On July 4, 1997, the Pathfinder module landed on Mars after a 6-month trip from Earth. Within a day, a little vehicle was exploring Martian rocks and soil. Cameras were transmitting live pictures back to Earth, where millions of people were tuned in through their computers to special World Wide Web sites set up for the occasion. Once again, science was transforming our image of the universe and helping us transcend our natural physical and mental limits, just as computers, brain-imaging devices, and nuclear power had done before. It is no exaggeration to say that the physical and natural sciences have forever altered human life and continue to do so. Although social science has nothing like this impact, it
does influence the design of social programs, the course of elections, the composition of juries, the strategies of business, and most important, our understanding of the social world.

Consider the impact of criminological research on the crime of domestic violence. Intimate partner violence (violence between spouses or intimates), sometimes referred to as domestic violence, is a major problem in our society, with police responding to between 2 million and 8 million complaints of assault by a spouse or lover yearly (Sherman 1992:6). Moreover, it is estimated from victimization surveys that many of these assaults are never reported to police (Bachman & Saltzman 1995; Tjaden & Thoennes 2000). Domestic violence is not just a frequent crime; it is also costly not only in terms of the injuries suffered by the parties involved but also in terms of shattered families. What to do about this major social problem, then, is an important policy question. One thing the police could do would be to respond to incidents of domestic violence in such a way that the offender would be less likely to be violent in the future. That is, proper police response could possibly prevent some acts of domestic violence. But what is the proper police response?

In 1981, the Police Foundation and the Minneapolis Police Department began an experiment to determine whether arresting accused spouse abusers on the spot would deter future offending incidents. In responding to police calls for service in misdemeanor domestic cases, the responding officer randomly assigned the case to be resolved by either arresting or not arresting the suspect on the scene. The experimental treatment, then, was whether the suspect was arrested, and the researchers wanted to know whether arrest was better than not arresting the suspect in reducing recidivism (subsequent assaults against the same victim). The study’s results, which were widely publicized, indicated that arrest did have a deterrent effect. Partly as a result of the reported results of this experiment, the percentage of urban police departments that made arrest the preferred response to complaints of domestic violence rose from 10% in 1984 to 90% in 1988 (Sherman 1992:14). Six other cities then hosted studies like the Minneapolis experiment (collectively, this was called the Spouse Assault Replication Program [SARP]), but the results were not always so clear-cut as in the original study (Buzawa & Buzawa 1996; Hirsche, Hutchison, & Dean 1992; Pate & Hamilton 1992; Sherman 1992; Sherman & Berk 1984). In some cities (and for some people), arrest did seem to prevent future incidents of domestic assault; in other cities, it seemed only to make matters worse, contributing to additional assault; and in still other cities, arrest seemed to have no discernable effect. After these replications of the original Minneapolis experiment, people still wondered, “Just what is the effect of arrest in reducing domestic violence cases, and how should the police respond to such cases?” The answer was not clear. The Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment, the studies modeled after it, and the related controversies provide many examples for a systematic overview of the social research process.

The first concern in criminological research (indeed in any research) is deciding what to study. That is, how does one go about selecting an issue, problem, or question to address with research? As you will learn in the next section, one source of the motivation to do research is criminological theory. In criminology, as in any other science, theory plays an important role as a basis for formulating research questions and later understanding the larger implications of one’s research results. Another motivation for research is one’s personal interests. There is nothing wrong with researching those issues that you find fascinating or interesting. There are other motivational sources for research that we will explore in this chapter.
including helping to answer questions illuminated by earlier research. In this chapter we use
the Minneapolis experiment and the SARP replication research to illustrate the three main
research strategies: deductive, inductive, and descriptive research. In all three, theory and data
are inextricably linked. The chapter ends with scientific and ethical guidelines that should
be adhered to no matter what the research strategy, and shows how the Minneapolis exper-
iment followed these guidelines. By the chapter’s end, you should be ready to formulate a
criminological research question, design a general strategy for answering this question, and
critique previous studies that addressed this question. You can think of Chapter 1 as having
introduced the “why” of criminological research; Chapter 2 introduces the “how.”

CRIMINOLOGICAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How does a criminologist decide what to study and research? A criminological research
question is a question about some aspect of crime or criminals that you seek to answer
through the collection and analysis of firsthand, verifiable, empirical data. The types of
questions that can be asked are virtually limitless. For example, “Are children who are
violent more likely than nonviolent children to use violence as adults?” “Does the race of
victim who is killed influence whether someone is sentenced to death rather than life
imprisonment?” “Why do some kinds of neighborhoods have more crime than others? Is
it due to the kinds of people who live there or characteristics of the neighborhood itself?”
“Does community policing reduce the crime rate?” “Has the U.S. government’s war on drugs
done anything to reduce the use of illegal drugs?” So many research questions are possible
in criminology that it is more of a challenge to specify what does not qualify as a social
research question than to specify what does.

But that does not mean it is easy to specify a research question. In fact, formulating
a good research question can be surprisingly difficult. We can break the process into
three stages: identifying one or more questions for study, refining the questions, and then
evaluating the questions.

Identifying Criminological Research Questions

Formulating a research question is often an intensely personal process in addition to being
a scientific or professional one. Research questions may emerge from your “personal trou-
bles,” as Mills (1959) put it, or your personal experiences. These troubles or experiences
could range from how you felt when you were picked up by the police and perhaps arrested
when you were a teenager for something you did not do, to the awareness you may have
that crime is not randomly distributed within a city but that there seem to be “good” or safe
parts of town and “bad” or unsafe areas. You may find yourself asking questions such as “Do
the police sometimes make things worse for people when they arrest them, worse in the
sense that they are more likely to commit crime in the future?” or “Does victimization
change a person’s trust in others?” or “Does involvement in crime vary by one’s age, social
class, gender, or racial or ethnic group?” Can you think of other possible research questions
that flow from your own experience in the world?
The experience of others is another fruitful source of research questions. Knowing a relative who was abused by a spouse, seeing a TV special about violence, or reading a gang member’s autobiography can stimulate questions about general criminological processes. Can you draft a research question based on a relative’s experiences, a TV show, or a book?

Other researchers may also pose interesting questions for you to study. Most research articles end with some suggestions for additional research that highlight unresolved issues. For example, Sherman et al. (1992) concluded an article on some of the replications of the Minneapolis experiment on police responses to spouse abuse by suggesting that “deterrence may be effective for a substantial segment of the offender population. . . . However, the underlying mechanisms remain obscure” (p. 706). A new study could focus on the mechanisms: Why or under what conditions does the arrest of offenders who are employed deter them from future criminal acts? Exactly what occurs when someone is arrested for domestic violence that may lead him or her not to be violent against a spouse in the future? Is it the brute fear of being arrested and having to go to jail? Is it the fear that one’s employer may find out and fire him or her? Is it the fear that members of the community may learn about the arrest and the offender does not want to lose his or her good standing in the neighborhood? Is it all these? Any issue of a journal in your field is likely to have comments that point toward unresolved issues.

The primary source of research questions for many criminologists is criminological theory. As you will soon learn, criminological theory provides an explanation as to why crime occurs, or occurs in some places and under some conditions but not others. Theory, then, is a very rich source of research ideas. Some researchers spend much of their careers conducting research intended to refine an answer to one central question. For example, you may find rational choice theory to be a useful approach to understanding diverse forms of social behavior, like crime, because you think people do seem to make decisions on the basis of personal cost-benefit calculations. So you may ask whether rational choice theory can explain why some people commit crimes and others do not, or why some people decide to quit committing crimes while others continue their criminal ways.

Finally, some research questions have very pragmatic sources. You may focus on a research question posed by someone else because doing so seems to be to your professional advantage. Some criminologists conduct research on specific questions posed by a funding source in what is termed a request for proposals (RFP). (Sometimes the acronym RFA is used, meaning request for applications.) Or you may learn that the public defenders in your city are curious as to whether they are more successful in getting their clients acquitted of a criminal charge than private lawyers.

**Refining Criminological Research Questions**

As you have perhaps surmised by now, the problem is not so much coming up with interesting criminological questions for research as it is focusing on a problem of manageable size. We are often interested in much more than we can reasonably investigate with our limited time and resources (or the limited resources of a funding agency). Researchers may worry about staking a research project (and thereby a grant) on a particular problem and so address several research questions at once, often in a jumbled fashion. It may also seem risky to focus on a research question that may lead to results discrepant with our own
cherished assumptions about the social world. In addition, the prospective commitment of
time and effort for some research questions may seem overwhelming, resulting in a certain
degree of paralysis (not that the authors have any experience with this!).

The best way to avoid these problems is to develop the research question one bit at a time
with a step-by-step strategy. Do not keep hoping that the perfect research question will just
spring forth from your pen. Instead, develop a list of possible research questions as you go
along. At the appropriate time, you can look through this list for the research questions that
appear more than once. Narrow your list to the most interesting, most workable candidates.
Repeat this process as long as it helps to improve your research questions. Keep in mind that
the research you are currently working on will likely generate additional research questions
for you to answer.

**Evaluating Criminological Research Questions**

In the third stage of selecting a criminological research question, you evaluate the best
candidate against the criteria for good social research questions: feasibility given the
time and resources available, social importance, and scientific relevance (King, Keohane, &
Verba 1994).

The research question in the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment, “Does the
formal sanction of police arrest versus non-arrest inhibit domestic violence?” certainly
meets the criteria of social importance and scientific relevance, but it would not be a fea-
sible question for a student project because it would require you to try to get the coopera-
tion of a police department. You might instead ask the question “Do people (students) think
that arrest will inhibit domestic violence?” This is a question that you could study with an
on-campus survey. Or perhaps you could work out an arrangement with a local battered
women’s shelter to study the question “What leads some women to call the police when
they are the victims of domestic violence, and why do they sometimes not call?” A review
of the literature, however, might convince you that this and other questions may not be
scientifically relevant because they have been studied enough.

**Feasibility**

You must be able to conduct any study within the time frame and resources you have. If time
is short, questions that involve long-term change may not be feasible, for example, “If a state
has recently changed its law so that it now permits capital punishment for those convicted
of murder, does it eventually see a reduction in the homicide rate over time?” This is an inter-
esting and important question, but one that requires years of data collection and research.
Another issue is what people or groups you can expect to gain access to. Although well-
experienced researchers may be granted access to police or correctional department files to
do their research, less seasoned and well-known researchers or students may not be granted
such access. It is also often difficult for even the most experienced of researchers to be given
full access to the deliberations of a criminal jury. For someone interested in white-collar crime,
recording the interactions that take place in corporate boardrooms may also be taboo.

Then you must consider whether you will have any additional resources, such as other
researchers to collaborate with or research funds. Remember that there are severe limits on
what one person can accomplish. On the other hand, you might work in an organization that collects data on employees, customers, or clients that are relevant to your research interests. Or you may be able to piggyback your research onto a larger research project.

You also must be prepared to handle large amounts of quantitative data. A computer and the skills to use it will be essential. Also take into account the constraints you face due to your schedule and other professional or personal commitments and obligations.

The Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment shows how ambitious social research questions can be when a team of seasoned researchers secures the backing of influential groups. The project required hundreds of thousands of dollars, the collaboration of many social scientists and criminal justice personnel, and the volunteer efforts of 41 Minneapolis police officers. But don’t worry, many worthwhile research questions can be investigated with much more limited resources. You will read in subsequent chapters about studies that addressed important research questions with much fewer resources than the Minneapolis social scientists commanded.

Social Importance

Criminological research is not a simple undertaking, so you must focus on a substantive area that you feel is important and that is either important to the discipline or important for public policy. You also need to feel personally motivated to carry out the study; there is little point in trying to answer a question that does not interest you.

In addition, you should consider whether the research question is important to other people. Will an answer to the research question make a difference for society? Again, the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment is an exemplary case. If that study showed that a certain type of police response to domestic violence reduced the risk of subsequent victimization, a great deal of future violence could be prevented. But clearly, criminology and criminal justice are not wanting for important research questions. Social scientists deal with such important issues as the effect of get-tough “three strikes” laws, whether strict supervision of those on parole and probation is more successful than less strict (and less costly) supervision, whether the death penalty deters criminals, whether gangs or the drug trade contributed to the rise in youth violence, whether crime is more prevalent in the United States than in European countries, whether gun control legislation reduces violence; we could go on and on. Many criminological questions deal with very important and troubling issues for our society.

Scientific Relevance

Every research question in criminology should be grounded in the existing empirical literature. By grounded we mean the research we do must be informed by what others before us have done on the topic. Whether you formulate a research question because you have been stimulated by an academic article or because you want to investigate a current public policy problem, you must turn to the criminological literature to find out what has already been learned about this question. (Appendix A explains how to find information about previous research, using both printed and computer-based resources.) Even if your research topic has already been investigated by someone else, that does not necessarily mean it
would be a bad idea for you to do research on the issue. It would be unreasonable to think of any criminological research question as being settled for all time. You can be sure that some prior study is relevant to almost any research question you can think of, and you can also think of better ways to do research than have been done in the past.

For example, the Minneapolis experiment was built on a substantial body of contradictory theorizing about the impact of punishment on criminality (Sherman & Berk 1984). Deterrence theory predicted that because it was a more severe penalty, arrest would better deter individuals from repeat offenses than not arresting them. Labeling theory, on the other hand, predicted that arrest would make repeat offenses more likely because it would stigmatize offenders. The researchers found one prior experimental study of this issue, but it was conducted with juveniles. Studies among adults and nonexperimental research had not yielded consistent findings about the effects of arrest on recidivism in domestic violence cases. Clearly, the Minneapolis researchers had good reason for another study. Prior research and theory also helped them develop the most effective research design.

THE ROLE OF CRIMINOLOGICAL THEORY

We have already pointed out that criminological theory can be a rich source of research questions. What deserves more attention at this point is the larger role of theory in research. Criminological theories do many things:

- They help us explain or understand things like why some people commit crimes or more crimes than others; why some people quit and others continue; and what the expected effect of good families, harsh punishment, or other factors on crime might be.
- They help us make predictions about the criminological world: “What would be the expected effect on the homicide rate if we employed capital punishment rather than life imprisonment?” “What would be the effect on the rate of property crimes if unemployment were to substantially increase?”
- They help us organize and make sense of empirical findings in a discipline.
- They help guide research.
- They help guide public policy: “What should we do to reduce the level of domestic violence?”

Social scientists, such as criminologists, who connect their work to theories in their discipline can generate better ideas about what to look for in a study and develop conclusions with more implications for other research. Building and evaluating theory is therefore one of the most important objectives of a social science like criminology.

Theory A logically interrelated set of propositions about empirical reality. Examples of criminological theories are social learning, routine activities, labeling, general strain, and social disorganization theory.
For centuries, scholars have been interested in developing theories about crime and criminals. Sometimes these theories involve very fanciful ideas that are not well developed or organized, whereas at other times they strike us as being very compelling and well organized. Theories usually contain what are called theoretical constructs. In criminology, these theoretical constructs describe what is important to look at to understand, explain, predict, and “do something about” crime. For example, an important theoretical construct in differential association theory is the notion of “definitions favorable and unfavorable to the violation of law.” Theories usually link one or more theoretical constructs to others in what are called relationship statements. Differential association theory, for example, would link the theoretical construct of favorable or unfavorable definitions to the theoretical construct of involvement in crime to argue: “As one is exposed to more definitions favorable to the violation of law relative to definitions unfavorable to the violation of law, the more one is at risk for criminal behavior.” This is a relationship statement that links two theoretical constructs; it states that as exposure to definitions favorable to the law increases, the risk of crime also increases. This is essentially a hypothesis that the theory of differential association entertains; if the theory is true, then the expected relationship should be true. The purpose of much criminological research is to examine the truth value, or empirical validity, of such theoretical relationship statements or hypotheses. Some criminological theories reflect a substantial body of research and the thinking of many social scientists; others are formulated in the course of one investigation. A few have been widely accepted, at least for a time; others are the subject of vigorous controversy, with frequent changes and refinements in response to criticism and new research.

Most criminological research is guided by some theory, although the theory may be only partially developed in a particular study or may even be unrecognized by the researcher. When researchers are involved in conducting a research project or engrossed in writing a research report, they may easily lose sight of the larger picture. It is easy to focus on accumulating or clarifying particular findings rather than considering how the study’s findings fit into a more general understanding of the social world. Furthermore, as we shall soon see, just as theory guides research, research findings also influence the development of theory.

We can use the studies of the police response to domestic assault to illustrate the value of theory for social research. Even in this very concrete and practical matter, we must draw on social theories to understand how people act and what should be done about those actions. Consider the three action options that police officers have when they confront a domestic assault suspect (Sherman & Berk 1984:263). Fellow officers might urge forced separation to achieve short-term peace; police trainers might prefer mediation to resolve the underlying dispute; feminist groups might urge arrest to protect the victim. None of these recommendations is really a theory, but each suggests a different perspective on crime and legal sanctions. The traditional police perspective sees domestic violence as a family matter that should not be the object of formal legal action. The preference for medication reflects the view that domestic violence involves a family crisis that can be solved with special counseling. The pro-arrest position views domestic violence as a crime as serious as that between strangers and favors arrest for its presumed deterrent effect.

You will encounter these different perspectives if you read much of the literature on domestic violence, or even if you talk with your friends about it. As Exhibit 2.1 shows, each perspective reflects different assumptions about gender roles, about the sources of crime,
and about the impact of punishment. In turn, these assumptions reflect different experiences with family conflict, police actions, and the legal system. What we believe about one crime and the appropriate response to it relates to a great many other ideas we have about the social world. Recognizing these relationships is a first step toward becoming a theoretically guided social researcher and a theoretically informed consumer of social research.

Remember, however, that social theories do not provide the answers to the questions we confront as we formulate topics for research. Instead, social theories suggest the areas on which we should focus and the propositions that we should consider for a test. That is, theories suggest testable hypotheses about things and research verifies whether those hypotheses are true. In fact, one of the most important requirements of theory is that it be testable, or what philosophers of science call falsifiable; theoretical statements must be capable of being proven wrong. If a body of thought cannot be empirically tested, it is more likely philosophy than theory. For example, Sherman and Berk’s (1984) domestic violence research was actually a test of predictions derived from two alternative theories of the impact of punishment on crime, deterrence theory and labeling theory:

Deterrence theory presumes that human beings are at least marginally rational beings who are responsive to the expected costs and benefits of their actions. Committing a crime nets certain benefits for offenders; therefore, if we want to inhibit crime, there must be a compensating cost; one cost is the criminal sanction (arrest, conviction, punishment). Deterrence theory expects punishment to inhibit crime in two ways. General deterrence occurs when people see that crime results in undesirable punishments for others, that “crime doesn’t pay.” The persons who are punished serve as examples for those who have not yet committed an offense but might be thinking of what awaits them should they engage in proscribed acts. Specific deterrence occurs when persons who are punished decide not to commit another offense so they can avoid further punishment (Lempert & Sanders 1986:86–87). Deterrence theory leads to the prediction that arresting spouse

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**EXHIBIT 2.1 Bases for Three Perspectives on Intimate Partner Violence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Police officers</th>
<th>“Temporary separation of the couple will bring short-term peace.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police trainers</td>
<td>Experiences with family conflict, police actions, the legal system, and so on Assumptions about gender roles, source of crime, impact of punishment, and so on “Mediation and counseling will resolve family problems.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist and Victims’ Rights activists</td>
<td>“Arresting spouse abusers will have a deterrent effect.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
abusers will reduce the likelihood of their reoffending when compared with a less serious sanction (not being arrested but being warned or counseled).

Labeling theory distinguishes between primary deviance, the acts of individuals that lead to public sanctions, and secondary deviance, the deviance that occurs in response to public sanction (Hagan 1994:33). Arrest or some other public sanction for misdeeds labels the offender as deviant in the eyes of others. Once the offender is labeled, others will treat the offender as a deviant, and he or she is then more likely to act in a way that is consistent with the deviant label. Ironically, the act of punishment stimulates more of the very behavior that it was intended to eliminate (Tannenbaum 1938). This theory suggests that persons arrested for intimate partner violence are more likely to reoffend than those who are caught but not punished because the formal sanction of arrest is more stigmatizing than being warned or counseled. This prediction about the effect of formal legal sanctions is the reverse of the deterrence theory prediction.

Theorizing about the logic behind formal legal punishment also can help us draw connections to more general theories about social processes. Deterrence theory reflects the assumptions of rational choice theory, which assumes behavior is shaped by practical calculations: People break the law if the benefits of doing so exceed the costs. If crime is a rational choice for some people, then increasing the certainty or severity of punishment for crime should shift the cost-benefit balance away from criminal behavior. Labeling theory is rooted in symbolic interactionism, which focuses on the symbolic meanings that people give to behavior (Hagan 1994:40). Instead of assuming that some forms of behavior are deviant in and of themselves (Scull 1988:678), symbolic interactionists would view deviance as a consequence of the application of rules and sanctions to an offender (Becker 1963:9). Exhibit 2.2 summarizes how these general theories relate to the question of whether to arrest spouse abusers.

EXHIBIT 2.2 Two Social Theories and Their Predictions About the Effect of Arrest for Intimate Partner Assault

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical assumption</th>
<th>Rational Choice Theory</th>
<th>Symbolic Interactionism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People’s behavior is shaped by calculations of the costs and benefits of their actions.</td>
<td>People give symbolic meanings to objects, behaviors, and other people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminological component</td>
<td>Deterrence theory: People break the law if the benefits of doing so outweigh the costs.</td>
<td>Labeling theory: People label offenders as deviant, promoting further deviance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prediction (effect of arrest for domestic assault)</td>
<td>Abusing spouse, having seen the costs of abuse (namely, arrest), decides not to abuse again.</td>
<td>Abusing spouse, having been labeled as “an abuser,” abuses more often.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Does either deterrence theory or labeling theory make sense to you as an explanation for the impact of punishment? Do they seem consistent with your observations of social life? Over a decade after Sherman and Berk’s (1984) study, Paternoster et al. (1997) decided to study punishment of domestic violence from a different perspective. They turned to a social psychological theory called procedural justice theory, which explains law-abidingness as resulting from a sense of duty or morality (Tyler 1990). People obey the law from a sense of obligation that flows from seeing legal authorities as moral and legitimate. From this perspective, individuals who are arrested seem less likely to reoffend if they are treated fairly, irrespective of the outcome of their case, because fair treatment will enhance their view of legal authorities as moral and legitimate. Procedural justice theory expands our view of the punishment process by focusing attention on how police act and how authorities treat subjects, rather than just on the legal decisions they make. Thus, it gives us a sense of the larger importance of the research question.

Are you now less certain about the likely effect of arrest for intimate partner violence? Will arrest decrease abuse because abusers do not wish to suffer from legal sanctions again? Will it increase abuse because abusers feel stigmatized by being arrested and thus are more likely to act like criminals? Or will arrest reduce abuse only if the abusers feel they have been treated fairly by the legal authorities? By suggesting such questions, social theory makes us much more sensitive to the possibilities and so helps us to design better research. Before, during, and after a research investigation, we need to keep thinking theoretically.

SOCIAL RESEARCH STRATEGIES

All social research, including criminological research, is the effort to connect theory and empirical data, the evidence we find in the real world. As Exhibit 2.3 shows, theory and data have a two-way, mutually reinforcing relationship. Research that begins with a theory implying that certain data should be found involves deductive reasoning, which moves from general ideas (theory) to specific reality (data). In contrast, inductive reasoning moves from the specific to the general.

Both deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning are essential to criminologists. We cannot test an idea fairly unless we use deductive reasoning, stating our expectations in advance and setting up a test in which our idea could be shown to be wrong (falsified). A theory that has not survived these kinds of tests can be regarded only as very tentative. Yet theories, no matter how cherished, cannot make useful predictions for every social situation or research problem that we seek to investigate. Moreover, we may find unexpected patterns in the data we collect, called serendipitous findings or anomalous findings. In either situation, we should reason inductively, making whatever theoretical sense we can of our unanticipated findings. Then, if the new findings seem sufficiently important, we can return to deductive reasoning and plan a new study to formally test our new ideas.

The Research Circle

This process of conducting research, moving from theory to data and back again, or from data to theory and back again, can be characterized as a research circle. Exhibit 2.4 depicts
this circle. Note that it mirrors the relationship between theory and data shown in Exhibit 2.3 and that it comprises three main research strategies: deductive research, inductive research, and descriptive research.
Deductive Research

As Exhibit 2.4 shows, deductive research proceeds from theorizing to data collection and then back to theorizing. In essence, a specific expectation is deduced from a general premise and then tested.

Notice that a theory leads first to a hypothesis, which is a specific implication deduced from the more general theory. Researchers actually test a hypothesis, not the complete theory itself, because theories usually contain many hypotheses. As we stated earlier, a hypothesis proposes a relationship between two or more theoretical constructs or variables. A variable is a characteristic or property that can vary. A constant is a characteristic or a property that cannot vary. For example, if we were to conduct some research in a male adult penitentiary, the theoretical construct “type of crime committed” would be a variable because persons will have been incarcerated for different offenses (one person is in for armed robbery, another for rape, etc.). However, the theoretical construct “gender” would be a constant because every inmate in the penitentiary would be male; gender does not vary, it is constant. Would age be a variable or a constant in this group? Would “criminal status” (offender or nonoffender) be a variable or a constant?

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**Hypothesis** A tentative statement about empirical reality, involving a relationship between two or more variables.

**Example of a hypothesis:** The higher the level of residential mobility in a community, the higher its rate of crime.

**Variable** A characteristic or property that can vary (take on different values or attributes).

**Constant** A characteristic or property that does not vary but takes on only one value.

Variables are of critical importance in research because in a hypothesis, variation in one variable is proposed to predict, influence, or cause variation in the other variable. The proposed influence is the independent variable; its effect or consequence is the dependent variable. After the researchers formulate one or more hypotheses and develop research procedures, they collect data with which to test the hypothesis.

**Independent variable** A variable that is hypothesized to cause, or lead to, variation in another variable.

**Example of an independent variable:** Residential mobility (residents moving in and out of the community).

**Dependent variable** A variable that is hypothesized to vary depending on or under the influence of another variable.

**Example of a dependent variable:** The rate of crime in a community per 1,000 residents.
Hypotheses can be worded in several different ways, and identifying the independent and dependent variables is sometimes difficult. When in doubt, try to rephrase the hypothesis as an if-then statement: “If the independent variable increases (or decreases), then the dependent variable increases (or decreases).” Exhibit 2.5 presents several hypotheses with their independent and dependent variables and their if-then equivalents.

Exhibit 2.5 demonstrates another feature of hypotheses: direction of association. When researchers hypothesize that one variable increases as the other variable increases, the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Hypothesis</th>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>If-Then Hypothesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The greater the social disorganization in a community, the higher the rate of crime.</td>
<td>Social disorganization</td>
<td>Crime rate</td>
<td>If social disorganization is higher, then the crime rate is higher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. As one’s self-control gets stronger, the fewer delinquent acts one commits.</td>
<td>Self-control</td>
<td>Self-reported delinquency</td>
<td>If self-control is higher, then the number of delinquent acts is lower.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. As the unemployment rate in a community decreases, the community rate of property crime decreases.</td>
<td>Unemployment rate</td>
<td>Rate of property crime</td>
<td>If the unemployment rate is lower, then the rate of property crime is lower.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. As the discrepancy between one’s aspirations and expectations increases, one’s level of strain increases.</td>
<td>Discrepancy between one’s aspirations and expectations</td>
<td>Strain</td>
<td>If the discrepancy between one’s aspirations and expectations is high, then the level of strain is high.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Crime is lower in those communities where the police patrol on foot.</td>
<td>Presence of foot patrols</td>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>If a community has police foot patrols, then the level of crime is lower.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
direction of the association is positive (Hypotheses 1 and 4 in the exhibit); when one variable decreases as the other variable decreases, the direction of association is also positive (Hypothesis 3). In positive relationships, then, the independent and dependent variables move in the same direction (as one increases, the other increases, or as one decreases, the other decreases). But when one variable increases as the other decreases, or vice versa, the direction of association is negative, or inverse (Hypothesis 2). In a negative relationship, then, the independent and dependent variables move in opposite directions (as one increases, the other decreases, or as one decreases, the other increases). Hypothesis 5 is a special case, in which the independent variable is categorical. The independent variable cannot be said to increase or decrease. In this case, the concept of direction of association does not apply, and the hypothesis simply states that one category of the independent variable is associated with higher values on the dependent variable.

You can get a better sense of what the direction of a relationship means by looking at Exhibits 2.6 through 2.10, which correspond to the five hypotheses shown in Exhibit 2.5. In these graphs, the independent variable is displayed as the x or horizontal axis and the dependent variable is displayed as the y or vertical axis. Exhibit 2.6 illustrates the hypothesis that social disorganization and a community’s crime rate are positively related. The positive association implies that as social disorganization (the independent variable) increases (moves from being low to being high), the expected change is that the dependent variable will also increase (move from being low to high). This is the same thing as saying that as the level of social disorganization in a community moves from low to high, the level of crime also moves from low to high. In other words, the more social disorganization, the more crime. Notice that in a positive relationship, the independent and dependent variables are moving in the same direction; as social disorganization increases, so does crime. This positive relationship is shown in Exhibit 2.6 as an upward sloping line in the graph.

Exhibit 2.7 illustrates a graph for a negative association. This graph shows that as one’s self-control becomes high (where more self-control means greater restraint over one’s
impulses), then the number of delinquent acts one commits declines or moves to low. This means that as self-control increases or strengthens, the frequency of delinquent behavior declines or decreases in number. Notice two things about this negative relationship. First, the independent and dependent variables move in opposite directions; as the independent variable (self-control) increases, the dependent variable (delinquency) decreases. Notice also that this negative relationship is shown as a downward sloping line in the graph.

Exhibit 2.8 illustrates a positive relationship but the hypothesis is stated differently. Hypothesis 3 in Exhibit 2.5 states that as the unemployment rate in a community decreases,
the rate of property crime in that community is also expected to decrease. Now, this is a positive relationship because the two variables move in the same direction; as the independent variable (unemployment) decreases, so does the dependent variable (the rate of property crime). As with Exhibit 2.6, this positive relationship is seen in an upward sloping line. Note that we could have expressed this hypothesis differently, and more similarly to Hypothesis 1, by stating, “As the level of unemployment in a community increases, the rate of property crime also increases.” This, too, is a positive relationship, because the variables are again moving in the same direction.

Exhibit 2.9 corresponds to Hypothesis 4 in Exhibit 2.5, and illustrates another positive relationship. The hypothesis states that as the discrepancy between what one aspires to obtain and what one expects to obtain gets greater (moves from low to high), the level of strain the person feels also increases. Again, the independent and dependent variables move in the same direction, so the relationship or association between them is positive. Notice, we could have expressed this identical positive relationship slightly differently, by stating, “As the discrepancy between aspirations and expectations decreases, the level of strain decreases.” Had we stated the hypothesis in this way, the graph would look exactly the same.

Finally, Exhibit 2.10 illustrates a relationship with a graph that is slightly different from Exhibits 2.6 through 2.9. Here, the hypothesis (Hypothesis 5 in Exhibit 2.5) states that we expect to see lower crime in communities that have foot patrols compared with communities that do not have foot patrols. Unlike the other independent variables, the independent variable foot patrol does not vary from low to high: Either there are foot patrols in the community or there are not. If the hypothesis is true, what we should expect to see is that most of the communities that do not have foot patrols should have high rates of crime, whereas most of those communities that do have foot patrols should have lower rates of crime. This expectation is shown in Exhibit 2.10 with the clump of points (representing communities)
EXHIBIT 2.10 Relationship Between Foot Patrols and Crime

for the “no foot patrol” communities at the high range of crime and the clump of points for the “yes foot patrol” communities at the low range of crime.

The motives for deductive research include both explanation and evaluation (as described in Chapter 1). An example of explanatory deductive research is the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment, in which Sherman and Berk (1984) sought to explain what sort of response by the authorities might keep a spouse abuser from repeating the offense. The researchers deduced from deterrence theory the expectation that arrest would deter domestic violence. They then collected data to test this expectation.

An example of evaluative deductive research is the study of the Second Step violence prevention curriculum, by Grossman et al. (1997), that was discussed in Chapter 1. The developers of the Second Step program had deduced from previous research in the violence prevention literature that violence in children could be inhibited if they learned and had practice with empathy, impulse control, and anger management. Based on this trinity of approaches, Second Step was devised to reduce the expressed violence among those children in the program. Grossman et al. collected data to test this expectation. They did find that physically aggressive behavior was lower among those children in the program than among a comparable group not exposed to the curriculum. Even though they began not with an explicit theory of violence prevention but with a mass of previous research findings, the developers of the Second Step program did begin with some ideas about what would work in inhibiting the violent behavior of young children. The evaluation by Grossman et al. confirmed those ideas.

In both explanatory and evaluative research, the statement of expectations for the findings and the design of the research to test these expectations strengthens the confidence we can place in the test. The deductive researcher shows her hand or states her expectations in advance and then designs a fair test of those expectations. Then “the chips fall where they may”; in other words, the researcher accepts the resulting data as a more or less objective picture of reality.
Inductive Research

In contrast to deductive research, **inductive research** begins at the bottom of the research circle and then works upward (see Exhibit 2.4). The inductive researcher begins with specific data, which are then used to develop (induce) a general explanation (a theory) to account for the data. The patterns in the data are then summarized in one or more **empirical generalizations** that can be compared to the hypothesis. If the empirical generalizations are those stated in the hypothesis, then the theory from which the hypothesis was deduced is supported. If the empirical generalizations are inconsistent with the hypothesis, then the theory is not supported (Wallace 1971:18).

The motive for inductive research is exploration. In Chapter 1, you read about an exploratory study of individuals’ responses to an incident involving a school shooting (Asmussen & Creswell 1995). The incident took place at a public university where a gunman tried to shoot the students in his class. Fortunately, the gun jammed, and all the students escaped uninjured. Because there was very little previous work in this area, Asmussen and Creswell (1995) conducted in-depth interviews with the students and tried to classify typical responses to the situation. Although the researchers did not develop a theory from their work, they did develop a classification scheme or taxonomy of different responses to traumatic events.

In strictly inductive research, the researcher already knows what he has found when he starts theorizing, or attempting to explain what accounts for these findings. The result can be new insights and provocative questions. But the adequacy of an explanation formulated after the fact is necessarily less certain than an explanation presented prior to the collection of data. Every phenomenon can always be explained in some way. Inductive explanations are thus more trustworthy if they are tested subsequently with deductive research.

A Qualitative Exploration of the Response to Domestic Violence

Qualitative research is often inductive: The researchers begin by observing social interaction or interviewing social actors in depth and then developing an explanation for what has been found. The researchers often ask questions like “What is going on here?” “How do people interpret these experiences?” or “Why do people do what they do?” Rather than testing a hypothesis, the researchers are trying to make sense of some social phenomenon. Bennet, Goodman, and Dutton (1999) used this approach to investigate one of the problems that emerge when police arrest domestic batterers: The victims often decide not to press charges. Bennett et al. did not set out to test hypotheses with qualitative interviews (there was another, hypothesis-testing component in their research), but sought, inductively, to “add the voice of the victim to the discussion” and present “themes that emerged from [the] interviews” (p. 762).

Research assistants interviewed 49 victims of domestic violence in one court; Lauren Bennett also worked in the same court as a victim advocate. The researchers were able to cull from their qualitative data four reasons why victims became reluctant to press charges: Some were confused by the court procedures, others were frustrated by the delay, some were paralyzed by fear of retribution, and others did not want to send the batterer to jail.

Explanations developed inductively from qualitative research can feel authentic because we have heard what people have to say “in their own words” and we have tried to see the social world “as they see it.” One victim interviewed by Bennett, Goodman, and Dutton
(1999) felt that she “was doing time instead of the defendant”; another expressed her fear by saying that she would like “to keep him out of jail if that's what it takes to keep my kids safe” (pp. 768–769). Explanations derived from qualitative research will be richer and more finely textured than those resulting from quantitative research, but they are likely to be based on fewer cases from a limited area. We cannot assume that the people studied in this setting are like others or that other researchers would develop explanations similar to ours to make sense of what was observed or heard. Because we do not initially set up a test of a hypothesis according to some specific rules, another researcher cannot come along and conduct just the same test.

**Descriptive Research**

You learned in Chapter 1 that description is one important motive for social research. Descriptive research can be considered a part of the research circle, even though such research does not involve connecting theory and data. As Exhibit 2.4 indicates, descriptive research starts with data and proceeds only to the stage of making empirical generalizations based on those data.

Valid description is important in its own right, but it is also critical in all research. Description of social phenomena can stimulate more ambitious deductive and inductive research. The Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment was motivated in part by a growing body of descriptive research indicating that spouse abuse is very common. You may recall from Chapter 1 that recent research on the magnitude of youth violence and other problem behaviors is heavily descriptive. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey is an ongoing study that attempts to measure the involvement of a national sample of youth in a wide sweep of antisocial behaviors. This descriptive work is valuable in documenting patterns and trends in violence by American youth throughout the 1990s. Theories will then be developed to account for these patterns and trends.

**Domestic Violence and the Research Circle**

The Sherman and Berk (1984) study of domestic violence that we have been discussing in this chapter is a good example of how the research circle works. In an attempt to determine ways to prevent the recurrence of spouse abuse, the researchers repeatedly linked theory and data, developing both hypotheses and empirical generalizations.

**Phase 1: Deductive Research**

The first phase of Sherman and Berk’s (1984) study was designed to test a hypothesis. According to deterrence theory, punishment will reduce recidivism, or the propensity to commit further crimes. From this theory, Sherman and Berk deduced a specific hypothesis: “Arrest for spouse abuse reduces the risk of repeat offenses.” In this hypothesis, arrest is the independent variable, and variation in the risk of repeat offenses is the dependent variable (it is hypothesized to depend on arrest).

Of course, in another study arrest might be the dependent variable in relation to some other independent variable. For example, in the hypothesis “The greater the rate of layoffs in a community, the higher the frequency of arrest,” the dependent variable is frequency
of arrest. Only within the context of a hypothesis, or a relationship between variables, does it make sense to refer to one variable as dependent and the other as independent.

Sherman and Berk (1984) tested their hypothesis by setting up an experiment in which the police responded to complaints of spouse abuse in one of three ways, one of which was to arrest the offender. When the researchers examined their data (police records for the persons in their experiment), they found that of those arrested for assaulting their spouse, only 13% repeated the offense, compared to a 26% recidivism rate for those who were separated from their spouse by the police without any arrest. This pattern in the data, or empirical generalization, was consistent with the hypothesis that the researchers deduced from deterrence theory. The theory thus received support from the experiment (see Exhibit 2.11).

In designing their study, Sherman and Berk (1984) anticipated an important question: “How valid was the connection they [the researchers] were trying to make between theory and data?” The three dimensions of validity—measurement validity, generalizability, and causal validity—were at issue.

Determining whether spouses were assaulted after the initial police intervention was the key measurement concern. Official records of subsequent assaults by the suspect would provide one measure. But most spousal assaults are not reported to the police, and so research assistants also sought out the victims for interviews every 2 weeks during a 6-month follow-up period. Although fewer than half the victims completed all the follow-up interviews, the availability of the self-report measure allowed the researchers
to shed some light on the validity of the official data. In general, the two measures yielded comparable results, although some discrepancies troubled critics.

The generalizability of the study’s results was the researchers’ greatest concern. Minneapolis is no more a typical U.S. city than any other, and we cannot assume that police policies that are effective in Minneapolis will be equally effective in cities with very different political histories, criminal justice agencies, and population characteristics. Sherman and Berk (1984) warned readers, “External validity will have to wait for replications” (p. 269); that is, for repetitions of the study using the same research methods to answer the same research question.

Finally, Sherman and Berk’s (1984) claims about the causal validity of their results rested primarily on the experimental design they used. The 330 domestic assault cases in the study were handled by the police in one of three ways: an arrest, an order that the offending spouse leave the house for 8 hours, or some type of verbal advice by the police officers. The officers were not allowed to choose which treatment to apply (except in extreme cases, such as when severe injury had occurred or when the spouse had demanded that an arrest be made). Instead, the treatments were carried out by police in random order, according to the color of the next report form on a pad that had been prepared by the researchers.

By insisting on the random assignment of cases to treatments, the researchers tried to ensure that police officers would not arrest just the toughest spouses or the spouses who seemed most obnoxious or the spouses they encountered late in the day. In other words, the random assignment procedure made it unlikely that arrested spouse abusers would differ, on average, from the other spouse abusers except for the fact that they were arrested (although, because of chance factors, the possibility of other differences cannot be completely ruled out). The researchers’ conclusion that arrest caused a lower incidence of repeat offenses therefore seems valid.

**Phase 2: Deductive Research**

Because of their doubts about the generalizability of their results, Sherman, Berk, and new collaborators began to journey around the research circle again, with funding from the National Institute of Justice for replications (repetitions) of the experiment in six more cities. These replications used the same basic research approach but with some improvements. The random assignment process was tightened up in most of the cities so that police officers would be less likely to replace the assigned treatment with a treatment of their own choice. In addition, data were collected about repeat violence against other victims as well as against the original complainant. Some replications also examined different aspects of the arrest process, to see whether professional counseling helped and whether the length of time spent in jail after arrest mattered at all.

By the time results were reported from five of the cities in the new study, a problem was apparent. In three cities—Omaha, Nebraska; Charlotte, North Carolina; and Milwaukee, Wisconsin—researchers were finding long-term increases in domestic violence incidents among arrestees. But in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and Dade County, Florida, the predicted deterrent effects seemed to be occurring (Sherman et al. 1992).

Researchers had now traversed the research circle twice in an attempt to answer the original research question, first in Minneapolis and then in six other cities. But rather than leading to more confidence in deterrence theory, the research results were calling it into
question. Deterrence theory now seemed inadequate to explain empirical reality, at least as the researchers had measured this reality. So the researchers began to reanalyze the follow-up data from several cities to try to explain the discrepant results, thereby starting around the research circle once again (Berk et al. 1992; Pate & Hamilton 1992; Sherman et al. 1992).

**Phase 3: Inductive Research**

At this point, the researchers’ approach became more inductive, and they began trying to make sense of the differing patterns in the data collected in the different cities. Could systematic differences in the samples or in the implementation of arrest policies explain the differing outcomes? Or was the problem an inadequacy in the theoretical basis of their research? Was deterrence theory really the best way to explain the patterns in the data they were collecting?

Sherman et al. (1992) now turned to control theory (Tobin 1957), yet another broad explanation for social behavior. It predicts that having a stake in conformity (resulting from inclusion in social networks at work or in the community) decreases a person’s likelihood of committing crimes. The implication is that people who are employed and married are more likely to be deterred by the threat of arrest than those without such stakes in conformity. This is because an arrest for domestic violence could jeopardize one’s job and one’s marriage, thus making arrest more costly for the employed and married. This is indeed what a reexamination of the data revealed: Individuals who were married and employed were deterred from repeat offenses by arrest, but individuals who were unmarried and unemployed were actually more likely to commit repeat offenses if they were arrested. This was an important theoretical insight, for it suggested that one powerful way that formal sanctions work is that they can potentially trigger informal sanctions or costs (e.g., loss of respect from friends and family).

Now the researchers had traversed the research circle almost three times, a process perhaps better described as a spiral (see Exhibit 2.12). The first two times the researchers had traversed the research circle in a deductive, hypothesis-testing way: They started with theory and then deduced and tested hypotheses. The third time they traversed the research circle in a more inductive, exploratory way: They started with empirical generalizations from the data they had already obtained and then turned to a new theory to account for the unexpected patterns in the data. At this point they believed that deterrence theory makes correct predictions given certain conditions and that another theory, control theory, may specify what these conditions are.

After two and one-half cycles through the research circle, the picture became more complex but also conceptually richer. The researchers came closer to understanding how to inhibit domestic violence. But they cautioned us that their initial question, the research problem, was still not completely answered. Employment status and marital status alone do not measure the strength of social attachments; they also are related to how much people earn and the social standing of victims in court. So perhaps social ties are not really what makes arrest an effective deterrent to domestic violence. The real deterrent may be cost-benefit calculations (“If I have a higher income, jail is more costly to me”) or perceptions about the actions of authorities (“If I am a married woman, judges will treat my complaint more seriously”). More research was still needed (Berk et al. 1992).
Phase 4: Deductive Research

In 1997, Paternoster et al. reexamined data from the Milwaukee Domestic Violence Experiment to test hypotheses derived from yet another theory, procedural justice theory. As explained earlier in this chapter, procedural justice theory predicts that people will comply with the law out of a sense of duty and obligation if they are treated fairly by legal authorities. In the Milwaukee sample, arrest had a criminogenic effect: Those who were arrested were subsequently more likely to abuse their spouses than those who were simply warned. Paternoster et al. (1997) thought that this effect might have been due to the way subjects were treated when they were arrested rather than simply to the fact that they were arrested. One of their hypotheses spells out the reasoning:

Among those persons arrested for spouse assault, those who perceive themselves as being treated in a procedurally unfair manner will be more likely to commit acts of spouse assault in the future than those arrested persons who perceive themselves as being treated in a procedurally fair manner, net of other determinants of violence. (P. 173)

To carry out this study, Paternoster et al. (1997) reexamined data collected earlier in Milwaukee, where the findings had seemed anomalous. However, this reanalysis of the data...
qualifies as deductive research, because the hypotheses were derived from theory and then tested with the data, rather than being induced by the data.

The procedural justice hypotheses were supported: Persons who were arrested in the Milwaukee experiment became more likely to reoffend only if they perceived that they had been treated unfairly by the police. Otherwise, their rate of rearrest was similar to that for the persons who were not arrested. Thus, another element was added to our understanding of the effects of the police response to domestic violence.

Clearly our understanding of effective responses to domestic violence will never truly be complete, but research to date has greatly improved our understanding of this social problem. The future should yield an even better understanding, even though at times it may be hard to make sense out of conflicting findings from different studies. Science is an ongoing enterprise in which findings cumulate and eventually yield greater understanding or even radical revisions in our understanding. Needless to say, researchers do not need to worry about running out of work to do.

GUIDELINES FOR CRIMINOLOGISTS

Any effort to understand the social world is plagued by pitfalls, including (as you learned in Chapter 1) such everyday errors in reasoning as overgeneralization, selective or inaccurate observation, illogical reasoning, and resistance to change. Social scientists, including criminologists, cannot avoid these problems entirely, but they try to minimize their impact by adhering to certain guidelines.

The guidelines followed by social researchers fall into two categories: those that help keep research scientific and those that help keep research ethical. Both types of guidelines are essential for a field of inquiry that seeks empirical generalizations about human society. To point out their value, we use examples from the domestic violence research.

Scientific Guidelines

The following nine guidelines are applicable to any type of scientific research, but they are particularly useful to criminologists and to those who read about criminology and criminal justice. Adherence to these guidelines will reduce the temptation “to project on what is observed whatever [they] want the world to be for [their] own private purposes” (Hoover 1980:131).

1. Test ideas against empirical reality without becoming too personally invested in a particular outcome. This testing approach is reflected in the research process and is implicit in the goal of validity. It contrasts markedly with our everyday methods of figuring things out, in which we typically just react to events as they happen, without paying much attention to whether we really are putting our ideas to a test. Empirical testing requires a neutral and open-minded approach: The scientists are personally disinterested in the outcome and not swayed by the popularity or the social status of those who would prefer other outcomes. This does not mean that the researchers are not personally involved or interested in the research—they
must be—rather, the point is that they cannot have so much invested in a research project personally or professionally that they try in subtle or not-so-subtle ways to affect the outcome.

2. **Plan and carry out investigations systematically.** Social researchers have little hope of conducting a careful test of their ideas if they do not think through in advance how they should go about the test and then proceed accordingly. But a systematic approach is not always easy. For example, Sherman and Berk (1984) needed to ensure that spouse abusers were assigned to be either arrested or not on a random basis, rather than on the basis of the police officers’ personal preferences. So the researchers devised an elaborate procedure using randomly sequenced report sheets in different colors. But the researchers found that police officers did not always follow this systematic procedure. Subsequently, in some replications of the study, the researchers ensured compliance with their research procedures by requiring police officers to call in to a central number to receive the experimentally determined treatment.

3. **Document all procedures, and disclose them publicly.** Social researchers who disclose the methods on which their conclusions rest allow others to evaluate for themselves the likely soundness of these conclusions. Such disclosure is a key feature of science. Again, Sherman and Berk (1984) provide a compelling example. In their research report, after describing the formal research plan, they described at length the apparent slippage from this plan, which occurred primarily because some police officers avoided implementing the random assignment procedure.

4. **Clarify assumptions.** No investigation is complete unto itself; whatever the researcher’s method, the research rests on some background assumptions. Research to determine whether arrest has a deterrent effect assumes that potential law violators think rationally, that they calculate potential costs and benefits prior to committing crimes. When a researcher conducts an election poll, the assumption is that people actually vote for the candidate they say they will vote for. When government unemployment statistics are used to describe the state of the economy, the assumption is that those statistics reflect actual fluctuations in unemployment. By definition, research assumptions are not tested, so we do not know whether they are correct. In fact, researchers themselves do not always recognize the assumptions they are making. By taking the time to think about and to disclose their assumptions, researchers provide important information for those who seek to evaluate the validity of their conclusions.

5. **Specify the meaning of all terms.** Words often have multiple or unclear meanings. Strain, differential association, social disorganization, subculture of violence, problem-oriented policing, and so on can mean different things to different people. Thus, the terms used in scientific research must be defined explicitly and used consistently. For example, Sherman and Berk (1984) identified their focus as misdemeanor domestic assault, not just wife beating. They specified that their work concerned those cases of domestic assault in which severe injury was not involved and both partners were present when police arrived.
6. **Maintain a skeptical stance toward current knowledge.** Scientists may feel very confident about interpretations of the social or natural world that have been supported by repeated investigations, but the results of any particular investigation must be examined critically. A general skepticism about current knowledge stimulates researchers to improve the validity of current research results and expand the frontier of knowledge. For example, in response to questions raised about the Sherman and Berk (1984) study, Sherman and Cohn (1989) discussed 13 problems of the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment in a published critique, weighing carefully the extent to which these problems might have affected its validity. This critique could then stimulate additional research designed to address the problematic aspects of the original research.

7. **Replicate research and accumulate knowledge.** No one study can be viewed as definitive in itself; usually at least some plausible threats to the validity of the conclusions exist. And no conclusion can be understood adequately apart from the larger body of knowledge to which the study is related. Scientific investigations may begin with a half-baked or off-the-wall idea, but a search of the literature for other relevant work must be conducted in short order. The other side of the coin is that the results of scientific research must be published, to serve as a foundation for others who seek to replicate or extend the research. Sherman (1992) reported that when he and his colleagues decided to attempt some replications of their own experiment, they found that another research team was already planning to do so. The process of extending knowledge gained in the Minneapolis experiment had already begun.

8. **Maintain an interest in theory.** Theories organize the knowledge accumulated by numerous investigations into a coherent whole and serve as a guide to future inquiries. Even though much research is purely descriptive, this research can still serve as a basis for others to evaluate different theories. The Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment was devised initially as a test of the competing predictions of deterrence and labeling theory, but the researchers extended their attention to control theory to help them explain unanticipated findings. These theoretical connections make the research much more relevant to other criminologists working to understand different types of crime and social control.

9. **Search for regularities or patterns.** Science is concerned with classes rather than with individuals (except inasmuch as individuals are representatives of a class). Scientists assume that the natural world has some underlying order of relationships, and that every event and individual is not so unique that general principles cannot be discerned (Grinnell 1992:27–29). Individuals are not unimportant to criminologists and other social scientists; Sherman (1992:162–164), for example, described the abuse histories of two men to provide greater insight into why arrest could have different effects for different people. But the goal of elaborating individual cases is to understand social patterns that characterize many individuals.
These general guidelines are only ideals for social research. No particular investigation will follow every guideline exactly. Real investigations by criminologists do not always include much attention to theory, specific definitions of all terms, and so forth. But any study that strays far from these guidelines cannot be considered scientific.

**Ethical Guidelines**

Every methodology (e.g., surveys, experiments, participant observation) has its own unique ethical considerations. As such, we will discuss ethics in all methodology chapters in this text. However, there are some general ethical guidelines that we would like to present here. Every scientific investigation, whether in the natural sciences or in the social sciences, such as criminology and criminal justice, has an ethical dimension. First and foremost, the scientific concern with validity requires that scientists be honest and reveal their methods. (How else could we determine whether the requirement of honesty has been met?) Scientists also have to consider the uses to which their findings will be put. In addition, because criminological research deals with people, such as criminals, criminal suspects, and incarcerated inmates, and controversial topics (involvement in crime), criminologists have some unique ethical concerns.

**Honesty and Openness**

Research distorted by political or personal pressures to find particular outcomes or to achieve the most marketable results is unlikely to be carried out in an honest and open fashion or to achieve valid results. For example, noted English biologist Sir Cyril Burt published fabricated evidence in 1961 that purported to show intelligence is determined primarily by heredity. In the 35 years before Burt’s deliberate falsification was exposed, his study influenced much social science theory and research (and was in part responsible for Burt’s knighthood) (Kamin 1974). Efforts to evaluate the influence of inherited characteristics on people were considerably set back by this fraud.

Being open about one’s research is particularly important when the research is used or influential in public policy matters. For example, an economist, Professor Isaac Ehrlich (1975), who was interested in the study of crime conducted a study that examined whether capital punishment deters murder. Using national data for the time period 1933–1969, Ehrlich concluded that each execution prevented or deterred 7–8 homicides; in other words, Ehrlich claimed that executions saved 7–8 innocent crime victims. This was one of a very few studies at the time to find a deterrent effect for capital punishment. In fact, his results were cited in a U.S. Supreme Court case (Gregg v. Georgia 1976) as evidence in support of deterrence. His reported findings caused both a stir among proponents of capital punishment and skeptical hostility among its critics. Other researchers immediately wanted to reexamine Ehrlich’s data to see how valid his results were. Unfortunately, Ehrlich was not immediately forthcoming with his data. The controversy surrounding his findings grew when other researchers tried to duplicate his findings with data they collected and found that when they analyzed slightly different years, with slightly different variables and sometimes slightly different statistical strategies, the effect of executions changed. In some analyses, executions seemed to deter murder; in some others, it seemed to increase murders.
(what was called a brutalization effect); and in others, it had no discernable effect at all. The controversy about Ehrlich’s findings bubbled for years and might have been resolved much sooner had Ehrlich been more open and forthcoming about his data.

Openness about research procedures and results goes hand in hand with honesty in research design. Openness is also essential if researchers are to learn from the work of others. In spite of this need for openness, some researchers may hesitate to disclose their procedures or results to prevent others from building on their ideas and taking some of the credit. You may have heard of the long legal battle between a U.S. researcher and a French researcher about how credit should be allocated for discovering the AIDS virus. Although such public disputes are unusual, concerns with priority of discovery are common. Scientists are like other people in their desire to be first. Enforcing standards of honesty and encouraging openness about research is the best solution for these problems.

The Uses of Science

Scientists must also consider the extent to which they should publicize their research and the uses to which it is put. Although many scientists believe that personal values should be left outside the laboratory, some argue that it is proper, even desirable, for scientists in their role as citizens to attempt to influence public policy. In other words, if their research has something to say about how things should be done, some scientists feel that they should actively promote their work. Sometimes, however, there is controversy on this point.

Throughout this chapter, we have been talking about one criminological experiment, the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment, which found that arresting domestic violence suspects was more effective in reducing subsequent violence than not arresting them. Although Sherman and Berk (1984) were generally cautious about the kinds of conclusions that should be drawn from their work, they were both active and passive in promoting their findings. Not only was their work published in scientific journals, but it also received widespread publicity in the national media: one of the authors and the Minneapolis chief of police wrote an editorial in the Wall Street Journal recommending that other jurisdictions pass laws similar to Minneapolis’s, and one of the authors contracted with a Minneapolis television station to film a documentary on the research. In their published findings, they concluded,

We favor a presumption of arrest: an arrest should be made unless there are good, clear reasons why an arrest would be counterproductive. We do not, however, favor requiring arrests in all misdemeanor domestic assault cases. (P. 270)

Sherman and Berk (1984) were criticized by other scholars on the basis that the findings of one study are not a sufficient empirical base on which to draw such an important public policy recommendation. In fact, Sherman and Berk did caution that their findings might not be replicated in other locations, and that their position is that police should be able to arrest domestic violence suspects, not that they should be required to. Nevertheless, because Sherman publicized the results of the research in the mass media, he was criticized by some social scientists for implicitly encouraging police departments to change their policies on the basis of preliminary evidence (the results of just one study in one city) (Binder & Meeker
In part, the question was whether basing policy on partial information was preferable to waiting until the information was more complete (more studies conducted in different locations). Sherman (1992:150–153) later pointed out that in the Omaha follow-up study, arrest warrants were very effective in reducing repeat offenses among spouse abusers who had already left the scene when police arrived at the time of the initial complaint. Absent offenders had not been included in the initial study, and because the Omaha finding was not publicized, it did not become known to police chiefs or battered women’s groups. As a consequence, Sherman suggested, some domestic violence that might have been prevented was not prevented. How much publicity is warranted, and at what point in the research is it warranted? He also argued that public policy is better guided by partial knowledge than no knowledge at all.

Criminologists who conduct research on behalf of organizations and agencies may face additional difficulties. When an organization contracts with a researcher to evaluate a program, identify community needs, or explore product potential, usually the organization, not the researcher, controls the final report and the publicity it receives. If organizational leaders decide that particular research results are inconsistent with their funding requests, community image, or employee relations, they may refuse to release the results or require changes that the researcher deems unacceptable. In a situation like this, a researcher’s desire to have findings used appropriately and reported fully can conflict with contractual obligations.

Researchers often can anticipate such dilemmas in advance and resolve them when the contract for research is negotiated, or decline a particular research opportunity altogether if acceptable terms cannot be worked out. But often these problems come up after a report has been drafted, when the researcher finds out that the report is unacceptable to a top-level administrator or executive whom the researcher does not even know. In addition, a researcher’s need to have a job or to maintain particular personal relationships may make it difficult to act in what the researcher thinks is the most ethical manner. A way to minimize these possibilities is to acknowledge the source of research funding in reports and to carefully scrutinize those research reports funded by organizations or agencies with a stake in the outcome.

**Research on People**

In physics or chemistry, research subjects (objects and substances) may be treated to extreme conditions and then discarded when they are no longer useful. However, social (and medical) scientists must concern themselves with the way their human subjects are treated in the course of research. This treatment may involve manipulations and deceptions in laboratory experiments, sensitive questions in survey research, observations in field studies, or analyses of personal data. Here we will briefly review current ethical standards for the treatment of human subjects and dilemmas in their application. In the chapters on data collection, Chapters 5 through 9, we will examine the specific ethical problems that may arise in the course of using particular research methods.

Contemporary standards for the treatment of human subjects are set by the federal government, by professional associations, by special university review boards, and in some cases by ethics committees in other organizations. Federal regulations require that the proposals of researchers seeking federal funds for research on human subjects be reviewed.
by an institutional review board (IRB) before they are submitted for federal review. IRBs at universities and other agencies in turn apply ethics standards set by government agencies, like the National Institutes of Health, and may develop more specific guidelines of their own. The American Society of Criminology (ASC), one of criminology’s professional organizations, is in the process of redrafting its code of ethics, but advises members to seek guidance from similar organizations including the American Sociological Association (ASA). The ASA’s standards (ASA 1997) concerning the treatment of human subjects include federal regulations and ethics guidelines emphasized by most professional social science organizations:

- Research should cause no harm to subjects.
- Participation in research should be voluntary, and therefore subjects must give their informed consent to participate in the research.
- Researchers should fully disclose their identity.
- Anonymity or confidentiality must be maintained for individual research participants, unless it is voluntarily and explicitly waived.
- The benefits of a research project should outweigh any foreseeable risks.

As simple as these guidelines may seem, they are difficult to interpret in specific cases and harder yet to define in a way agreeable to all criminologists. For example, how should we interpret the admonition that no harm should be done to subjects? Does it mean that subjects should not be at all harmed psychologically as well as physically? That they should feel no anxiety or distress during the study or only after their involvement ends? Should the possibility of any harm, no matter how remote, deter research?

Consider the question of possible harm to the subjects of a well-known prison simulation study (Haney, Banks, & Zimbardo 1973). The study was designed to investigate the impact of social position on behavior, specifically, the impact of being either a guard or a prisoner in a prison, a total institution. The researchers selected 20 young men whom they judged to be the most stable and mature, and the least antisocial, of 75 applicants. The participants signed a contract agreeing to be either a guard or a prisoner in a simulated prison for 2 weeks, during which time they would be paid $15 daily and receive food, clothing, housing, and medical care. Some were randomly selected to be guards and were told to maintain order among the prisoners, who were then incarcerated in a makeshift basement prison. Within the first two days, marked differences in behavior emerged between the two groups. The prisoners acted passive and disorganized, and the guards became verbally and physically aggressive (although physical abuse was not allowed) and arbitrary. Five prisoners were soon released for depression, uncontrollable crying, fits of rage, and in one case a psychosomatic rash; on the sixth day the researchers terminated the experiment. Through discussions in special post-experiment encounter sessions, feelings of stress among the participants who played the role of prisoner seemed to the relieved; follow-up during the next year indicated no lasting negative effects on the participants and some benefits in the form of greater insight.

Would you ban such experiments because of the potential for harm to subjects? Does the fact that the experiment yielded significant insights into the effect of a situation on
human behavior, insights that could be used to improve prisons, make any difference (Reynolds 1979:133–139)? Do you believe that this benefit outweighed the foreseeable risks?

The requirement of informed consent is also more difficult to define than it first appears. To be informed, consent must be given by persons who are competent to consent, have consented voluntarily, are fully informed about the research, and have comprehended what they have been told (Reynolds 1979). Can prisoners give informed consent? Can children or juveniles give their own consent? Can parents or guardians give consent on behalf of their children? Can students who are asked to participate in research by their professor give consent? Can participants in covert experiments do so?

Fully informed consent may alter participation in research and, because signing consent forms prior to participation may change participants’ responses, produce biased results (Larson 1993:114). In addition, there is always the problem that those persons who give their support in a research project may be quite different from those who do not. This differential selection of participants has implications for both the validity of the reported results and the generalizability of the study. Experimental researchers whose research design requires some type of subject deception try to get around this problem by withholding some information before the experiment begins but then debriefing subjects at the end. In the debriefing, the researcher explains to the subject what happened in the experiment and why. However, even though debriefing can be viewed as a substitute in some cases for securing fully informed consent prior to the experiment, if the debriefed subjects disclose the nature of the experiment to other participants, subsequent results may still be contaminated (Adair, Dushenko, & Lindsay 1985).

Well-intentioned researchers also may fail to foresee all the potential problems. In the prison simulation, all the participants signed consent forms, but how could they have been fully informed in advance? The researchers themselves did not realize that the study participants would experience so much stress so quickly, that some prisoners would have to be released for severe negative reactions within the first few days, or that even those who were not severely stressed would soon be begging to be released from the mock prison. If this risk was not foreseeable, was it acceptable for the researchers to presume in advance that the benefits would outweigh the risks?

Maintaining confidentiality is another key ethical obligation. This standard, however, should be overridden if a health- or life-threatening situation arises and participants need to be alerted. Also, the standard of confidentiality does not apply to observation in public places and information available in public records.

The potential of withholding a beneficial treatment from some subjects is also cause for ethical concern. The Sherman and Berk (1984) experiment required the random assignment of subjects to treatment conditions and thus had the potential of causing harm to the victims of domestic violence whose batterers were not arrested. The justification for the study design, however, is quite persuasive: The researchers did not know prior to the experiment which response to a domestic violence complaint would be most likely to deter future incidents (Sherman 1992). The experiment provided clear evidence about the value of arrest, so it can be argued that the benefits outweighed the risks.

The evaluation of ethical issues in a research project should be based on a realistic assessment of the overall potential for harm to research subjects rather than an apparent
inconsistency between any particular aspect of a research plan and a specific ethical guideline. For example, full disclosure of what is really going on in an experimental study is unnecessary if subjects are unlikely to be harmed. Nevertheless, researchers should make every effort to foresee all possible risks and to weigh the possible benefits of the research against these risks.

The extent to which ethical issues are a problem for researchers and their subjects varies dramatically with research design. Survey research, in particular, creates few ethical problems, unless the survey queries respondents about sensitive subject matter (e.g., victimization or offending experiences; see Chapter 7 for a more detailed discussion of this issue). In fact, researchers from Michigan’s Institute for Survey Research interviewed a representative national sample of adults and found that 68% of those who participated in a survey were somewhat or very interested in participating in another; the more times respondents had been interviewed, the more willing they were to participate again. Presumably they would have felt differently if they had been treated unethically (Reynolds 1979:56–57). On the other hand, some experimental studies in the social sciences that have put people in uncomfortable or embarrassing situations have generated vociferous complaints and years of debate about ethics (Reynolds 1979; Sjoberg 1967).

CONCLUSION

Criminological researchers can find many questions to study, but not all questions are equally worthy. The ones that warrant the expense and effort of social research are feasible, socially important, and scientifically relevant.

The simplicity of the research circle presented in this chapter belies the complexity of the social research process. In the following chapters, we will focus on particular aspects of that process. Chapter 3 examines the interrelated processes of conceptualization and measurement, arguably the most important part of research. Measurement validity is the foundation for the other two aspects of validity. Chapter 4 reviews the meaning of generalizability and the sampling strategies that help us to achieve this goal. Chapter 5 introduces causal validity, the third aspect of validity, and illustrates different methods for achieving causal validity, with particular emphasis on experimental designs. The following four chapters then introduce different approaches to data collection, including surveys, qualitative research methods, secondary data analysis, and evaluation research, that help us, in different ways, to achieve validity.

As you encounter these specifics, do not lose sight of the basic guidelines that researchers need to follow to overcome the most common impediments to social research. Owning a large social science toolkit is no guarantee of making the right decisions about which tools to use and how to use them in the investigation of particular research problems. More important, our answers to research questions will never be complete or entirely certain. Thus, when we complete a research project, we should point out how the research could be extended and evaluate the confidence we have in our conclusions. Recall how the gradual elaboration of knowledge about the deterrence of domestic violence required sensitivity to research difficulties, careful weighing of the evidence, and identification of unanswered questions by several research teams.
Ethical issues also should be considered when evaluating research proposals and completed research studies. As the preceding examples show, ethical issues in social research are no less complex than the other issues that researchers confront. And it is inexcusable to jump into research on people without any attention to ethical considerations.

You are now forewarned about, and thus hopefully forearmed against, the difficulties that any scientists, but criminologists in particular, face in their work. We hope that you will return often to this chapter as you read the subsequent chapters, when you criticize the research literature, and when you design your own research projects. To be conscientious, thoughtful, and responsible is the mandate of every social scientist. If you formulate a feasible research problem, ask the right questions in advance, try to adhere to the research guidelines, and steer clear of the most common difficulties, you will be well along the road to fulfilling this mandate.

**KEY TERMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anomalous finding</th>
<th>Independent variable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>Inductive reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminological research question</td>
<td>Inductive research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debriefing</td>
<td>Institutional review board (IRB)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deductive reasoning</td>
<td>Replication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deductive research</td>
<td>Research circle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dependent variable</td>
<td>Serendipitous finding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direction of association</td>
<td>Theoretical construct</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empirical generalization</td>
<td>Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Falsifiable statement</td>
<td>Variable</td>
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<td>Hypothesis</td>
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**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Research questions should be feasible (within the time and resources available), socially important, and scientifically relevant.
- Building criminological theory is a major objective of criminological research. Investigate relevant theories before starting criminological projects, and draw out the theoretical implications of research findings.
- The type of reasoning in most criminological research can be described as primarily deductive or inductive. Research based on deductive reasoning proceeds from general ideas, deduces specific expectations from these ideas, and then tests the ideas with empirical data. Research based on inductive reasoning begins with specific data and then develops general ideas or theories to explain patterns in the data.
- It may be possible to explain unanticipated research findings after the fact, but such explanations have less credibility than those that have been tested with data collected for the purpose of the study.
- The scientific process can be represented as circular, with connections from theory to hypotheses to data to empirical generalizations. Research investigations may begin at different points along the research circle and traverse different portions of it. Deductive research begins at the point of theory; inductive research begins with data but ends
with theory. Descriptive research begins with data and ends with empirical
generalizations.
• Replications of a study are essential to establish its generalizability in other situations.
An ongoing line of research stemming from a particular question should include a series
of studies that, collectively, traverse the research circle multiple times.
• Criminologists, like all social scientists, should structure their research so
that their own ideas can be proved wrong, should disclose their methods for others to
critique, and should recognize the possibility of error. Nine specific guidelines are
recommended.
• Scientific research should be conducted and reported in an honest and open fashion.
Contemporary ethical standards also require that social research not place subjects in any
jeopardy, that research subjects be forewarned of any risk to them, that participation be
voluntary as expressed in informed consent, that researchers fully disclose their identity,
and that researchers fully and honestly report their research findings and sources of
financial support.

EXERCISES

1. State a problem for research related to a criminological topic or issue of interest to you.
   Write down as many questions as you can about this topic.
   a. Considering your interest, opportunities, and the work for others, which of your
      research questions does not seem feasible or interesting?
   b. Pick out one question that seems feasible and that your other coursework suggests has
      been the focus of prior research or theorizing. Write this research question in one
      sentence. Elaborate on your question in a single paragraph. List at least three reasons
      for why it is a good research question to investigate.

2. Search the scholarly literature on your topic of interest. Refer to Appendix A for guidance
   on conducting the search if necessary.
   a. Copy at least 10 citations to recent articles reporting research relevant to your research
      question.
   b. Look up at least three of these articles. Write a brief description of each article, and
      evaluate its relevance to your research question. What additions or changes to your
      thoughts about the research question are suggested by these sources?
   c. Would you characterize the findings of these articles as largely consistent or
      inconsistent? How would you explain discrepant findings?
   d. How well did the authors summarize their work in their abstracts for the articles you
      consulted? What important points would you have missed if you had relied on only the
      abstracts?

3. Using one of the research articles you consulted for Exercise 2, identify and look up one
   of the cited articles, or Web sites. Compare the cited source to what was said about it in
   the original article or site. Was the discussion in the cited source accurate?

4. Using the same research article you focused on for Exercise 3, identify the stages of
   the research project corresponding to the points on the research circle. Did the
   research cover all four stages? Identify the theories and hypotheses underlying the
   study. What data were collected or utilized for the study? What were the findings
   (empirical generalizations)?
DEVELOPING A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Now it is time to start writing the proposal. These next exercises are very critical first steps.

1. State a problem for research. If you have not already identified a problem for study, or if you need to evaluate whether your research problem is doable, a few suggestions should help to get the ball rolling and keep it on course:
   a. Jot down questions that have puzzled you in some area having to do with people and social relations, perhaps questions that have come to mind while reading textbooks or research articles or even while hearing news stories. Don’t hesitate to jot down many questions, and don’t bore yourself; try to identify questions that really interest you.
   b. Now take stock of your interests, your opportunities, and the work of others. Which of your research questions no longer seem feasible or interesting? What additional research questions come to mind? Pick out a question that is of interest and seems feasible and that your other coursework suggests has been the focus of some prior research or theorizing.
   c. Write out your research question in one sentence, and elaborate on it in one paragraph. List at least three reasons for why it is a good research question for you to investigate. Then present your proposal to your classmates and instructor for discussion and feedback.

2. Search the literature (and the Web) on the research question you identified. Refer to Appendix A for guidance on conducting the search. Copy down at least 10 citations to articles (with abstracts from Sociology Abstracts or Psychology Abstracts) and 5 Web sites reporting research that seems highly relevant to your research question; then look up at least 5 of these articles and 3 of the sites. Inspect the article bibliographies and the links in the Web site and identify at least one more relevant article and Web site from each source. Write a brief description of each article and Web site you consulted and evaluate its relevance to your research question. What additions or changes to your thoughts about the research question are suggested by the sources?

3. Propose at least two hypotheses that pertain to your research question. Justify these hypotheses in terms of the literature you have read.

4. Which standards for the protection of human subjects might pose the most difficulty for researchers on your proposed topic? Explain your answers and suggest appropriate protection procedures for human subjects.

Student Study Site

The companion Web site for The Practice of Research in Criminology and Criminal Justice, Third Edition

http://www.sagepub.com/prcj3

Visit the Web-based Student Study Site to enhance your understanding of the chapter content and to discover additional resources that will take your learning one step further. You can enhance your understanding of the chapters by using the comprehensive study material, which includes e-flashcards, Web exercises, practice self-tests, and more. You will also find special features, such as Learning from Journal Articles, which incorporates SAGE’s online journal collection.
WEB EXERCISES

1. You have been assigned to write a paper on domestic violence and the law. To start, you would like to find out what the American Bar Association’s stance is on the issue. Go to the American Bar Association Commission on Domestic Violence’s Web site at www.abanet.org/domviol/mrdv/identify.html.

2. What is the American Bar Association’s definition of domestic violence? How does it suggest one can identify a person as a victim of domestic violence? What does it identify as “basic warning signs”? Write your answers in a one- to two-page report.

3. Go to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) Web site at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/. Go to “Publications.” Browse the list of publications for topics related to domestic violence. List the titles of all publications focusing on violence between intimate partners. Choose the most recent publication. How does the BJS define “intimate partners”? What are some of the characteristics of intimate partner violence? What trends are identified in the report?

ETHICS EXERCISES

1. Review the ethical guidelines adopted by the American Sociological Association (p. 63). Indicate whether you think each guideline was followed in the Sherman and Berk (1984) research on the policy response to domestic violence. If you find it hard to give a simple “yes” or “no” answer for each guideline, indicate the issues that make this evaluation difficult.

2. Concern with how research results are used is one of the hallmarks of ethical researchers, but deciding what form that concern should take is often difficult. You learned in this chapter about the controversy that occurred after Sherman and Berk (1984) encouraged police departments to adopt a pro-arrest policy in domestic abuse cases, based on findings from their Minneapolis study. Do you agree with the researchers’ decision to suggest policy changes to police departments based on their study, in an effort to minimize domestic abuse? Several replication studies failed to confirm the Minneapolis findings. Does this influence your evaluation of what the researchers should have done after the Minneapolis study was completed? What about Larry Sherman’s argument that failure to publicize the Omaha study finding of the effectiveness of arrest warrants resulted in some cases of abuse that could have been prevented? In one paragraph, propose a policy that researchers should follow about how much publicity is warranted and at what point in the research it should occur.

SPSS EXERCISES

Browse the variables in YOUTH.POR, a survey of high school youth regarding attitudes toward delinquency and delinquent behavior.

1. From these variables (excluding sex of respondent), write two hypotheses about levels of delinquency (DELINQ1) among high school youth.

2. Create a bar chart for at least one of the variables you hypothesize to be associated with levels of delinquency.
3. Compare the distribution of your chosen variable across gender groups. Select all males (SEX = 1) and request a bar chart of your chosen variable; then select all females (SEX = 2) and generate the bar chart again.

4. Compare the distributions between the two bar charts and formulate a hypothesis as to the relationship between the two variables. Is there a relationship between SEX and your chosen variable?

5. From these results, what do you hypothesize is the relationship between gender and level of delinquency?