

Chapter 2

Paradigms, Theory, and Research

Paradigms

- Definition
 - Model or framework for observation and understanding which shapes both what we see and how we understand it
 - Paradigms are often confused with “common sense” or “the way things are”
- Each paradigm offers an aspect of social life that answers some question while ignoring others
- A paradigms popularity may ebb and flow but it is never totally discarded

Can paradigms cause you to have blinders to one set of problems while generating interest in another set?

- Yes!
- Feminist paradigm argues that for example, the subjectivity of women has been silenced in existing sex-blind paradigms such as Marxism, symbolic interactionism, and so on.

The difference between a theory and a paradigm:

- A. Theory is a general way of looking at the world a paradigm attempts to explain what we see
- B. Paradigm is a general way of looking at the world a theory attempts to explain what we see
- C. Theories and Paradigms are basically the same
- D. None of the above

What is the difference between micro and macro approaches?

- Macrotheories deal with large, aggregate entities of society or even whole societies: Evolutionism, System theories (including structural functionalism), Political Economy...
- Microtheories are more interested in issues of social life at the level of individuals and small groups: Symbolic interactionism, Ethnomethodology, Sociolinguistics, Social exchange, phenomenology...
- Macro-micro link

A micro-theory may focus on:

- A. Ethnomethodology
- B. Structural Functionalism
- C. Conflict Theory
- D. Content Analysis

Some social scientist study small, face to face groups in societies. Such studies are:

- A. micro studies
- B. macro studies
- C. paradigm studies
- D. Positivism
- E. Critical race theory

A view of society in which social behavior is seen as serving important goals and need is called

- A. symbolic interactionism
- B. conflict paradigm
- C. positivism
- D. structural functionalism

The structural-functionalist paradigm argues:

- A. Social behavior is an attempt to dominate other while avoiding being dominated
- B. Society can be studied like a biological organism
- C. Society is constructed through interactions of individuals
- D. None of the above

Roy wants to study the role of religion in society, how it give societies a focus, how it gives meaning to unexplainable events, and how it often connects with the political and economic institutions. Which paradigm would be best?

- A. Feminist
- B. Marxism
- C. Ethnomethodology
- D. Structural functionalism
- E. Critical race theory

Kirk wants to study how people would respond when what he or she expects in the middle of conversation were violated. Which one would be best?

- A. Symbolic interactionism
- B. Structural functionalism
- C. Conflict theory
- D. Ethnomethodology

Two Logical System

- Deductive and Inductive reasoning
 - Deductive we begin with a theory and move through the scientific process
 - Inductive we observe our surroundings and see what is their and move towards theory
- Traditional Model of Science
 - Theory
 - Operationalization
 - Observation

Traditional Model of Science

- Begin with a theory
 - We move from a theory to a testable hypothesis
 - Our theory assumes that homicide is related to where you live
 - Hypothesis would say the poorer the neighborhood, the more likely there is to be homicide in that neighborhood

Continued

- Operationalization
 - Homicide may seem pretty obvious, but are there differences?
 - How do we define poor? What is a poor neighborhood?
- Operationalize
 - Means to specify exact operations involved in measuring a variable

Continued

- Observation
 - Final step
 - Looking at the world and make measurements on what we have seen
- Process
 - We could examine the various neighborhoods of riverside
 - We could calculate the level of poor and the homicide level
 - Run statistical analysis or just show our results

The three main elements in the traditional model of science are:

A. Science, hope, philosophy

B. Theory, sampling, data analysis

C. Operationalization, ethics, theory

D. Theory, operationalization, observation

E. Description, exploration, explanation

Deductive Theory Building

- Specify the topic
- Specify the range of phenomena your theory addresses.
- Identify and specify your major concepts and variables
- Find out what is known about these relationships
- Reason logically from those propositions to the specific topic you are examining

Inductive Theory Building

- Begin with Field Research
 - Observe events in progress
- From this Field Research you look for trends in what you have observed
- You build theory from the trends
- Also called “Grounded Theory”

Deductive vs. Inductive

- In many ways deductive and inductive processes are not stagnant but can play off of one another
- The theory that you acquire through an inductive process can be tested deductively
- Conversely, your findings from deductive study can lead you to more questions which you can examine through inductive observation

Link between Theory and Research

- Theory for the sake of theory is fine, but there are many ways of examining and testing theories
- Theories guide social questions and the way in which we ask those questions
- There are many way to go about examining these social questions which may lead to more theories

The _____ approach to theory-testing moves from the general to the specific, from a set of abstract postulates to the discovery of evidence for or against a general theory.

- a. Idiographic
- b. deductive
- c. nomothetic
- d. inductive
- e. macro-theoretical

The logical process of moving from a more specific to a more general level of interest is called:

- a. induction
- b. deduction
- c. empiricism
- d. hypothesis

Inductive and Deductive approaches:

- A. are connected to each other
- B. contradict each other
- C. deal with exactly the same procedures
- D. are really indistinguishable from each other

If you start your scientific study with an observation about TV watching and Income, what kind of approach are you taking?

- A. Idiographic
- B. Inductive
- C. Deductive
- D. interactionist

Deductive reasoning:

- A. Begins with a theory and moves through the scientific process to prove or disprove the theory
- B. Begins with field research, examines what events in progress, and attempts to look for trends within those events
- C. Begins with data and attempts to fit the data to the theoretical model
- D. None of the Above

The first step in building a theory through the inductive approach is to:

- A. Develop measures
- B. Develop hypotheses
- C. Develop a sample
- D. Observe some segment of social life