



Hermeneutics & Institutions

Understanding Land-Use Change in Tropical Rainforests

IHDP OM 2009, Bonn

Jes Weigelt, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin



.....
It is theory that decides what is going to be observed.

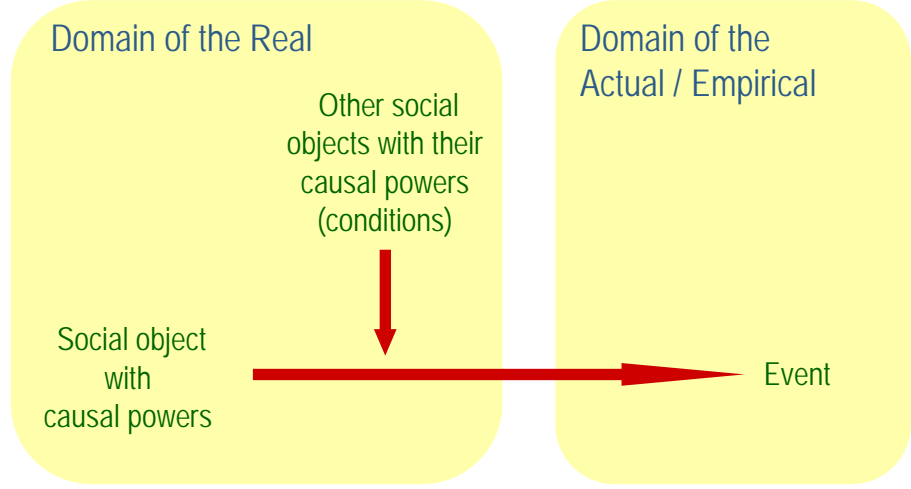
Albert Einstein



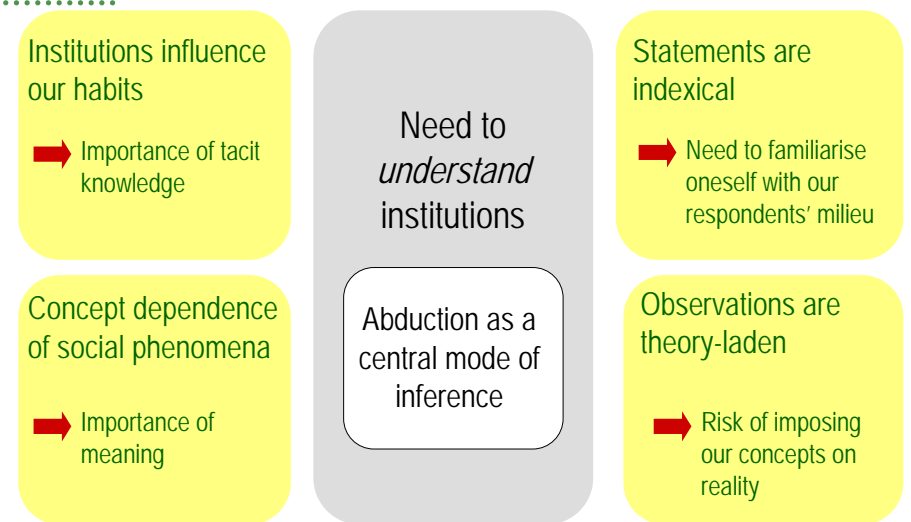
- Reflection on ontological & epistemological assumptions is highly useful for institutional analysis.
- Suggest a heuristic approach to institutional analysis.
- Discuss the heuristic approach through a comparison with other approaches



Thinking about Causality in a different Way



An Epistemological Comment





A Heuristic Approach to Institutional Analysis

Frame

Reasoning needs to build on the different domains of reality

"Grounded" approach to institutional analysis

Methods need to allow for *understanding*

5 Points of Departure

Case studies as the principle research strategy

Unit of analysis: Relations

Adaptive Theorising

"Qualitative" Methods

Necessity of extensive field exposure



New Perspectives on Institutional Analysis?

A "Non-grounded" Approach?

- Land Reform Policies, Conflict, Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon (Alston, Libecap, and Mueller (2000), Alston and Mueller (2003))
- Deforestation as an effect of contradictory legislation & the resulting incentives that actors face

- ➔ Why do the authors focus on this particular factor?
- ➔ Result of the hypothesis testing approach they pursue

Do we need to go for large-N?

- Case studies and large-N studies complementing each other on an equal basis (for example, Poteete and Ostrom 2008)
- Rationale: "external validity" (ibid), policy advice (Bardhan 2006)

- ➔ Against the background of the discussion of causality: What do large-N studies tell us?
- ➔ Implicit deductivist approach to institutions which is at odds with the heuristic approach derived



Thank you very much for your attention!

Contact: jes.weigelt@agrar.hu-berlin.de

I do thank for support



Multiple Determination of Events

