

Study Questions for Esterberg's Chapter 1: What is Social Research?

1. On what sorts of dimensions does Esterberg distinguish between **Qualitative and Quantitative approaches** to research?
2. Esterberg refers to "the sociological imagination," which is a phrase popularized by sociologist C. Wright Mills. What does "the **sociological imagination**" refer to, and how does it relate to what you are trying to do when you do a piece of research?
3. Distinguish between **deductive and inductive approaches** to research. Which are qualitative researchers more likely to use? How would your instructor describe the relationship between these two approaches to research?
4. Identify and explain in your own words some of the central tenets of **positivism**.
5. On what bases have positivist approaches been criticized?
6. Compare and contrast **positivism** and **naturalism**.
7. Let's say that you are interested in the choices that students make regarding career paths, e.g., choices about what to major in, what career path to pursue. How might your adherence to one or the other of these approaches affect the way you went about doing research?
8. How does Esterberg characterize **Social Constructionist** and **Interpretive** approaches? For example, what are their central premises or tenets and how would adopting these types of approaches be manifest in the way you went about doing research?
9. In what sense or to what extent could **Feminist and Other Critical Approaches** also be considered "interpretive" or "social constructionist" approaches? What is unique about them?
10. How does Esterberg distinguish between **methods** and **methodology**?
11. "Knowledge" and "perspective" are intertwined; each implies the other." Would a postmodernist agree or disagree with that statement? Explain.