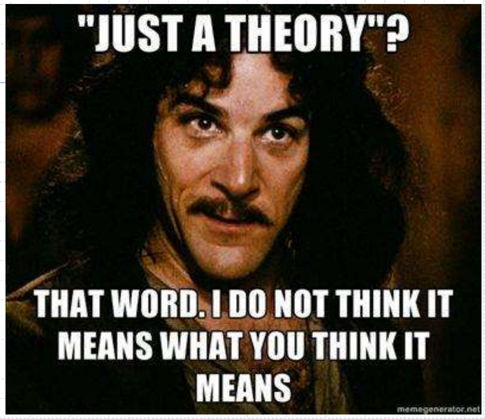

1

What will you study as part of the (one!) class survey?

1. Politics 3%
2. Family life 19%
3. Cultural life 16%
4. Lifestyle 41%
5. Education 9%
6. Something else 13%

25

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Extra Credit HW Option:

- *Methodological* research question
  - *Not* an empirical question (as HW1) or theoretical (see HW2)
  - Examples might include articles testing whether…
    - response rates vary between phone and mail surveys
    - changing a questions' wording changes the distribution of answers
    - Changing the question order affects item response rates.
- Will be due last day of class
- Will mean you have 10 assignments (9 after the lowest is dropped) rather than 9 (8 after the lowest is dropped)
  - Does *not* replace another HW; does *not* mean 3 grades dropped.
  - Just means that your pool of assignments is larger, so that any one low (or high) grade makes a proportionately smaller difference in your overall homework grade.

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Where we are…

DEADLINES			LECTURE		LABS				
Date	Things Due	Reading (15th)	Category	TOPIC	Lab #	Lab Assignment	Type	T	R
Tue Jan 21		-	Orientation	Orientation	-	-	-	-	-
Thu Jan 23		chapt. 1	Orientation	Inquiry & Research	1	Empirical Claims	Topical	-	1
Tue Jan 28		chapt. 4	Orientation	Research Design	(2)	Mini-Design	Solo	1, (2)	
Thu Jan 30		-	Orientation	SPSS Intro	3	Computing (miles)	Data		(2), 3
Tue Feb 4	HW1 Article Review	chapt. 2	Orientation	Explanation & Theory	4	Writing Hypo	Topical	3,4	
[illegible]		[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]					
			Measurement	Recoding *(in lab?)*	5	Recoding (colleges)	Data		4, 5
Tue Feb 11		pp. 124-137	Orientation	Conceptualization	(6)	Measuring Love	Solo	5, (6)	
Thu Feb 13	HW2 Annotations	pp. 138-157	Measurement	Operationalization	7	Internal Validity	Topical		(6), 7
Tue Feb 18		pp. 421-426	Measurement	Elementary Stats	8	Univariates (gsssub)	Data	7, 8	
Thu Feb 20		chapt. 3	Orientation	Misuses of Research	EC1	Ethics (extra credit)	[illegible]		8, EC1
Tue Feb 25	HW3 Dataset Basics	p.415-420, 434-438	Measurement	Quantitative Analysis	9	Coding Heroes		9	
Thu Feb 27		ch.6 & 427-428	*Measurement*	Indices & Scales	10	Lab (abort)			9, 10
Tue Mar 4		pp. 249-256	Measurement	Surveys: Wording	11	Draft Survey Questions	Topical	10, 11	
Thu Mar 6	HW4 Welfare Analysis	chapt. 7	Measurement	Sampling & Errors	(12)	Apartments	Solo		11, (12)
Tue Mar 11		p.426-427,429-433	Description	Crosstabs	13	Crosstabs (gss84)	Data	(12), 13	
Thu Mar 13	MIDTERM	-	-	Project Overview (mandatory lecture)	-	-	-		13
Tue Mar 18				(Spring Break)					
Thu Mar 20				(Spring Break)					
Tue Mar 25	HW5 Indices	pp. 256-263	Measurement	Surveys: Format	14	Draft Survey Format	Topical	14	
Thu Mar 27		-	Description	Testing (Ordinal) Association	15	Ordinal Tests (USDecline)	Data		14, 15
Tue Apr 1		chapt. 8	Observation	Experimental Research	16	Review Survey Draft	Topical	15, 16	
Thu Apr 3	HW 6 Proposal	-	Description	Three Interval Tests	17	3 Tests	Data		16, 17
Tue Apr 8		pp. 263-288	Observation	Surveys: Mode	(18)	Conduct Survey	Solo	17, (18)	
Thu Apr 10		pp. 433-434	Description	Multivariate & Modeling	19	Multiple R (multireg)	Data		(18), 19
Tue Apr 15	HW7 Three Tests	ch.13 & 428-429	Orientation	Qualitative Analysis	(20)	Jaywalking Study	Solo	19, (20)	
Thu Apr 17		pp. 420-421	Observation	Data Entry	(21)	Data Entry	Solo		(20), (21)
Tue Apr 22		chapt. 10	Observation	Fieldwork & Ethnography	(22)	Grounded Theory	Solo	(21), (22)	
Thu Apr 24	HW8 Experiment	chapt. 15	Description	Control Variables & Elab	EC2	Elaboration (extra credit)	Data		(22), EC2
Tue Apr 29		chapt. 11	Observation	Unobtrusive Research	23	Content Analysis	Topical	EC2, 23	
Thu May 1	HW9 Survey Analysis	pp. 316-318	Observation	Focus Groups	24	Evaluation Design	Topical		23, 24
Tue May 6		chapt. 12	Description	Oral Presentations	(25)	Oral Presentations Eval	Solo	24, (25)	(25)
Thu May 8									
Thu May 15	Final Exam			(no class meeting - due 5pm, firm!)				-	-

4 weeks

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SOC497/L: SOCIOLOGY RESEARCH METHODS

Theory & Research:

Scientific Explanations

Ellis Godard

Slides with these, you may have seen before

Outline for Today – *thick!*

- Scienticity (esp. Barriers)
- Paradigms
  - Babbie's List :-S
  - Positivism :-(
  - Others (*briefly* :)
- Theories - Organizing Ideas
- *Purpose* of Theory
- Hypotheses
  - Ideas about Testing Theories
- Lab: Hypotheses & Variables

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Q1. Which was *not* offered as a criterion for scientific evaluation?

1. Falsifiability 0%
2. Validity 2%
3. Generality 0%
4. Simplicity 7%
5. Originality 19%
6. ✓ All of these were given 71%

18

Variability in Scienticity

Donald Black; link @ site

- Five characteristics of science
  - Testability, Validity, Generality, Simplicity, & Originality
- **Each is a variable** (not binary)
  - The more an idea is any of those, the more scientific it is
  - Vary curvilinearly w/ researchers' distance from the subject
  - Can predict the conditions that maximize them
    - Inc. intermediate distance between researcher & subject
    - Black's scientific commandments
- Makes Science relatively easy to evaluate
  - What's a "good"/useful idea? It has those 5! The more, the better
  - What's the alternative?
    - If you're not being scientific, what are you being?
    - If not evaluating ideas w/ those 5, then w/ what?

Characteristics of Good* Theory*

- **Validity**
  - holds up to the facts well; conforms to our observations
- **Testability**/Falsifiability
  - of what use is an unrefutable idea?
- **Parsimony** (simplicity)
  - May include precision/explicitness?
- **Generality**
  - applies to many cases, settings, issues, instances, etc.
  - best theories explain the most, and in the most contexts
- **Originality**/Creativity

* They are "good" in the sense of being scientific. If you don't want to be scientific, you might prefer other criteria – but *which ones?*

** These are also measures of *scientic*ity: The more of each (or any or all) of these an idea is, the more scientific it is *(per D. Black)*

+ possible other criterion: intersubjective – aware of itself, a theory that accounts for the theory itself

"Theoretical Paradigms"

- Not the same as theory
  - Worldview, overarching perspective, way of thinking
  - Like a theoretical *strategy* (way of thinking) but separate from explanatory power
  - E.g. Newtonian physics, evolutionary biology
- Not objective facts of nature
  - Neither true nor false (Kuhn)
    - Implicit, assumed, taken for granted
    - may gain or lose popularity but seldom disregarded
  - Individual choice? Sociological result?
- Provides direction
  - But also constrains attention

Evaluation of Explanations

- Descriptions & Explanations demand evaluation
  - Are they worth reading, repeating, citing, assigning, etc.?
- Clear criteria make science relatively easy to evaluate
  - What's a "good"/useful idea? It has those 5!
  - **The more it has, the better**
- **What's the alternative?**
  - If you're not being scientific, what are you being?
  - If not evaluating ideas w/ those 5, then w/ what?

Q2. How many examples of theoretical paradigms does Babbie give in the text?

1. 4 3%
2. 5 26%
3. 6 51%
4. 7 5%
5. 8 15%

0

Babbie's Examples

- "Positivism"
- Social Darwinism
- Conflict Theory
  - Marxian/Marxist
  - Feminism
- Structural Functionalism
- Symbolic Interactionism
- Ethnomethodology

- NOTE: Slide on each, but just highlights (red) on some – rest = for your notes ☺
- NOTE: Durkheim and Weber not paradigmatic?

Classical Positivism

- August Comte (originated)
  - Aspects of society as phenomena to study scientifically
    - Religious paradigms dominated (Social variation as God's will)
  - "Positivism" = optimistically scientific approach
  - Can "fix" the "problems" (for whom?) w/ Sociology
- Philosophical meaning
  - Distinct ontology …

Levels of Abstraction

- Levels of Abstraction
  - Methodology – ways of collecting facts
  - Theory – summaries that provide order to facts
  - Epistemology – basis for evaluating summaries
  - Ontology – what can be explained
- Ontological Approaches
  - Realism: the truth is out there; we just have to measure it
  - Positivism*: the truth is in summaries; experience orders chaos
  - Empiricism*: explanation is tricky, but can be studied & improved
  - Postmodernism: observation is so tricky we can't reference "facts"

** Calling science "positivist" is clumsy and inaccurate…*

Contemporary "Positivism"

- Has lost its ontological distinction
  - Informally, anything scientific or propositional
  - Still, not a "theory" (contra Babbie)
    - = Ontological; most of the others not even epistemological
- But differs from empiricism
  - Positivism emphasizes sensory experience
    - World isn't just "out there" – our observations order it
  - Empiricism recognizes variation in sensory experience
    - Bad measurements, poor samples, inappropriate analysis, etc.
  - Positivism seeks to explain the world.
    - Empiricism also explains explanation.

Social Darwinism

- Social scientists (esp. Herbert Spencer) applied the idea of "**survival of the fittest**" to society
  - E.g. moving from hunter-gathers, to agrarian, to industrial forms of societies was a natural progression for the "fittest" form of society to survive.
  - Things get better and better
- Problems
  - Idea of competition contentious, even offensive
    - Things *don't* just get "better"
    - Inhumane – shouldn't we have sympathy for the weak?
  - Conceptual issues:
    - Fitness? Death? Extinction?
- Persists fairly recently, though in different forms
  - Population Ecology – study of "niches", newspapers
  - Implicit in any conflict/status model – some characteristics are superior for the given environment & entail preferable outcomes

Conflict Theory

- **Social life best understood thru conflict processes**
  - **Ongoing tension between two groups/types**
  - Between groups, within groups, etc.
  - They don't get better, they just go on
- **Marxian:**
  - Base/Superstructure - Conflict is over base
- **Feminist:**
  - White, middle/upper class males make rules & set punishments
  - Men and women are intellectually different
    - Girls play spontaneously, imaginatively, & free of structure or rules
    - Boys' games are structured, rule-driven, & involve face-to-face competition
  - Conflict rooted in historical/social & intellectual/personality differences
- **Common themes of domination & exploitation**
- **Problem:**
  - **Doesn't explain who/when; Assumes uniformity and a constant, but empirical reality includes wide variation**

Structural Functionalism

- Common themes: **harmony & order**
- A social entity is like an organism, with many parts, each performing a specific function needed **to facilitate the existence of the system**
  - AKA, "social systems theory"
  - What part do the police play in society?
  - What part do *criminals* play?
- Problems:
  - Can't measure/identify balance/harmony
  - **Doesn't allow for *disorder*, so disallows variation – not much room for explanation**

Q3: How many of those are testable w/ observable data?

1. All of them 5%
2. Most of them 0%
3. Half of them 0%
4. Some of them 11%
5. None of them 84%

Symbolic Interactionism

- George Herbert Mead's term
- Refers to **process of humans reaching common understanding thru language and symbols**
  - lends insights into nature of interactions in ordinary social life – the looking glass self
- Leads to a cultural turn in explanation
  - Symbols are imbedded in our interactions
  - Culture accounts for personality, meaning, etc.

What *is* a "theory"?

- Often misused
  - *not* informal
  - Not synonymous with paradigm
    - Could be more, or less
- Set of comprehensive statements
  - Typically Explanatory & Predictive
    - Might simply be interpretivist; Not testable?
  - Systematic
    - derive explanations from coherent scheme
  - Most of those 6 are *not*

Ethnomethodology

- "Methodology of the people"
- Harold Garfinkel
  - People are continuously trying to **make sense of the life they experience**
    - Why did this happen, what is my reaction, how will I react in the future, what does this experience mean?
  - **Thru their actions and interactions**, people are continually creating social structure – they are, if fact, creating their realities.
  - Paradigmatic? Maybe in sense of trend > qual work?
- **How test *any* of these? :(**

Ways of Organizing Theory

- Historical Origins
- Early Names (D,M,W)
- Contemporary (Macro/Micro/etc)
- 3 Popular Flavors
- 4 Major Strands (DB)

Context of the Beginning

- 19th Century Europe
- Social Change
  - Industrial and French Revolutions
  - Farm to Factory, Rural to Urban, etc.
- Controversy
  - Loss of old order (authority, power, etc.)
    - Land, church, kinships, community
  - Conservative reactions to social chaos…

Key Figures: Early Scientists

- Emile Durkheim (1858-1917)
  - Intensely empirical / scientific
  - Alienation through lack of solidarity (anomie)
- Karl Marx (1818-1883)
  - Intensely critical / normative
  - Alienation through class conflict (oppression)
- Max Weber (1864-1920)
  - "Value-free" study of historical societies
  - "Verstehen" – understand subjective meanings
- All systematic – comparative systems

Key Figures: Contemporary

- *Micro*sociology
  - George Herbert Mead
  - Charles Cooley
  - Erving Goffman
- *Meso*sociology
  - Robert Merton
  - John Turner
- *Macro*sociology
  - Roger Dahrendof
  - W.E. Du Bois
- Pure Sociology
  - Donald Black
  - Ellis Godard ☺

Three Popular Flavors

- Typical focus = on three:
  - Symbolic Interactionist – micro
  - Conflict Theorist – macro
  - Functionalist – macro?
- Many more in larger typology
  - Donald Black's
  - Four Strands; 2 Flavors each

Four Major Strands of Strategy

- Individualism
  - Look to experiences of reality by free agents
- Utilitarianism
  - Patterns follow the goals of social actors
- Functionalism
  - Patterns satisfy some systemic balance
- Structuralism
  - Patterns explained by sociological distributions

Two Flavors of Each Strand

- Individualism
  - Motivational - psychological impact of social forces
    - *Suicide, Protestant Ethic*
    - Learning, bonding, pressure, strain
  - Phenomenological - actor's objective conscious experience
    - Neutralization, social construction of reality
    - Symbolic Interactionism (Meade, Goffman)
- Utilitarianism
  - Rational Choice - rational choices of means & goals
  - Conflict Theory – opposition from unequal power/resources
    - Marx, Dahrendorf, Marx
    - +Feminism

Two Flavors of Each Strand, cont'd

- Functionalism
  - Systems Theory – patterns contribute to system's needs
  - Neo-Darwinian Theory – selection thru adaptive fit
    - +Socio-Biology
- Structuralism
  - Constraint Theory – consequences of variable opportunity
    - Weak ties, homosexuality, change/crime
  - Behavioral Theory – locations/directions in social space
    - Law, suburbs, therapy, terrorism, flame wars, reality shows

So, how many are there?

- What counts, & how's it organized?
  - Babbie's 6? – not a list of theories
  - Typical 3? – incomplete & silly
  - Black's 8 (10)? Maybe…
  - But there's no logical limit to kinds of theory, otoh…
- Theory is special & difficult
  - Most of those don't satisfy all 5 criteria
  - You *won't* create your own theory

Q4. How many kinds of theory are there, according to Black?

1. 4
2. 6
3. 8
4. 10
5. 12

The Role/Purpose of Theories

- **Theories function in research in three ways:**
  - They make sense of observed patterns – explain what we see
  - Shape & direct research efforts – control how we observe
  - Prevent us from being taken in by flukes
- **Answers "why" questions,** but indirectly –
  - - by answering when, where, what, and/or how
  - Specifies conditions under which something happens (or doesn't)
- **Provide logical explanations,** but does that mean
  - …propositional cause/effect statements?
  - …more general "covering laws"
  - …comprehension thru something rich but imprecise

Looking ahead: Papers

- Should try to use theory to contextualize your research goals & findings:
  - Why are you looking at this topic?
  - How are you going to interpret the answers?
  - What is the logic behind your claims?
  - Don't *force* theory – but *do explain* something
- The lit review is your "theory" section
  - More on lit searches next week (Mon 9/16)
- Entire project depends on a **hypothesis**…

Stating Hypotheses

- Relates two variables
  - Propositional statement relates concepts
  - Variables are observable, measurable
- Parts
  - Dependent variable – effect
  - Independent variable – "cause"
  - Control variable – third piece…
- Formats
  - "if x, then y" or "when x, y is more likely" or "y is more likely under condition x"

Hypothesized Relationships

- Most important: 2 variables
  - Clearly measurable things & how they're related
- Strength
  - Weak, moderate, or strong
- Direction
  - Positive – same direction; 1 goes up when other does
    - e.g. education and income
  - Negative – opposite direction
    - e.g. age and educ
  - "flat"/neutral – no relationship
- Form…

Lab Exercise

- Moving from Theory to Measurement
  - Stating claims as hypotheses
    - DO NOT just copy or paraphrase what I've written
    - Must invent measurements, picking example/instance of idea
  - Identifying the *variables* in claims
  - Handout on Canvas
- Groups again
  - Groups of 3-5 get secretary bonus
  - Must work w/ different people than first lab (!)
- Secretarial Bonus
  - Any group unable to pick may forego the 5 pts
  - ~ Prisoner's Dilemma?
  - Rotate!

Hypothesized Relationships, cont'd

- Form
  - Linear
  - Curvilinear & "U-linear"
    - e.g. law and intimacy; age and income
  - Others: U-linear, logorhythmic, loglinear, cosinal, S-curve, no relationship until some point, etc.
- Practically…
  - Typically hypothesize direction and form (linear); usually hope for strength, but that may vary too
  - For papers, assume linear, hypothesize pos or neg

Q5. A bivariate hypothesis includes:

1. A dependent variable ("DV")
   0%
2. An independent variable ("IV")
   0%
3. A claim about how the DV varies w/ the IV
   3%
4. All of the above
   95%
5. None of the above; it's a trick question
   3%

Recent Exercise: Claims

- Required pulling together pieces
  - Empirical vs. normative (lecture)
  - Claims and evidence (reading)
  - Support and falsification (both)
- Objectives
  - Awareness of the *nature* of claims
  - Critical consideration of basis of & *support for*

Team Scores

Points	Team	Points	Team
3.92	**Lifestyle**		
3.8	**Cultural life**		
3.33	**Something else**		
3.17	**Education**		
3	**Family life**		