

ANNOTATIONS

THE CODIFICATION OF SOCIAL SCIENCE METHODOLOGY¹

THIS most recent addition to the rapidly increasing number of Readers in the methodology of social research is a collection of over sixty articles all but a few of which have been previously published. Most of the selections actually are brief reports of empirical studies that provide the illustrative materials for the editors' theoretical organization of the volume: "Concrete studies are being scrutinized as to the procedures they use, the underlying assumptions they make, the modes of explanation they consider as satisfactory. Methodological analysis in this sense provides the elements from which a future philosophy of the social sciences may be built." This frame of reference is introduced and the articles connected by a series of introductions to the six sections comprising the book: Concepts and Indices; Multivariate Analysis; The Analysis of Change Through Time; Formal Aspects of Research on Human Groups; The Empirical Analysis of Action; and, Toward a Philosophy of the Social Sciences.

The editors are to be congratulated for their consistently excellent choices of research materials. Many of the most well-known and important studies in the social sciences have been represented, e.g., the American Soldier studies, the Burgess and Cottrell marriage prediction work, the Lazarsfeld *et al* election studies, the Klineberg race intelligence research, Katona's test of the Keynesian hypothesis on income and savings rate changes, Dorothy Thomas' research on Swedish population

¹ Lazarsfeld, Paul F. and Rosenberg, Morris (Eds.): THE LANGUAGE OF SOCIAL RESEARCH, A READER IN THE METHODOLOGY OF SOCIAL RESEARCH. Glencoe, Illinois, The Free Press, 1955, 590 pp., \$6.75.

change and economic factors, Bales' work on the categorization of the interaction process in small groups, Cattell's research on group characteristics, and many others too numerous to cite. At the more explicitly theoretical level are such pieces as Merton's paradigm for the study of the sociology of knowledge, an exceptionally clear description by Hans Zetterberg of the usefulness of axiomatic theories in sociology, and others. The vulnerable aspect of this book is decidedly not in its selection of materials.

A basic question remains, however, of the significance of the general contribution made by the editors which stands or falls mainly on the merits of the connective tissue they supply to organize and give meaning to the sections and reprints. Their main theoretical objective is to examine the extent to which methodology in the social sciences can be codified and formalized. In retrospect, this seems to have been a noble but largely unsuccessful attempt, a criticism that derives more from the prematurity of the attempt, or perhaps more accurately, from the "state of the arts" than from any inadequacy of the editors. What their editorial work spotlights is the fact that there are certain common, recurring methodological and epistemological problems in social science ranging from such questions as to how to handle more than two variables simultaneously to what are the most fruitful levels of asking "why?". The recognition of the recurrent nature of such problems, and selections illustrating specific attempts at solving them, is no doubt desirable. However, despite the fact that the editors disclaim any intention of competing with "the substantive, creative worker" for the laurels of science, their emphasis does not demonstrate it. At times, fairly simple and elementary concepts and analytical models are put through such a rigorous intellectual wringer that the result serves to confuse more than to enlighten. That awareness of assumptions, limitations, and implications of research method, for example, is indispensable intellectual equipment is undeniable; that the extent to which it occasionally is pushed in this work will enhance the ultimate quality of the research product is far less certain.

The book probably will (and should) find wide acceptance in the graduate schools of social science. Its best use is prob-

ably as a type of source book for illustrating kinds of research problems and their attempted solutions by many of our outstanding social scientists.

CHARLES F. WESTOFF

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COMPARATIVE POPULATION AND URBAN RESEARCH VIA MULTIPLE REGRESSION AND COVARIANCE ANALYSIS¹

As the title of this monograph may suggest, the two-fold purpose of this study is methodological and substantive, i.e., it discusses (1) the use of the multiple regression and covariance analysis as an approach to population and urban research and (2) the investigation of several hypotheses concerning urban and suburban growth.

Chapter 1 is devoted entirely to an explanation and rationale of the methodology. The "comparative" approach to urban research, as used here, is one which utilizes standard metropolitan areas as units of equal weight. This is contrasted with the more traditional "aggregative" approach in which totals for groups of areas are used. While "aggregative" methods are useful for description, they have only limited value for arriving at multiple-variable explanations of group phenomena. The multiple-regression approach permits the researcher to ascertain how completely he is able to explain the variability of a dependent variable by a given series of independent variables.

Basically, the substantive purpose of the book is to account for the variation or differences among the 125 Standard Metropolitan Areas in the United States with a population of 100,000 or more in 1950, with respect to: (1) total rate of metropolitan growth (Chap. 2); (2) degree of metropolitan suburbanization (Chap. 3); (3) rate of metropolitan suburbanization (Chap. 4); and (4) rate of central city growth.

Definitive results are precluded by the lack of adequate in-

¹ Bogue, Donald J. and Harris, Dorothy L.: *Comparative Population and Urban Research Via Multiple Regression and Covariance Analysis*. Oxford, Ohio, Scripps Foundation for Research in Population Problems and Chicago, Population Research and Training Center, 1954, 75 pp. \$0.90.