

***How do we think  
[about social reality]***

***when doing qualitative research?***

SOCB2506:  
APPLYING SOCIOLOGY - QUALITATIVE METHODS

20<sup>th</sup> of  
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2023



## EPISTEMOLOGICAL POINTS OF VIEW TO SOCIAL PHENOMENA

**Epistemology**, the philosophical study of the nature, origin, and limits of human knowledge.

- Do we know things?
- And if we do, how and when do we know things?

*'' In trying to make sense of social reality, no grand method or theory has a universal and general claim to authoritative knowledge (Richardson, 1997: 121).*

*'' Researchers engage in the practical activities of generating and interpreting data to answer questions about the meaning of what their participants know and do. They can do this using a wide range of methods including ethnography, life history work and narrative inquiry to study ‘... first hand what people do and say in particular contexts’ (Hammersley, 2006: 4).*

# EPISTEMOLOGICAL APPROACHES

<i>Objectivism</i>	<i>Constructivism</i>	<i>Subjectivism</i>
Meaning and meaningful reality exists as such apart from the operation of any consciousness. In this epistemology, of what it means to know, understanding and values are considered objectified in the people researchers study. Using appropriate methods researchers can discover objective truth.	Constructivism rejects the objectivist view of human knowledge. Truth or meaning is constructed not discovered. People may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomena. There can be no unmediated grasp of the social world that exists independently of the researcher and all claims to knowledge take place within a particular conceptual framework.	Evident in structuralist, post-structuralist and postmodernist thinking. Meaning does not emerge from the interaction between the object and the subject; it is imposed on the object by the subject.

**Source: Michael Crotty "The foundation of social research. Meaning and perspective in the research process" 1998, Allen Uniwin.**



# INTELLECTUAL ATTITUDE OF THE RESEARCHER

Current sociology is transparadigmatic

Source: Michael Crotty "The foundation of social research. Meaning and perspective in the research process" 1998, Allen Uniwin.

**Positivism** - the march of science

**Constructionism** - the making of meaning

**Interpretivism** (phenomenology and hermeneutics)

**Critical inquiry**: the Marxist heritage, contemporary critics and critique

**Feminism**: re-visioning the man-made world

**Postmodernism**: crisis of confidants or what is truth?

## **POSITIVISM**

*The credo of positivism assumes a principled closeness to natural scientific methods, verifiability of data, maximum detachment of the researcher from the object of research*

**Is our knowledge is reliable?**

## **INTERPRETIVISM**

*These directions are concerned with recognizing the essence of social phenomena, no matter how exclusive or typical they may be. For this, it is necessary not only not to distance yourself from the object of your research, but also to penetrate it "from the inside"*

# METHODOLOGICAL AMBIVALENCE

Criteria	Inquiry	Inquiry
Role of qualitative methods	Preparatory	Using of interpretations of different actors
Researcher-subject	Distance	Closeness
Position of the researcher	Outsider	Insider
Theory - researcher	Confirmation	Contingency
Strategy of the research	Structural	Non-structural
Scope of findings	Nomothetical	Idiographic
Image of social reality	Static, external to the actor	Processual, constructed by the actor
Nature of data	"Hard", "strong", reliable	"deep", "rich" data

# DEFINING THE SUBJECT OF INQUIRY

APPROACH	CONCEPT	METHOD
POSITIVISM	SOCIAL STRUCTURE, SOCIAL FACTS	QUALNTITATIVE, WHICH CHECK THE HYPOTHESIS
INTERPRETATIVE-SOCIAL SCIENCE	SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION, SENCES AND MEANINGS	QUALITATIVE, WHICH CREATE THE HYPOTHESIS



Our participants have been telling us valuable stories. We've learned so much about what we're doing right and where we can improve.



Did you get their emails? If so, we can survey them and get some real evidence.



# THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER



*The researcher may plan a role that entails varying degrees of “participantness”—that is, the degree of actual participation in daily life.*

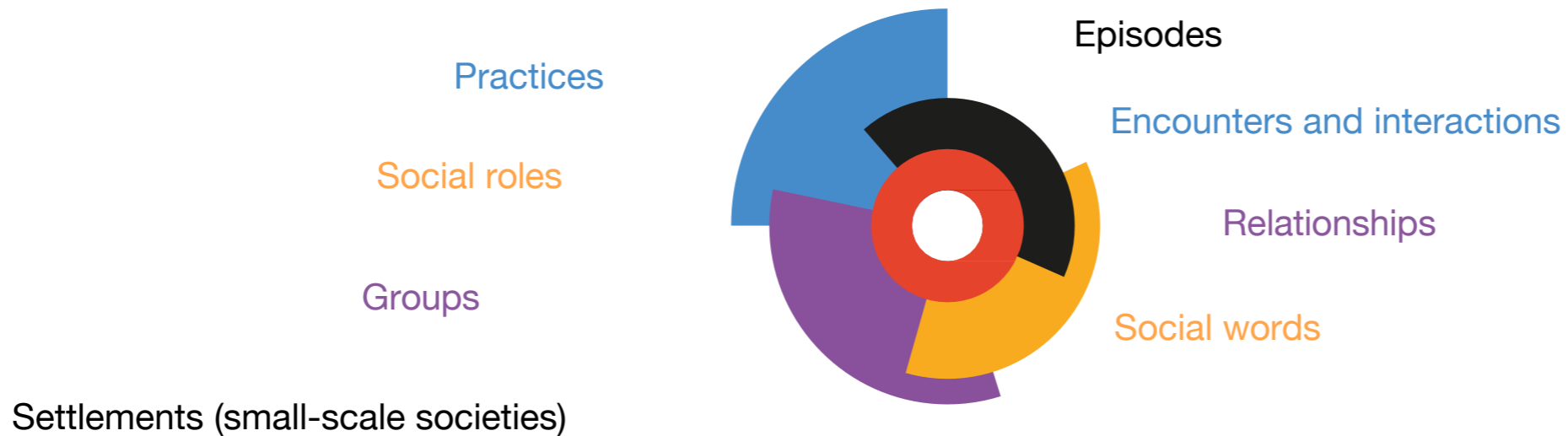
*At one extreme is the full participant, who goes about ordinary life in a role or set of roles constructed in the setting.*

*At the other extreme is the complete observer, who engages not at all in social interaction and may even shun involvement in the world being studied.*

*And, of course, all possible complementary mixes along the contin-uum are available to the researcher. —*

*(E.BABBIE "Special Consideration in Qualitative Field research")*

# WHAT IS APPROPRIATE TO BE STUDIED WITHIN QUALITATIVE METHODS



*Babbie E. Qualitative field research. The basics of Social Research. Cengage Learning Inc, 2016*



# QUALITATIVE PARADIGMS\*

1

**Naturalism**

Reality as it is seen by the participant

2

**Ethnomethodology (phenomenology)**

Patterns of the social life and interaction

3

**Grounded theory**

What is going here?

Skepticism

Following research procedures

4

**Case study & extended case method**

Descriptive purpose.

Improving/rebuilding of the theory

5

**Institutional Ethnography**

Linkage of “microlevel” of the personal experience and “macrolevel” of the institutions

6

**Participatory action research**

Activism, education and calling for action

*Babbie E. Qualitative field research. The basics of Social Research. Cengage Learning Inc, 2016*

