



# What's A Theory?

Design Political Research: Week 8

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# Oh, paradigm!



- What the bi~~ is paradigm?
  - "A model or frame of reference through which to observe and understand." (Babbie 32)
  - Epistemology? Approach? Method?

# Common Paradigms

- Positivism
- Rational choice
- Structuralism
- Culturalism

# Positivism

"Scientific truths could be positively verified through empirical observations and the logical analysis of what was observed." (Babbie 35)

- Reality is *independent* from human feelings, ideas, perceptions.
- Social phenomena have to be treated like *physical objects*.
- Knowledge is *value-free, objective, measurable*.
- Knowledge can only be accessed objectively through a *scientific approach*.

## Three Pillars Lichbach and Zuckerman

- Rational choice Richard Thaler
- Structuralism Dialectical materialism;
- Culturalism historical materialism (contradiction:  
productive capacity vs social relations of  
production; economic base vs superstructure)

Clash of civilization; political culture

# Theory



- Paradigm: A way of looking.
- Theory: An explanation of what we see.
  - Variables (IVs and DVs)
  - Relations

# Components

- Axioms/assumption
- Proposition/argument

# Example: Structural realism

- Assumptions
  - International Anarchy
  - States
  - Survival
- Arguments
  - Security dilemma
  - Relative rather than absolute power



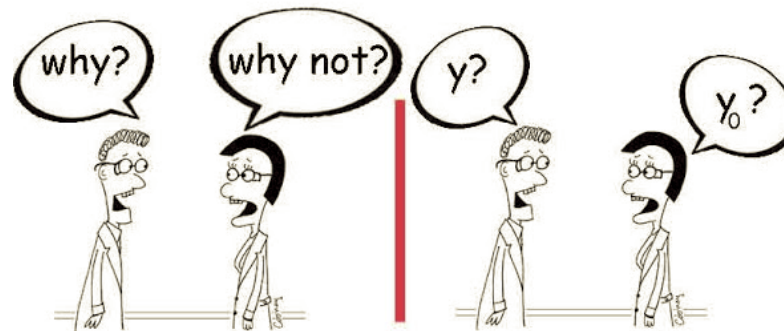


# Hypothesis

"How reality works as the theory says?"

- Expectation
- Testable
- Real life

# Null hypothesis?



The Difference is subtle

**Humor Gags**  
blogspot.com

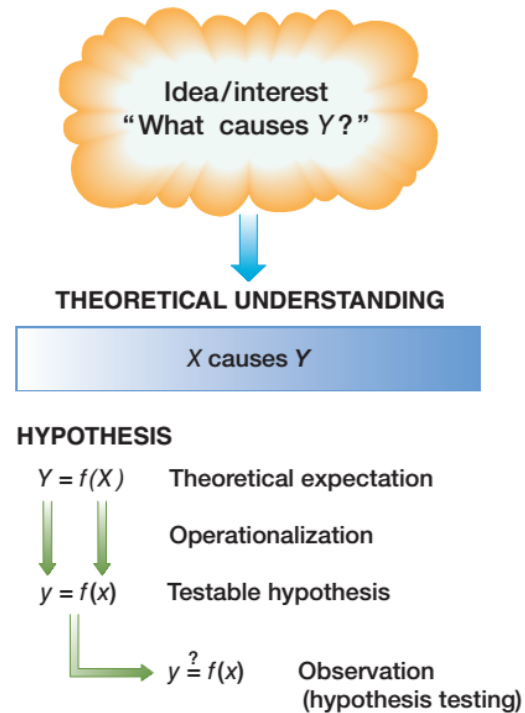
- Baseline: no relation
- Rejecting rather than proving

# Hypotheses of Structural Realism

- Balance of power: internal and external **Growth and rivalry**
- Power distribution in the international system
  - Unipolar?
  - Multipolar?
  - Bipolar

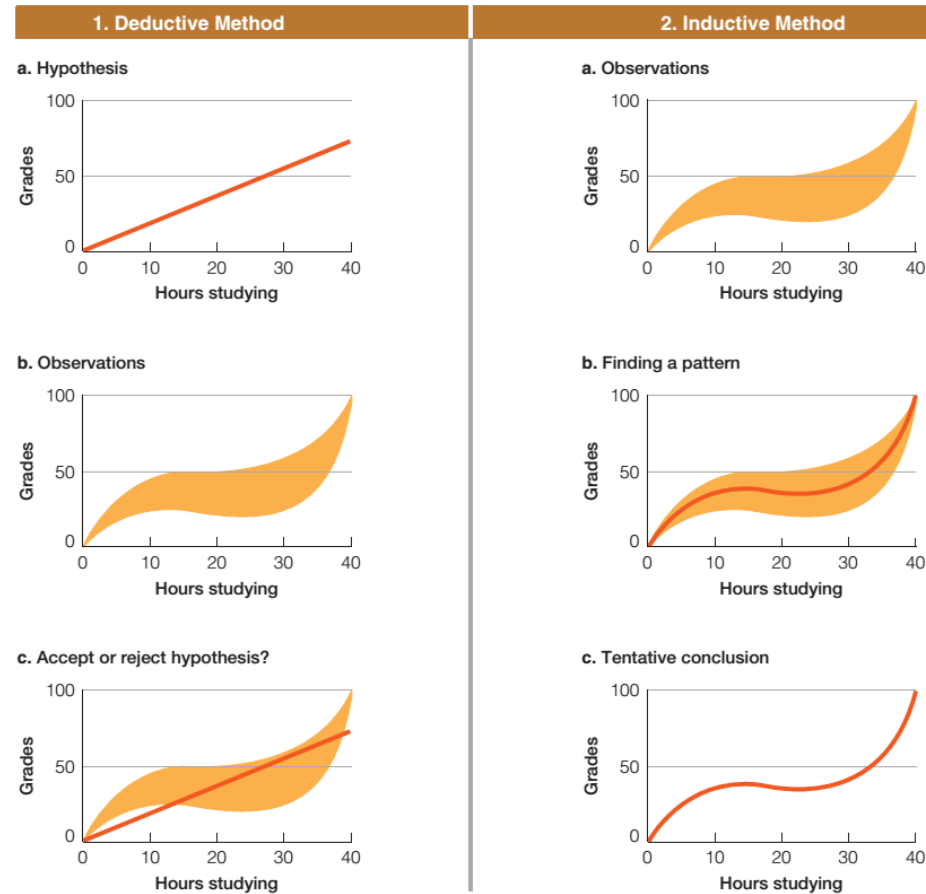


# Chain everything up



- Well, deductively...

# Deductive and inductive theories



# Conduct deductive theory

1. Specify the topic.
2. Specify the range of phenomena.
3. Identify and specify concepts (variables).
4. Find out the relationships.
5. Reason logically from the propositions to the specific topic.

# Conduct inductive theory



1. Observation
2. Generalization
3. Reasoning

# Big data?



- Valuable
- Dynamic
- Skeptical