



# Where Does A Question Come From?

Design Political Research: Week 4

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# Quiz Time!!

# Focus?

When you have a topic or question of interest, what can you do with it?

- Exploring
- Describing
- Explaining

# Exploration

图是个exploration：有什么特点？

1. 不能看清全部
2. 没有focus 3.没有为什么看

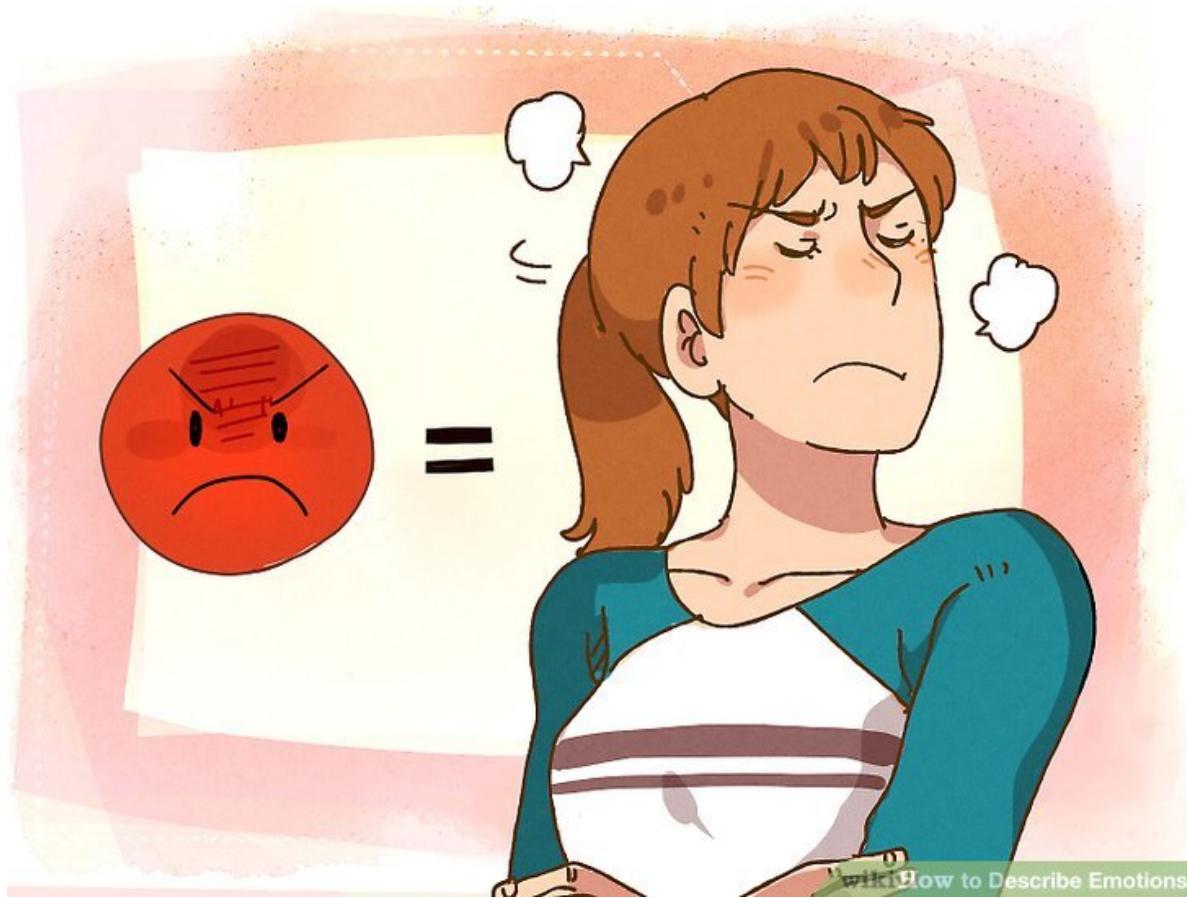


- What to explore?
  - Satisfying curiosity.
  - Testing the feasibility of more works.
  - Developing methods.
- Weak points?

lake of theories and expectations

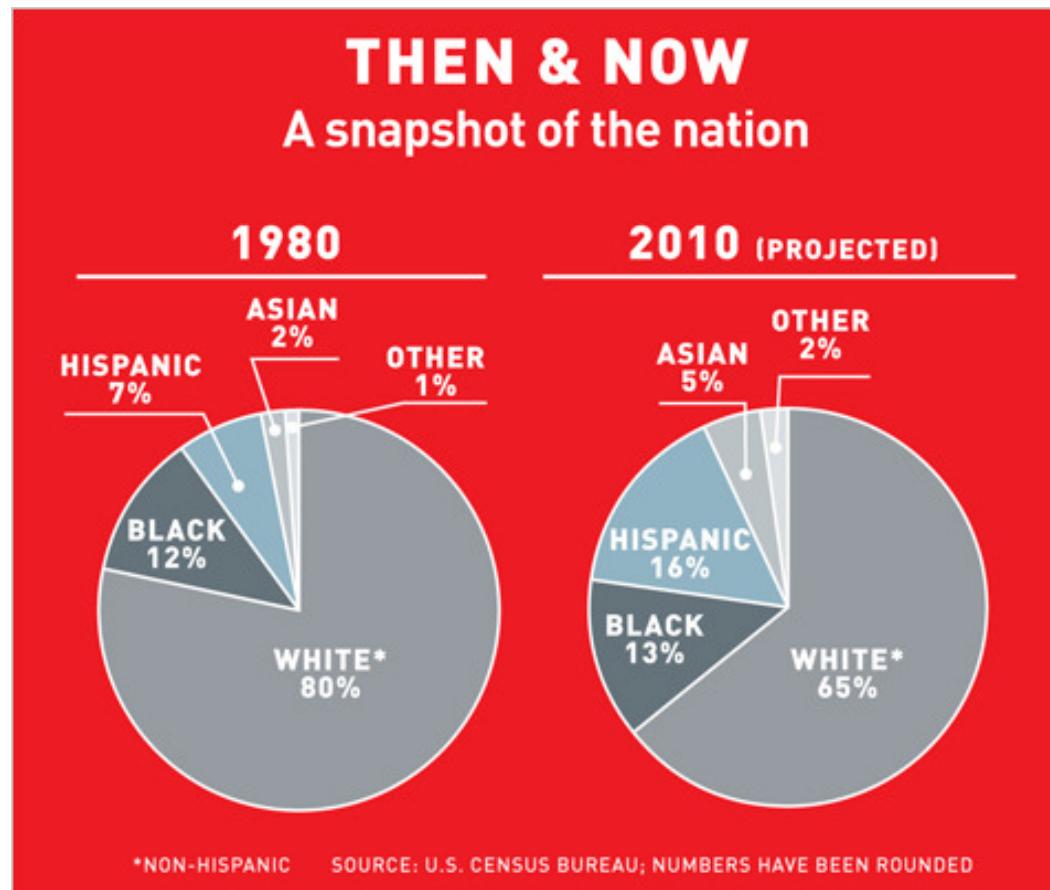
selection bias, inaccurate observation, overgeneralization,  
illogical reasoning

# Describing



How to Describe Emotions

# US Census





# Oh, Causality!

# Explanation in general

- Case-focused: Ideographic explanation
  - Complete, in-depth understanding of a single case
- Pattern-focused: Nomothetic explanation
  - Defence for causality

Milan Svolik 2012, The politics of authoritarian rule  
review the process of Mexico transition:

- masses over rule
- power-sharing

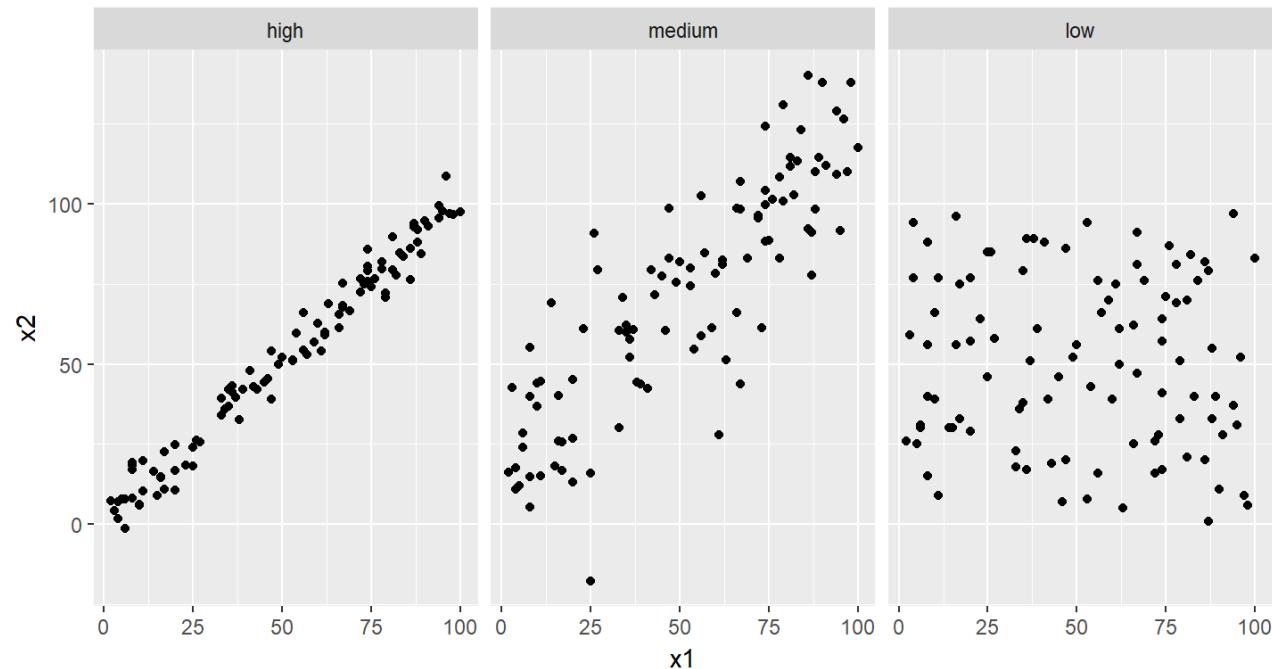
# Criteria for nomothetic explanation

- The variables must be correlated.
- The cause takes place before the effect.
- The variables are nonspurious.

逐条看，先说correlation： 哪意思？

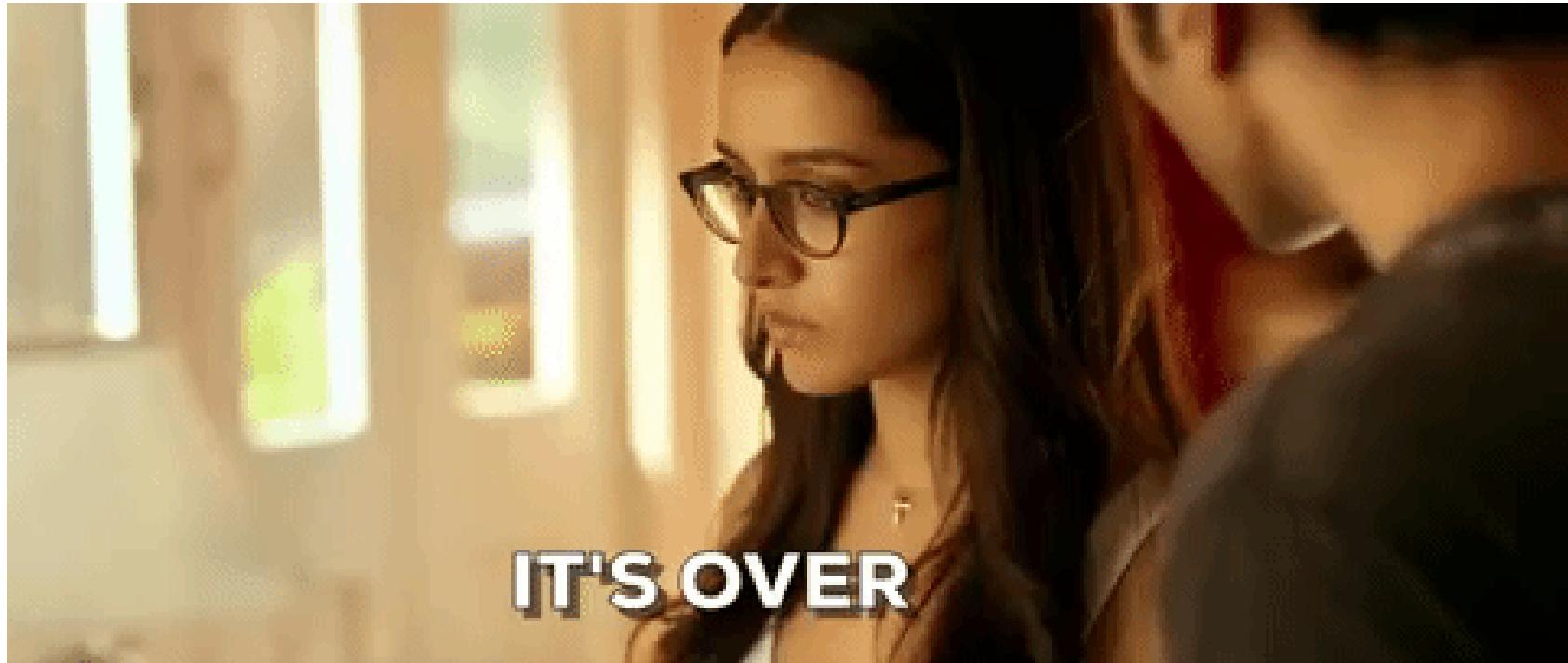
# Correlation

"An empirical relationship between two variables such that (1) changes in one are associated with changes in the other, or (2) particular attributes of one variable are associated with particular attributes of the other." (Babbie 94)

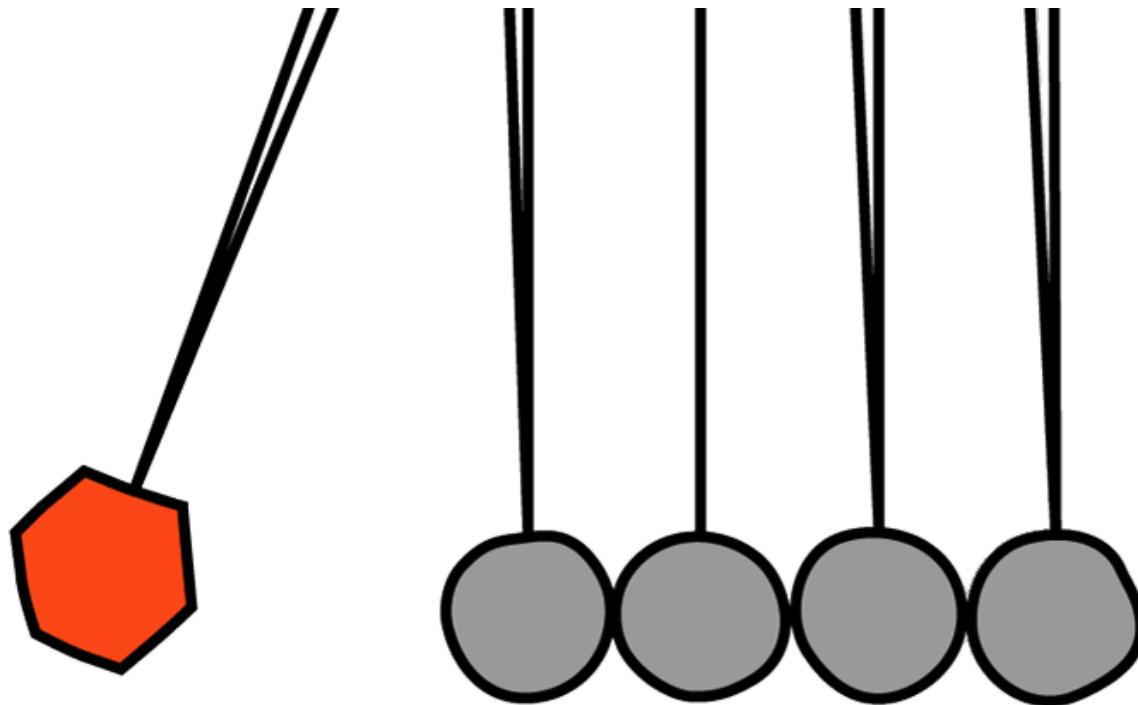


所以在dump 时候说，correlation down to 0.

So, if you have to dump someone...



# Time-order



quantum mechanics  
multiverse(多重宇宙)

# Spurious relationship

"A coincidental statistical correlation between two variables, shown to be caused by some third variable." (Babbie 94)



其他例子?

年龄越大越可能投Republican (非, 关系存在)

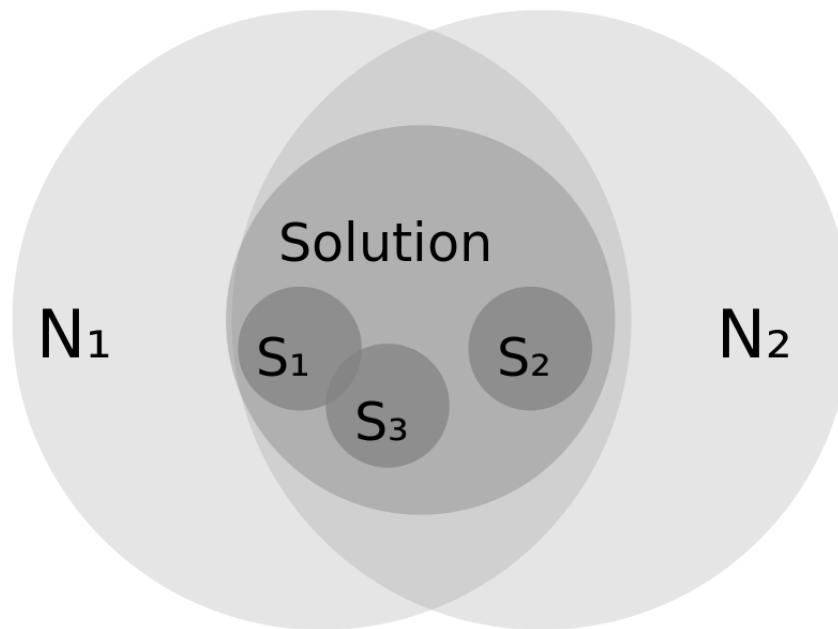
政治参与increase voting rate(非, endogenous+多原因)

As education increases, so does Republican party i.d. Therefore  
education causes people to become Republicans (wealth)

# Three false criteria

- Complete causation
- No exception
- Majority rule

# Complete causation



GT:

举例： China is a threat of the US.

1,2: necessary, -sufficient

3,4: sufficient, -necessary

5,6: necessary + sufficient

7, 8: -necessary, -sufficient

# Exception (probability)



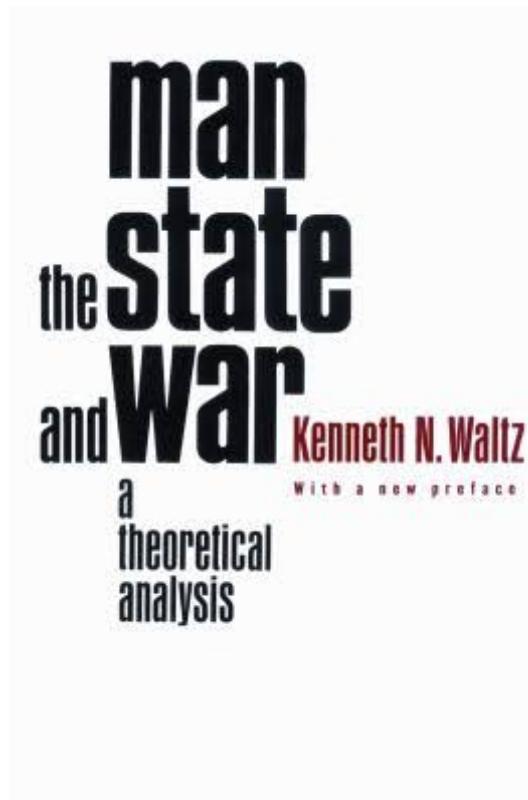
Political scientists' prediction of the 2016 election.

# Majority rule



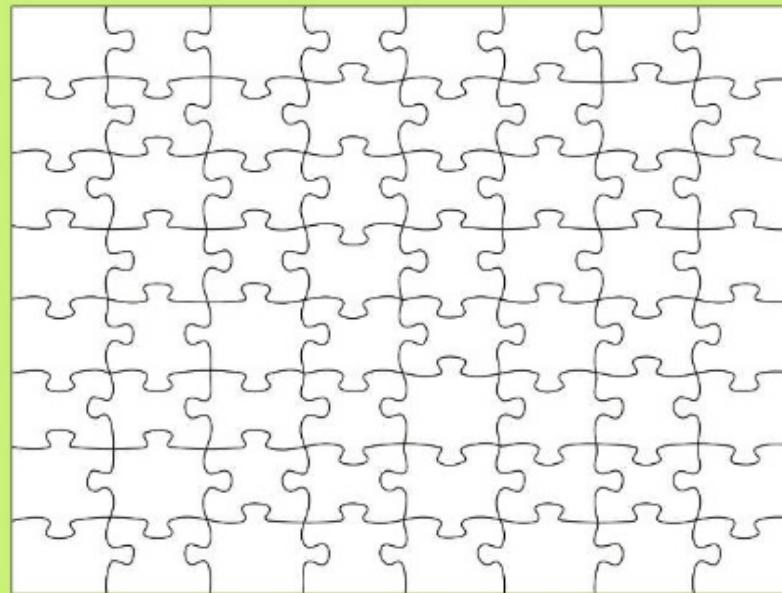
# Build your explanation with the right bricks

Unit of Analysis



If you used the wrong bricks,...

## The Ecological Fallacy



example? Female driver; masses do not matters.

# Reductionism

(Reductionist fallacy, individualist fallacy, exception fallacy)

An example:

- Hank: I ran my car off the side of the road because that damn squirrel ran in front of my car.
- Officer: You don't think it had anything to do with the fact that you were trying to text your girlfriend, and driving drunk?

# Beyond Causality

Ragin's purpose of soical research:

1. identifying patterns and relaitonships.
2. testing and refining theories.
3. making predictions
4. interpreting culturally and or historically significant phenomena
5. exploring diversity
6. giving voice
7. advancing new theories.

# Predicting

- What's predicting?
- Why is it important?
- What's the relation of this purpose with explanation?

(GT: 1. someone said one can't say understand it if it cannot predict the future. 1. predicting rates is much easier.)

**Debate: no prediction no science vs. prediction not a criterion**

1,4, statement

2,5, positive materials

3,6, negative materials

4,8, conclusion

# Interpreting

Theda Skocpol (1979):

- Surveying the revolutions in Russia, France, and China
- Two arguments:
  - Starting: crisis of state (international factor) + patterns of class dominance
  - Outcome: crisis + socioeconomic/international constraints

- Is Skocpol (1979) ideographic?
- How is this different from historian study? 小讨论：谁认为一样/不一样
- How is this different from explanation?

# Giving voice

- Studies of gender rights
- Studies of environmentalism
- Studies of social media
- Studies of terrorism

1. 考慮 substantive 問題
2. 基于实证数据
  - a. cross-sectional
  - b. time-series

No research exists in vacuum!