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The Practice of Social Research (Book Review)

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the point to students that nonpunitive, public health oriented measures may be more useful in reducing drug-related problems than are law enforcement measures.

Part 3, *Reacting to Crime*, has a chapter devoted to each of the criminal justice agencies: the police, the courts, and corrections. Chapter 10, "Policing Society," deals with the history of policing, the recruitment, training, and work routines of police, and the issues of discretion and corruption among the police. I especially appreciated the up-to-date research finding on strategies for handling domestic violence incidents. Chapter 11, "The Judicial Process," provides an overview of case processing in criminal courts. There is a substantial discussion of plea bargaining and a boxed insert with the Supreme Court's decisions supporting plea bargaining. Chapter 12, "Punishing the Criminal Offender," begins with a definition of punishment, categories of punishment, and two models of punishment. Various criminal penalties are described with a major portion of the chapter focusing on imprisonment and its effects.

Part 4, *Explaining Crime*, presents the theories used to explain crime and criminality. In Chapter 13, "The Foundations of Criminological Theory," Barlow begins by stating the sociological orientation of his text and what this means in terms of the questions asked about crime and criminals and the theories developed by sociologists to explain criminal phenomena. He then goes on to discuss ideology, types of theories, and the history of criminological theory. He gives a brief overview of nonsociological perspectives (i.e., biological, psychological, biosocial, and multifactor) "to cover adequately the field's history and the diversity of current theories of crime" (p. 476). However, while acknowledging the contributions (and theoretical weaknesses) of other disciplines, he leaves no doubt that the sociological perspective is necessary to develop realistic theories of crime.

The next three chapters, "Crime and Social Structure," "Crime and Social Process," and "Rationality-Opportunity Theories of Crime," provide thorough reviews of the major sociological theories of crime. In Chapter 14, "Crime and Social Structure," Barlow's analysis of the differences among the social structural theories (i.e., social disorganization, strain, cultural transmission, and conflict), as well as the common threads tying them together, is exceptionally well done.

The final chapter documents the efforts of criminologists over the past decade to develop a general theory of crime which will explain a wide range of criminal activity. The five theories presented here are varied, ranging from those based on sociobiology to evolutionary ecology to rational choice to reintegrative shaming to the thrill of lawbreaking. This chapter is a fitting capstone to Barlow's text in that it provides the material for further discussion and controversy as well as a research agenda for the nineties and beyond.

At the end of the book, an appendix gives the definitions of the FBI's Part 1 and Part 2 Offenses and the definitions of crime from the National Crime Victimization Survey. There are also a list of references, photo acknowledgments, an author index, and a subject index. However, there is at least one missing reference (Kaplan, 1983 on p. 327 is not listed in the References section).

My overall evaluation of this book is favorable. I would recommend it for introductory or survey courses in Criminology. However, because it is densely packed with information and the level of writing is somewhat sophisticated, this book would be more appropriate for advanced undergraduate students than for freshmen and sophomores. Special strengths of the book are the expanded section on theory and Barlow's integration of race, class, and gender into his discussions of crime.

My criticisms, as noted above in the summary of contents, are minor and related to the abbreviated coverage of certain topics such as victim impact statements, benefit of clergy, the Dutch drug policy, and the omission of a significant problem with the UCR data. These shortcomings can be remedied by the instructor.

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The Practice of Social Research. 6th ed. Earl Babbie. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. 1992. 493 pages.

How many of us pick up the Sunday edition of the *New York Times* or the latest issue of our professional journal of book reviews and first scan the listing to see if any of our favorite authors have published another book? With textbooks we get hooked on, we often do the same—keep a lookout for new updated editions. Anyone teaching in the field of social research no doubt is familiar with Earl Babbie's *The Practice of Social Research* and many have looked for and welcomed his new editions over the years. With this sixth edition the structure of the book will be familiar to those who have used this textbook.

Students will be challenged to exercise their critical thinking skills right away in their reading of Chapter 1 on "Human Inquiry and Science," and they will gain insight into what makes science different from other ways of knowing. What distinguishes scientific theory from everyday reasoning and the relationship of scientific research to theory is the subject of the next chapter. This chapter, as well as the following one on the nature of causation, lays the groundwork for students' development of an understanding of the techniques of social research.

Each basic technique used in doing social research is the subject of subsequent chapters. Professors who have used prior editions of this textbook will be familiar with the chapters on research design, conceptualization and measure-

ment, operationalization, indexes, scales, and typologies and the logic of sampling which comprise Part 2 on "The Structuring of Inquiry." Comprehensive and detailed coverage of the "Modes of Observation"—namely, experiments, survey research, field research, unobtrusive research and evaluation research, is presented in Part 3. The author takes the students through the next stage of social research, "Analysis of Data" (Part 4) with chapters on quantifying data, elementary analyses, the elaboration model and social statistics. What Babbie says about the need to update to remain current with continually changing social research technology and practices is exactly what he does throughout this textbook. The ethical and political issues as well as the uses of social research, the topics covered in Part 5, are current and timely. This is true with most of the examples and applications given throughout the textbook. Several of the excerpts are abstracted from material that students might view as dated but that to professors would be seen as classic.

Anyone interested in the "how to" of teaching social research methods or guiding students through their first experience of doing social research will find the book valuable. There are several pedagogical gems. First—and this is new to this edition—there is what Babbie calls a "Holographic Overview" at the beginning of the textbook. Simply stated, it is an organizing scheme summarizing the highlights of each chapter in sequential form to give us an overview of the textbook. I find this particularly helpful, as it helps instructors convey a holistic perspective to which the student can be referred back to from time-to-time. It is like being on a moving train where one can go back to any car, view the terrain from a variety of locations and see how the cars, although different, are linked together, while still moving ahead!

To enhance the quality of the teaching and the learning experience, Babbie has retained an end-of-each-chapter summary of the main points covered, review questions and exercises and suggestions for additional readings. Perhaps more journal articles, easily accessible today, could be listed. The appendices are particularly useful for directing the student to the use of the library, providing a table of random numbers, distribution of chi square and a learner's guide to SPSS* and SPSS PC+ (Version 4) among other resources. Microcomputer support is provided with data from the National Opinion Research Center's "General Social Survey." Updated supplements in the form of a student study guide and workbook (E. Babbie and T. Wagenaar) and an instructor's manual (M. Jendrek) are available.

To help the student through each chapter, the style of writing is such that one thinks the author is speaking directly to that student and addressing the feelings the student is probably having at that very moment. For example, in the "Holographic Overview," the student will read "you can use

parts of this chapter to satisfy family and friends when they ask what a nice person like you is doing in a course like this." With the use of this textbook, what could be a very abstract and highly theoretical course is made very personable and down-to-earth for the student.

The Practice of Social Research is a generic text. If you want your students to learn the basic skills of how to gather information, analyze and summarize data, and present findings logically and coherently in the context of social scientific inquiry, then this is a book that merits your serious consideration. It is a basic research methods course for use in any one of the social sciences and for courses in such professions as social work, criminal justice, marketing and communications. However, if you are looking for, let's say, feminist methods or even feminist materials for instructing students in social research methods, I would not recommend this book.

A sixth edition of *The Practice of Social Research* tells me that this textbook is the product of Babbie's own survey. There are hundreds of instructors who have used earlier editions, tested them in the classroom and provided Babbie with feedback, solicited and unsolicited. All is taken into serious consideration as evidenced by a careful nuance of teaching and learning techniques, the anticipation of anxieties by the student and addressed by the author, the clarity of presentation of complex material and so much more. With this sixth edition, *The Practice of Social Research* continues to be a significant (statistically?) contribution to teaching sociology.

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Collective Behavior. Erich Goode. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 1992. 499 pages.

One of the potential benefits of the increasing emphasis on outcome assessment in education is a renewed concern for what and how much students actually learn in our classes. This concern could substantially alter the criteria by which we choose textbooks. Instructors whose approach is essentially "informational" would likely seek a text of similar orientation, aiming to expose students to a comprehensive survey of accumulated knowledge within a discrete subject matter. An alternative to the more traditional approach I've termed "informational" can be described as (for lack of a better term) "interpretive." The interpretive approach conceives of sociology as offering to students a set of analytical tools that when skillfully used can sharpen the perspectives they bring to their interpretations of social life. *Collective Behavior* by Erich Goode would be a fine textbook choice, particularly for the instructor who has chosen the latter approach in the design and organization of his/her course.

The book is comprised of 11 chapters (with good, concise one-page summaries for each)