

Extracting Evidence from Observation

Ioannis Votsis
University of Bristol

PART I

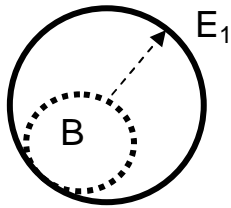
Basu (2003):

For observations to be of use in theory testing, they need to be transformed into evidence via a theoretical process. Evidence is theory-laden.

One cannot infer observations from the theory (not even with theoretical auxiliaries). One must first transform observations to evidence.

BUT

$$(x) (Bx \rightarrow E_1x)$$



EITHER $(x)(E_1x \rightarrow Bx)$ OR
 $(x) (E_1 \rightarrow (Bx \vee A_1x \vee \dots \vee A_nx))$

L-Theory + Auxiliaries:

1. O
 2. $O \rightarrow E_1$
 3. E_1
 4. $E_1 \rightarrow (B \vee A_1 \vee \dots \vee A_n)$
- $\therefore B \vee A_1 \vee \dots \vee A_n$

We need not transform observations. The theoretical auxiliaries are moved where they belong, viz. in the testing bed.

PART II

- Suppose we want to ask whether we're all observing the same thing. How can we establish this?

DPDS:

- Different perceptions or observations imply different stimuli or physical objects.

OR (its contrapositive)

- Same stimuli or physical objects imply same perceptions or observations.

DSDP:

- Different stimuli imply different perceptions.

OR (its contrapositive)

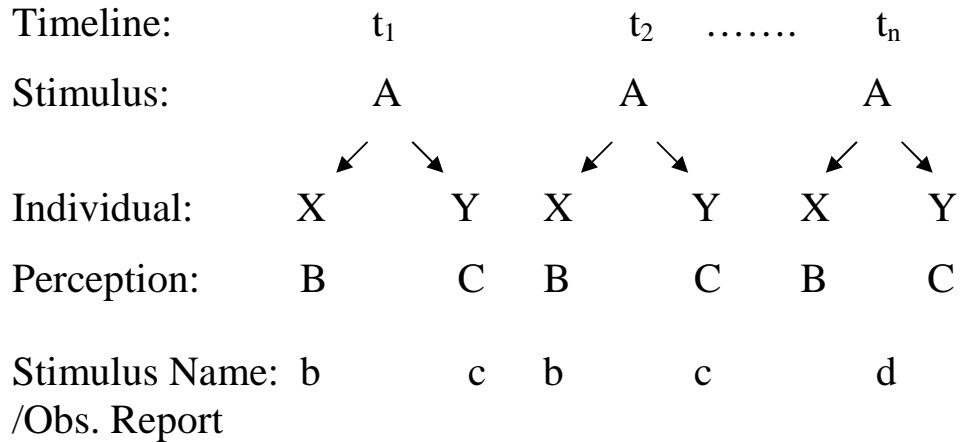
- Same perceptions imply the same stimuli.

DPDS-I:

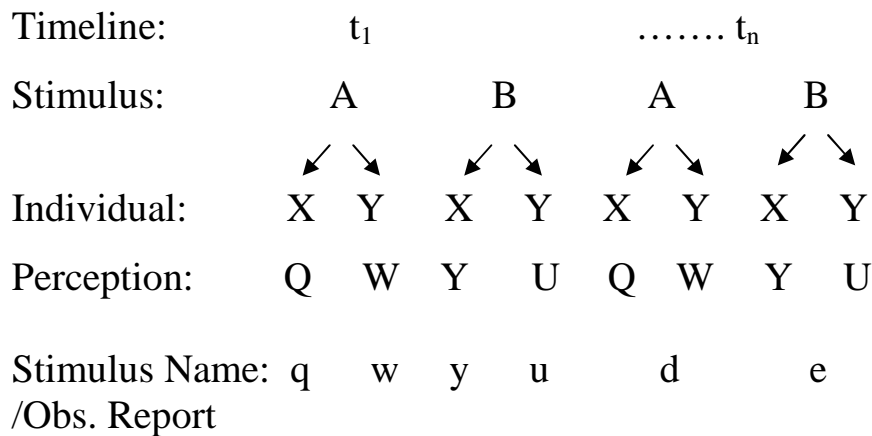
- Different perceptions *in any given individual* arise because of *that* individual's exposure to different stimuli.

One Stimulus Agreement:

If DPDS is relativised to individuals, how do we get agreement between individuals in light of different perceptions?



Multiple Stimulus Agreement:



- Each individual has the same observations under the same stimuli. Intersubjective agreement is reached when different individuals realise that some name or linguistic expression (like an obs. report) is used in the presence of some particular stimulus.

CONCLUSION

- I argued for two theses:
 - (1) We *can* distil the objective part of observations by appeal to DPDS-I. The agreement established on the basis of this principle is 'the evidence' properly construed.
 - (2) We can shift some known theoretical influences from observation to the test-bed.