

# Advanced Research Methodology

## 6. The Role of the Hypothesis

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Fall 2007

# How to Formulate a Hypothesis?

- Hypotheses are explicit statements that indicate how a researcher thinks the phenomena of interest are related.
  - ▶ E.g.: “The European Union is a system of governance without government.”
  - ▶ or: “The institutional framework of the European Union generates certain forms of governance.”
- To develop a hypothesis it is useful to:
  - ▶ survey the relevant literature to avoid “reinventing the wheel”
  - ▶ reflect on your theoretical approach

# The Distinction between Qualitative and Quantitative Research

- Qualitative research poses questions that are turned into a hypothesis, e.g.:
  - ▶ Question:  
What modes of steering does the European Union foresee in the field of competition?
  - ▶ Hypothesis:  
The European Union has certain laws and competences that provide the Commission with a huge steering power.
- Quantitative Research directly formulates hypotheses, e.g.:
  - ▶ The executive power of the Commission is measurable with the number of regulations in a policy field
  - ▶ The compliance of a member state of the European Union depends on its internal structure: federal, regionalised or central

# Role of Hypotheses

- Predictions about reality and the results of the study
- Alternative hypotheses state the difference in the outcomes depending on the variation of variables
- Null hypotheses state no difference between the outcomes when varying the independent variables
- Hypotheses allow to split the problem into sub-questions
- Sub-questions serve as a help to structure the problem