

## main purposes of empirical research

(1) **exploring**, (2) **describing** and (3) **explaining** social phenomena at the level of aggregates, not individuals

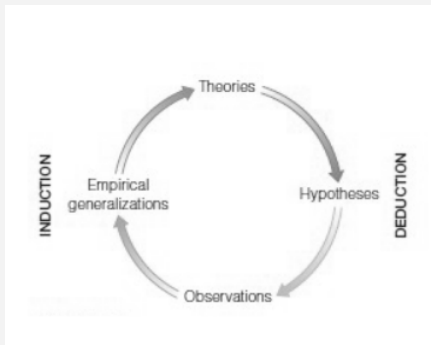
## research question

a research program always starts with a research question.  
this question can be either *descriptive* or *explanatory*  
-> a research question can be answered by systematic collection of data

## avoiding inaccurate inquiry

researchers seek to avoid inaccurate day-to-day inquiry with overgeneralized conclusions by careful, deliberate and representative observations, avoiding illogical reasoning

## the empirical circle



## the empirical circle:

- building on existing insights
- general theories generate concrete expectations: hypotheses
- hypotheses are tested by observations
- observations are generalized to build/adjust theories

## empirical circle



a specified version of the empirical circle presented by Babbie



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Page 1 of 1.

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