

HANDOUT: PLANNING

RESEARCH METHODS PLANNING

FIVE QUESTIONS

There are five questions to ask yourself about every research question you are thinking of pursuing:

1. Does this topic (or research site, or data collection method) really interest me?
2. Is this a problem that is amenable to social science study?
3. Are adequate resources available to investigate this topic: To study a population at this particular research site? To use a particular data collection method?
4. Will my research question or method lead to unsolvable ethical problems?
5. Is the topic of theoretical or practical interest?

GUIDE TO THEORETICAL ISSUES IN RESEARCH

There are four big arenas in social science:

1. The nature-nurture problem:
2. The evolution problem
3. The internal/external problem
4. The social facts, or emergent properties problem

THE LITERATURE SEARCH

There are three main documentation resources:

1. People
2. Review articles and bibliographies
3. A host of on-line databases

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