

Empirical
Claims

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Outline

Why Make
Empirical
Claims?

Expert
Quotations

Traditional
Empirical
Research

Meta-analysis

Alternative
Traditions

Debating Empirical Claims

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- 1 Why Make Empirical Claims?
- 2 Expert Quotations
- 3 Traditional Empirical Research
- 4 Meta-analysis
- 5 Alternative Traditions

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- Unavoidable with policy oriented cases
- To address specific questions
- Examples
 - 1 Decriminalization reduces gang violence?
 - 2 Sanctions kill the poor?
 - 3 Immunizations cause autism?



Expert Quotations

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- Most debaters rely on summaries from experts
- Why?
 - 1 Because most debaters (and judges) are unqualified to read the actual empirical literature
 - 2 Because summaries are quicker to present in rounds
- Standards of expertise
 - 1 Qualification for expertise
 - 2 Access to relevant information
 - 3 Disinterest
- Key challenge - comparing experts

Traditional Empirical Research

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- Two traditions of empirical research
 - 1 Case studies and small sample research
 - 2 Large sample research
- Standards of empirical research
 - 1 Sample size
 - 2 Sample selection
 - 3 Measurement
- Debating traditional empirical research involves debating which source of evidence better fits with these standards

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- Meta-analysis involves the summary of other empirical studies
- Advantages of meta-analysis
 - 1 The sample size of the meta-analysis is the sum of all the included studies
 - 2 Meta-analyses tend to focus on summary - which is easy to quote
 - 3 The peculiarities of individual studies are likely to average out
- Mixing dissimilar studies can still be difficult and unreliable



Alternative Traditions

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- Skepticism
- Standpoint epistemology and narratives