Abductive Analysis and the Search for Mechanisms: Semiotic Chains as a Bottoming-out Processual Level in Qualitative Research

Dr. Iddo Tavory
Assistant Professor of Sociology, NYU

In Abductive Analysis Stefan Timmermans and myself argue that sociologists need to cut through inductivism and deductivism, and posit the generative surprises of research at the center of qualitative theorizing. We then argue that the strongest evidence in most qualitative research—and the best way to locate “surprises“ in the research process—arises through tracing chains of meaning-making in action and interaction. This presentation will expound on this second point, comparing this pragmatist processual account to other notions of mechanism-base explanation in the social sciences, and especially in “analytical sociology.” As we argue, semiotic chains provide a uniquely adequate bottoming-out level since it traces the building blocks of action and interaction without making untenable assumptions about human nature and rationality.

Friday, April 17, 2015, 2-4pm
Social Science Research Commons Grand Hall
Woodburn Hall 200

http://go.iu.edu/wim • wim@indiana.edu