, and 3) practical help with everyday problems and decisions. After reviewing these three sections ask students: 1) what differentiates scientific methods from the scientific method, 2) what are the stages in the scientific method?, 3) why is the scientific method used?, and 4) what does the scientific method enable researchers to conclude? A similar exercise appears in Chapter 1 of the Study Guide.

4. Ask students to go to the following site for a review of different sociological perspectives. http://www.hewett.norfolk.sch.uk/CURRIC/soc/Theory1.htm Ask students to select a theory or a theorist and compare the material on the website with the Babbie chapter. What additional information was provided on the site about the theory or theorist?

APPLYING SOCIAL RESEARCH TO EVERYDAY LIFE

1. Have the students interview at least two family members about their work and career. Have their questions focus on job satisfaction and relationships with supervisors/subordinates. Do these experiences seem to fit a conflict approach to society, or a more cooperative one as supported by structural functionalists?

2. Ask the students to monitor the front page of the New York Times for one week, keeping track of the issues that are discussed on the front page. Which of the theoretical paradigms discussed in the readings best captures current affairs?
QUESTIONS/ACTIVITIES TO GUIDE A RESEARCH PROJECT

ACTIVITIES:

1. Have the students select two different theoretical perspectives and ask them to discuss how each paradigm would guide the students’ thinking on his or her research paper. Once this is complete, have the student evaluate each perspective based on current research on the topic: which approach seems to be more in step with current scholarship?

2. Have the student discuss how they would study their topic of interest from an inductive approach, and then from a deductive approach using existing theory. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each strategy?

QUESTIONS:

1. Sociological theories are often seen as “competing” with one another. Ask the student if more than one theory from the readings be used to study the student’s topic of interest in a synergist way.

2. Do your own personal feelings about the topic you are interested in study impact in any way the particular theory you select?

3. How are you able to account for the subjective nature of our perceptions of reality when doing research on your topic of interest?