



Surveying the Social World: Principles and Practice in Survey Research (Understanding Social Research)

Aldridge

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- * What are the strengths and limitations of social surveys?
- * How can the principles of surveying be put into practice?
- * How are findings analysed and results presented?

The survey has become a widely used technique for gathering information and opinions from individuals, organizations, and other groups. In *Surveying the Social World*, Aldridge and Levine begin by examining the contemporary state of surveys within society and social science methodology, explaining the potential of the survey method and the ways it can be used effectively when resources are limited. They then take the reader systematically through the process of conducting survey research covering in turn, the role of theory, the planning and design of projects, pilot work, access to informants, ethical issues, sampling methods, the preparation of questionnaires, interviewing, the use of computer packages, processing responses, statistical methods of data analysis, and the presentation of findings.

Unlike some rival texts that stress complications and difficulties of conducting social surveys, this book adopts a consciously 'can-do' approach, emphasizing strategies and practical tips. Written in a direct style with a clear structure, each chapter begins with a list of key elements and concludes with summary points, points for reflection and suggestions for further reading. As well as examples of techniques and good practice from a variety of surveys, the authors use their own Travel Survey throughout the book to illustrate the decisions that need to be taken at each stage of the survey process. For the technical topics, there is a glossary containing over 130 technical terms that are highlighted in the text. The result is an essential guide to conducting social surveys for students in the social sciences, and for others who need to carry out a community or organizational survey but who may have no previous training in social research methods or experience of survey work.

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