

Research Paradigms

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Debates	Positivist & Post-positivist Paradigm	Critical Social Paradigm		Interpretivist or Constructivist Paradigm
		1. Emancipatory/Liberationist	2. Postmodernism or Post-structuralism	
<p>Ontology: <i>What do we believe about the nature of reality?</i> <i>What is the nature of reality?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reality exists but is imperfectly and probabilistically comprehended Individuals are perceived mainly as rational actors; they have choice and autonomy; there are causes and effects to human behaviour Reality is stable and temporarily persistent thus allows generalization Some degree of critical realism characterizes post-positivism 	<p>(1) Critical realism or historical realism: social structures are historically constructed and they shape and represent current reality; reality is both objective and subjective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> power struggles define reality values and ideas are naturalized over time and that is what we think reality is individuals have agency and potential for autonomy despite social structures <p>(2) Sceptical relativism: Virtual and competing 'realities' exist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> power relations shape realities; reality exists as much as it is constructed through talk, text, and media; individuals have multiple subjectivities/selves which are not coherently articulated desires and freedom are not individual autonomy but rather socially produced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relativism: Multiple interpretations of reality account for a single phenomenon Reality is dynamic and socially co-constructed There are many specific constructs of reality (individual or negotiated consensus) 	
<p>Epistemology: <i>How do we know what we know?</i> <i>What is the nature of knowledge?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised objectivism and dualism: attempts of neutral assessment and knowledge creation in binary oppositions Findings are the closest we can get to the truth; predictive character Experience must be verifiable to be a source of knowledge (evidence) Examples in social sciences: Functionalism and behaviourism 	<p>(1) Focus on structural forces and value-mediated knowledge production:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reveals ideologies and false consciousness against oppression and in favour social justice Examples of social theories: Marxism and neo-Marxism, (2nd wave) feminism, critical theories, postcolonialism, critical race studies, and queer theory <p>(2) Truth is a dominant discourse and science a current regime of truth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> knowledge is transitional and a crystallization of dominant/emergent discourses there are no grand theories that can account for the complexity of the world Examples of social theories: Poststructuralism, postmodernism, cultural studies, postfeminism (3rd wave) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transactional: Knowledge is produced between researcher and participant; Knowledge is the result of a process of human interactions in specific locations Truth is mediated by interpretation and meanings Examples of social theories and philosophies: Phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, hermeneutics, social constructionism 	
<p>Methodology: <i>How should we study the world?</i> <i>How to create knowledge?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hypothetic-deductive method Verification or falsification of hypotheses Researcher and subjects are independent of one another Primarily quantitative but include some qualitative studies (descriptive, some forms of grounded theory) Typical designs include experimental studies and randomized controlled trials 	<p>(1) Critique, dialogical, and dialectical : Confrontation of oppressive structures and transformational aims for knowledge production</p> <p>Quantitative and qualitative</p> <p>Examples: Participatory and action research, dialogical and cooperative inquiry, critical ethnography, institutional ethnography</p> <p>(2) Deconstruction and rhizomatic thought : Doubting what we know, finding new ways to see, and acknowledging multiple entry and exit points to data generation and interpretation; primarily qualitative</p> <p>Examples: Discourse analysis, genealogy, some visual ethnography</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hermeneutics: Search for meanings and consensus through lived experiences Qualitative Examples: Constructivist grounded theory and ethnomethodology 	
<p>Position of Researcher: <i>Who is the researcher within this paradigm?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To discover what is real and to be an informer of findings to knowledge users To control subjectivity to avoid bias In qualitative, to uncover how people "really think" 	<p>(1) Organic Intellectual: Researcher is involved in empowerment, advocacy or committed towards social justice; explicit social agenda; personal position is basis for interpretation of findings; many times co-ownership of findings; KTE for social change</p> <p>(2) Transgressive intellectual: Challenges other paradigms propositions; aware that (s)he benefits from current power arrangements and has multiple subjectivities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passionate participant and co-creator of multiple voices; altruist values Researcher's subjectivity is essential for the co-creation of meaning 	

References

My own thinking on research paradigms.

Lincoln, Y. S. and Guba, E., G. (2000). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions and emerging confluences. In N., K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.). Handbook of qualitative research (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 163-188.

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