Organization Studies is a diverse interdisciplinary field:

- Sociology
- Economics
- Management
- Political Science
- History
- Law
- Public Administration
- Public Health
Theoretical Anarchy

No single “organization theory” dominates

Dozens of theories cover diverse macro- & micro-level phenomena

*Changing Orgs* lists 65 theories (p. 403)

To work with the 5 basic theories used in the book, we must investigate common theoretical elements
Theoretical Elements

**THEORY**: set of logically interrelated statements to explain some observable phenomena

A theory to explain corporate mergers & acquisitions

**CONCEPT**: term defining a key element of a theory

Firm size; Market share; Profits; Merger

**PROPOSITION**: sentence linking two or more concepts in an expected relationship

The smaller a firm’s market share, the greater the probability it will merge with a larger corporation.
Defining Concepts

A theoretical concept may be defined:

(1) **Nominal**ly, by giving a synonym (name) for the term

- \text{MOTHER}_{\text{def}} : \text{female parent}
- \text{FIRM}_{\text{def}} : \text{business unit or enterprise}

(2) **Really**, by listing its key attributes/characteristics

- \text{FIRM}_{\text{def}} : \text{private ownership; employees; products or services for sale in market; one or more locations}
- \text{BUREAUCRACY}_{\text{def}} : \text{fixed jurisdiction ordered by rules; activities distributed as official duties; office hierarchy & levels of graded authority; management based on written documents; etc (Weber)}
Group Exercise: Concept Definitions

Class breaks into small groups of 4 students
Discuss and agree on both nominal & real definitions

Left-side: Define concept ORGANIZATIONAL POWER
Right-side: Define concept ORGANIZATIONAL AUTHORITY

Reconvene after 5 minutes to compare / contrast
What did we discover about concept formation?
SHORTER WRITING #2:

For Thursday, write a one-page (~300 words) critical analysis of one key theoretical concept appearing in an organizational theory. Choose:

(1) POPULATION in Organizational Ecology,

(2) LEGITIMACY in Institutionalism, or

(3) CENTRALITY in Organizational Networks

Define the concept formally; explain why it is so important to the theory; then illustrate the concept by applying it to some organizational event or situation with which you are familiar (personally or from media coverage).