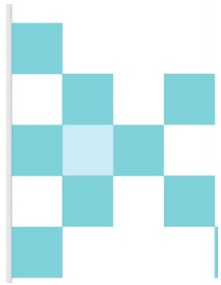


METHODOLOGY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

22 September 2026

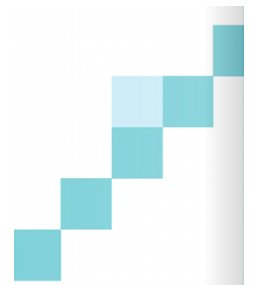


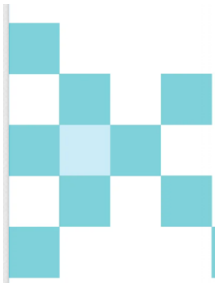


What will we be talking about?

...Doing (Social) Science

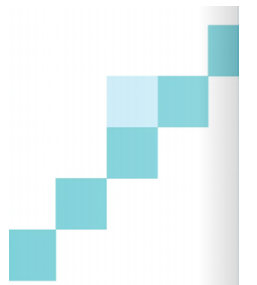
- Ontology and epistemology of social sciences
- What does it mean “to do science”
- What distinguishes social science from other forms of observing social reality
- Inductive and hypothetico-deductive reasoning
- Between positivism and social constructivism
- The particular problem of social sciences: the familiarity of the social
- How to deal with one's own values
- Ethics of social sciences in contemporary societies

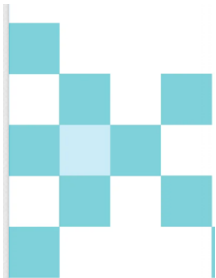




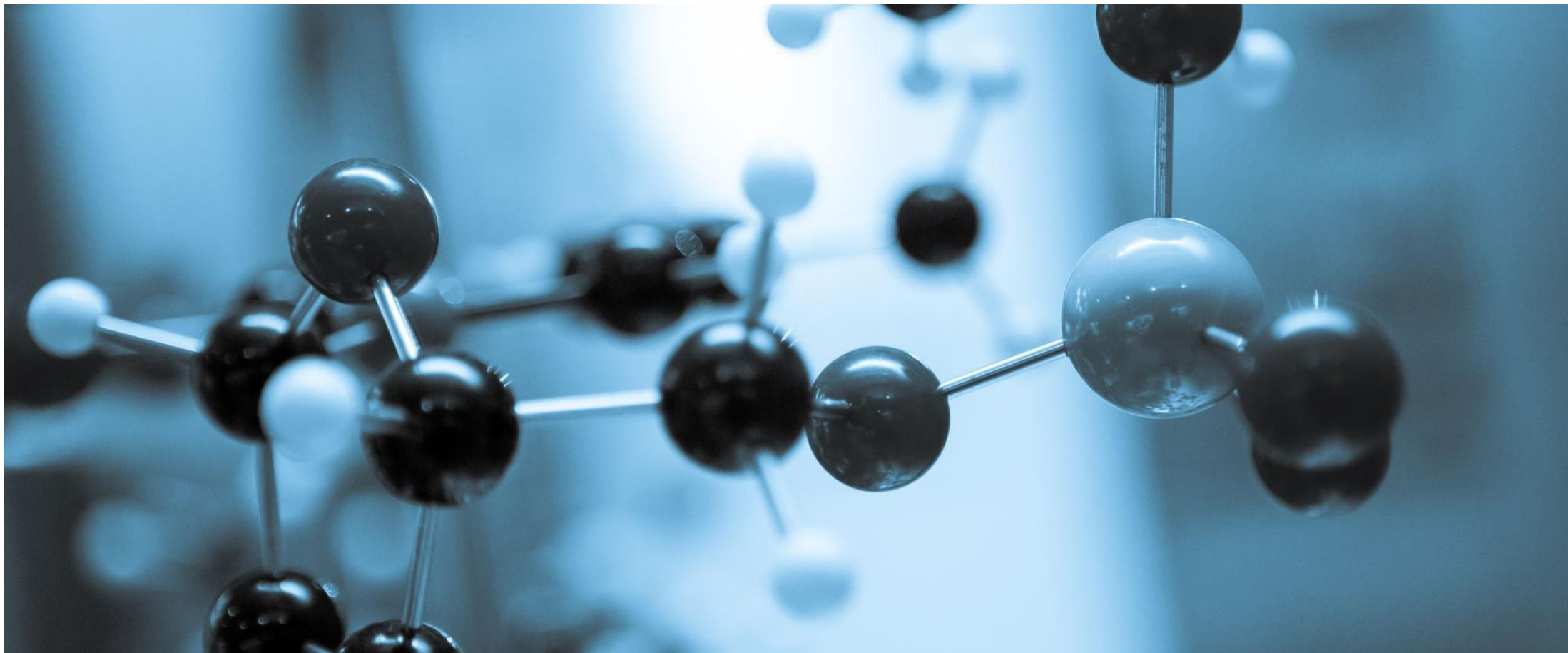
To start...

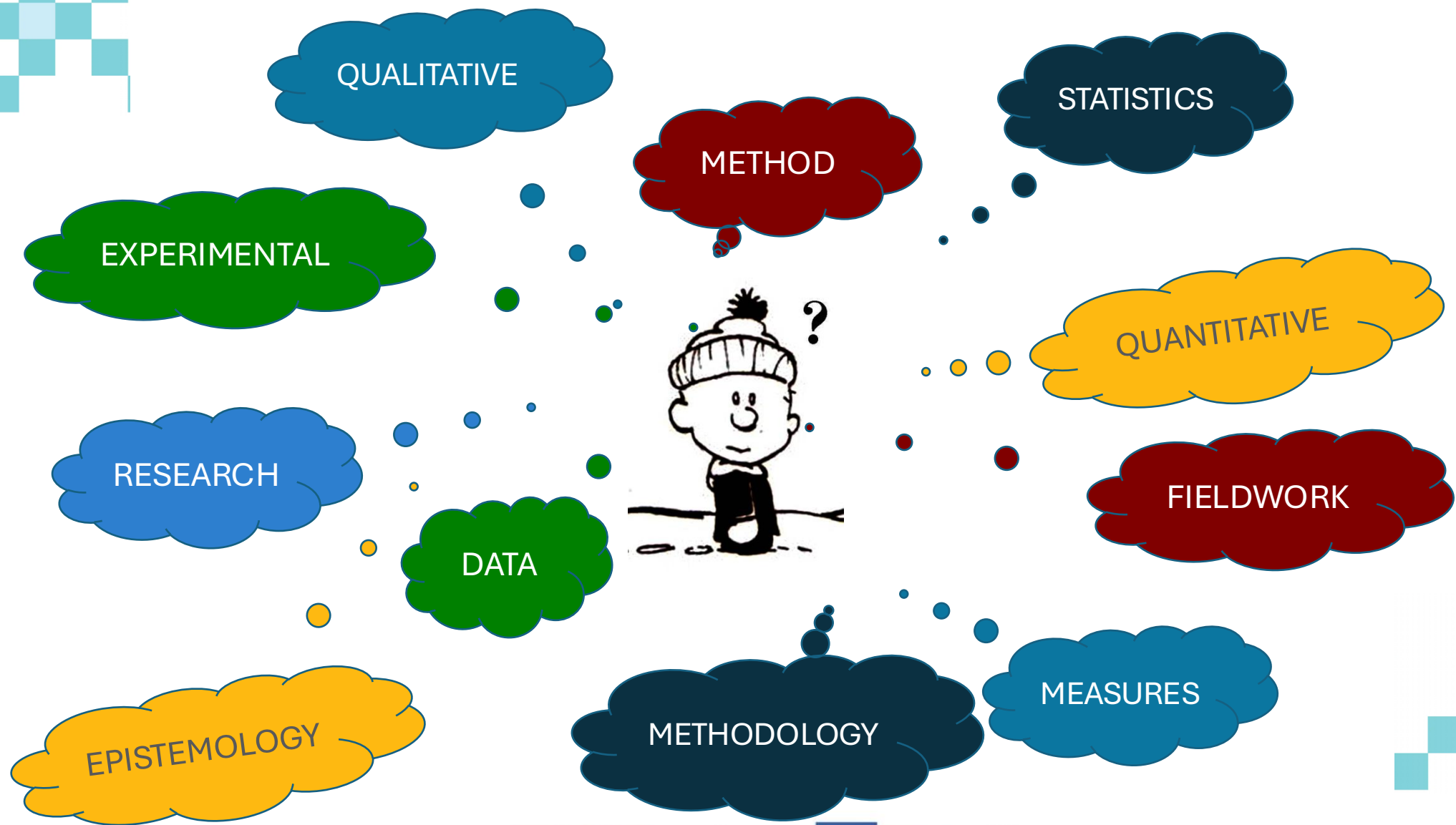
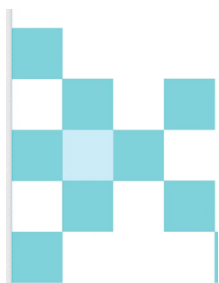
1. The scientific method
2. Epistemology, methodology and methods
3. Why methods matter?

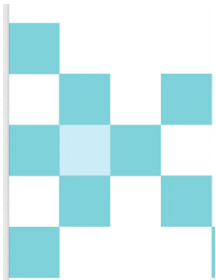




THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD



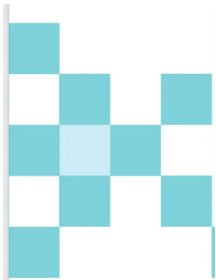




GENERALISED CONFUSION

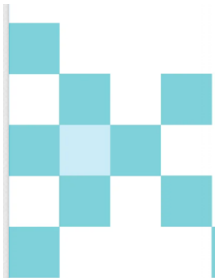
- On books
- On debates
- On papers, theses and dissertations





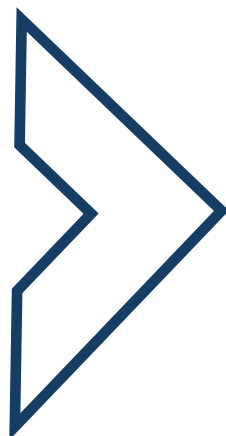
What is science?





What is science?

The word **science**
originates from the Latin
word *scientia*

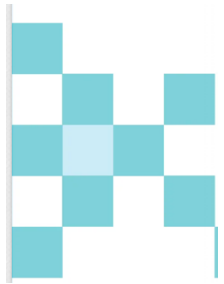


KNOWLEDGE



The capacity "to know" – the act of "being convinced of" or "being certain of"
It is being certain of what one believes, or what one supposes to know.

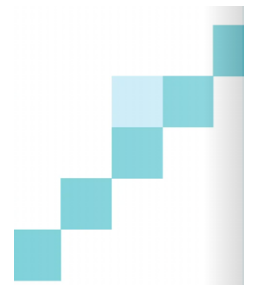


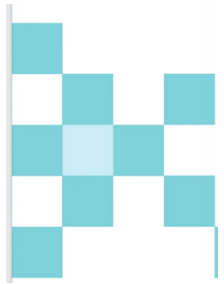


What is science?

Science is considered by many to be the most correct and valid source of knowledge.

What is "scientifically proven" is generally assumed to be indisputable, something that is more than a belief or a mere opinion.

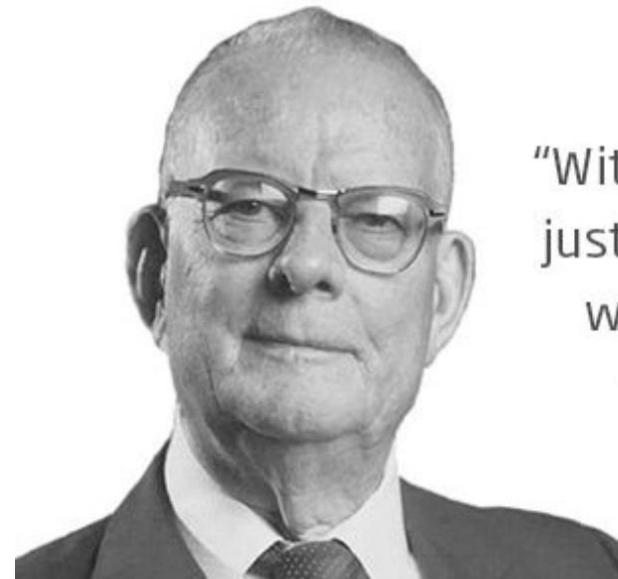




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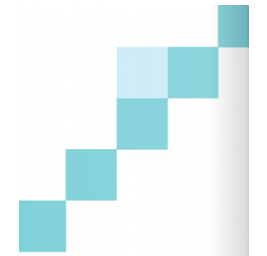
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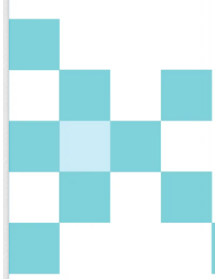


"Without data you're just another person with an opinion"

W. Edwards Deming

(1900-1993)



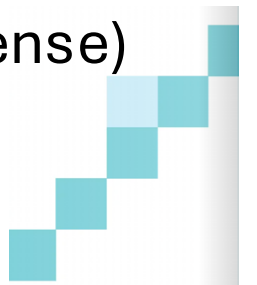


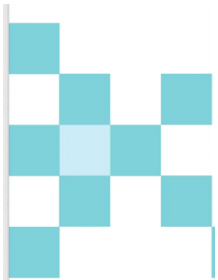
What is science?

It is a special type of belief.

It is the one that can withstand the test of **validity**.

Thus, the problem of the nature of science focuses not only on the question of the **criteria for the validity of knowledge** but also on the question of the elements that function as a **boundary between scientific knowledge and other forms of knowledge** (e.g. religion, metaphysics, and common sense)





...validity of knowledge

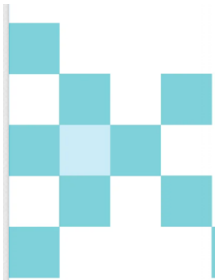
What is believed
to be the
objective world

This idea was already present in some metaphors used in the classical philosophy of Plato (who believed in the existence of the world of eternal and perfect ideas and the world of human senses and imperfect senses).

A subjective
world

A world with its own logic, capable of being described or "discovered" (that is, the **object of knowledge**)

Represented by a perceptive, thinking subject, capable of knowing and decoding the "hidden" logic of the objective world (that is, the **subject of knowledge**)

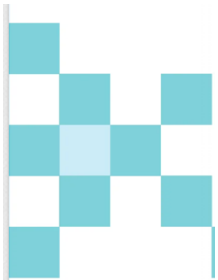


What is science?

Empirical
evidence

based on observations, objectively measured and
verifiable





What is science?

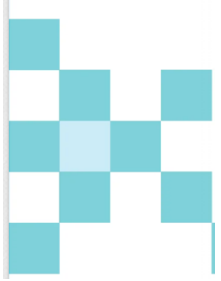
Empirical
evidence

based on observations, objectively measured and verifiable

Methodology

systematic and organized approach to gathering, analysing, and interpreting data





What is science?

A way of getting information about the natural and the social world

Empirical evidence

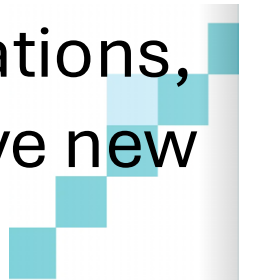
based on observations, objectively measured and verifiable

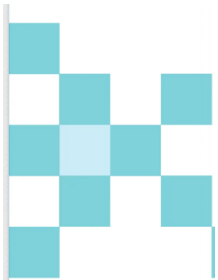
Methodology

systematic and organised approach to gathering, analysing, and interpreting data

Theoretical framework

test existing theories, test alternative explanations, finding the answer to new hypothesis, improve new theories and/or create new ones





Doing science: 3 related concepts

The study of knowledge.
It answers questions such as:

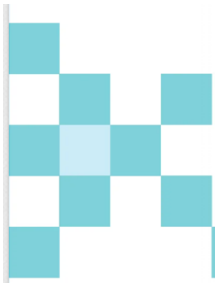
Epistemology

What is knowledge?

How do we know what is true?

What is the relationship between the
subject and the object of knowledge?

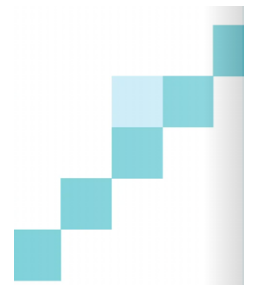
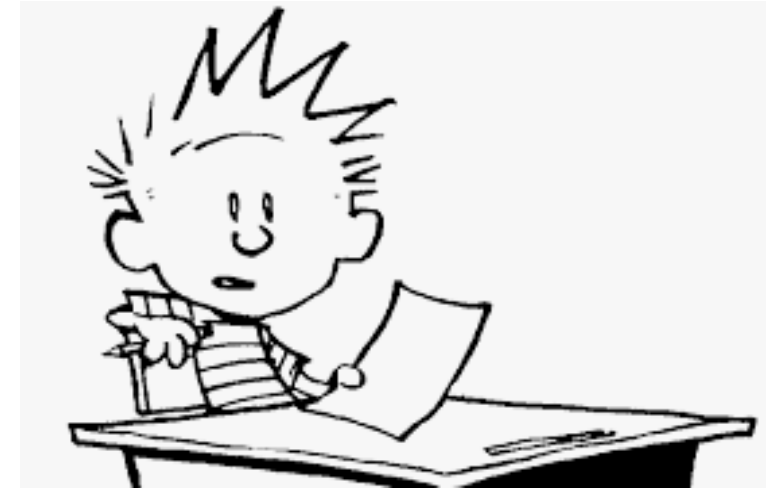


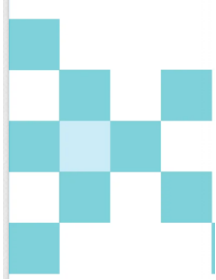


Doing science: 3 related concepts

Methodology

The reflection and choice of research paths. It evaluates and justifies which approaches are appropriate for studying a problem





Doing science: 3 related concepts

Methods

The practical paths and tools used in research. Examples include interviews, observations, experiments, or statistical analyses

When Cooking...

My husband's method:

Use only the dishes you need. Clean up as you go.

www.HedgerHumor.com



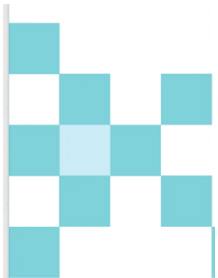
My method:

Somehow use every pot and pan we own and create a giant mess.

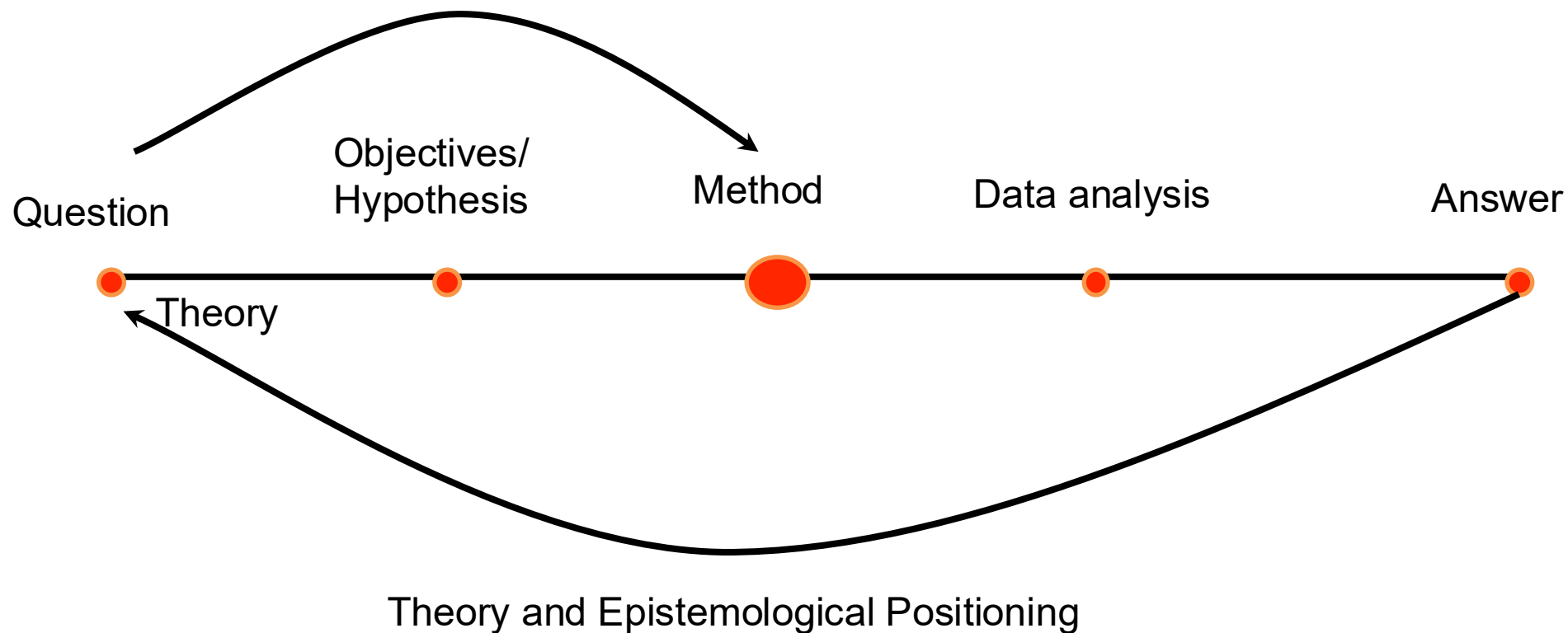
No matter what you're cooking.

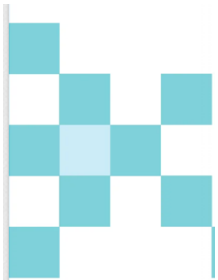
©Adrienne Hedger





The role of method in research





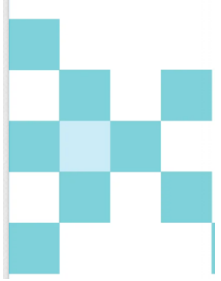
Why methods matter?

Fundamental question



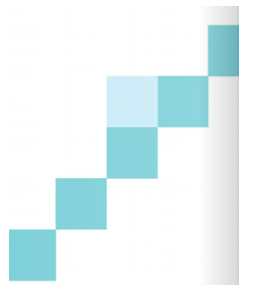
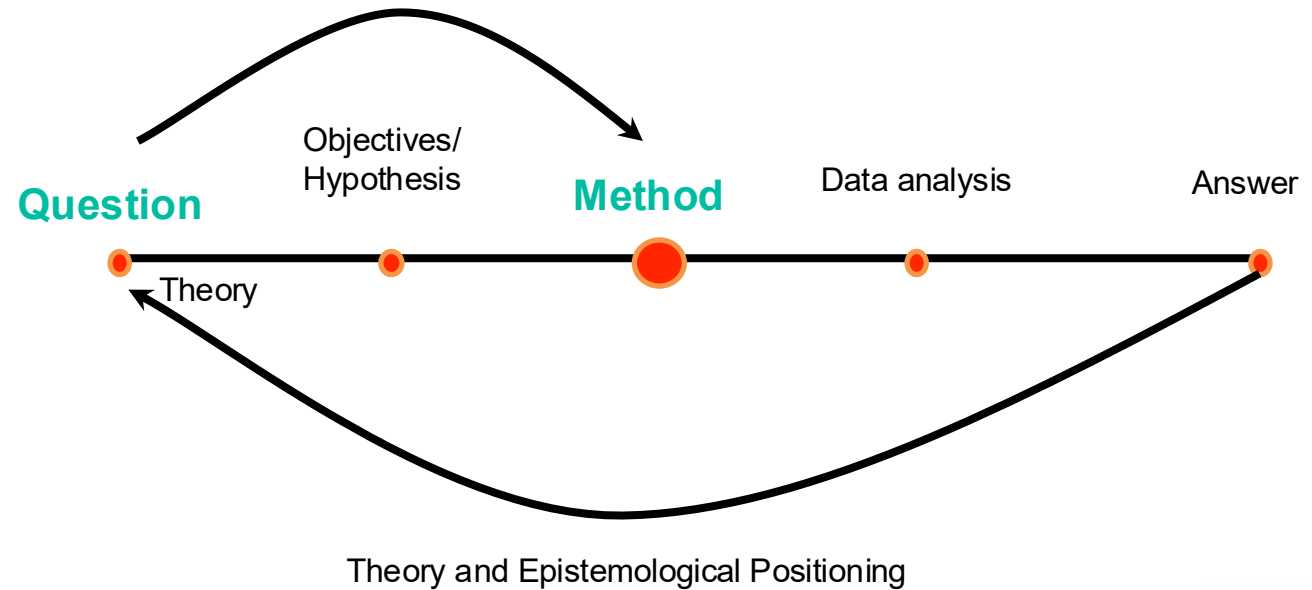
What's the best method?

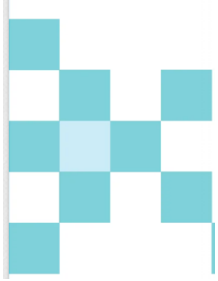




Choosing the method

It depends mainly on
the type of research
question





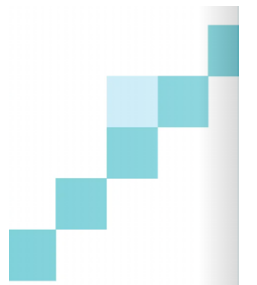
Concluding...

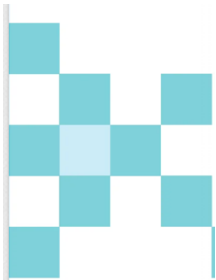
All Methods are Adequate

When they answer research questions that the method is capable of answering.

All Methods are Inadequate

When they are used to answer questions that the method is not capable of answering.





Questions?

... to be continued

