

# GETTING THE INTRODUCTION AND THE «HOOK» RIGHT

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# INTRODUCTION: ANSWER THREE QUESTIONS

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- 1) **Who cares?** What is the topic or RQ, and why is it interesting and important to theory and practice? (Hooks: quote and trend)
- 2) **What do we know, what don't we know, and so what?** What key theoretical perspectives and empirical findings have already informed the topic or question? What major, unaddressed puzzle, controversy, or paradox does this study address, why does it need to be addressed? (Establishing the field vs Problematizing the field (Locke and Golden-Biddle, 1997))

CONT.

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### 3. What will we learn? (Framing your theoretical contribution)

How does your study fundamentally change, challenge, or advance scholars' understanding?

\* *Consensus shifting*- identify widely held assumptions, proceed to challenge them, describe implications for ongoing research

\* *Consensus creation*-show a lack of consensus in the literature and either clarify the lines of debate or resolve the conflict

See Understanding and addressing readers' sensemaking (Patriotta: 2017:756)

CONT.

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«Just because a gap exists does not necessarily make the study interesting or worthwhile. Many authors write the introduction by stating that there is a gap but end there without clearly noting why filling this particular gap is important or interesting, or why this contributes to our enhanced understanding of the particular phenomenon.» (Grant and Pollock, 2011: 874)

# GENERATING RESEARCH QUESTIONS THROUGH PROBLEMATIZATION

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- «need for reorienting research away from incremental footnote-on footnote research as the norm for the field» (Daft & Lewin, 1990:1)

**FIGURE 1**  
**The Problematization Methodology and Its Key Elements**

| <b>Aim of the problematization methodology</b>   |  |   |   |   |  |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|
| Generating novel research questions through a dialectical interrogation of one's own familiar position, other stances, and the literature domain targeted for assumption challenging |  |   |   |   |  |
| <b>A typology of assumptions open for problematization</b>   |  |   |   |   |  |
| <i>In-house:</i><br>Assumptions that exist within a specific school of thought   | <i>Root metaphor:</i><br>Broader images of a particular subject matter underlying existing literature                          | <i>Paradigm:</i><br>Ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions underlying existing literature | <i>Ideology:</i><br>Political-, moral-, and gender-related assumptions underlying existing literature | <i>Field:</i><br>Assumptions about a specific subject matter that are shared across different theoretical schools |  |
| <b>Principles for identifying and challenging assumptions</b>  |  |   |   |   |  |
| <i>1. Identify a domain of literature:</i><br>What main bodies of literature and key texts make up the domain?   | <i>2. Identify and articulate assumptions:</i><br>What major assumptions underlie the literature within the identified domain? | <i>3. Evaluate articulated assumptions:</i><br>Are the identified assumptions worthy to be challenged?          | <i>4. Develop alternative assumptions:</i><br>What alternative assumptions can be developed?          | <i>5. Relate assumptions to audience:</i><br>What major audiences hold the challenged assumptions?                | <i>6. Evaluate alternative assumptions:</i><br>Are the alternative assumptions likely to generate a theory that will be regarded as interesting by the audiences targeted? |

# THE HOOK OR GRABBER, (Jacobsson and Hallgren, 2014)

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- Initial twist that captures the reader's attention and indicates why a paper is interesting, relevant and important
  - 1) The quote
  - 2) The anecdote
  - 3) The provocative question
  - 4) The surprise
  - 5) The metaphor

# TITLES ARE YOUR HOOK

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- 1) THE TITLE MUST OUTLINE THE TOPIC AT HAND AND WHY IT IS INTERESTING AND IMPORTANT
- 2) WHAT MAJOR PUZZLE/PARADOX DOES THE ARTICLE UNLOCK? DOES THE TITLE INDICATE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FIELD? THE PROBLEMATIZING OF A FIELD?
- 3) WHAT WILL WE LEARN? THE TITLE MUST ESTABLISH THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ARTICLE TO THE FIELD

Russel- Bennett and Baron (2016) «Editorial: the importance of the snappy title»



# STRUCTURING YOUR INTRODUCTION

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- What is the problem? Describe the (empirical) problem in practical terms (add numbers and factual info)
- What has research shown to date on this matter? Current knowledge status. Perspectives used. What is still unexplained? Describe the research gap, argue a RQ that fills that gap/Problematization
- Describe the theoretical take-on to your RQ and argue for how your theoretical approach brings the research field forward.

## CONT...

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- Argue for methodology ( empirical context and methods)
- Contribution of the article (cf consensus shifting/ consensus creation)
- Describe how the rest of the article is organized

## Good examples of an introduction

Greenwood, R. & Suddaby, R. (2006) Institutional entrepreneurship in mature fields: The big five accounting firms, *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol.49 (1) 27- 48

## IDENTIFY THEORIES - DESCRIBING A PARTICULAR PHENOMENON

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- What is the overarching theoretical framework?
- How does this paper amend existing theory?
- What is the mechanism that links the constructs in this paper?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the theory?

Editors' comments, AMR, 2016, 41(1) 1-8.

# BUILDING BLOCKS OF THEORY DEVELOPMENT

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What

How

Why

Who, when where?

Whetten, D.A. (1989) What Constitutes a Theoretical Contribution? *Academy of Management Review*, 14 (4) 490-495)

# WHAT

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- Which factors should be considered as part of the explanation of the social or individual phenomena of interest?
  - Comprehensiveness (are all factors included?)
  - Parsimony (should some factors be deleted because they add little additional value to our understanding?)

# HOW

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- How are the factors related? ( arrows, boxes, introducing causality)
- Together the WHAT and HOW elements constitute the domain or subject of the theory.
- The more complex the set of relationships under consideration, the more useful it is to graphically depict them
- Variance theory versus process theory

# WHY

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- What are the underlying dynamics that justify the selection of factors and the proposed causal relationships?
- The rationale constitute's the theory's assumptions - the theoretical glue
- Theory- development process – logic replaces data for evaluation
- Challenge and extend existing knowledge, not simply to rewrite it.
- Push back the boundaries of our knowledge by providing compelling and logical justification for altered views
- Most fruitful but also most difficult in theory development



# WHO, WHERE, WHEN

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- Conditions place limitations on the propositions derived from a theoretical model
- Temporal and contextual factors – boundary of generalizability
- Theoretical critiques should marshal compelling evidence

# LINK BETWEEN THEORY DEVELOPMENT AND EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

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- WHAT and HOW describe.
- Only WHY explains.
- WHAT and HOW provide a framework for interpreting patterns
- Combining the HOWS and WHATS produces the model (derive propositions)

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«We must make sure that is passing as a good theory includes a plausible, cogent explanation for why we should expect certain relationships in our data. Together WHAT, HOW, WHY provide the essential ingredients of a simple theory: description and explanation» (Whetten, 1989:491)

# WHAT THEORY IS NOT (I)

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1. References are not theory
2. Data are not theory
3. Lists of variables or constructs are not theory

Sutton, R.I. and Staw, B.M. (1995) What Theory is *NOT*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40:371-384

## WHAT THEORY IS NOT (II)

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3. Diagrams are not theory
4. Hypotheses (or predictions) are not theory

Predictions presented without any underlying causal logic do not constitute theory

Sutton, R.I. and Staw, B.M (1995) What Theory is *NOT*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40:371-384

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