Doing Research in Sociology

Chapter 2
Methodology - The system of procedures that helps us develop knowledge.
Descriptive Studies- Based on collected data.

Explanatory Studies- Answers questions of how did this condition originate.
Concept-

...is a term or symbol that represents the similarities in otherwise diverse phenomena.

Variable-

...is a measurable dimension of a concept, or a measurable concept.
Hypothesis -

...is an empirically testable statement of relation between two or more variables.

Theory -

...a comprehensive explanation of observed relationships between variables.
Three Levels of Theories:

- **Local Theories** - Are highly focused and deal with limited, immediately testable propositions.
- **Grand Theories** - Theoretical orientations which attempt to explain all social life.
- **Middle-Range Theories** - Broad enough to apply to a range of topics, but specific enough to provide guidelines for research.
Goal of Science: To understand cause and effect relationships.

- Independent Variable- The cause, explanatory variable.
- Dependent Variable- The effect, the condition that the researcher wants to explain.
- Operationally define the variable-(1)Degree (2)Category
Correlation- a relationship between variables that occurs regularly.

Spurious Correlation- One that is merely coincidental and does not imply any causal relationship what-so-ever.

Multivariate Analysis- Involves more than two independent variables.
◆ Research Methods:
◆ Quantitative Methods- are designed to study variables that can be measured in numbers. (Survey)
◆ Qualitative Methods- used by those studying social interaction and when it is difficult to assign numbers. (Case Study)
◆ Population- the total group of people to be studied.
◆ Sample- a limited number of cases that represent the entire population.
The Controlled Experiment

- The Experimental Group- is the one in which the independent variable, -the variable whose effect is to be tested- is introduced.

- The Control Group- is the one from which the independent variable is withheld.
Comparative Analysis

- **Cross-national Research** - research that compares two or more nations.
- **Longitudinal Research** - follows the same people over a period of time.
- **Cross-sectional Research** - used to study social change by looking at groups that are at different stages of development.