Choosing a topic

In the real world, choosing your topic and method inevitably involves tradeoffs

Interesting vs. provable (see next slide)

Policy relevant vs. "of interest to the discipline"

Your next job

Skills and comparative advantage

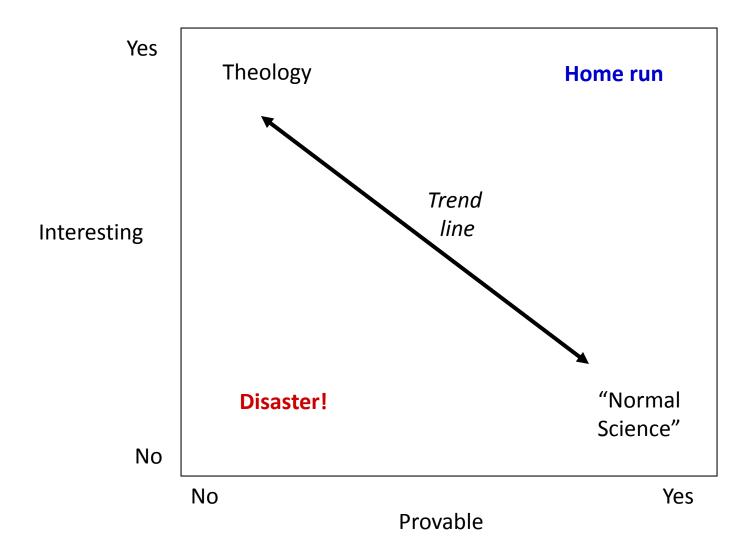
Tastes and interests (S.J. Gould) ——

The "so what"



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Perhaps the biggest challenge is finding a question that is both interesting and provable

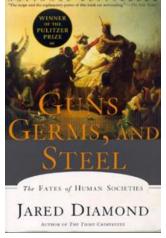


Perhaps the biggest challenge is finding a question that is both interesting and provable (2)

Yes

Is there a God?

Interesting



Diamond, Jared. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2017. © W.W. Norton & Company. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see https://ocw.mit.edu/help/faq-fair-use/.

How many angels can dance on the head of a pin

"Are Supreme Court Nominations a 'Move the Median' Game?" (APSR 2017)

No

No Yes Provable

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