

### Chapter 1 : [Read PDF] How to Build Social Science Theories Download Free - Video Dailymotion

*How to Build Social Science Theories is a sophisticated yet readable analysis presented by internationally known experts in social science methodology. It is designed primarily as a core text for graduate and advanced undergraduate courses in communication theory.*

Shoemaker Pamela Shoemaker Ph. She is the author of *Gatekeeping* Sage, and *Mediating the Message*: Reese, Longman Publishers, As an internationally known scholar, Pamela is a past president of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications AEJMC and serves or has served on the editorial boards of many major journals in the mass communications field. He was born in Newport News, Va. He attended Virginia Tech, where he was co-editor of the student newspaper and received a B. He went to Stanford University, where he received a Ph. He has also held summer jobs and other short-term positions with the Newport News Va. He taught one of the first classes in the Senior Fellows program, the honors program within the College of Communication at the University of Texas. He served for six years as the editor of *Journalism Monographs*. The latter is in its fifth edition and has been translated into five languages. He enjoys traveling hiking, and songwriting, and is a member of the Austin Songwriters Group. Lasorsa is an associate professor of journalism at the University of Texas at Austin. He received a bachelor of arts degree in journalism from St. Bonaventure University, a master of arts degree in journalism from the University of Texas at Austin and a doctor of philosophy degree in communication from Stanford University. In college, Lasorsa served as editor-in-chief of his school newspaper, *The Bonaventure*, and he worked at the *Suffolk N*. Upon graduation, he entered the U. Air Force where he served as a radio communications specialist and a curriculum development specialist. Before beginning his academic career, Lasorsa served as editor-in-chief of the *Marble Falls Texas Highlander*. Lasorsa studies and teaches communication theory and methods, focusing on political communication and media effects. He has published articles in numerous books, journals and other publications. Lasorsa was a co-author of the three-volume *National Television Violence Study*.

**Chapter 2 : How to Build Social Science Theories by Pamela J. Shoemaker | LibraryThing**

*Essential reading for students of social science research, this book traces theories from their most rudimentary building blocks (terminology and definitions) through multivariable theoretical statements, models, the role of creativity in theory building, and how theories are used and evaluated.*

Between theory and intuition Social sciences: Between theory and intuition What do political leaders need to know about the world in order to be able to govern it properly? And who can and should tell them? This is where the social sciences come into play. But while explanations of past events seem to be somewhat uninteresting for politics, predictions are difficult to make. Why have birth rates been declining for decades, why is voter participation dropping everywhere in Europe and why do large portions of Africa remain undeveloped? Politicians, however, as people of action, are interested in explanations only when what is being explained has practical significance for them, allowing the causes claimed by the theory to be influenced by political means in such a way that their effects are changed in a desired direction. A theory that traces declining performance in school to accelerated biological development in youth may be true or false, but it holds no interest for political leaders unless it could be used to release the government from responsibility. It would be a different story if the explanation were increased class sizes or, say, the elimination of grades for personal conduct: Many scientists consider the ability to make predictions to be the defining feature of a good theory Unlike explanations, politicians are almost always interested in predictions. These, too, are based on theories and are, in principle, also explanations, but of future states rather than present or past states. Many scientists, including some social scientists, consider the ability to make predictions to be the real mark of a good theory. Since politicians must continually bet on the future, they hold a similar view. Thus, those who, as scientists, promise information about how much the economy will grow or shrink in the coming year, which occupations will see the highest growth rates in the next ten years, how many additional births extra parental benefits will encourage, or which new electoral candidate might propel his party forward, can expect not only an attentive ear, but also extensive financial contributions from governments and political parties. Nevertheless, there are good reasons to suspect that the ability of the social sciences to predict the future is not only currently and coincidentally, but also fundamentally limited. The researchers, as the representatives of their own interests, could have responded: Because too little was invested in research. But not even economists were that hard-nosed back then; the shock was apparently too great. In early , the six biggest German economic research institutes were still on average predicting economic growth of 1. In April , they revised their forecasts to minus 4. Today, forecasts are being merrily bandied about again “right down to the exact tenth of a percent, as always. And politicians gladly accept them and quote them as if nothing ever happened. After all, someone usually wins the lottery, too “and twice a week, at that. In both situations, a person can be right without having known anything. There is more than one valid explanation for any given state of affairs Not that actual knowledge would have hurt “such as a working short-term memory of history that included the LTCM crisis, the popping of the technology bubble, the Asian crisis and similar events that took place after Of course, scientists who rely only on theoretical, model-based knowledge, disregarding historical knowledge per se, will have difficulty accessing this memory. Still, despite the strong pressure among economists to conform, there are a few of them around. They knew good reasons for suspecting that there would be another crash sometime, because there is no such thing yet? But even they could not know what form the crash would take, where it would begin and how or whether it would end. That they could not know this is not due to a lack of research, but rather lies in the essence of the matter: The word is now spreading that the social sciences are incapable of making so-called point predictions “predictions about individual cases. Point predictions, however, are likely to be the only predictions that those in politics could be interested in. For example, while it may be good to know that economic growth contributes to the creation of stable democracies, what policymakers really need to know is whether this will also apply to China or the Philippines in the first decade of the 21st century. All it can give us are statements of probability with no guarantees for individual cases, whether relating to democratization or election results, military coups, the

outbreak and outcome of wars and of course of financial crises. There are solid and logical reasons why the social sciences cannot say much about individual cases. Nor can this be changed, even with the most ingenious refinements to their scientific toolbox. Research on social processes will always involve fewer cases than the number of factors that could explain these cases, thus inevitably leading to more than one valid explanation for any given state of affairs. This can also be expressed in a more pointed fashion: History becomes what it is through events that could have also not occurred, and thus would have permitted a different history. Just how differently, no one can know. Without the extinction of the dinosaurs from the impact of a meteorite, there would be no mammals, and thus no humans. We can know this without being able to know what would have become of the dinosaurs if they had been allowed to go on for example whether their present-day offspring would be eating with knives and forks or with chopsticks. Historical events such as the collapse of Communism in , the reunification of Germany or the current financial crisis can subsequently be reconstructed as probable or even declared inevitable; but until they have occurred, other events can prevent, delay or modify them, without anyone ever being able to know that they were just about to occur. What politicians would like even better than predictions are technical instructions for controlling social developments. Politicians like to see society as a machine with set screws: The task of science is to label the set screws legibly. People want to be persuaded with reason rather than controlled by technologies of social engineering. Where does this mechanistic world view come from, and the social utopias that feed on it? Many believe that their development is the real task of a truly scientific social science. But unlike in the natural or engineering sciences, the field of social sciences consists of subjects who are capable of making observations and taking action, and who are not at all indifferent about what science claims about them and for what ends governments use their findings. People recognize attempts to steer their actions, and attribute intentions to such attempts. In turn, they respond with their own intentions. These include a fundamental need to be persuaded with reason rather than controlled by technologies of social engineering. All democratic societies of societies whose members have a say therefore strictly regulate the use of behavior control techniques. So for example, even if the research on neuromarketing were to deliver what its promoters promise, the application of its findings will inevitably be subject to strict legal limitations. Just as the social sciences are incapable of predicting the future, the reactions of acting subjects to scientific attempts at control are unpredictable. Social science theories cannot be kept secret. Their use for behavior control will be noticed sooner or later. When that happens, they will be examined to determine their intentions, and responded to intentionally. For example, the researchers in the famous Hawthorne experiments to claimed to have found that female workers worked faster and better even without a pay increase if they were treated in a friendly manner and if the walls in their workshop were painted yellow. But after word had gotten out among the staff that the management merely wanted to save money through kind words and yellow paint, they demanded higher wages and went on strike. A similar fate befell John Maynard Keynes, who knew better than any other economist of his time how important expectations are for behavior. When, in the s, Keynesian global management of the economy by means of monetary and fiscal policies had become established practice, firms and consumers responded increasingly sluggishly to low interest rates; they believed that even lower rates could be expected if stagnation continued. In the end, the theory no longer worked because it had become generally known. Many other facets of the relationship between forecasts relating to human actions and the actions themselves could be described, but all of them have one thing in common: A special variant of this relationship is the use of forecasts in economic policy. When economists predict growth, participants in the economy gather up their courage and invest or consume or at least that is what economists and governments believe. Now it is true that the economy is a system of action. The expectations of actors in the system with respect to what will happen are thus and no one understood this better than Keynes of causal significance. Indeed, hardly anywhere has Robert K. If we think it all the way through, we arrive at the paradoxical possibility that a prediction that was originally and objectively wrong can become right as a result of being made known: Politicians who are at a loss when faced with an impending crisis in any case like to play it down or deny its existence, in the hope that it will then somehow go by. If, in contrast, other members of the political class especially those who are in the opposition express the fear that things could get bad, they

will be accused of talking the catastrophe into existence – even if, according to all of the scientific criteria, it is objectively impending. In or just prior to a crisis, economists may in this sense mutate into politicians and let themselves be persuaded to embellish their forecasts in order to avoid a panic and ease the job of economic policy. Their responsibility would no longer be to explain the world, but rather to influence it. In the extreme case, as at the peak of the financial crisis, elite cartels can then emerge whose members undertake to be pointedly optimistic, regardless of how abysmal the outlook has been and still is. And what else can they do when, in a highly uncertain situation, they have no suitable instruments at their disposal anyway? So politics and science – and the latter in its most positivistic variation – can transform into magic: As highly trained communications experts, politicians already have a natural tendency toward a magical world view that we can justifiably make fun of. But its rational core is the particular responsiveness of the social world: Does that justify lying to it in its own supposed interests? I will leave that question aside and mention merely that here, too, control can fail when its instruments are recognized as such. Positive forecasts must be taken to be scientifically true if they are to trigger the optimism they need to trigger in order to come true. If it were to become known that they were doctored for the sake of this result, then the outcome would not be optimism but a deep loss of trust – and a crash that could be far worse than anything that could have been expected. In any case, the notion that a social scientist can truly have an advantage over experienced practitioners when it comes to the choice of suitable means for specific goals can be reasonably doubted. The gap between theory and intuition is smaller than many social scientists would like to believe. Although counting, measuring and observing social issues may seem trivial to some, it is anything but that. Often, the state is not allowed to collect key information itself. The modern state and democratic discourse are in many ways dependent on information about the state of society that is not easily available, and the collection of which is often extremely complicated and requires extensive expert knowledge. But more often, the state is not allowed or not able to collect key information itself – such as the number of newborns with a migration background or the actual extent of substance abuse. Other factors that may seem entirely unproblematic have to be determined through complex estimation operations that require constant refinement. These include not only the GNP, but also the population, which has not been counted directly since the last censuses in GDR and BRD, but only updated with complicated, more or less satisfying methods. The reason is that society is resistant to being counted – a further example of the active role that the subject of social science plays for it by responding to it. Politically important issues, such as per capita economic growth, the birth and immigration rate or the unemployment rate are thus known with far less certainty than is normally assumed. In fact, there are examples of problems that governments have tried for years to solve, or problems for which voters called them to account, that, when the statistical data was later revised, turned out not really to have been problems after all. The only possibility to make visible the decisions and interests that contribute to the official descriptions of social reality is an independent social science. Only it can ensure the necessary pluralism through which alone politically problematic issues can come to light, or how small changes in legal definitions or administrative procedures – for example in the definition of unemployment or in the classification of job applicants by the employment offices – can change what is presumably the case, like the rate of unemployment. In short, without society having methodologically serious, critical information about itself, the political discourse would be even more void of content than it already often is. Wolfgang Streeck, born in , works on political economy and economic sociology. He began teaching at the University of Wisconsin in Madison in and was a fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg Berlin in . Streeck also held visiting professorships at various international universities before being appointed Director at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies in

## Chapter 3 : How to Build Social Science Theories - SAGE Research Methods

*Explore the research methods terrain, read definitions of key terminology, and discover content relevant to your research methods journey.*

Bibliography Definition Theories are formulated to explain, predict, and understand phenomena and, in many cases, to challenge and extend existing knowledge within the limits of critical bounding assumptions. The theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study. The theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists. Theory Building in Applied Disciplines. Importance of Theory A theoretical framework consists of concepts and, together with their definitions and reference to relevant scholarly literature, existing theory that is used for your particular study. The theoretical framework must demonstrate an understanding of theories and concepts that are relevant to the topic of your research paper and that relate to the broader areas of knowledge being considered. The theoretical framework is most often not something readily found within the literature. You must review course readings and pertinent research studies for theories and analytic models that are relevant to the research problem you are investigating. The selection of a theory should depend on its appropriateness, ease of application, and explanatory power. The theoretical framework strengthens the study in the following ways: The theoretical framework connects the researcher to existing knowledge. Guided by a relevant theory, you are given a basis for your hypotheses and choice of research methods. Articulating the theoretical assumptions of a research study forces you to address questions of why and how. It permits you to intellectually transition from simply describing a phenomenon you have observed to generalizing about various aspects of that phenomenon. Having a theory helps you identify the limits to those generalizations. A theoretical framework specifies which key variables influence a phenomenon of interest and highlights the need to examine how those key variables might differ and under what circumstances. By virtue of its applicative nature, good theory in the social sciences is of value precisely because it fulfills one primary purpose: Answers from the Social and Cultural Sciences. University of Tennessee Press, ; Drafting an Argument. How Conceptual Frameworks Guide Research. Research Methods Knowledge Base. Developing Theory from Practice. Strategies for Developing the Theoretical Framework I. Developing the Framework Here are some strategies to develop of an effective theoretical framework: Examine your thesis title and research problem. The research problem anchors your entire study and forms the basis from which you construct your theoretical framework. Brainstorm about what you consider to be the key variables in your research. Answer the question, "What factors contribute to the presumed effect? Identify the assumptions from which the author s addressed the problem. Group these variables into independent and dependent categories. Review key social science theories that are introduced to you in your course readings and choose the theory that can best explain the relationships between the key variables in your study [note the Writing Tip on this page]. Discuss the assumptions or propositions of this theory and point out their relevance to your research. A theoretical framework is used to limit the scope of the relevant data by focusing on specific variables and defining the specific viewpoint [framework] that the researcher will take in analyzing and interpreting the data to be gathered. It also facilitates the understanding of concepts and variables according to given definitions and builds new knowledge by validating or challenging theoretical assumptions. Purpose Think of theories as the conceptual basis for understanding, analyzing, and designing ways to investigate relationships within social systems. To that end, the following roles served by a theory can help guide the development of your framework. Means by which new research data can be interpreted and coded for future use, Response to new problems that have no previously identified solutions strategy, Means for identifying and defining research problems, Means for prescribing or evaluating solutions to research problems, Ways of discerning certain facts among the accumulated knowledge that are important and which facts are not, Means of giving old data new interpretations and new meaning, Means by which to identify important new issues and prescribe the most critical research questions that need to be answered to maximize understanding of the issue, Means of providing members of a professional discipline with a common language and a frame of reference for defining

the boundaries of their profession, and Means to guide and inform research so that it can, in turn, guide research efforts and improve professional practice. Holton III, editors. *Human Resource Development Handbook: Linking Research and Practice. Theory Construction and Model-Building Skills: A Practical Guide for Social Scientists*. Guilford, ; Ravitch, Sharon M. *Structure and Writing Style* The theoretical framework may be rooted in a specific theory, in which case, your work is expected to test the validity of that existing theory in relation to specific events, issues, or phenomena. Many social science research papers fit into this rubric. For example, Peripheral Realism Theory, which categorizes perceived differences among nation-states as those that give orders, those that obey, and those that rebel, could be used as a means for understanding conflicted relationships among countries in Africa. A test of this theory could be the following: Does Peripheral Realism Theory help explain intra-state actions, such as, the disputed split between southern and northern Sudan that led to the creation of two nations? However, you may not always be asked by your professor to test a specific theory in your paper, but to develop your own framework from which your analysis of the research problem is derived. Based upon the above example, it is perhaps easiest to understand the nature and function of a theoretical framework if it is viewed as an answer to two basic questions: I could choose instead to test Instrumentalist or Circumstantialists models developed among ethnic conflict theorists that rely upon socio-economic-political factors to explain individual-state relations and to apply this theoretical model to periods of war between nations]. The answers to these questions come from a thorough review of the literature and your course readings [summarized and analyzed in the next section of your paper] and the gaps in the research that emerge from the review process. With this in mind, a complete theoretical framework will likely not emerge until after you have completed a thorough review of the literature. Just as a research problem in your paper requires contextualization and background information, a theory requires a framework for understanding its application to the topic being investigated. When writing and revising this part of your research paper, keep in mind the following: Clearly describe the framework, concepts, models, or specific theories that underpin your study. This includes noting who the key theorists are in the field who have conducted research on the problem you are investigating and, when necessary, the historical context that supports the formulation of that theory. This latter element is particularly important if the theory is relatively unknown or it is borrowed from another discipline. Position your theoretical framework within a broader context of related frameworks, concepts, models, or theories. As noted in the example above, there will likely be several concepts, theories, or models that can be used to help develop a framework for understanding the research problem. The present tense is used when writing about theory. Although the past tense can be used to describe the history of a theory or the role of key theorists, the construction of your theoretical framework is happening now. You should make your theoretical assumptions as explicit as possible. Later, your discussion of methodology should be linked back to this theoretical framework. Alabama State University; *Conceptual Framework: University of Michigan; Drafting an Argument. Demystifying the Journal Article. The Context of Discovery*. Stanford University Press, , pp. *Writing Tip Borrowing Theoretical Constructs from Elsewhere* A growing and increasingly important trend in the social and behavioral sciences is to think about and attempt to understand specific research problems from an interdisciplinary perspective. One way to do this is to not rely exclusively on the theories in your particular discipline, but to think about how an issue might be informed by theories developed in other disciplines. For example, if you are a political science student studying the rhetorical strategies used by female incumbents in state legislature campaigns, theories about the use of language could be derived, not only from political science, but linguistics, communication studies, philosophy, psychology, and, in this particular case, feminist studies. Building theoretical frameworks based on the postulates and hypotheses developed in other disciplinary contexts can be both enlightening and an effective way to be fully engaged in the research topic. *The Oxford Handbook of Interdisciplinarity*. Oxford University Press, Do not leave the theory hanging out there in the introduction never to be mentioned again. Undertheorizing weakens your paper. The theoretical framework you describe should guide your study throughout the paper. Be sure to always connect theory to the review of pertinent literature and to explain in the discussion part of your paper how the theoretical framework you chose supports analysis of the research problem, or if appropriate, how the theoretical framework was found in some way to be inadequate in

explaining the phenomenon you were investigating. The terms theory and hypothesis are often used interchangeably in newspapers and popular magazines and in non-academic settings. However, the difference between theory and hypothesis in scholarly research is important, particularly when using an experimental design. A theory is a well-established principle that has been developed to explain some aspect of the natural world. Theories arise from repeated observation and testing and incorporates facts, laws, predictions, and tested assumptions that are widely accepted [e. A hypothesis is a specific, testable prediction about what you expect to happen in your study. For example, an experiment designed to look at the relationship between study habits and test anxiety might have a hypothesis that states, "We predict that students with better study habits will suffer less test anxiety. The key distinctions are: A theory has been extensively tested and is generally accepted among scholars; a hypothesis is a speculative guess that has yet to be tested.

**Chapter 4 : The Progress-Focused Approach: Theory building in social science**

*"How to Build Social Science Theories is a sophisticated yet readable analysis presented by internationally known experts in social science methodology. It is designed primarily as a core text for graduate and advanced undergraduate courses in communication theory.*

She is the author of *Gatekeeping* Sage, and *Mediating the Message*: Reese, Longman Publishers, As an internationally known scholar, Pamela is a past president of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications AEJMC and serves or has served on the editorial boards of many major journals in the mass communications field. He was born in Newport News, Va. He attended Virginia Tech, where he was co-editor of the student newspaper and received a B. He went to Stanford University, where he received a Ph. He has also held summer jobs and other short-term positions with the Newport News Va. He taught one of the first classes in the Senior Fellows program, the honors program within the College of Communication at the University of Texas. He served for six years as the editor of *Journalism Monographs*. The latter is in its fifth edition and has been translated into five languages. He enjoys traveling hiking, and songwriting, and is a member of the Austin Songwriters Group. Lasorsa is an associate professor of journalism at the University of Texas at Austin. He received a bachelor of arts degree in journalism from St. Bonaventure University, a master of arts degree in journalism from the University of Texas at Austin and a doctor of philosophy degree in communication from Stanford University. In college, Lasorsa served as editor-in-chief of his school newspaper, *The Bonaventure*, and he worked at the Suffolk N. Upon graduation, he entered the U. Air Force where he served as a radio communications specialist and a curriculum development specialist. Before beginning his academic career, Lasorsa served as editor-in-chief of the Marble Falls Texas Highlander. Lasorsa studies and teaches communication theory and methods, focusing on political communication and media effects. He has published articles in numerous books, journals and other publications. Lasorsa was a co-author of the three-volume National Television Violence Study.

**Chapter 5 : Social sciences: Between theory and intuition | Max-Planck-Gesellschaft**

*As straightforward as its title, How to Build Social Science Theories sidesteps the well-traveled road of theoretical examination by demonstrating how new theories originate and how they are elaborated.*

Sage Publications India Pvt. Shoemaker, James William Tankard, Jr. Lasorsa; foreword by Jerald Hage. Includes bibliographical references and index. S52 Printed on acid-free paper. Alicia Carter Production Editor: Sylvia Coates Preface [Page ix] One of us Tankard was teaching at the University of Wisconsin in 1971 when two graduate students, Robert Krull and James Watt, mentioned an exciting course they were taking from a sociology professor named Jerald Hage. The course dealt with theory building in sociology, and the students said Hage had just written his own text for the course and distributed it to the class in mimeographed form. Tankard showed interest in seeing the document, and Krull and Watt obtained a copy for him. It was mimeographed pages, and the figures were drawn by hand. The title of the manuscript was Techniques and Problems of Theory Construction. The manuscript was not always easy reading, with examples taken primarily from sociology, but it dealt with the important matter of theory building in a more systematic and comprehensive way than anything else that was around. Tankard, who was teaching theory and research methods at the University of Texas, began assigning chapters in graduate seminars. Despite a few student complaints about the difficulty of the material, he continued to assign chapters from the Hage book for years because the ideas were so important and useful. Another of us Shoemaker remembers going through graduate classes at the University of Wisconsin in which theory building and testing were discussed and expecting to see an example of a theory with all its various parts. This was the beginning of her interest in theory building. Shoemaker came to the University of Texas to teach in and began assigning chapters from the Hage book, which she knew about from her graduate courses at Wisconsin. At Texas, she required the book in her graduate theory classes until it went out of print. The students complained at the time about how difficult the book was to read and comprehend, but for years later, those same scholars said again and again how important the book ultimately was to their research programs. His initial reaction was typical of many students faced with Hage for the first time, reading Chapter 1 on theoretical statements and trying to digest it all: Do I really need to know this stuff? Now he, too, tries to instruct others in the ways of Hage. One of the shortcomings of the Hage book that became noticeable in the 1980s was that it dealt mostly with theoretical statements relating two variables. Shoemaker began using this paper in seminars along with the Hage readings and also added some figures that helped in the visualizing of three-variable relationships. He returned to Texas to teach in 1980. At this point, all three of us were at the University of Texas, teaching courses in social science research methods and communication theory. We began talking about writing our own book on theory building. Another factor motivating us was that, at a certain point, the Hage volume went out of print. A recent search of <http://www.sagepub.com>: After a meeting or two, we gave ourselves the assignment of each writing every 2 weeks a five-page essay on any aspect of theory building that interested us. We also came up with our first outline for a book dealing with theory building. In 1985, Shoemaker left the University of Texas to become an administrator at Ohio State University, and the theory-building project was shelved for a while. When Shoemaker went back to research and teaching at Syracuse University in 1987, we revived the book idea. We circulated our old outline, revised it, and assigned chapters. The chapters were completed in December 1990. The project took more than a decade to complete, but it now reflects our more mature understanding of social science theory structure. It was not an easy book to write, but it is some of the most satisfying work we have done. We would like to acknowledge the influence of Jerald Hage, now in the Department of Sociology at the University of Maryland, and thank him for being a pioneer in this new and important area. We hope readers of this book will come to share our excitement about theory building and use the ideas and principles contained in this book to conduct better research and build better theories. Lasorsa June [Page xii] Foreword [Page xiii] Periodic cycles apply to topics in the social sciences as they do in fashion. In the 1980s, there was considerable interest in the building of social science theory when the accent was on the word science. A proliferation of books on the logic of theory or techniques for theory construction was its direct manifestation. Then, in a very short time, by the 1990s, the focus

had shifted to the opposite extreme, namely a distrust of theory and even an ideological opposition to the word science. The word social, as in social construction, has now become operative. First, I had been thinking of returning to the topic of theory construction myself. Now, the publication of this excellent book frees me to move on to some of my other concerns. Here is a book in which the most important ideas in my own effort have been retained, elaborated, and improved upon in a number of interesting ways. After receiving a copy of the manuscript and reading the preface, I must also admit that I was deeply touched. I had had a very strong commitment to teaching theory construction because I had always believed that many more individuals could be creative if they were provided with the right language and the right tools. So I rejoiced when I discovered that Shoemaker, Tankard, and Lasorsa had had these same concerns for a number of years. Providing a number of examples and in enough detail so that readers can more easily grasp quite difficult and abstract ideas involved in such notions as continuous variables, theoretical definitions, and operational linkages 2. Integrating the discussion of theoretical and operational linkages with statistics and research methodology more generally 3. Adding three- and four-variable sets of hypotheses and linkages 4. Including a whole chapter on models and their use in theory building, which can be a wonderful source of new ideas about variables Each of these kinds of elaborations requires a few comments. My original effort included too many new terms for the typical graduate student. Shoemaker, Tankard, and Lasorsa have rightly concentrated on the analytical importance of continuous versus categorical concepts, theoretical and operational definitions, and theoretical and operational linkages. These are the core ideas, which they have carefully explained with numerous examples. The richness of the examples, I am sure, will make these abstract ideas concrete enough so that they are comprehensible. Indeed, it is clear from the preface that the authors have spent some time teaching these ideas and learning how best to communicate them to their students. A truly important contribution is the integration of the theoretical ideas of operational definitions and linkages with statistics. In particular, Chapter 4 has a rich variety of examples that make apparent the connection between theory and research. I do not know if graduate departments of mass communication resemble those in sociology, but I do know that in the latter there has been a wide separation between those interested in theory and those interested in research. This chapter, like other parts of the book, narrows the distance between these alternative ways of thinking. At the time I was writing TPTC in , while I was living in Birmingham, England, and teaching at the University of Aston , path analysis did not exist, and it was difficult to get students to think in terms of independent and dependent variables, let alone anything more complex than this. But today three- and four-variable analyses are commonplace. The three-variable case is a paradigm that is well integrated with the analytical strategies of Columbia University taught by Paul Lazarsfeld and Herbert Hyman, by whom I was trained as a graduate student and is another illustration of how theory and research can be usefully combined. The next chapter examines the set of concerns involved in analyses of four and more variables. What could also be added to the latter discussion is the importance of combining alternative paradigms as a fruitful theoretical and research strategy. Sociology, like many of the social sciences, has been riddled with controversies over the past few decades. It seems to me that rather than debating opposing viewpoints it is much more fruitful and appropriate to include them within the same research study. Of course, one might question whether it is possible to represent another perspective accurately when one is committed to a specific viewpoint. Each of us has to provide his or her own answer to that question. But without a doubt, the field advances more assuredly when opposing paradigms are combined in the same theoretical framework and data analysis. A special chapter on the use of models constitutes a wonderful addition to the armamentarium of theoretical thinking. Indeed, models can be a useful source for generating hypotheses or theoretical linkages. Again, ideally, one would like to combine several of them relative to a single subject. Now, who does this book address? All its examples involve the field of mass communications, yet the book is entitled *How to Build Social Science Theories*. Though it would seem to have a very specific audience in mind, I would argue that it should be read by anyone preparing for a career in social science research, whether in an academic, governmental, or private sector setting. Researchers—and this necessarily includes PhD candidates—are required to frame their subject matter theoretically, indicating what is missing and suggesting what might be helpful in filling the gaps in knowledge. The separate chapters as well as the discussion of evaluation provide

a framework to do just thatâ€”determine the missing partsâ€”and provide ideas about how to eliminate knowledge gaps. Increasingly, people hired with either MSs or PhDs are asked to demonstrate that they have this capacity to generate new theoretical concepts and hypotheses. Certainly, this is the gist of questions I have been asked to answer when writing references for students who have used my name. This book can help them in this endeavor and ensure a more successful career for them. Without the same labels, many of these ideas were buried in the examples in my own book TPTC in specific discussions of how to think about a new concept, operational definition, or theoretical linkage. Creativity in thinking is also affected by the variety and sources of information that we monitor, as any student of mass communication would probably agree with. Here are some the ways in which the variety can be increased: Cultivating a diverse set of friends in terms of age as well as culture, politics, and religion 2. Knowing multiple languages well enough to be able think in them 3. Living in another country and adapting successfully to its culture rather than remaining in an American ghetto 4. Reading books and newspapers or listening to television or radio programs, especially when foreign, that disagree with our cherished perspectives and attempting to understand their criticisms of our own ways 5. Taking double majors in college or shifting disciplines between college and graduate school, especially if they represent disparate ways of thinking 6. This leads to much more complex cognitive structure, which in turn will facilitate creativity in our own minds and lead to our developing new continuous variables, theoretical and operational definitions, and theoretical and operational linkages. Let me close by saying once again how delighted I am that so much careful thought has been given to how to communicate with students so that they can grasp the importance of thinking theoretically. Before collecting any data, we recommend preparing preliminary tables and figures to show all analyses necessary to test the hypotheses. Attached are some examples of using various statistics. These are not presented as the only way to show statistics, but they are straightforward and easy to read. Univariate descriptive statisticsâ€”You should provide one or more tables with a univariate statistic for every variable used in your study. Variables that are measured at interval or ratio levels can be adequately described with means and standard deviations, and many of these can be presented in one table.

### Chapter 6 : How to Build Social Science Theories : Pamela J. Shoemaker :

*Theory Construction and Model-Building Skills: A Practical Guide for Social Scientists (Methodology in the Social Sciences) James Jaccard out of 5 stars*

### Chapter 7 : Sell, Buy or Rent How to Build Social Science Theories online

*Periodic cycles apply to topics in the social sciences as they do in fashion. In the s, there was considerable interest in the building of social science theory when the accent was on the word science.*

### Chapter 8 : Theoretical Concepts: The Building Blocks of Theory - SAGE Research Methods

*Note: Citations are based on reference standards. However, formatting rules can vary widely between applications and fields of interest or study. The specific requirements or preferences of your reviewing publisher, classroom teacher, institution or organization should be applied.*

### Chapter 9 : How to Develop a Theory: 14 Steps (with Pictures) - wikiHow

*A theory explains why something happens or how several things are related. It is the "how" and the "why" of an observable "what". To develop a theory, you'll need to follow the scientific method. First, make measurable predictions about why or how something works. Then, test those predictions with a.*