3. Watts (2014) (4 points). Read Watts (2014). This paper focuses on the importance of having a model, making assumptions explicit, causal inference, and prediction. In a one-to-two-page written response, answer the following questions.

When rational choice theory was initially introduced in 1960s, it was questioned by experts from all walks of life. It was mainly attacked by unreasonable and weak assumptions related to "the preferences, knowledge, and computational capabilities of the actors in question (Watts, 2014, P320)". Also, the predictions based on this theoretical model were also different from the empirical evidence.

This paper mentions that as James (1909) and later Boudon (1988) have argued, commonsense notions, even if it is not established in all cases, are established in daily life that people can observe can also lead to a false overall establishment. However, the author stated: even if the statement is established in daily life, it is not necessarily global. The author mentioned that the validity of this assumption is nothing but an illusion. "Just because an explanation makes sense of some observed outcome is in fact no guarantee that it also corresponds to any generalizable causal mechanisms or was even the cause of that particular outcome in any meaningful sense. (Watts, 2014, P327)" Also, in daily life, the flaws of the assumption are either very small or can be corrected when people are not aware of it.

The author mentions, nothing is a globally solution, but there are indeed some methods that have been proposed and validated in the social sciences and even other science fields for many years. He suggested that the sociologists should pay more attention to experimental methods like field experiments, natural experiments, quasi-experiments, and laboratory experiments (including web-based "virtual labs"). The author also mentioned an alternative method applied to nonexperimental data, such as massive computational methods, methodological advances in statistics, and econometrics. Last but not least, the author mentioned an alternative both to running experiments and also to estimating statistical models was predictive power of this model.

Addendum:

In this paper, the author criticizes the process of evolving into theoretical conclusions based on the conclusions obtained in daily life. At the same time, the author emphasizes the process of drawing conclusions through field experiments and statistical data. In fact, a reasonable theoretical model is in need of rational simplification and hypothesis necessary for reality. No single model can simulate every dimension of the real world, and a model like that may also be difficult to make reasonable predictions. Why do we need a theoretical model? The reason is that the model can rationally simplify the conditions, and also benefit causal inference and prediction. Therefore, in the process of our study and research, the necessary assumptions and prerequisites for the theoretical model are essential.