

Scientific Inquiry in Social Work

Chapter 6

- 6.1 Micro, Meso & Macro Approaches
- 6.2 Paradigms and Theories
- 6.3 Inductive and Deductive Reasoning

6.1 Micro, Meso and Macro Approaches to Research

Micro Level analysis examines an individual's experience

i.e.: self-concept, personal values and beliefs, mental, emotional & physical health

Meso Level analysis explores the interactions among and between groups.

i.e.: communities, families, health care providers, teachers, friend groups

Macro Level analysis studies interactions across nations, states or cultural systems.

i.e.: policy, law, media, institutions, dominant ideologies, often seems out of reach of an individual

Example: The Micro, Meso & Macro of Stigma (Erving Goffman)

"a powerful negative social label that radically changes a person's social identity and self-concept"

Micro – Psychology, coping, mental or physical illness, stress, personal experience living in a stigmatized body

Meso – Social/Cultural, how stigmatized individuals move about their communities. Stereotypes, prejudice or (mis)recognition within the community affecting self-esteem, identity or symbolic worth.

Macro – Media, Cultural and Historical Context that supports or propels a stigma. Availability (or lack) of needed resources because of unsupportive infrastructure.

What are some of the factors that affect why a person may not be vaccinated?

Micro -

Personal-opinion/choice, misinformed about their availability, medical exemption, misinformed about vaccine safety, medical trauma

Meso -

Locality, transportation, community culture

Macro -

Distribution, media misinformation



6.2 Paradigms, Theories, and how they shape a Researcher's Approach

6.2 Paradigms & Theories



Paradigm- Way of viewing the world and a framework from which to understand the human experience.

Theory- Intends to explain some of the how's and why's we have about an aspect of social life (*Rubin & Babbie, 2017, p.615*)

Vaccine access through the different paradigm lenses

Table 6.1 Social scientific paradigms

Paradigm	Emphasis	Assumption
Positivism	Objectivity, knowability, and deductive logic	Society can and should be studied empirically and scientifically.
Social Constructionism	Truth as varying, socially constructed, and ever-changing	Reality is created collectively. Social context and interaction frame our realities.
Critical	Power, inequality, and social change	Social science can never be truly value-free and should be conducted with the express goal of social change in mind.
Postmodernism	Inherent problems with previous paradigms.	Truth is always bound within historical and cultural context. There are no universally true explanations.

Theory - "a systematic set of interrelated statements intended to explain some aspect of social life"

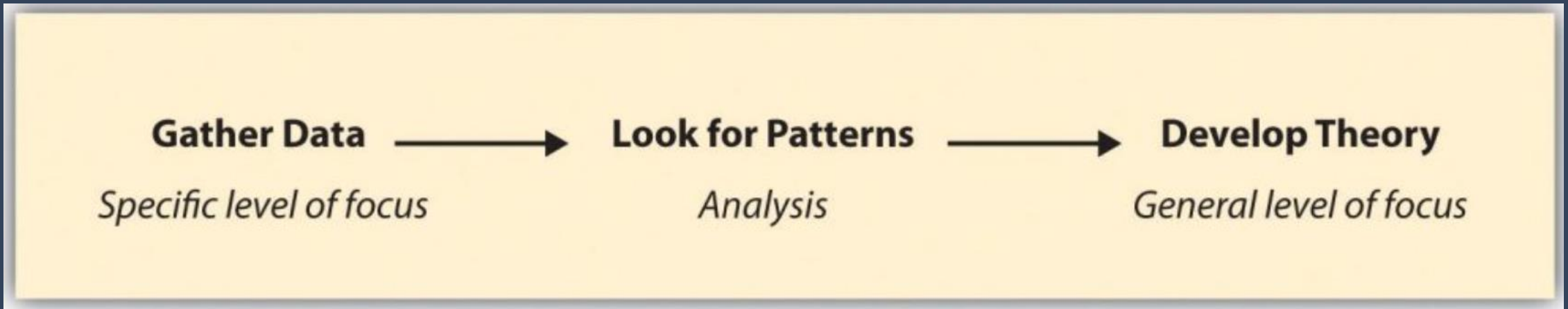
Table 6.2 Social work theories and the study of substance abuse

Theory	Focuses on	A study of substance abuse might examine
Systems	Interrelations between parts of society; how parts work together	How a lack of employment opportunities might impact rates of substance abuse in an area
Conflict	Who wins and who loses based on the way that society is organized	How the War on Drugs has impacted minority communities
Symbolic Interactionism	How meaning is created and negotiated through interactions	How people's self-definitions as "addicts" helps or hurts their ability to remain sober
Social Exchange	How behavior is influenced by costs and rewards	Whether increased distribution of anti-overdose medications makes overdose more or less likely

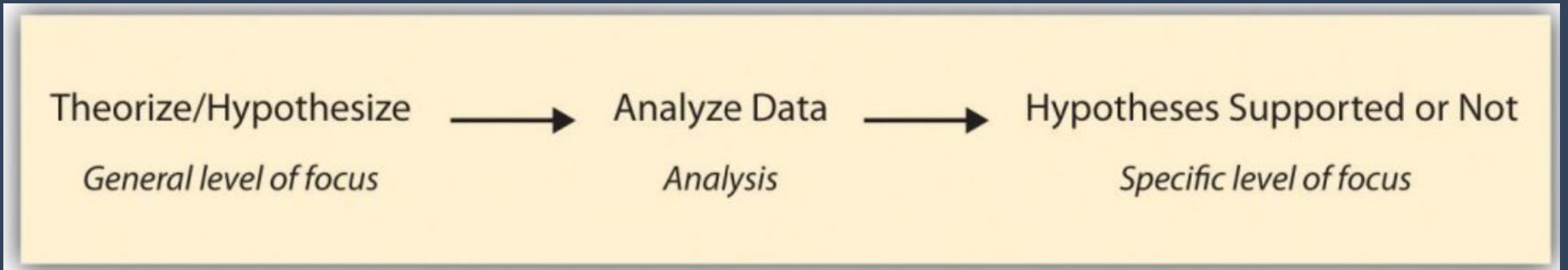


6.3 Inductive and Deductive Reasoning

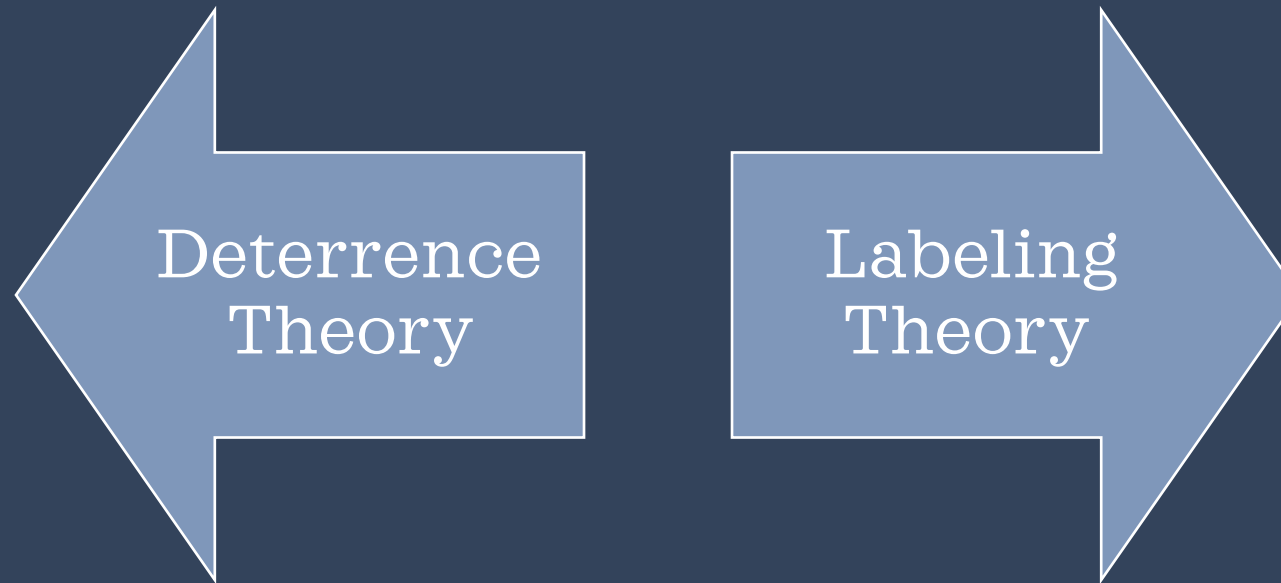
Inductive Reasoning



Deductive Reasoning



The Effects of Punishment on Deterring Domestic Violence (Sherman & Berk, 1984)



Deterrence
Theory

Deterrence theory predicts that arresting an accused spouse batterer will *reduce* future incidents of violence

Labeling
Theory

Labeling theory predicts that arresting accused batterers will *increase* future incidents.

The Effects of Punishment on Deterring Domestic Violence (Sherman & Berk, 1984)

Control Theory	Arrest →	↓ Incidents of domestic violence for the married and employed
	Arrest →	↑ Incidents of domestic violence for the unmarried and unemployed