

## POPULATION HEALTH RESEARCH: TWO BASIC PARADIGMS

PARADIGMATIC ISSUES	OBJECTIVIST PARADIGM	SUBJECTIVIST PARADIGM
<p><b>ONTOLOGY</b></p> <p>What is the nature of reality?</p> <p>How does the researcher perceive this reality? What beliefs sustain his/her research?</p>	<p><u>Positivism</u> Naive realism: reality exists, reality is objective and singular, reality is apart from the researcher but apprehensible, reality can be known.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <p><u>Postpositivism</u> Reality exists independently from the researcher, but the researcher can only approximately know it and apprehend it. Social reality is static and external to actors.</p>	<p>Reality is subjective and multiple, reality is not apart from the researcher. Social reality is processual and socially constructed by actors (researcher, participants, etc.).</p>
<p><b>EPISTEMOLOGY</b></p> <p>What is the relationship between the researcher and what is researched?</p>	<p>Researcher is independent from what is researched; dualist; findings are 'true'</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <p>Findings are probably true</p>	<p>Researcher produces what is being researched; in other words, the researcher is not independent from what is researched; findings are created/produced</p>
<p><b>AXIOLOGY</b></p> <p>What is the role of values?</p> <p>How does the researcher perceive the role of values? The beliefs that sustain his/her research?</p>	<p>Value-free research; influence denied.</p> <p>The researcher assumes that the research is not influenced by social values.</p>	<p>Value-laden; the researcher assumes and acknowledges the influence of values on the research</p>
<p><b>AIM OF RESEARCH</b></p>	<p>Explanation: prediction and control</p>	<p>Critique and social change; restitution and emancipation; understanding; reconstruction</p>
<p><b>ETHICS</b></p>	<p>Extrinsic to the research process itself; formally policed by external mechanisms such as professional codes, ethics committees; realist ontology tilts towards deception to get to the 'truth'</p>	<p>Intrinsic to the research process itself; intent to erode ignorance and misapprehensions; takes full account of values; moral tilt to be revelatory; inclusion of participant values in the research process; process tilt towards revelation (hiding the researcher's intent is destructive of the aim of the research of uncovering)</p>

<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	<u>Quantitative</u>	<u>Qualitative</u>
<p>There is a difference between a quantitative/qualitative <i>method</i> and a quantitative/qualitative <i>technique</i>. Method is the design, framework and process of the research while a technique is a data collection tool.</p> <p>There is a distinction between <i>method</i> and <i>approach</i>. Method is the design, framework and process of the research while the approach is the assumptions underlying the process of the research (assumptions that sustain the methodological decisions).</p>	<p><u>Preoccupations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disinterested scientist as informer of decision makers, policy makers and change agents; outsider</li> <li>• Concepts and their measurement/quantification</li> <li>• Causality</li> <li>• Prediction</li> <li>• Generalization/nomothetic</li> <li>• Replication</li> <li>• Reality is static</li> </ul>	<p><u>Preoccupations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeing through the eyes of; transformative intellectual as advocate and activist; passionate participant as facilitator of multivoice reconstruction; insider</li> <li>• Description</li> <li>• Contextualism/ideographic</li> <li>• Differences between phenomena</li> <li>• Social reality is a process</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> <li>• Theory and concepts</li> <li>• More informed and sophisticated reconstructions</li> </ul>
	<p><u>Characteristics</u></p> <p>Experimental/manipulative; verification of hypotheses</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <p>Modified experimental/manipulative (as much as possible in context); falsification of hypotheses</p>	<p><u>Characteristics</u></p> <p>Dialectical (critically examine so-called 'truths'); structural and historical insights; interaction between researcher and participants</p>
	<p>Accurate and reliable through internal and external validity and reliability</p>	<p>Accurate and reliable through verification (dependability, credibility); historical situatedness; trustworthiness and authenticity</p>
<p><b>TECHNIQUES</b></p> <p>(only a sample shown here)</p>	<p><u>Quantitative techniques</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structured observation</li> <li>• Structured interviews</li> <li>• Questionnaires and surveys</li> <li>• Secondary data</li> <li>• Content analysis</li> </ul>	<p><u>Qualitative techniques</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant observation</li> <li>• Non-structured interviews</li> <li>• Life histories</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Contextual analysis/documents</li> </ul>
<p><b>SOURCES</b></p> <p>Bryman, A. (1988). <u>Quantity and quality in social research</u>. London: Unwin Hyman; Creswell, J.W. (1994). <u>Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches</u>. California: Sage; Guba, E.G. &amp; Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin &amp; Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), <u>Handbook of qualitative research</u> (pp. 105-117). California: Sage.</p>		