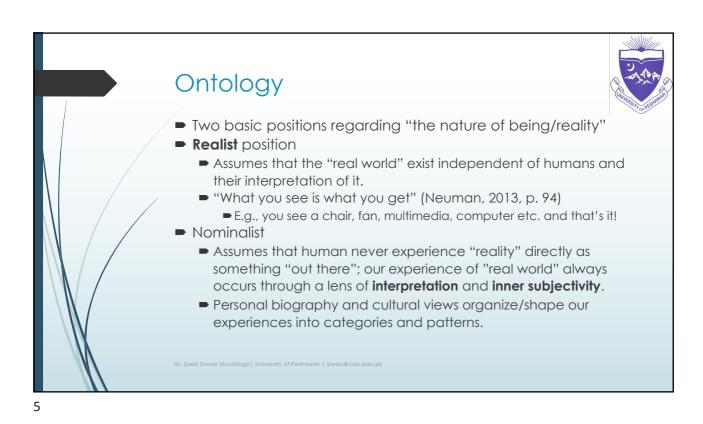
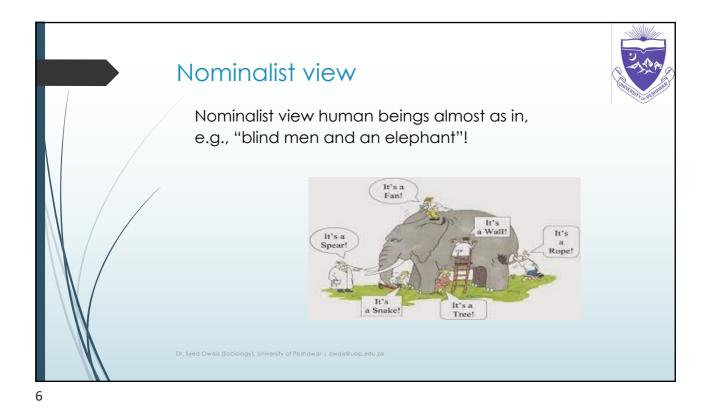


Cont'd... WHY THREE MAJOR METHODOLOGIES? WHY NOT JUST ONE? Because: Differences in Philosophical Foundations! Two (philosophically) central questions: What is the fundamental nature of reality? aka Ontological considerations Ontology = "An area of philosophy that deals with the nature of being, or what exists; the area of philosophy that asks what really is and what the fundamental categories of reality are" (Neuman, 2013: 94). How do we know or understand reality? aka Epistemological considerations Epistemology = "An area of philosophy concerned with the creation of knowledge; focuses on how we know what we know or what are the most valid ways to reach truth" (Neuman, 2013: 95).





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Pistemology Means, "what we need to do to produce knowledge and what scientific knowledge looks like once we have produced it" (Neuman, 2013, p. 95). Realist (positivist) position: There is an empirical world "out there" irrespective of our inner thoughts and perception about it. Observe (collect empirical evidence) again and again to verify reality consistently; Consistent verification/reverification would produce objective knowledge Through consistent verification (objective knowledge), we'll discover laws governing reality

Positivism is



- "an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond" (Bryman, 2012, p. 28). [See p. 28 of Bryman (2012) for further principles of positivism as well!]
- "Positivist social science is an organized method for combining deductive logic with precise empirical observations of individual behaviour in order to discover and confirm a set of probabilistic causal laws that can be used to predict general patterns of human activity" (Neuman, 2013, p. 97).

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Positivism: brief history In philosophical history, positivism was the contribution of: Two British philosophers, (1) David Hume (1711–1776) in A Treatise of Human Nature (1739–1740) and (2) John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) in A System of Logic (1843), outlined the fundamentals of positivist science. Sociology French founder — Auguste Comte (1798–1857) — wrote Cours de Philosophie Positivistic (The Course of Positive Philosophy) (1830–1842), elaborating the principles of social science positivism. Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) used positivist assumptions in his Rules of the Sociological Method (1895), a core text for early social researchers.

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Positivism/Positivist Social Science (PSS) The ultimate purpose of conducting social science research: To discover and document universal causal laws of human behavior The fundamental nature of social reality: Adopts "realist ontology", i.e., reality exists out there waiting to be discovered! The world is not chaotic and irregular; patterns and laws exist in the social world and through constant investigation (verification) we shall one day have laws (e.g., just as in Physics there are laws of motion!) Science's quest is to discover patterns in the shape of laws governing human behaviour. Reality is stable and our knowledge about it is additive. Researchers carefully document fragments/parts of reality again and again to finally clarify/discover them and put (pieces) together, we shall have laws!

Positivism/PSS The basic nature of human beings: Human beings = self-interested, pleasure-seeking/pain-avoiding, rational mammals. A cause → same effect on everyone - observable from human behaviour in the external/real world mechanical model/behaviourist approach about humans. i.e., observing people's external behaviours and documenting outside forces acting on them are sufficient to provide adequate explanations of human thought and action.

Positivism/PSS Positivism/PSS Question of human agency (freewill, volition, & rationality): Structural factors (social, cultural etc.) more important than individual, subjective, inner feelings (agency) — in social/sociological theory, this dilemma discussed as Agency-Structure debate! Structuralist orientation! Positivism/PSS is deterministic (emphasizing "determinism") — i.e., determining causes/mechanisms that produce effects. People not robots/puppets to act according to culture only, but research will advance understanding of the probability of certain behaviours.

Positivism/PSS Common sense relationship with scientific knowledge Marked difference and contrast b/w both. Discovery of "truth" the ultimate purpose of science; hence, superior to commonsense (full of logical contradictions) Non-scientific knowledge (religion, magic, personal experience, tradition, etc.) inferior to positivist knowledge. Although science may borrow common sense ideas, but rigorously defined and investigated!

Positivism/PSS



- The constituents of explanation/theory of social reality:
 - Positivism is nomothetic
 - Greek word 'nomos' = law and 'thetēs' = one who establishes: nomethetic "A type of explanation used in positivist social science that relies heavily on causal laws and lawlike statements and interrelations" (Neuman, 2013, p. 99).
 - i.e., based on a system of general laws: X causes Y! Covering Law model.
 - ► Laws of human behaviour be transhistorically and universally valid.

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Positivism/PSS Determining true/false explanation: Ground in enlightenment ideas, positivist believe in people's capacity to recognise truth and distinguish from falsehood via reason – human conditions improvable through reason and pursuit of truth. How? 2 conditions for judging explanations: (1) no logical contradictions; (2) consistency with observed facts – through replication the whole system of knowledge creation under constant check/challenge.

Positivism/PSS

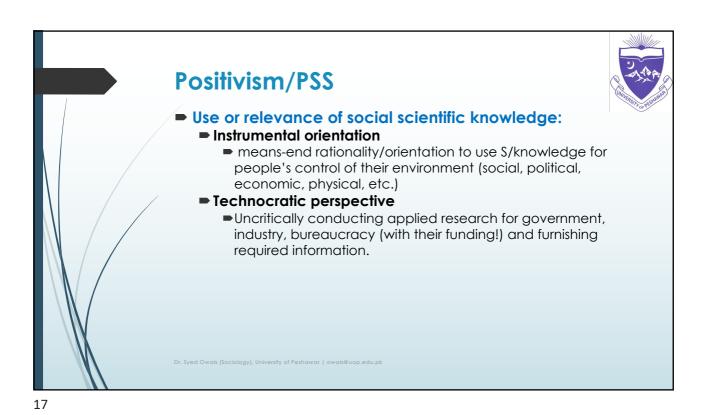


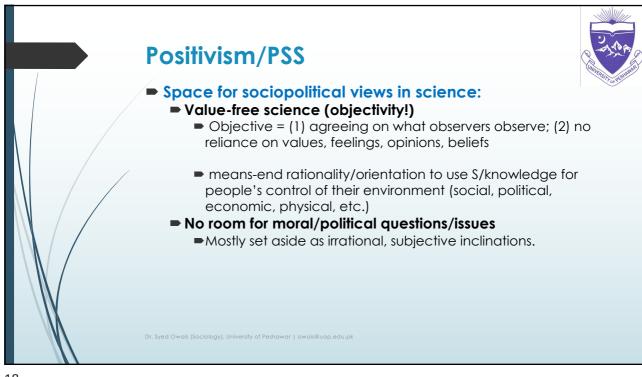
Good evidence or factual information:

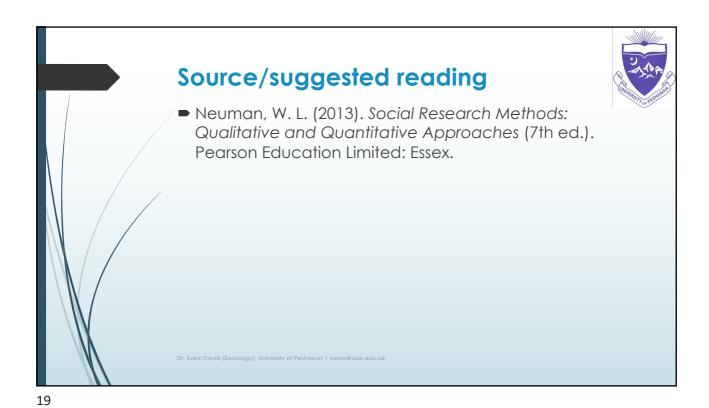
- Dualist view: facts exist apart from our personal values, ideas, theories
 - Facts discoverable via five senses (hearing, smelling, touching, seeing, tasting) or through their extension (telescope, microscope, etc.)
- Empirical knowledge superior to intuition, emotions, etc.
 Hence, positivists are strict empiricists!
- Empirical evidence shared with rational people (who can independently observe it) with subjectively agree to it – i.e., intersubjectivity
- Application of falsification principle a black swan found after documenting 1000s of white swans!

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