

Your Excellent Dissertation: Theory and Methodology

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Why Bother with THEORY?





$$1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + \dots + \infty =$$

$$-\frac{1}{12}$$

Mythology and Created Knowledge



What is a THEORY?



Theories as „shades“



Theories as „blindners“

What *really* is a THEORY?



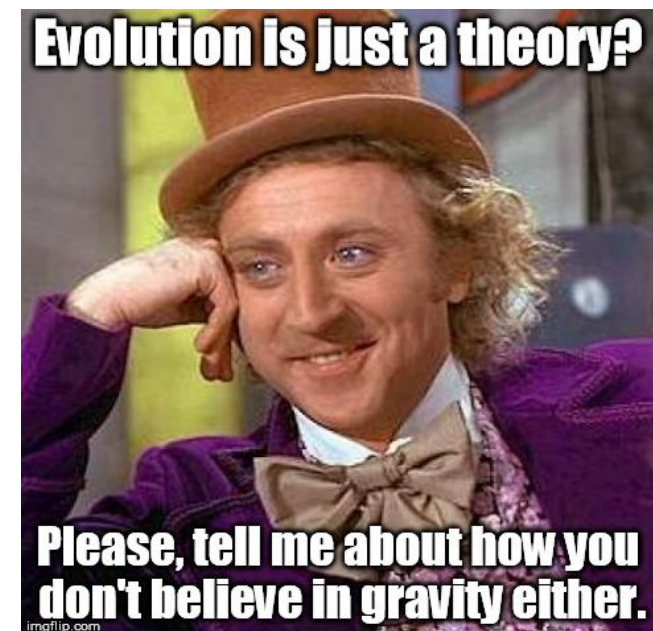
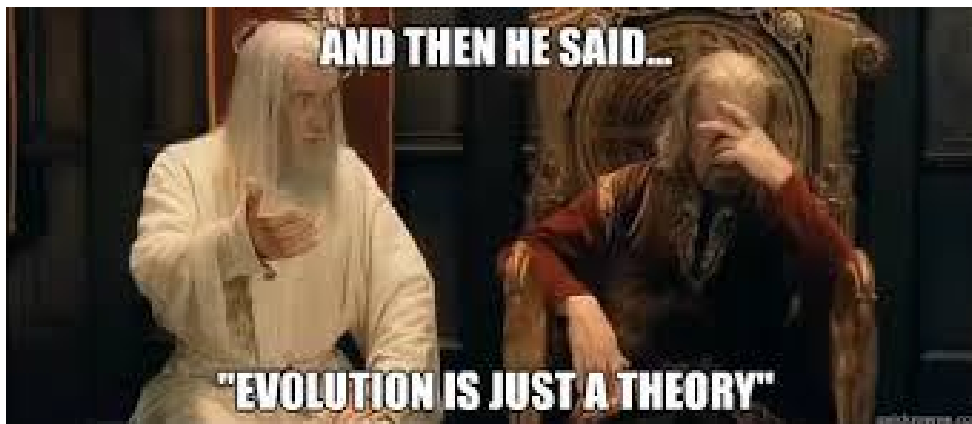
- Self-contained machine
- Composed of smaller parts instrumentally placed
- Operates via power mechanism
- Needs the right „currency“ (data) to work and give results
- Gives only certain kinds of results

THEORY is a TOOL!

Learning theories = toolkit-building

„Just a THEORY“

- As in „Evolution is just a theory“
(...therefore we don't know what the truth really is)
- Fact < Law < Scientific Theory



GOAL

To convince the reader of the *plausibility* and *soundness* of your results and conclusions

=> Use the right tools for the right job

Decisions

- Start with research question?
 - Formulate research question first and *then* seek the proper tools for the job
- Start with theory?
 - Select a theory first and *then* formulate the question
 - Consider the themes and topics the theory tackles the best and that play to its strengths

Your RESEARCH is a reflection of YOU !

Natural Science Vs. Social Science



Vs.



Levels of Analysis

International system



Nation state



Bureaucracy

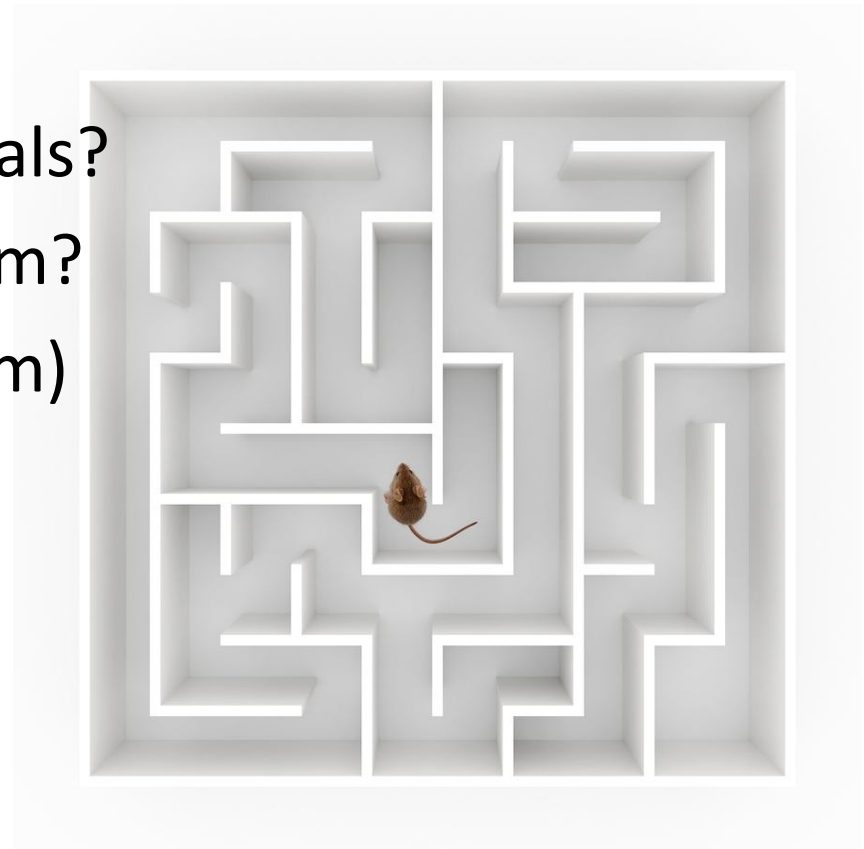


Individual

Agency Vs. Structure

Where does social reality come from?

- Behaviour of individuals?
- Structural determinism?
- Both? (co-determinism)



False Causes

Correlation \neq Causation !

