

What are the major sociological paradigms?

- Structural Functional Theory
- Conflict Theory
- Symbolic Interaction Theory

**Why should social theory
be discussed in a social
research methods class?**

Ethical Issues in Social Research

- Tea Room Trade by Humphreys described research into the lives of “part-time” homosexuals
 - Lied to participants by telling them he was a voyeur-participant.
 - Traced participants to their home and interviewed them under false pretenses.
- Was Humphreys ethical in doing what he did? Are there parts of the research that you believe were acceptable and other parts that were not?

Ethical Issues in Social Research

- Voluntary participation (intrusion into people's lives)
- No harm to participants (emotional stress, embarrassment, danger of being identified)
- Informed Consent
- Anonymity and confidentiality (can't be identified vs only researchers know identify)

Ethical Issues in Social Research

- Deception
 - Example: Doesn't tell why doing research
 - Needs to be justified by compelling scientific or administrative concerns.
- Analysis and reporting
 - May try to embellish findings
 - Researchers must be honest about their findings and research

Ethical Issues in Social Research

- **Institutional Review Boards**
 - Federal law to protect subjects/respondents
 - Review research proposals involving humans so they can guarantee the rights and interests are protected
- **Professional Codes of Ethics**
 - Most professional associations have formal codes of conduct that describe acceptable and unacceptable professional behavior.

Politics of Social Research

- Objectivity of science vs ideology of politics
- Can science be completely objective
- Politics deals with the substance and use of research.
- If research results are politically sensitive then the methodology will be attacked

Politics in Perspective

Three issues:

- Science is not untouched by politics.
- Science does not proceed in the midst of political controversy.
- Awareness of ideologies enriches the study and practice of social research methods.

- We need to realize that as human beings social researchers are going to act like human beings and we must take this into account in assessing their findings (Babbie, 2004, p.79).