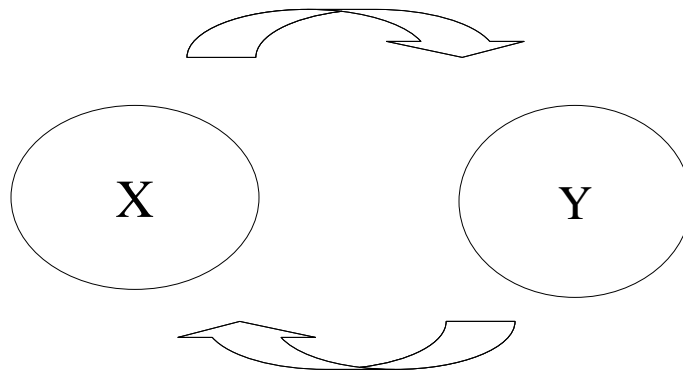


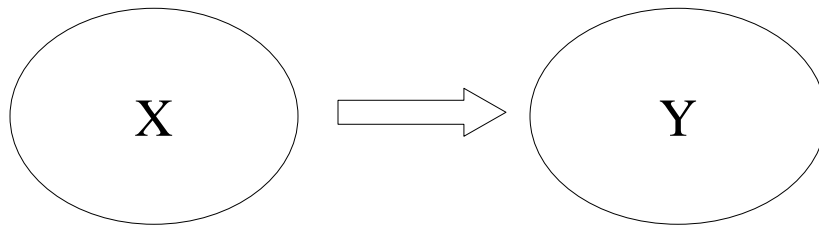
Basic Concepts

- Purpose of Science:
exploration, description, explanation
- Attributes:
descriptive characteristics
- Variables:
logical groupings of attributes

Association



Causality



Independence model (hypothetical)

Percentage Supporting Abortion, by Education Level		
	Low	High
Support	50	50
Oppose	50	50
Total	100	100
N	()	()

Positive association (hypothetical)

Percentage Supporting Abortion, by Education Level		
	Low	High
Support	40	80
Oppose	60	20
Total	100	100
N	()	()

Negative association (hypothetical)

Percentage Supporting Abortion, by Education Level		
	Low	High
Support	80	40
Oppose	20	60
Total	100	100
N	()	()

Units of Analysis

“Categorizing possible units of analysis may make the concept seem more complicated than it needs to be. What you call a given unit of analysis—a group, a formal organization, or a social artifact—is irrelevant. **The key is to be clear about what your unit of analysis is.**” (my emphasis)

[Earl Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research*, 2001, p. 97]

Units of Analysis (n=4)

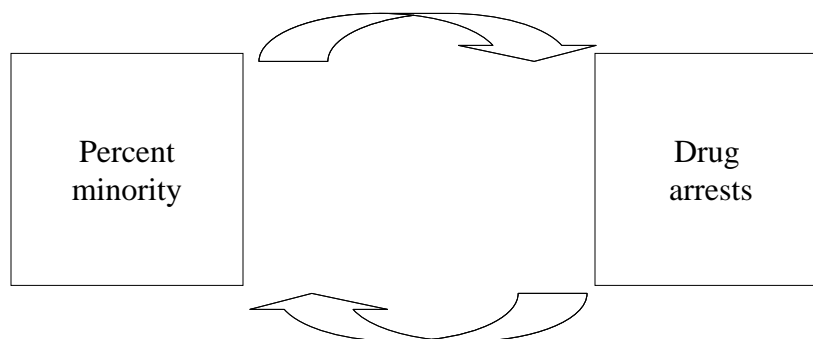
- Individual: attributes of people
- Social groups: populations of people
- Formal organizations: organizations with formal structure, rules, charter
- Social artifacts: social objects

What's the Unit of Analysis? (what or whom is studied?)

- 1) Sex and political attitudes
- 2) Car brand and crash statistics
- 3) Proportion transient in a city and reported burglaries
- 4) Size of firm and percent of employees who are minority
- 5) Percent democrats in a congressional district and number of social programs
- 6) Support of oil companies for environmental causes and amount of oil spilled per year

Ecological Fallacy (confounding units of analysis)

Unit of Analysis = social group (city)



Moral: Don't move down to lower unit of analysis and make causal argument.

Timing of data collection and causality

- Cross-sectional: snapshot, can't infer causality
- Longitudinal studies: helps with causality
 - Trend studies
 - Cohort studies
 - Panel studies

Conceptualization (Basic definitions)

- Concept: mental images
- Conceptualization: specifying precisely what we mean by our concepts
- Interchangeability of indicators: evaluating multiple indicators of concepts

Alternative description

Assigning definitions:

- ✓ **Real definition:** concepts are not real
- ✓ **Nominal definition:** definition assigned
- ✓ **Operational definition:** specific definition
- ✓ **Reification:** danger of thinking our concepts are real

Granovetter's “strength of weak ties”

- **Concept:** strength of ties
- **Nominal definition:** frequency of contact with friend who passed along job information
- **Operational definition:** How often did you see the contact around the time he/she passed on the job information?
 - 1) Often (at least twice a week)
 - 2) Occasionally (greater than once a year, but less than twice a week)
 - 3) Rarely (once a year or less)

Sample: people who recently found jobs through contacts

Granovetter's findings (univariate statistics)

Frequency of contact with friend	
	%
1. Often	17
2. Occasionally	55
3. Rarely	28
Total	100
N	()

REMEMBER!

Effect = noun

Affect = verb