

SABSA doctoral supervision workshop

1 July 2021

How to support your students' literature review

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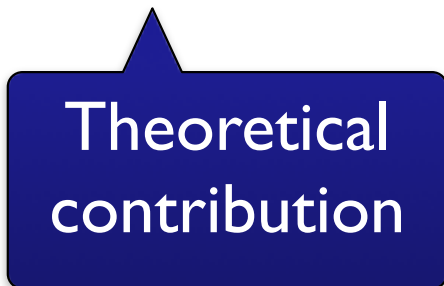
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I.e., a novel, parsimonious, convincing, and general argument about why or how something happens

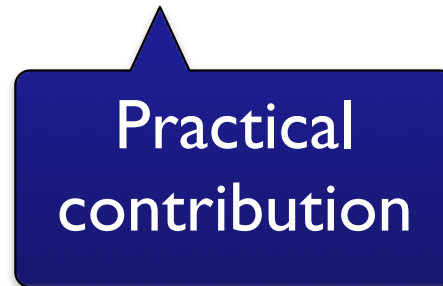
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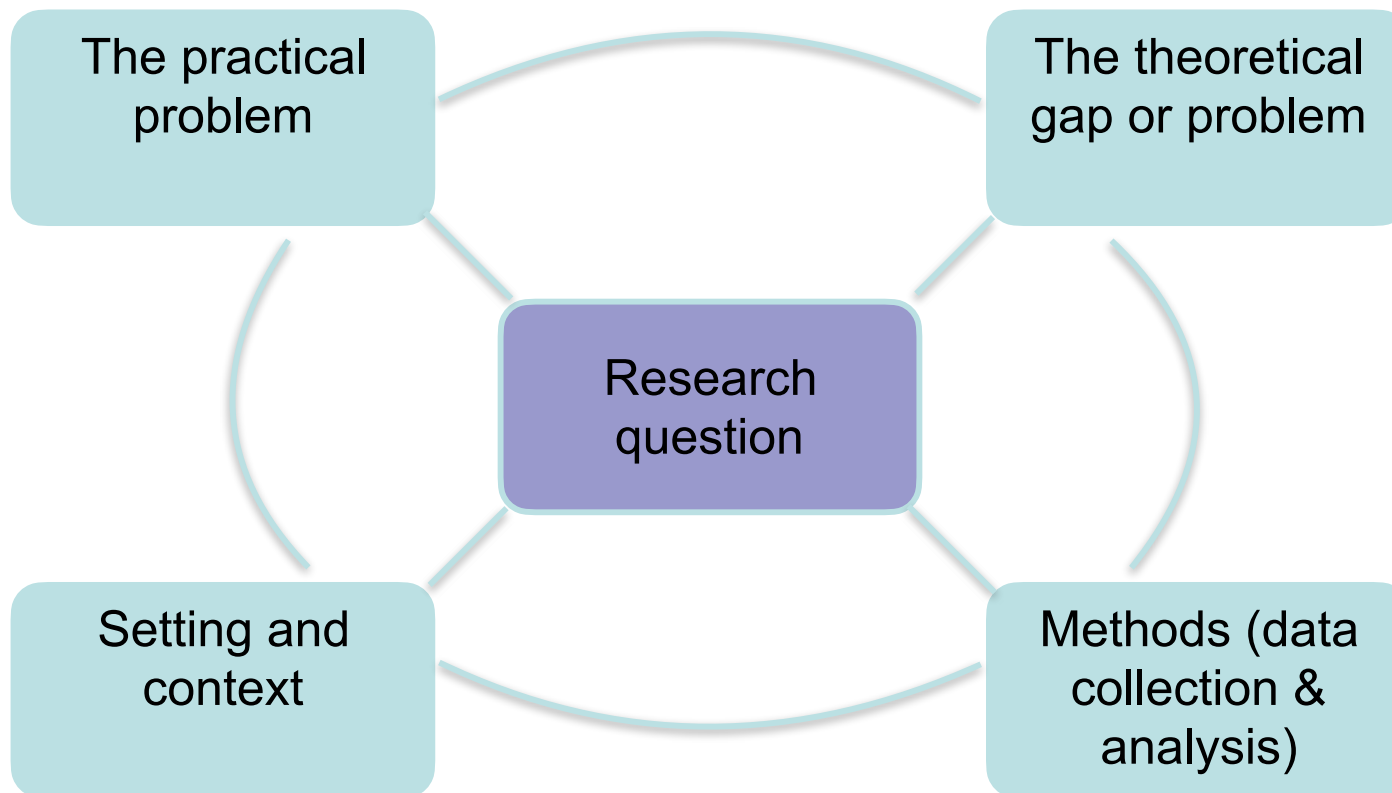


Theoretical contribution



Practical contribution

I. Clarify the purpose of a PhD and of the literature review within this





Why theory?

- Because a PhD requires a theoretical contribution
- Because respected (organization and management studies) journals require a theoretical contribution



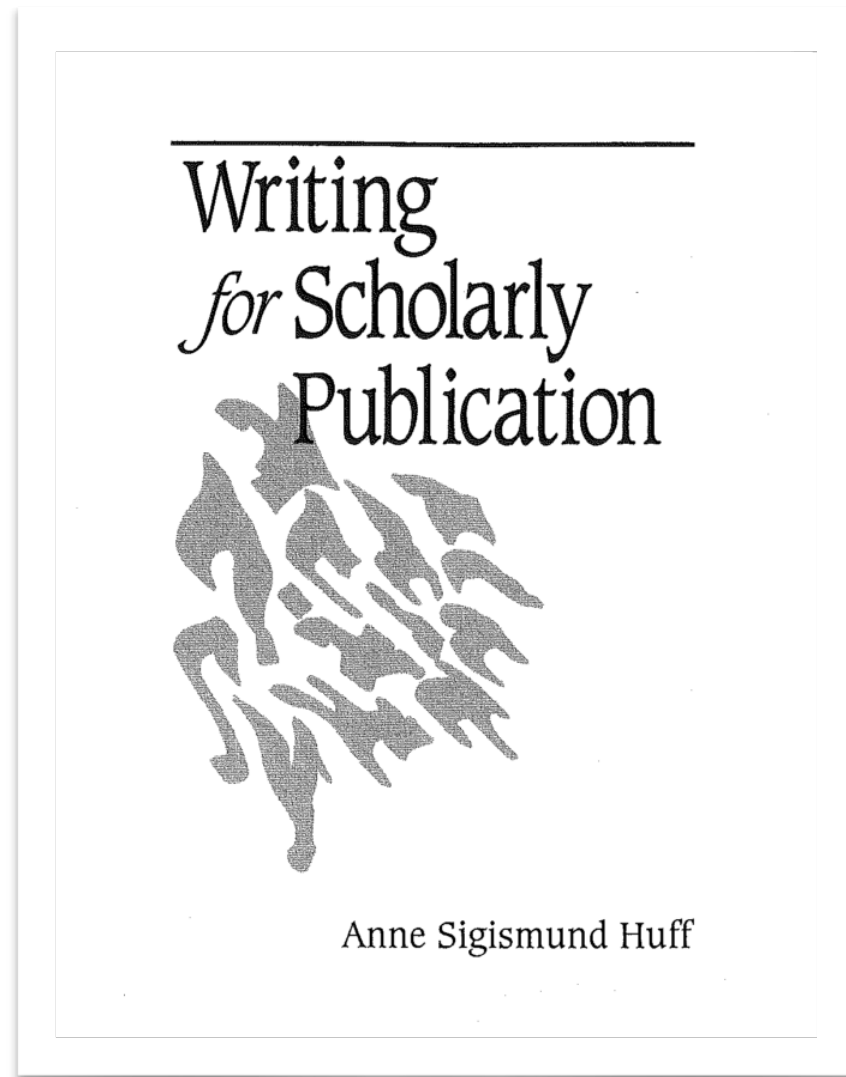
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- Because respected (organization and management studies) journals require a theoretical contribution

- Because of its impact on how people think and act...

“Nothing is quite so practical as a good theory!” (Lewin, 1951)

2. Explain scholarly work as contributing to a scholarly conversation



(Huff, 1999)

- *Scholarly work is rooted in the lively exchange of ideas—
conversation at its best.*



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3. Help focus on a salient conversation (just like choosing a table at a party)

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4. Help consider what it takes to contribute to a conversation (e.g., build on flow, etc.)

The critical questions to answer are these:

- Which conversations should I participate in?
- Who are the important “conversants”?
- What are these scholars talking about now?
- What are the most interesting things I can add to the conversation?

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5. Help identify the key “conversants” - they are the foundation of the scholarly argument

These can be scholars or specific articles (I like the latter approach)

An example list of conversants...

Backer, K.D. and Miroudot, S. (2013). Mapping global value chains. OECD trade policy papers, 159.

Covey Stephen, R. (1989). The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. Simon & Shuster, USA.

Ernst & Young. (1999-2009) Mergers and Acquisitions: A review of activity for the year. Ernst & Young. South Africa.

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**These are not scholarly conversants
(i.e., theory-based, peer-reviewed)**

An example list of conversants (2)

Adorno, T.W. (1973). *Negative Dialectics*. London: Routledge & Paul Ltd.

Buchholz, R. and S, Rosenthal, S.B. (2006). Integrating ethics all the way through: The issue of moral agency reconsidered. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 66 (1), 233-239

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Not all of these are scholarly conversants - and they are not in “conversation” with each other

Another response...

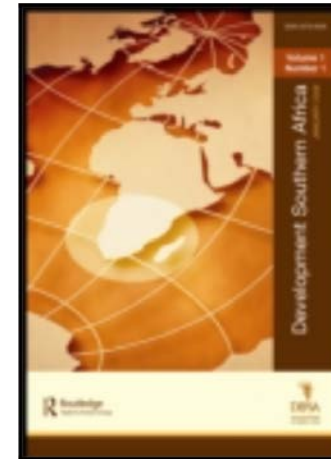
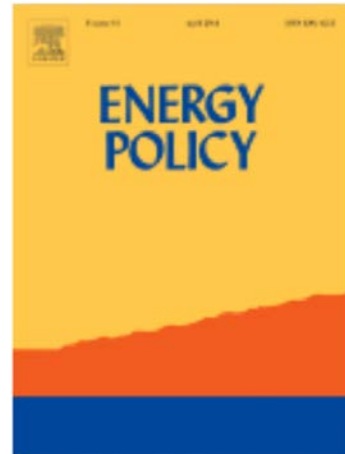
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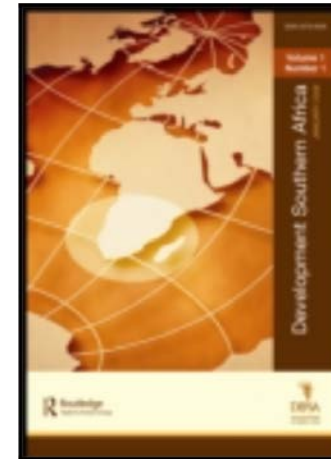
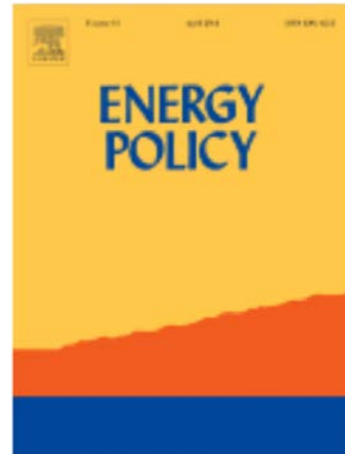
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There is always relevant prior work
(e.g., if not AI, then technology)

Recognizing diversity in the journal landscape...

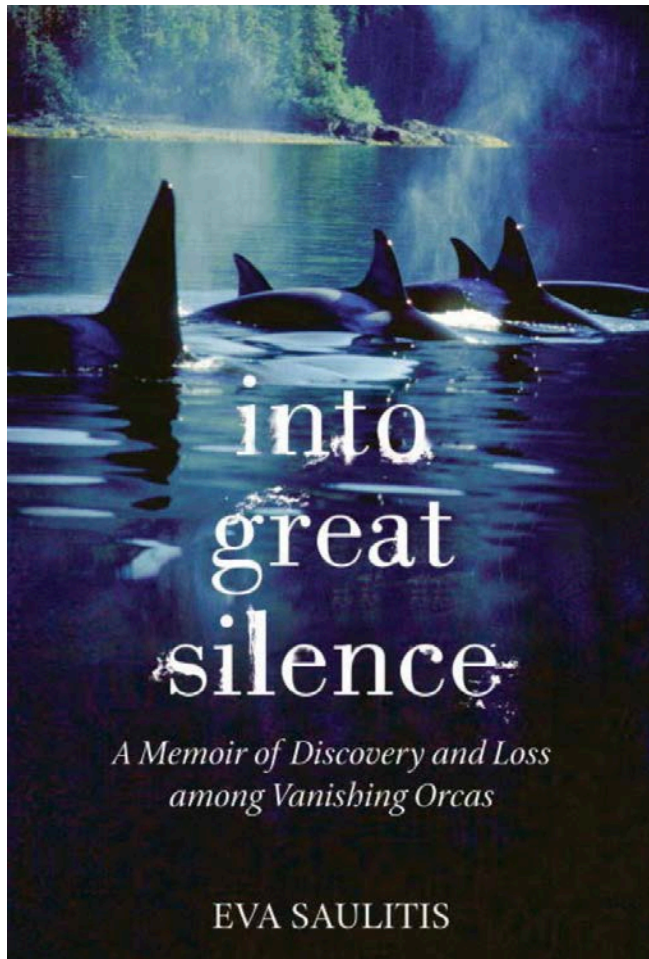


Recognizing diversity in the journal landscape...



The salient conversation depends on where you want to get published...

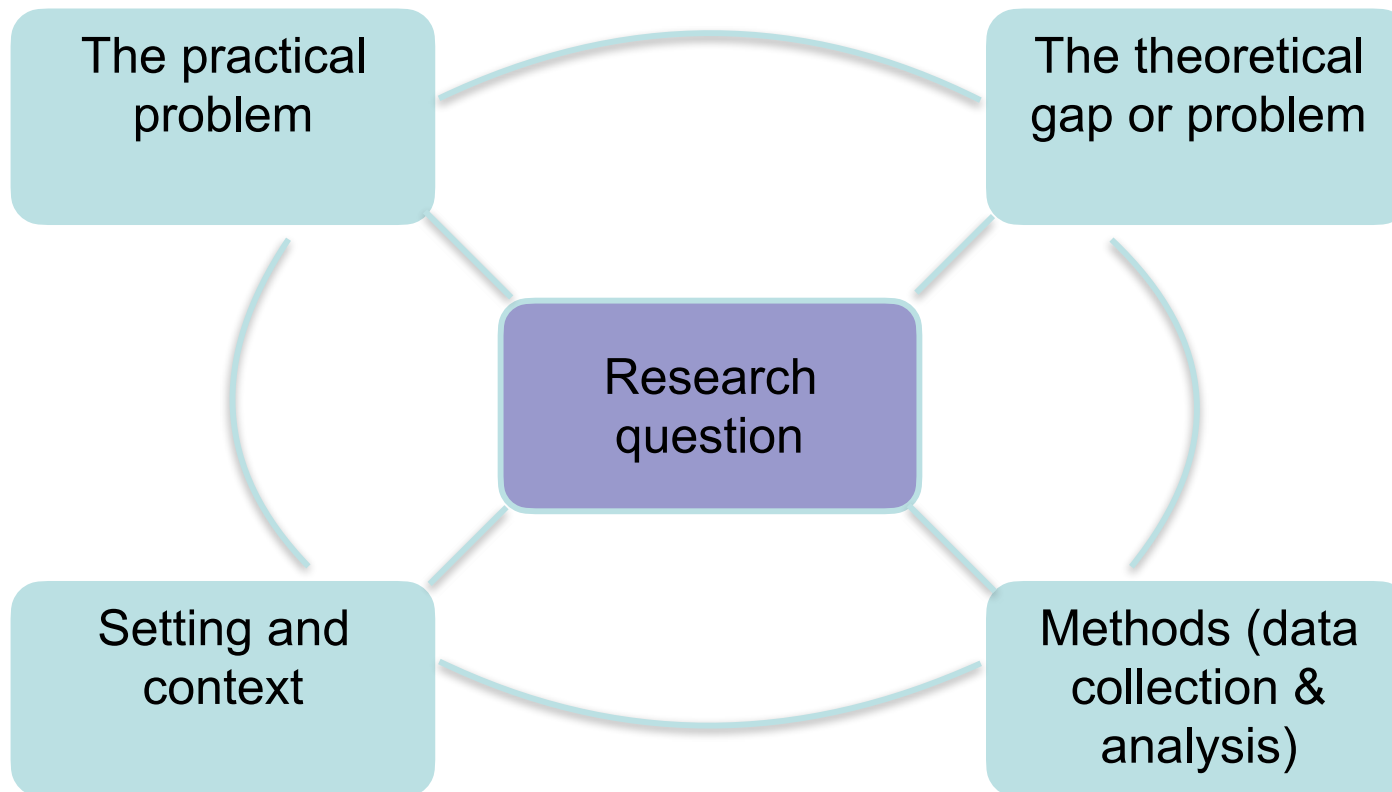
6. Help balance convention with curiosity



“Doug Chadwick... writes, ‘Science is an organized form of wonder.’ Every scientific study comes out of a wondering. You see something happen in the field and ask, “What’s going on? Why is that happening?” ...

(Saulitis interview with Christine Byl, “The Sun”)

7. Help specify the research question that emerges from the literature review



GENERATING RESEARCH QUESTIONS THROUGH PROBLEMATIZATION

MATS ALVESSON

University of Lund and University of Queensland

JÖRGEN SANDBERG

University of Queensland

It is increasingly recognized that what makes a theory interesting and influential is that it challenges our assumptions in some significant way. However, established ways for arriving at research questions mean spotting or constructing gaps in existing theories rather than challenging their assumptions. We propose problematization as a methodology for identifying and challenging assumptions underlying existing literature and, based on that, formulating research questions that are likely to lead to more influential theories.

FIGURE 1
The Problematization Methodology and Its Key Elements

Aim of the problematization methodology				
Generating novel research questions through a dialectical interrogation of one's own familiar position, other stances, and the literature domain targeted for assumption challenging				
A typology of assumptions open for problematization				
<i>In-house:</i> Assumptions that exist within a specific school of thought	<i>Root metaphor:</i> Broader images of a particular subject matter underlying existing literature	<i>Paradigm:</i> Ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions underlying existing literature	<i>Ideology:</i> Political-, moral-, and gender-related assumptions underlying existing literature	<i>Field:</i> Assumptions about a specific subject matter that are shared across different theoretical schools

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