

# **INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY**

**Soc 1101: Summer 2023**

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# Research Methods

## Lecture 5

# RECALL

- A sociologist is “...someone concerned with understanding society in a disciplined way” (Berger 16)

# TODAY'S LECTURE OUTLINE

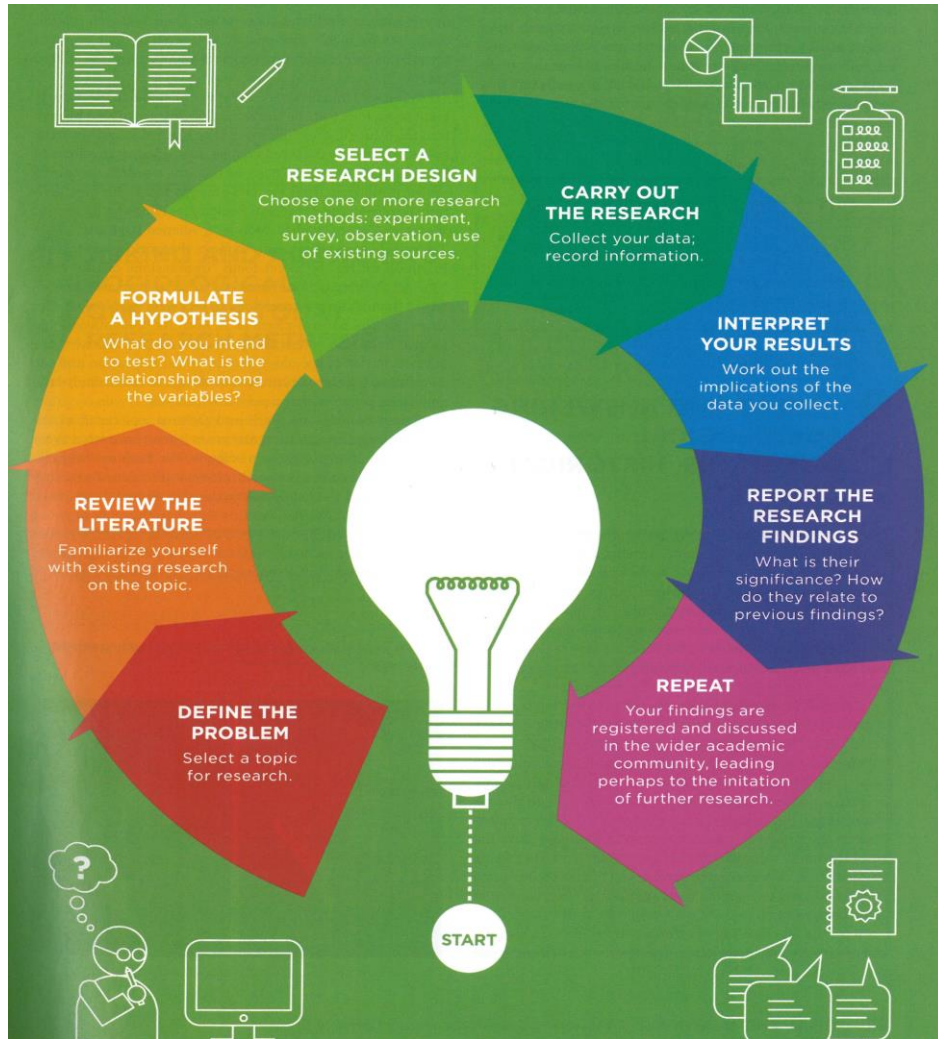
- **The Research Process**
- **Research Approaches & Methods**
  - **Deductive and Inductive**
  - **Quantitative and Qualitative**
    - **Pros and cons of each**
- **Ethics in Social Research**
- **Next lecture: Social Stratification and Inequality**

# OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

- **Answer questions from the sociological perspective**
- **Varied in goal and technique**
- **Inferential**
- **Systematic (rule-governed, transparent, replicable)**
- **Importance of reflexivity**

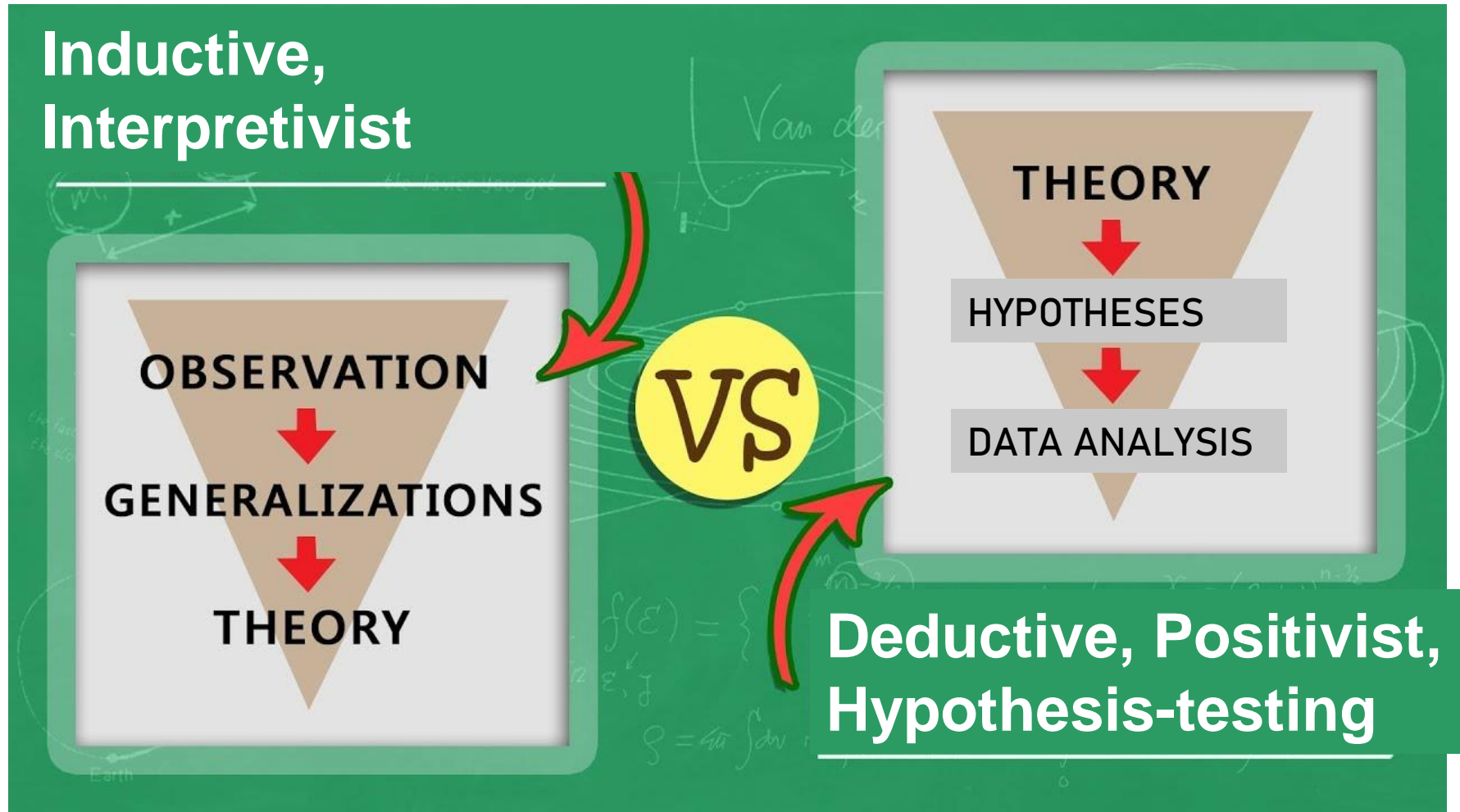


# THE RESEARCH PROCESS



- Define the problem or puzzle
- Review the literature
- Form hypotheses
- Select a research design/method
- Collect data
- Analyze data
- Interpret results
- Report/disseminate findings

# TWO BROAD RESEARCH APPROACHES



# TWO BROAD METHODS CATEGORIES

- **Quantitative Methods**
  - **Seek to convert information about the social world into numeric form**
  - **Usually takes a more “deductive” approach**
- **Qualitative Methods**
  - **Seek to collect information about the social world that cannot readily be converted into numeric form**
  - **Usually takes a more “inductive” approach**
- **Mixed-Methods combines these techniques**



# QUANTITATIVE METHODS

- **Seek to convert information about the social world into numeric form**
- **Main means of data collection:**
  - **Surveys and questionnaires**
  - **Experiments**
  - **Quantification of internet data**
- **Use statistics to analyze these data**
- **Strengths: factual/how much/whether questions; breadth, generalizability, efficient collection of data on large populations; relationship between variables**
- **Limitations: potentially superficial, response bias can occur**

# QUALITATIVE METHODS

- **Seeks to understand the social world from the subjects' point of view (experiences, meaning, beliefs)**
- **Main means of data collection**
  - **Participant observation & ethnography**
  - **Qualitative interviews**
  - **Historical archives, images, videos, sounds, etc.**
- **Data analysis includes identifying meaningful patterns or themes and/or storytelling**
- **Strengths: sense-making/how/why questions; depth, richness of information collected; revelation of social processes**
- **Limitations: usually not empirically generalizable, limited to small groups or settings**

# Which Approach & Method?

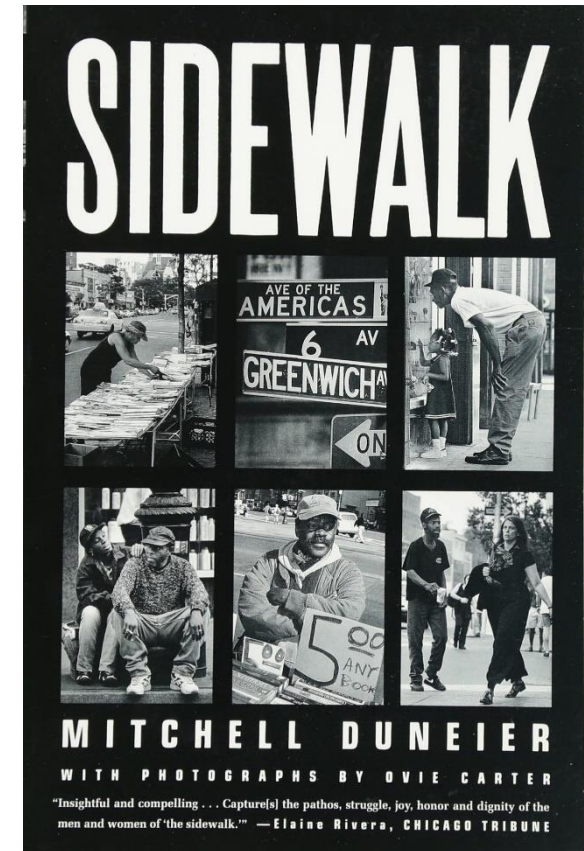
Mitch Duneier spends time with homeless men selling magazines in New York to learn about the social organization of the streets.

A) Deductive

A) Quant

B) Inductive

B) Quali



# Which Approach & Method?

Hout and Fischer use survey data to test hypotheses about why more Americans have no religion.

A) Deductive

A) Quant

B) Inductive

B) Quali



# Which Approach & Method?

Researchers working on a large survey design questions to measure Americans' attitudes towards civil liberties.

A) Deductive

A) Quant

B) Inductive

B) Quali

# SUICIDE, AGAIN...



[Most Powerful Speech By Man Who Survived Jump From Golden Gate Bridge | Kevin Hines | Goalcast - YouTube](#)

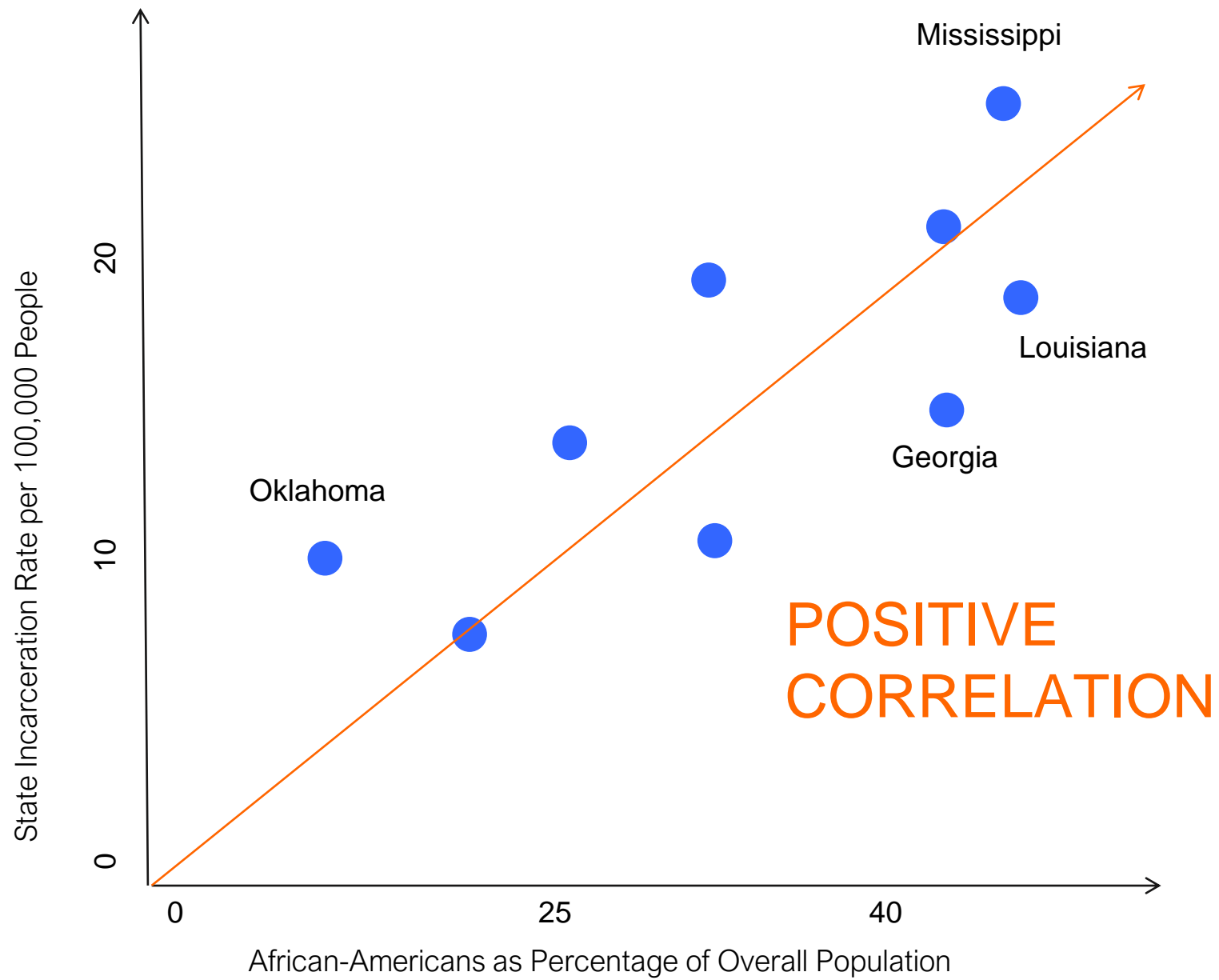
# BREADTH VS DEPTH



# CAUSALITY VERSUS CORRELATION

- **Correlation: two variables/factors/events are associated with each other**
- **Causation: one variable/factor/event brings about another**
  - **Many causes for every effect**



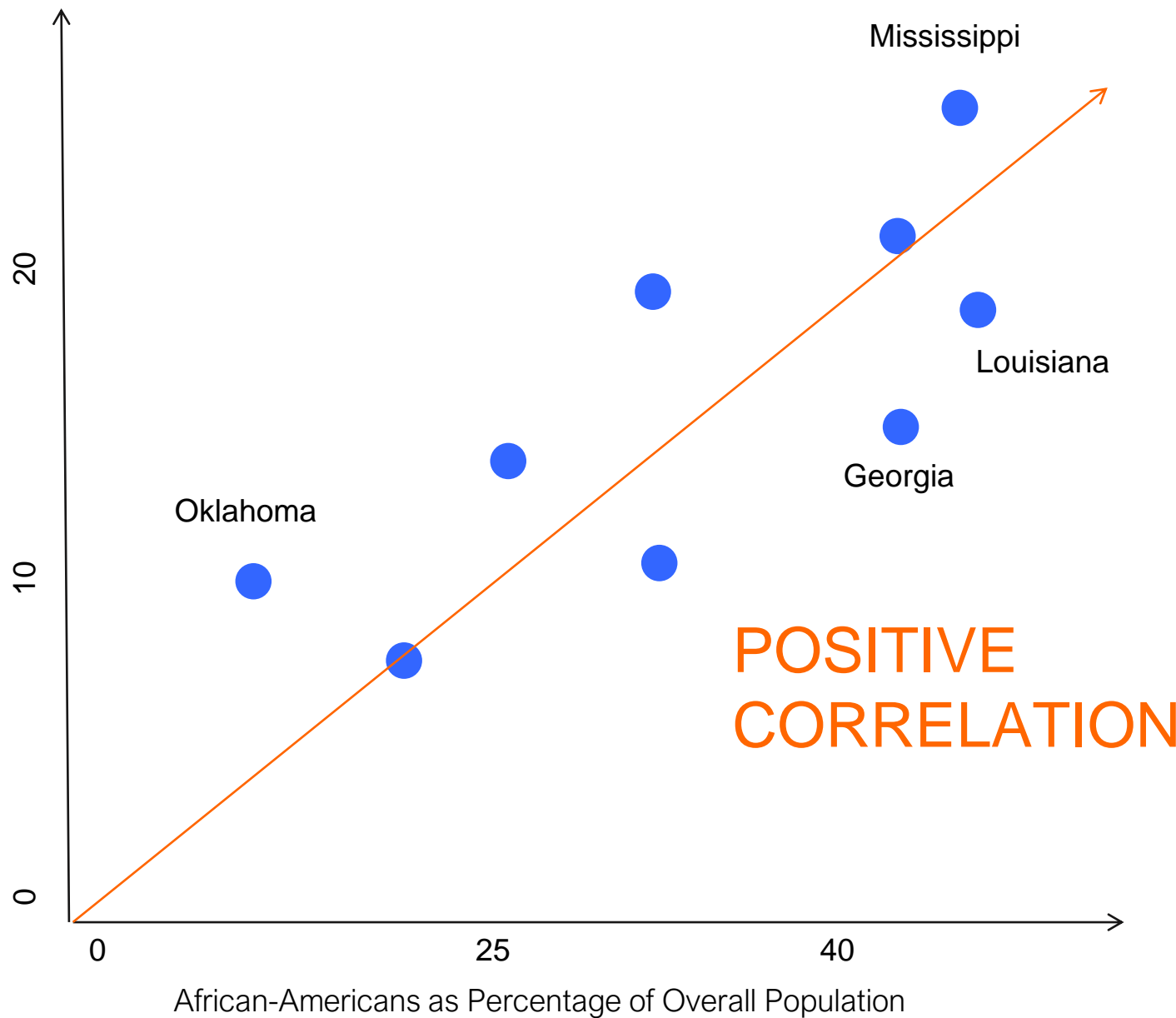


# VARIABLES

- **Dependent Variable**
  - **The outcome that the researcher is trying to explain**
    - **Our example: likelihood of incarceration**
- **Independent Variable**
  - **The factor(s) that the researcher believes has a causal impact on the outcome**
    - **Our example: race**

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

State Incarceration Rate per 100,000 People



African-Americans as Percentage of Overall Population

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

POSITIVE  
CORRELATION

# CAUSALITY VERSUS CORRELATION

**CORRELATION**  
**DOES NOT IMPLY**  
**CAUSATION!**



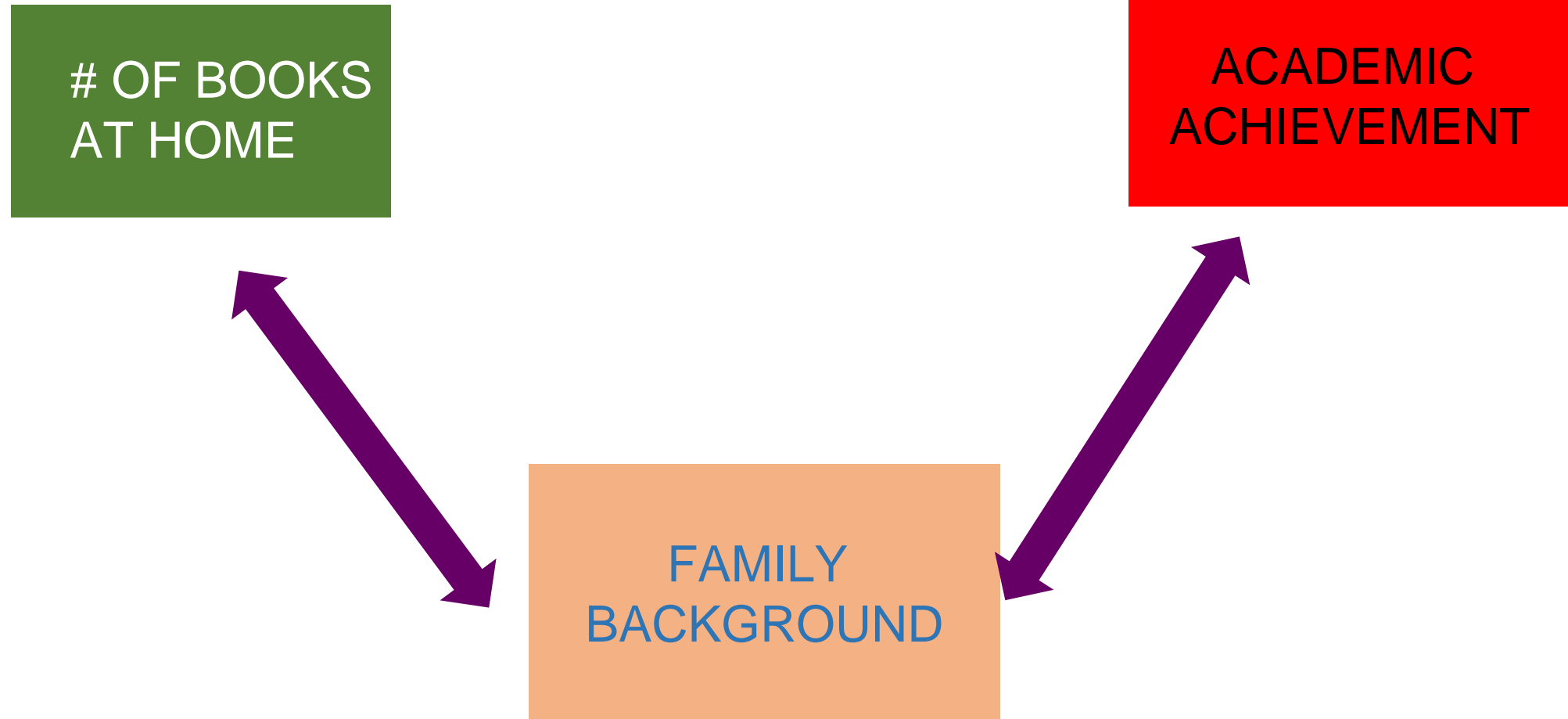
# SPURIOUS RELATIONSHIP

# OF BOOKS  
AT HOME



ACADEMIC  
ACHIEVEMENT

# SPURIOUS RELATIONSHIP



# THE PROBLEM OF REVERSE CAUSALITY

**A**

**B**

# OF BOOKS  
AT HOME



ACADEMIC  
ACHIEVEMENT

# OF BOOKS  
AT HOME



ACADEMIC  
ACHIEVEMENT

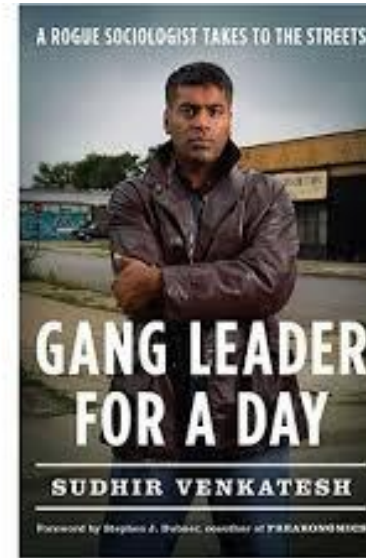
**The women taking hormone replacement therapy had a lower risk of heart disease. Select all options below that may explain this phenomenon:**

- A) The women were from a higher socioeconomic group.**
- B) Hormone replacement therapy reduced the risk.**
- C) Neither A) or B).**



# ETHICS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

- **Two examples**
  - **Ethnographies**
  - **Social experiments**
- **Golden Rules**
  - **Do no harm**
  - **Informed consent**
  - **Voluntary participation**
- **Purpose of an Institutional Review Board (IRB)**



# TOMORROW'S LECTURES

- **Social Stratification and Inequality**
- **Readings**
  - **Lemert 2013 [Marx & Engels 1848]**
    - **Excerpt from "The Communist Manifesto"**
  - **Davis and Moore 1945**
    - **"Some Principles of Stratification"**
  - **Tumin 1953**
    - **"Some Principles of Stratification: A Critical Analysis"**
- **Social Class and Mobility**
- **Readings**
  - **Lareau 2002**
    - **"Social Class and Childrearing in White and Black Families"**
  - **Chetty et al 2016**
    - **"The Fading American Dream"**