



Shining a Light on Document Analysis

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What is a document?

- "Researchers are expected to read, understand and critically analyze the writings of others, whether fellow researchers, practitioners or policy-makers." P 167



Documents might:

- Be library-based
- Be computer-based
- Be work-based
- Have a policy focus
- Have an historical orientation
- Refer to pps. 167-8



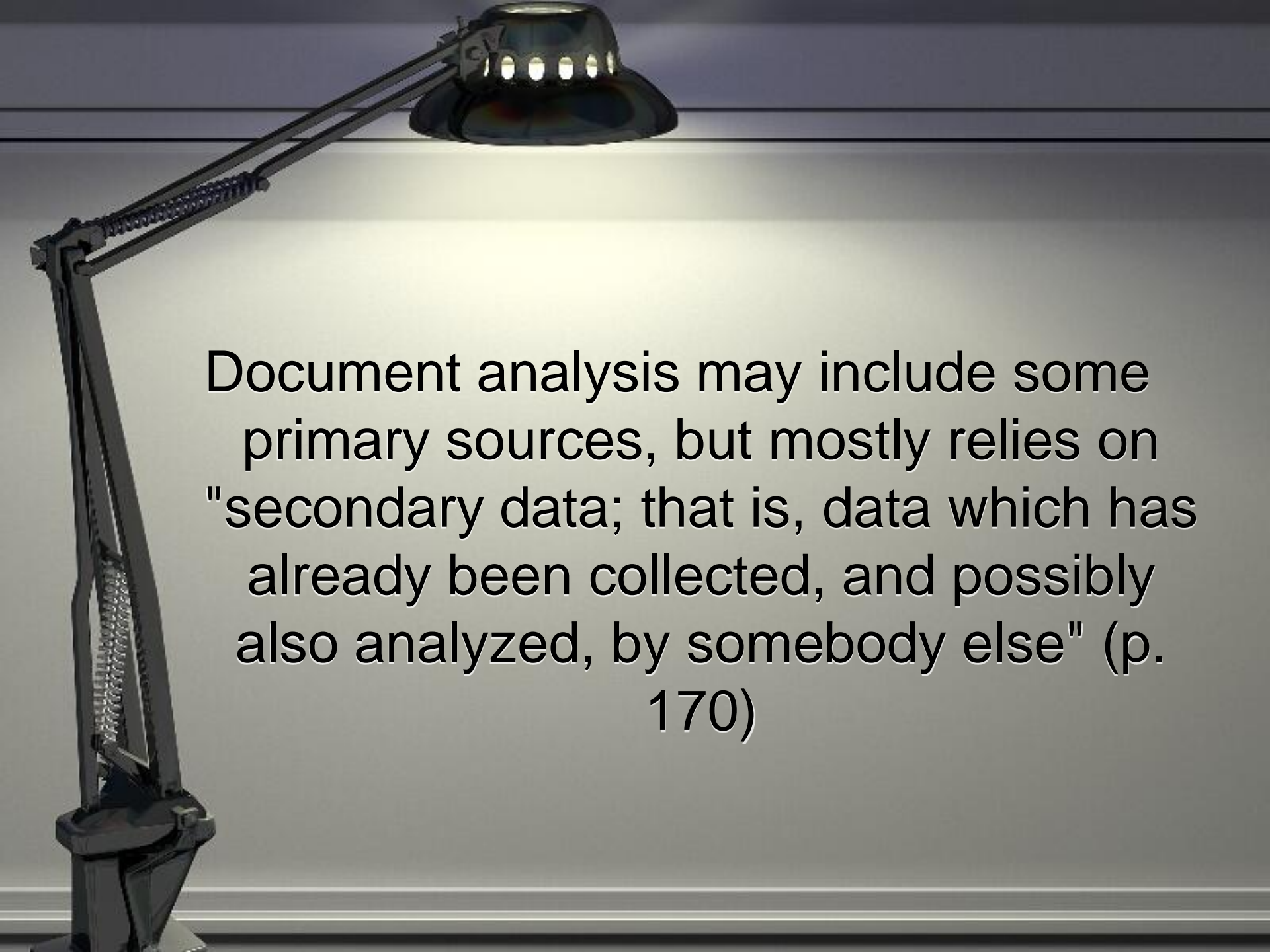
Documentary sources for research include:

- Government surveys and censuses
- Legislative documents
- Public records
- Archives (historical records)
- Media documents
- Personal documents (diaries, wills, web pages, etc.)
- Comparative information about international organizations



Townsend, p. 171

Be "self-conscious about the process of selection."

A desk lamp with a metal arm and a glass shade, casting light on a white surface. The lamp is positioned on the left side of the frame, and its light illuminates the text on the right.

Document analysis may include some primary sources, but mostly relies on "secondary data; that is, data which has already been collected, and possibly also analyzed, by somebody else" (p. 170)

A desk lamp with a silver-colored metal frame and a glass globe is positioned on the left side of the frame. The lamp is turned on, casting a warm, yellowish glow onto the white surface of the slide. The slide is the central focus, containing text about primary sources. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

A primary source is:

- unanalyzed original data



This is important because:

- Collecting primary data is difficult, time-consuming, and expensive
- One can never have enough data
- The data you want may already exist
- It may complement your primary data
- It may confirm, modify, or contradict your findings
- Research is not conducted in isolation
- More data is collected than is used

A desk lamp with a silver-colored metal frame and a glass globe is positioned on the left side of the frame. The lamp is turned on, casting a warm, yellowish glow that illuminates a white rectangular area in the center of the slide. The background is a dark, textured surface, possibly a wall or a backdrop.

A secondary source is:

- Any pre-existing data set



Questions about secondary sources

- Conditions of its production
- Whether variables, variable indicators or other definitions, changed in statistical data
- See “Analyzing Documents”



Article Assessment

- Provides information for a research topic
- Develops understanding of ideas and issues
- Documents take on greater significance when viewed in relationship to one another



Document Analysis

- Extracts what is important to the topic
- Groups together findings
- Grouped information is the focus of the topic