

Chapter 2: Paradigms, Theory and Research

Macro & Micro Theory

- Macro – the big picture, aggregates, whole societies
- Micro – at the level of individuals, small groups

Paradigm – model or scheme to help understand the world

- Structural functional paradigm
- Conflict paradigm
- Symbolic interaction paradigm

- Example: Prisons from each paradigm

Traditional Scientific Method

- Theory (Hypothesis)
- Operationalization
- Observation

Theory to Hypothesis

- Hypothesis: testable statement about a relationship between two variables
- Example: Juvenile delinquency inversely related to social class; as social class goes up, delinquency goes down

- Test the hypothesis by specifying meanings of variables
- Example: delinquency specified as “being arrested for a crime” or “being convicted of a crime”; social class might be specified as family income

Operationalization – How will we measure the variable?

- Example: study of high school students and delinquency and social class;
- Operationalize delinquency:
 - Have you ever stolen anything? Yes No

- Example: operationalize family income:
- What was your family's income last year?
 - Less than \$10,000
 - \$10,001 to 25,000
 - \$25,001 to \$49,999
 - \$50,000 and above

Data/Findings

- Percent Delinquent
- Under \$10,000 20
- \$10,000 to \$24,000 15
- \$25,000 to \$49,999 10
- \$50,000 and above 5
- Data confirms our hypothesis

Data/Findings

- Percent Delinquent
- Under \$10,000 15
- \$10,000 to \$24,000 15
- \$25,000 to \$49,999 15
- \$50,000 and above 15
- Data disconfirms our hypothesis

Idea/Interest

What causes X?



Theoretical Understanding

Y causes X

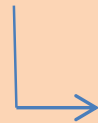
Hypothesis

$X = f(Y)$ x is a function of y Theoretical expectation



Operationalization

$x = f(y)$ Testable hypothesis



Observation (hypothesis testing)

How to State Hypotheses

- Hypothesis: Basic statement that is tested in research
- What is a null hypothesis? That there is no relationship between the variables

Practice: The Two Examples

1. State a relationship between two variables
2. Make a prediction about the relationship between two variables
3. Must be testable
4. Must be stated in an unambiguous manner

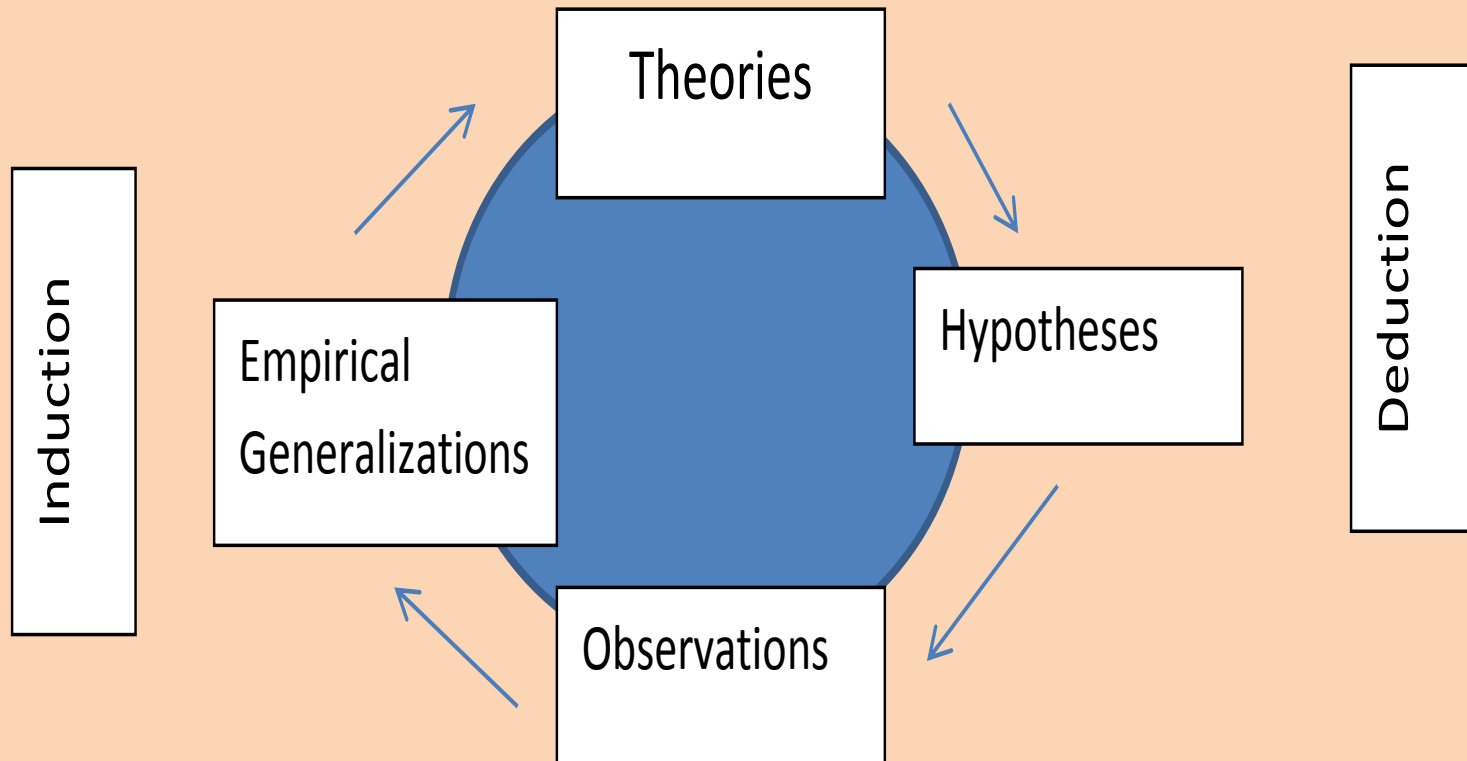
Deduction and Induction Compared

- Deductive approach – begins with an expected pattern that is tested against observations
- Inductive – begins with observations and seeks to find a pattern within them

Example of Inductive Approach

- Durkheim's study in France (1897)
- Meticulously studied suicide rates
- Struck by fact that Protestant countries had higher rates than Catholic ones
- Developed his theory of anomie
- Began to see other patterns, furthered his theory

Wheel of Science



Links Between Theory and Research

- Many ways to go about social inquiry
- Various links between theory and research

Research Ethics and Theory

- Collective nature of social research offers protection against biased research findings
 - Manner in which researchers discuss with others, present findings