



EMPIRICAL POLITICAL RESEARCH

Research Design Assignment/ Tutorial 3
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CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

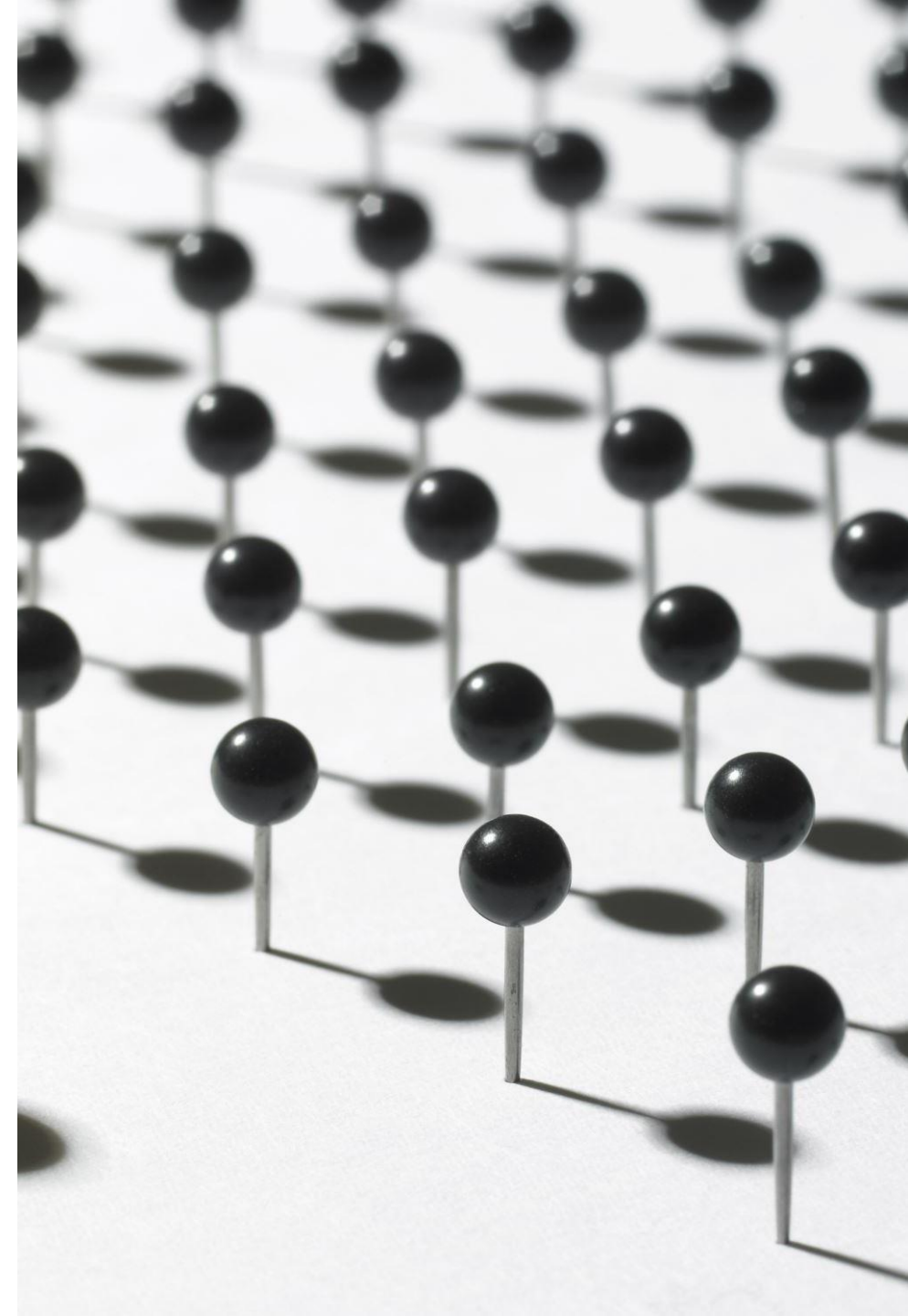
Task: specify the research question to be addressed and the intellectual purpose of the research, such as why the research question is important, and the appropriateness of studying it using a survey.

Length: 1 sentence for the question and 1-2 sentences for importance

EXAMPLE

How does the active use of Twitter by politicians affect their proposed policies?

This question is relevant because policymakers who actively use social networks might be influenced by public opinion more than those who do not. Such dependence might have far-reaching implications on governance and economy.



THEORY SPECIFICATION = CONVEYING AN ARGUMENT IN ONE STRONG PASSAGE

Task: find a plausible “because” for your research question. Ask yourselves why the relationship between X and Y might exist.

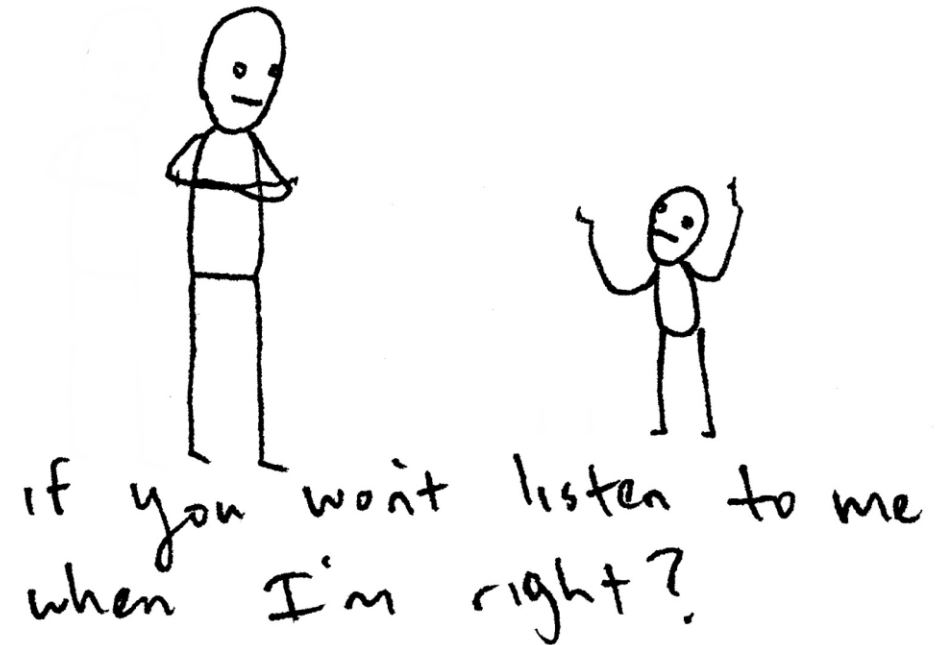
Length: 2-4 sentences

EXAMPLE

Voters try to influence their governments’ policy decisions towards their most preferred outcomes, so they politize Twitter. Political leaders, when being active on Twitter, can inform themselves about citizens’ demands and adjust their policies to the most popular choice – an implication of the median voter theorem.

You don’t have to mention specific theories, but you can if you want to.

How are we supposed
to have a good argument



HYPOTHESIS SPECIFICATION = COMMUNICATE YOUR EXPECTATIONS

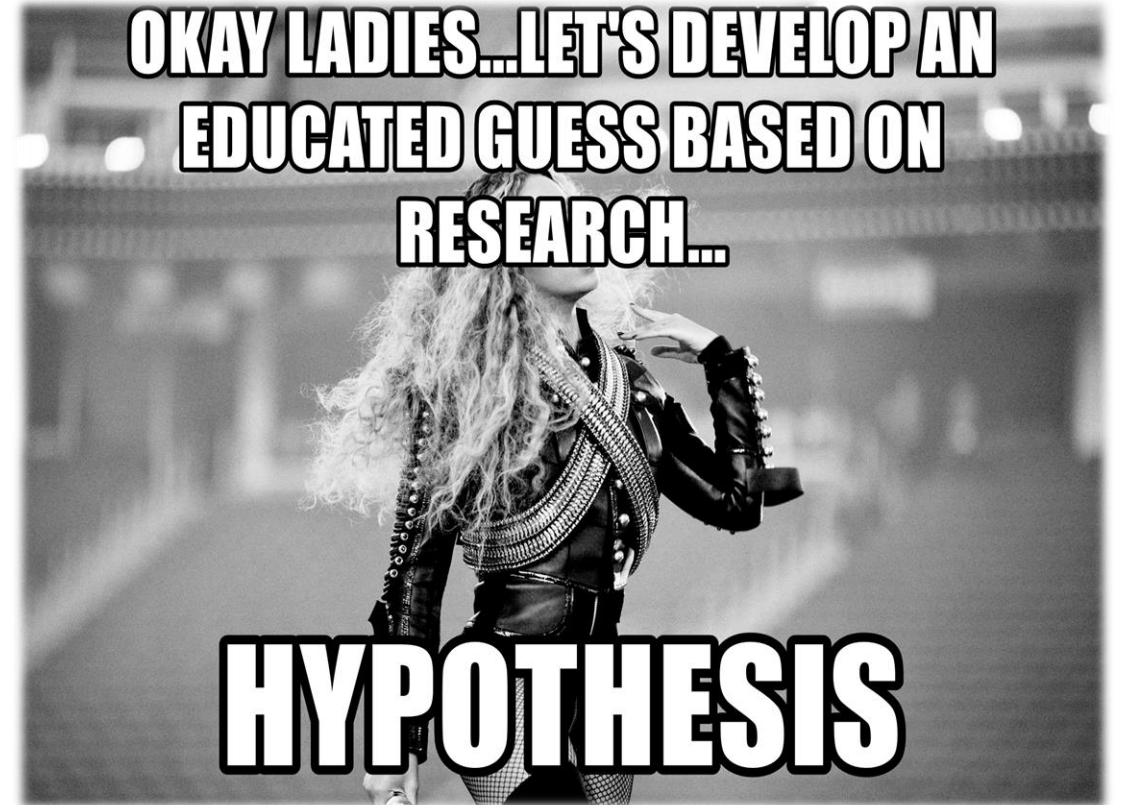
Task: find a yes-no statement to test your theory. Ask yourselves under what conditions the relationship between X and Y can be directly observed.

Length: 1-2 sentences

EXAMPLE

Hypothesis 1: Politicians confronted with more left-wing Twitter audiences are likely to shift their policies to the left.

Hypothesis 2: Politicians who actively use Twitter are expected change their positions more often than those who do not use Twitter.



OPERATIONALISATION AND MEASUREMENT

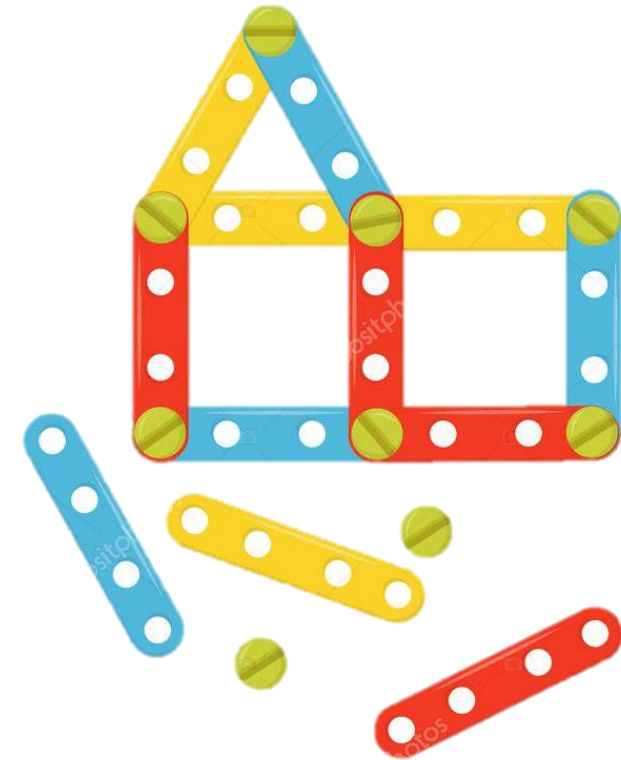
Task: State the population of the study and discuss the sampling strategy that best fits the purpose of the survey or an experiment.

Length: 5-10 sentences

EXAMPLE

I will measure my dependent variable – the politician's response to preferences expressed by Twitter audiences by running a laboratory experiment with invited politicians who will be interviewed about their economic policy stances and attitudes toward globalisation (on the left-right scale from -5 to +5) before they receive an overview of most popular tweets of their citizens. After the politician reads the overview, he or she is asked again whether they would like to change the preference and if yes, in what direction on the left-right scale. My independent variable is...

... and so on



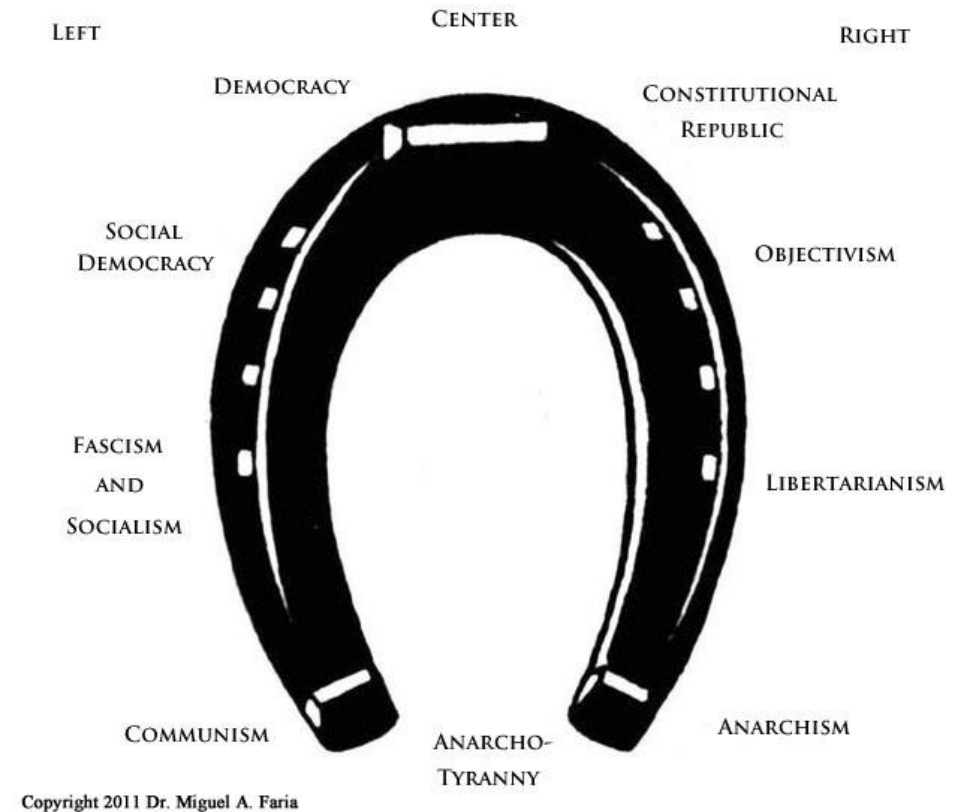
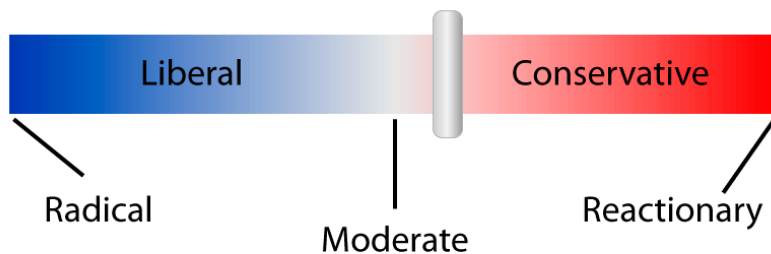
DESIGN EXEMPLARY QUESTIONS FOR YOUR SURVEY OR EXPERIMENT

Task: Try to derive concise and efficient questions that test your hypotheses and don't forget that you don't have to reinvent the wheel. Include any visual aids, such as thermometer scales, photographs or answer cards.

Length: 20 substantive questions (or more)

EXAMPLE

Where would you place yourself on the following scale:



... you can use different shapes and dimensions, be creative

DISCUSS LIMITATIONS AND PROBLEMS OF YOUR RESEARCH

Task: Try to reflect on what have you done so far and what could be done to improve your method. Think about alternative explanations or ways to test your hypotheses.

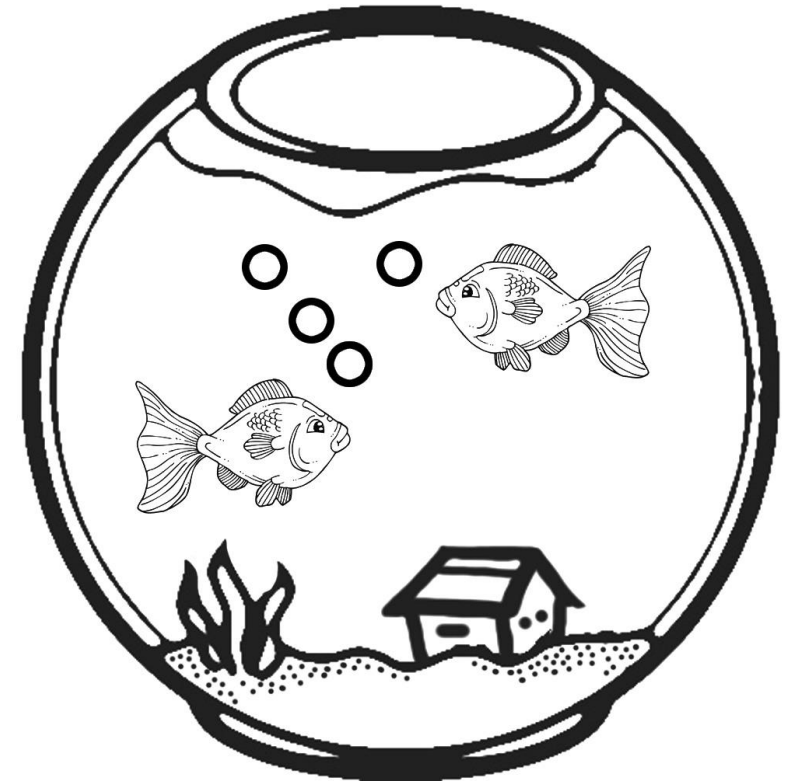
Length: does not matter, depends on your choice

EXAMPLE

The use of laboratory experiments to test political response to public opinion in Twitter has many shortcomings. First, it does not allow to trace cross-temporal trends: respondents just fill in the questionnaire and then there is no follow-up. Second, there are many factors that can influence the respondent's decision on the test day, e.g., ...

The questionnaire does not answer ...

My theory does not account for ... countries / cases. There might be another explanation, which is ...



**SUBMIT YOUR PRESENTATIONS AND QUESTIONNAIRES TO ME VIA SLACK
OR EMAIL BY 30.11!**

**SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS ASSIGNMENT (INCLUDING ACTIVE
PARTICIPATION IN THE ORAL PRESENTATION) WILL BE REWARDED WITH
5 EXTRA CREDIT POINTS (ON A 100-POINT SCALE) IN THE EXAM FOR
EMPIRICAL POLITICAL RESEARCH.**

LEVELS OF MEASUREMENT (... WHAT IF WE ARE INTERESTED IN A CONCEPT BUT DO NOT KNOW HOW TO MEASURE IT)

Nominal, e.g., gender

Ordinal, e.g., education level

Interval, e.g., school grade

Ratio, e.g., income

Important note: the difference between interval and ratio is simply that the latter has a natural zero point, and the former does not (e.g., income conventionally starts with zero, so it is an example of a ratio scale)

MEASUREMENT PROBLEMS

- Conceptual clarity, i.e., how well-derived are my concepts?
- Precision, i.e., can 1.3 be rounded to 1.0?
- Accuracy, i.e., should I compare all federal states or is one Bundesland enough to draw conclusions about Germany?
- Availability, i.e., where do I get the data?

Indirect Measurement

