

Paradigms, Theory and Research

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What is a paradigm?

- According to Burrell and Morgan (1979; 24), “To be located in a particular paradigm is to view the world in a particular way”
- Kuhn (1970; 175) introduced the term paradigm and provides a useful definition; “it stands for the entire constellation of beliefs, values and techniques, and so on shared by the members of a community”

Traditional 'Split'

- **Quantitative** is viewed as the traditional, the positivistic, the experimental
 - Established by authorities such as Newton and Locke.
 - “Scientific Method”
- **Qualitative** is viewed as the constructivist or naturalistic, postpositivist or postmodern perspective
 - Began as a counter-movement to the positivist tradition in the late 19th century
- Both can be seen as "scientific" and good research in either remains a systematic and rigorous process.

Positivism

- The external world is real.
- Direct observation of behavioral phenomena is required to confirm or refute hypotheses
- Observations must be value-free and emotionless; interpretations have no place in science
- Reality is consistent; findings are generalizable

Post positivism

- Meaning is the interaction of external reality and internal perception/mediation.
- Some thoughts, constructs, etc. cannot be observed directly but can be inferred from observational data.
- Observations are necessarily influenced by perception and cognition and can therefore never be totally value-free.
- While many aspects of the physical world may be constant and predictable, living beings and random occurrences have an element of uncertainty that may allow understanding but not always allow prediction and control.

Conflict

- Examines the conflict and unrest which exists in all groups, especially societies
- Assumes that economic inequalities are the underlying source of conflict
- Social conflict is viewed as necessary for social change to occur
- Based on the ideas of Karl Marx

Ethnomethodology

- Within phenomenology, including ethnomethodology we find that where man is seen as the creator of his own reality... they go further and argue that *the only social reality is the one of the moment*
- The father of phenomenological sociology is Alfred Schutz. Harold Garfinkel is the person most often associate with the term "ethnomethodology".

Symbolic Interactionism

- Herbert Blumer (1962:189) states that "The organization of human society is the framework inside of which social action takes place and is *not the determinant of that action.*"
- Philosophers John Dewey and Horton Cooley contributed to the growth of this theory.

Social Darwinism

- Human society, as a Social Darwinist claims to perceive it, is not some sort of higher order level of nature; human society, unlike many animal societies, does not evolve and adapt to the natural world; human society endeavors to change the face of the natural world.
 - “Survival of the fittest”
 - “Survival of the richest”

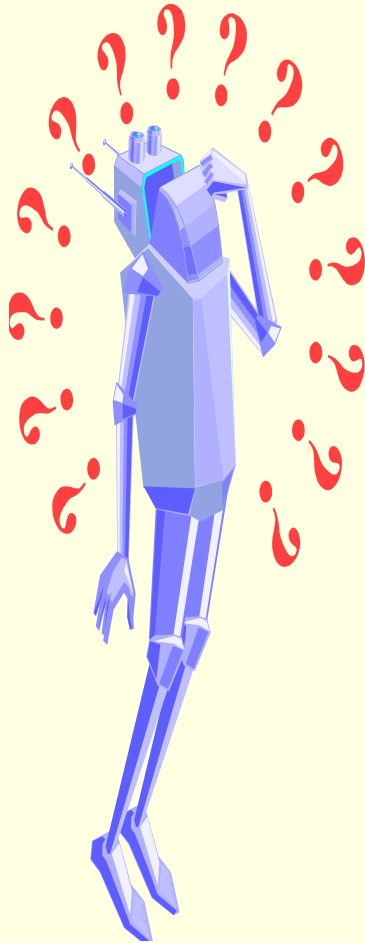
Feminism

- A school of thought that explains gender in terms of the political and socio-economic structure in which it is constructed and emphasizes the importance of taking collective action to eradicate sexism in society, and to reconstruct gender so that it is neither a harmful nor an oppressive social category

Structural Functionalism

- Explains society's expectations of us as members, and our inability to stray too far from those expectations
- Structural functional theory allows for major institutions, such as the economy, religion, polity, education and family, to be considered groups in the grandest sense
- The dynamic of the groups in relation to other groups and the whole system is under study

Reasoning



- "Deductive reasoning" refers to the process of concluding that something must be true because it is a special case of a general principle that is known to be true.
- For example, if you know the general principle that the sum of the angles in any triangle is always 180 degrees, and you have a particular triangle in mind, you can then conclude that the sum of the angles in your triangle is 180 degrees.

Reasoning

- "Inductive reasoning" is the process of reasoning that a general principle is true because the special cases you've seen are true.
- For example, if all the people you've ever met from a particular town have been very strange, you might then say "all the residents of this town are strange".



Reasoning

- Inductive reasoning is part of the discovery process whereby the observation of special cases leads one to suspect very strongly (though not know with absolute logical certainty) that some general principle is true.

- Deductive reasoning, on the other hand, is the method you would use to demonstrate with logical certainty that the principle is true.

Class Exercise

- Create a paradigm
 - Name it
 - Outline it
 - Compare it to existing paradigms