

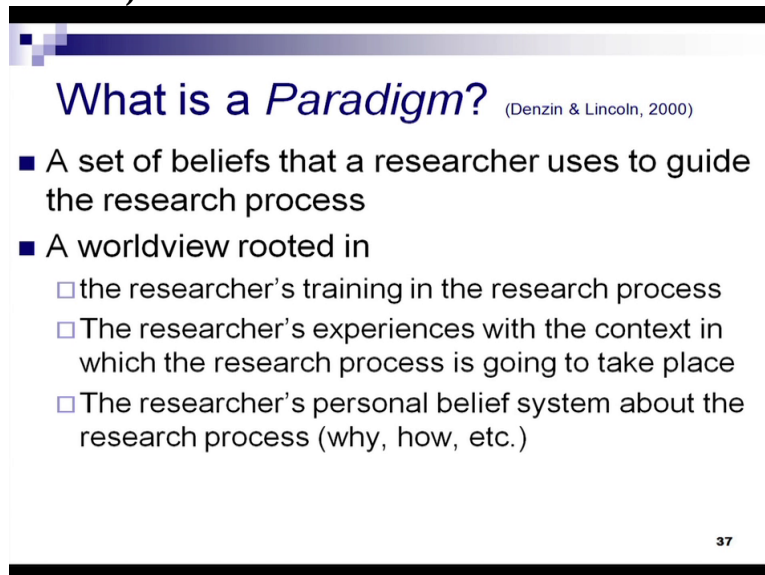
**Qualitative Research Methods**  
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**Lecture – 6**  
**Dominant Paradigms of Qualitative Research**

Welcome back to the NOC course titled qualitative research methods, my name is Aradhna Malik and helping you with the course and we have been talking about various things related to various aspects of qualitative research, we have talked about what qualitative research is? What qualitative researchers do? And now we are moving into a module called the Dominant Paradigms in Qualitative Research, we will discuss a few of the dominant paradigm but in order to discuss the Paradigms of specifically pertaining to qualitative research, we must know the background behind those paradigms.

We must understand what a paradigm is? And how different Paradigms evolved? And which ones are most applicable to qualitative research? Which ones are the most applicable to the kind of research that we are talking about here?

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**What is a *Paradigm*?** (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000)

- A set of beliefs that a researcher uses to guide the research process
- A worldview rooted in
  - the researcher's training in the research process
  - The researcher's experiences with the context in which the research process is going to take place
  - The researcher's personal belief system about the research process (why, how, etc.)

37

So what is a Paradigm? a paradigm is a set of beliefs that a researcher uses to guide the research process, it's a world view, it is a mindset, it is where you're coming from, Okay, it is if you are what you think, what are and how are you approaching the problem that is a paradigm. I use in order to arrive at a problem and this world view is rooted in the researchers training in the research process, so how you were trained, what you were trained to believe,

what you were trained to use, how you studied this whole process of research process and what you were taught to believe as truth, what you were taught to believe as knowledge base.

What you would taught to believe as meaning reality, addition to the knowledge base or the creation of new knowledge, so all of this adds to our understanding of what research is and how it should be conducted ,all of us have different ways of looking at things. Also we must understand that our training and how to approach different problems also affects how we work on them.

So some people say that human behavior can be quantified and should be quantified, because you want to make predictions, because you want to make profit, one example of this is business research methods, which is a very, very important aspect of managerial training. And as we know what are customers want, how can we give it to them so the whole area of marketing uses extensively we try to predict, consumer behavior.

For example, is rooted in the predictions of human behavior as far as there propensity to buy products and services, is concerned. So you know and that is a result of quantification to quite an extent, what has the pattern then and how is the pattern going to be, how does the history of the pattern of purchase of certain items predict, whether people will buy the same thing in future or not or similar things in future or not.

So how a person approaches the problem, what a person feels can feed into that problem, is an important aspect of how, what techniques a person uses and that is in turn a result of what the person was trained in or how the person was trained to approach different problems. The other things that affects how researchers view, research is, the researchers experiences with the context in which the research process is going to take place, how familiar are you, with the context?

So if I am a appear academic, I have never visited village and I am sayinng this with reference to the course, I just thought on the move platform, just before this it's quite possible that some of you may have enrolled for that course, the course was on title strategic communication for sustainable development. So I am taking the example from there, if I am academic who has never visited the village, my view, or my way of approaching problems,

thinking about problems, my perception of the problems in rural areas, will be based on secondary data.

Very truthful, very believable secondary data, UNICEF reports, World Bank reports, this, that but then my words view will be based on what I read about it or maybe even YouTube videos as opposed to my being a part of that context, how familiar am I with that context, do I even know how to get information out of people, I may have excelled in the art of interviewing, I may have scored very high marks or may be full marks in a paper on interviewing and research methods, but till I go and speak to the people in their language and understand, what lies behind getting that information.

I mean I stand, I wouldn't say I stand, I know where I stand, I stand on a different level than people who don't have all these degrees and professional qualifications, but know how to get information out of people. So you know our familiarity drives the paradigm we use for research to quite an extent. Then the researchers personally system about the research process why, how, et cetera, now I personally believe that it is very important to use a mixed methods research process for studying human behavior.

A mixed methods design is much more important to study human behavior, than a purely quantitative or a purely qualitative research design, for the simple reason that there are some aspects of human behavior, that can be categorized and quantified and there are other aspects of human behavior that cannot be categorized, I personally, am a person who will react to the question, Oh! I can predict your behavior with; okay right I will tell you. You want to predict my behavior alright, I am going to prove you wrong.

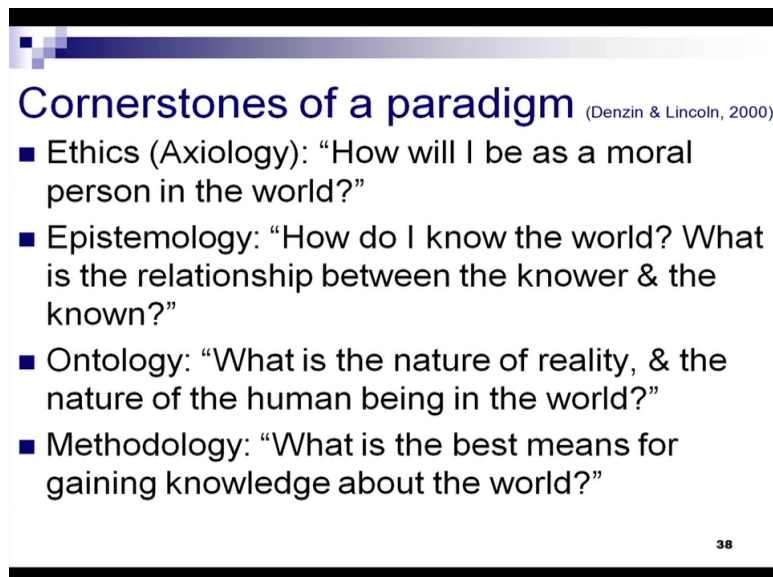
So you know I am I am talking at the very micro level and people start laughing and then you will say that that is not how the world works, but that is very true. Human behavior can be very unpredictable at times and I like to look between the lines and see where it is unpredictable and how unpredictable, what is the extent of this lack of predictability and how predictable it is.

So you know the mixed methods research design or the mixed methods approach works best, for people like me because I have studied various things, my background, my belief system, my understanding of human behavior, may be the same as many of you and may be very

different from others and that is precisely what drives the research design I use, in my own research in approaching problems, where I have to study human behavior.

So you know, these are very, very, very basic things that help us shape our world view, what is knowledge? How do we perceive knowledge? Etc, So this world views are rooted in what we know about the research process, our background, our basis, our training, our opinions, ours urge to go deeper into the cases, etc, Okay.

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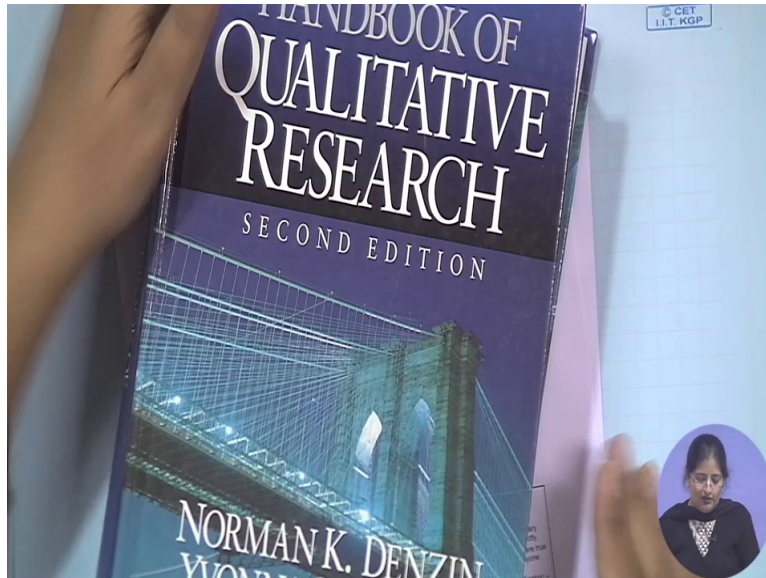
**Cornerstones of a paradigm** (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000)

- Ethics (Axiology): “How will I be as a moral person in the world?”
- Epistemology: “How do I know the world? What is the relationship between the knower & the known?”
- Ontology: “What is the nature of reality, & the nature of the human being in the world?”
- Methodology: “What is the best means for gaining knowledge about the world?”

38

The Cornerstones of a paradigm, what are the cornerstones, the pillars on which this whole notion of a paradigm stands are, the first one is ethics or axiology, how will I be as a moral person in the world? this is what it attempt to answer, this is again from this book by Denzen and Lincoln, the book that have been telling you about handbook of qualitative research methods edited by Denzen and LinkedIn and I have this book, I have a copy of this book.

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I will show you the cover so please focus on the book, thank you. So this is the book I'm using, this is a 2000 edition and I also have a copy of the 1994 edition, but it's not possible to show that here, anyway. So this is from the spook and so the whole principle or the pillar of axiology deals with how will I be as a moral person in the world, how do I treat the research process, what is the cornerstone?

What is my anchor when I am doing research? where do I stop? What do I explore? What is sensitive information? What is not sensitive information or what is an area that I would like to explore? Where do I draw the line between getting information out of subjects and using them for my research, so you know that's very fine line between getting help from someone and using someone, so you know all those things.

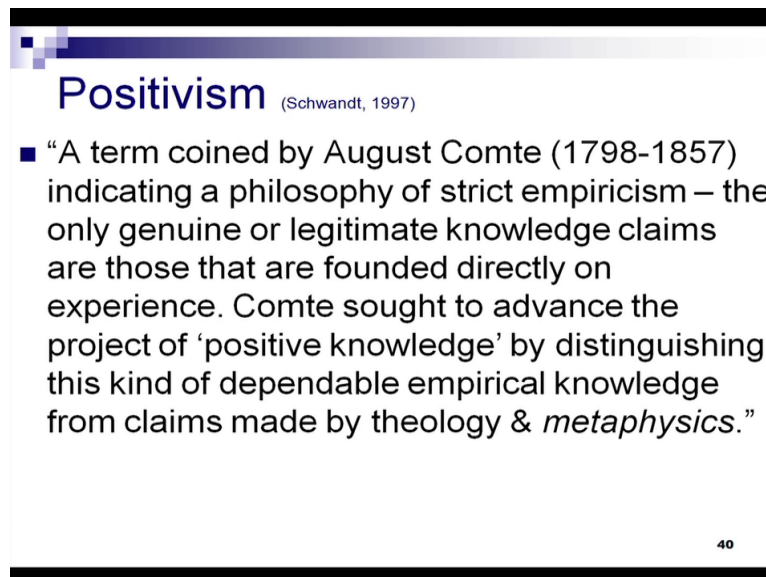
So how do I approach this, from researchers standpoint, who needs information and data and who needs to get things done and how much of manipulation I used in the research process. We need to sometimes manipulate the situation intrusive research, for example Medical Research is very, its invasive, psychological research can be very intrusive, you actually break through the barriers of a person's mind, enter in get valuable data out and then many of you many times one forgets to seal, whatever one has broken open, so axiology, where does one draw the line.

Then Epistemology how do I know the world? What is the relationship between the knower and the known? How do I understand what knowledge is or what I am exploring? What is my relationship as an inquirer with the inquired? Okay then Ontology, What is the nature of

reality and the nature of the human being in the world? How do I perceive reality? That is ontology.

Methodology, study of methods, what are the methods available to me and what is the best method for me to use or I won't even use the word best, most appropriate method, that I can use to put particular problem. These are the four pillars of cornerstones of the paradigms, we use in our research. Okay.

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**Positivism** (Schwandt, 1997)

- “A term coined by August Comte (1798-1857) indicating a philosophy of strict empiricism – the only genuine or legitimate knowledge claims are those that are founded directly on experience. Comte sought to advance the project of ‘positive knowledge’ by distinguishing this kind of dependable empirical knowledge from claims made by theology & *metaphysics*.”

40

The first one day going to talk about is positivism, I just read, Positivism “A term coined by August Comte, I hope I'm pronouncing the word right, indicating a philosophy of strict empiricism - the only genuine or a legitimate knowledge claims are those that are found directly on experience. Comte sought to advance the project of ‘positive knowledge’ by distinguishing this kind of dependable empirical knowledge from claims made by theology and metaphysics”.

And we will do well a little bit more on this, so positivism is exploring real situations that can verified, that can be tested, exploration of real situations, building knowledge on our understanding of real systems.

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## Characteristics of Positivism

(Schwandt, 1997; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000)

- *Ontology*: Naïve realism: Our senses are our primary windows to the world. We perceive the world directly.
- *Epistemology*: The findings we are dealing with are true because they are rooted in empirical inquiry. Anyone can check them!
- *Methodology*: Experimentation, validation, verification – quantitative methods
- *Aim of inquiry*: Primarily “explanation, prediction & control”
- *Goodness or quality criteria*: “Conventional benchmarks of ‘rigor’; internal & external validity, reliability & objectivity”
- *Type of narration*: “Scientific report”

41

The characteristics of positivism are, as far the Ontology is concerned, Naive realism: which says that our senses are our primary windows to the world, actually our only windows to the world and what we perceive from our senses is the real world, so we perceive directly from our senses and that can be verified, anyone with the same senses will perceive, the same things that anyone else does, that is the ontology.

Epistemology: the findings we are dealing with are true because they are rooted in empirical inquiry. Anyone can go and check them! so whatever we are saying is rooted in empirical inquiry, we are inquiring about what we see, what we experience through our senses and we are using empirical methods, anyone with the same set of resources will arrive at the same conclusion and that is how we know, we test what we see.

Methodology is experimentation, validation, verification and quantitative methods. Then the here, the aim methodologies experimentation, validation and verification and all this is done through quantitative methods.

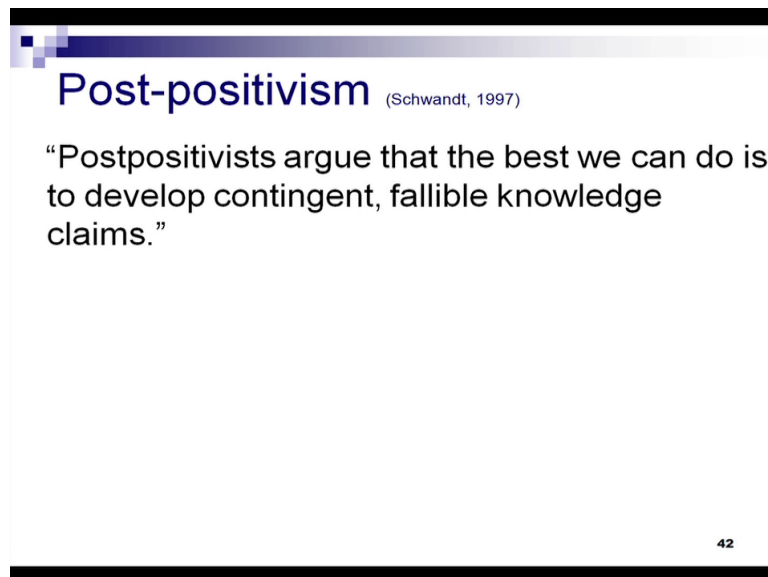
Aim of inquiry: is primarily “explanation, prediction and control”, explanation was something like that, why not something else, so we talk about, so it is not even why not, it is explaining, it is describing things, by way of testing them, by way of going deeper into what we see. Then prediction based on what we see happening, we see patterns and we predict on the basis of that and we control certain variables, to see how other things are the dependent variables are affected by controlling certain situations or the independent variables. Okay. The aim inquiry is this.

Now, how do we know that this research is good or how do we know that it is it is a good quality, the criteria used are conventional benchmarks of rigor, it is systematic, it is thorough, it is rigors and internal and external validity, now validity means that we set of methods used, answers the question that was asked, so the connection between the method the output in relation to the methods is answering the question that was asked.

Reliability is whether this method repeatedly gives us the same or similar response. Okay, so validity is the fit between the question and the answer, and reliability is the repetitive or the repeated response that we get or the same getting similarity of responses, I'm sorry reliability is the similarity in the responses we get by use of the same method. And objectivity personal bias is a not coming in etc.

And the type of narration, what do we get at the end of it, it is scientific report, okay, that is positivism it is very similar to, its not the same as empiricism, we will not even touch in empiricism because it's not connected, even usually to what we are going to talk about later. Okay.

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**Post-positivism** (Schwandt, 1997)

“Postpositivists argue that the best we can do is to develop contingent, fallible knowledge claims.”

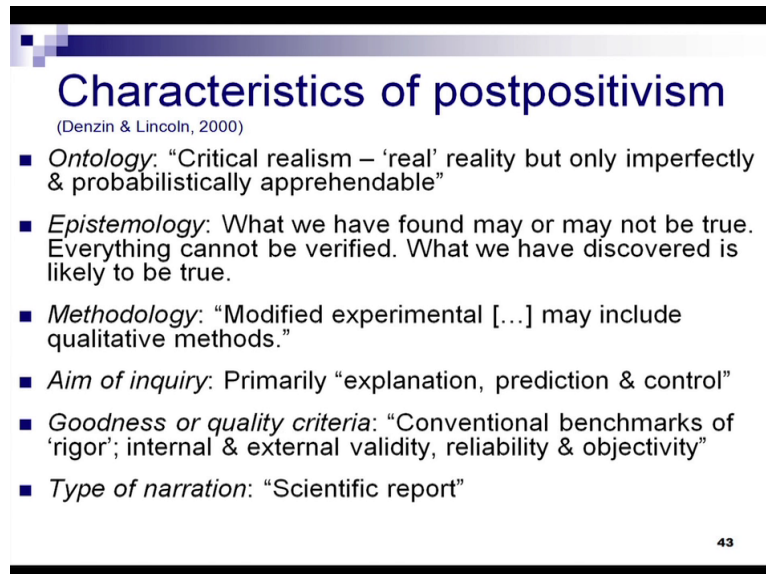
42

Post positivism on the other hand is, that you know researchers realizing that maybe there is something above and beyond what we can test, what we can verify, what we can validate, so after the period of positivism, came a period of post positivism, where researchers said okay fine, maybe there are things that will not be experienced by our senses, but they will still be there, may be there are things that cannot be verified, maybe there are things that can be verified, maybe there is a grey area, that is what post positivist said.



So they argue that the best we can do is to develop contingent, fallible knowledge claims, we can develop claims, but we must realize that they are contingent, which means they are only answering the question that has been asked at a specific point in time. And fallible they are open to or they are subject to people questioning them, revising them or even throwing them out. Okay, it's not the absolute truth.

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**Characteristics of postpositivism**  
(Denzin & Lincoln, 2000)

- *Ontology*: “Critical realism – ‘real’ reality but only imperfectly & probabilistically apprehendable”
- *Epistemology*: What we have found may or may not be true. Everything cannot be verified. What we have discovered is likely to be true.
- *Methodology*: “Modified experimental [...] may include qualitative methods.”
- *Aim of inquiry*: Primarily “explanation, prediction & control”
- *Goodness or quality criteria*: “Conventional benchmarks of ‘rigor’; internal & external validity, reliability & objectivity”
- *Type of narration*: “Scientific report”

43

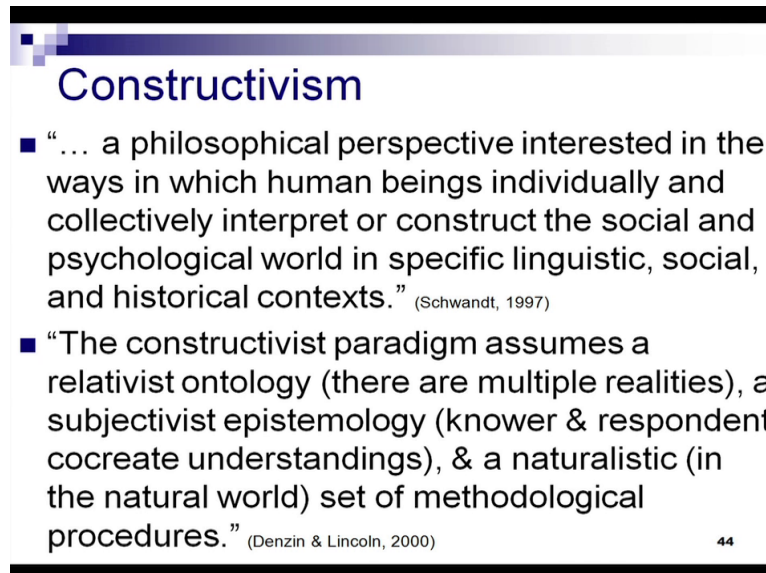
Now characteristics of post positivism, the first one is ontology, so how do we know “critical realism, so this is, what is the nature of reality is, real reality but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehendable”. Critical realism what is there, maybe there may not be there, it may not have the same size and shape that we think it has, it may not have the same features that we think that it has, so we are open to additions, deletions, modifications to our notions of reality.

Then Epistemology: what we have found may or may not be true, we can, we are trying our best to find the most appropriate truth or the most appropriate knowledge here, but we are open to accepting that whatever we have found may be true, it may not be true, everything cannot be verified. what we have decide, but we will go with the hope that whatever we have discovered is very likely to be true, because we have put in the rigor that is required, we have use standard methods, but we are open to accepting and this may or may not be true.

Methodology is “modified experimental it may include qualitative methods” it’s not only experimental; there is some element of this grey areas there. The aim of inquiry is again the

same as positivism, primarily explanation, protection and control. Goodness or quality criteria also remain the same is positivism, which is “conventional benchmarks of ‘rigor’ internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity. And the Type of narration: or what we get in the end is a scientific report.

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## Constructivism

- “... a philosophical perspective interested in the ways in which human beings individually and collectively interpret or construct the social and psychological world in specific linguistic, social, and historical contexts.” (Schwandt, 1997)
- “The constructivist paradigm assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (knower & respondent cocreate understandings), & a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures.” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000)

44

The next one is constructivism and we will we will talk about in much greater detail, later on we have a special lecture devoted to it, a series of lectures devoted to it, I will not go very deep into it. It is “a philosophical perspective interested in the ways in which human beings individually and collectively interpret or construct the social and psychological world in specific linguistic social and historical context.”

“The constructivist paradigm assumes the relativist ontology, which means there are multiple realities, subjectivist epistemology which means, the knower and respondent co-create understandings and a naturalistic set of methodological procedure. So this paradigm assumes that can be more than one reality, what we think is real is real for us, it may be different for somebody else.

The subjectivist epistemology which means the relationship between the knower and known is what creates this reality, okay, we know the world through the co-creation of what knower and the known believed together to be real. And the methods that are used or the methodological procedure, study of methods is rooted in the natural world, we will talk much more about it in the upcoming lectures, I will not dwell too much on it. Okay.

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## Characteristics of constructivism

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2000)

- *Ontology*: “Relativism – local & specific constructed realities”
- *Epistemology*: “Transaction/ subjective; created findings”
- *Methodology*: “Hermeneutic/ dialectic”
- *Aim of inquiry*: “Understanding; reconstruction”
- *Goodness or quality criteria*: “Trustworthiness & authenticity”
- *Narration*: “Interpretive case studies”

45

Characteristics, ontology is “Relativism how do we know that it's real, local and specific constructed realities” so there are local realities and there are constructed realities and everything is relative. Epistemology is “Transaction or subjective created findings” we create reality, how do we know that something is real, by creating it together, in and through communication, we talk about it, do you think this is so no, I think this is something else, okay, fine, so we negotiate, we talked about it and we come to a mutual understanding of what reality is.

The Methodology is “Hermeneutic or dialectic” which means we try to understand about the situation that we are in, in and through dialogue and we construct the links between the different pieces of information that we get in order to perceive a combined collective whole. So Aim of inquiries, “Understanding what do we hope to achieve through this method, or through this paradigm, our ultimate goal is to understand or to reconstruct the commonly held understanding,”

so we want to know more, I want to know it, I want to know it from a different perspective, I want to explore. Goodness of quality criteria, how do we know that the day work is good or a good quality, “Trustworthiness and authenticity” because everything is rooted in the core construction of reality, so the people involved need to get together and decide whether it's authentic and trustworthiness. Narration is “Interpretive case studies” so that is the ultimate output. Okay.

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## Critical theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000)

- Focuses on in depth and thorough understanding of the connection between assumptions, description, and explanations, and challenges current beliefs in doing so.
- Emerged out of Marxism
- Frankfurt School:
  - Prof. Herbert Marcuse:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pzfy2izu44&list=PLB8AFCE7A127FABAF>

46

The last paradigm that we are going to talk about very briefly over here is critical theory and we will have another set of lectures on this later on, critical theory focuses on in depth and thorough understanding of the connection between assumptions, description and explanations, and challenges current beliefs in doing so.

Critical theory says, that I am not satisfied with whatever there is, something is wrong, something is wrong somewhere and this came out of the Marxist philosophy, that primarily try to explore why or how, you know this whole system of injustice percolated into the society, somebody had more somebody had less and the Frankfurt School actually dealt with or started the discussion was one of the one of the group that started the discussion on the critical theory the links are provided here.

We don't have time but actual videos of interview with professor Herbert Marcuse, are available through this link. So you know you can actually you know once you get the slide you can watch this yourself, but critical theory just try to challenge current beliefs about certain things and ask why something like this, why not like this, so we uncover the layers it is there, we know it's there but we are not fully satisfied with the explanation that is there.

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## Characteristics of critical theory

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2000)

- *Ontology*: "Historical realism – virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, & gender values crystallized over time."
- *Epistemology*: "Transactional/ subjectivist, value mediated findings."
- *Methodology*: "Dialogic/ dialectic"
- *Aim of inquiry*: "Critique & transformation; restitution & emancipation"
- *Goodness or quality criteria*: "Historical situatedness; erosion of ignorance & misapprehension; action stimulus"
- *Narration*: "Historical, economic, sociocultural analyses"

Characteristics again very, very briefly Ontology "Historical realism so the reality that is rooted in history and history means social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values crystallized over time" how do we know what is historical collection of the way reality has been perceived overtime. Epistemology is "Transactional or subjectivist, value mediated findings" what do we believe to be true, in and through our conversations, communication and in light of our belief systems. What should be true, what should not be true?

Methodology, is again "Dialogic or dialectic" in and through communication. Aim of inquiry, is not to uncover anything, it is critique and transformation so we believe we start with the assumption that whatever is there is not enough, we are not saying it is not true, it's just not enough there is something missing, the something has to be added. So it is critique and transformation through the critique, restitution and emancipation.

Goodness or quality criteria, sr our goal is to find out what is not right, find out why it's not right and take steps to fix it, that is the aim of critical of inquiry using the critical theory paradigm. Goodness of quality criteria: "Historical situatedness, erosion of ignorance and misapprehension;" so we prove that something is not right because X situation was not looked at and ultimately the provision of its stimulus for action and we will deal with it in greater detail when we discuss critical theory.

So we are looking at the provision of a stimulus for corrective action, yes first we uncover what is not right and why it's not right and then say okay, now that we have done it, something needs to be done about. So the stimulus is provided just by virtue of unravelling

something that was closed earlier, it is there not fully clear as to what is underneath the surface. Narration is the what do we get the output is, “Historical, economic, socialcultural analyses” of these are the characteristics of critical theory and these are the paradigm that we will be covering in the course of the next few lectures, this is all we have time for today thank you very much for listening.