

# EGOV Phd Colloquium Regensburg, Sep 2/3, 2007

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## Traditional Research (Main Characteristics)

- Orientation on
  - Reduction
    - Problem Definition and Assumptions,
    - Piecemeal Analysis (Descartes), and
    - Minimum Explanation (Ockham's Razor)
  - Objects and Treatments (Complete Control)
  - Quantification and Measurement
  - Cause-and-effect Hypotheses (Mostly Few Variables)
  - Researcher Independence and Impartiality
  - Repeatability
  - Generalization
- Developed by and modeled after the Natural Sciences
  - The notion of a "hierarchy" of physics–chemistry-biology-psychology–social sciences)
- Mostly Positivist Positions

## A Good Dissertation

- is a DONE dissertation. Period.
- Avoid
  - Analysis paralysis
  - Writer's Block
  - Procrastination
  - Embellishment and perfection
  - Getting tenured on writing the dissertation, rather
- Get DONE!

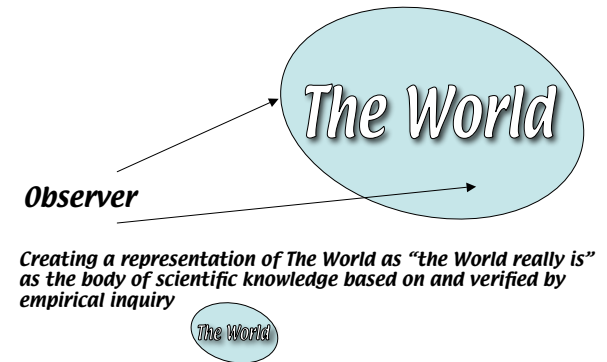
## Emphases (Limitations) of Traditional Research

- Focus on few variables
- Orientation towards clear-cut sequential causal relationships—difficulty of dealing with ambiguous causal relationships (for example, as in complex systems)
- Focus on hard (mostly numerical) data - difficulty of dealing with soft variables
- Research situation designed to fit literature
- Literature review antecedes study
- Sequential research design

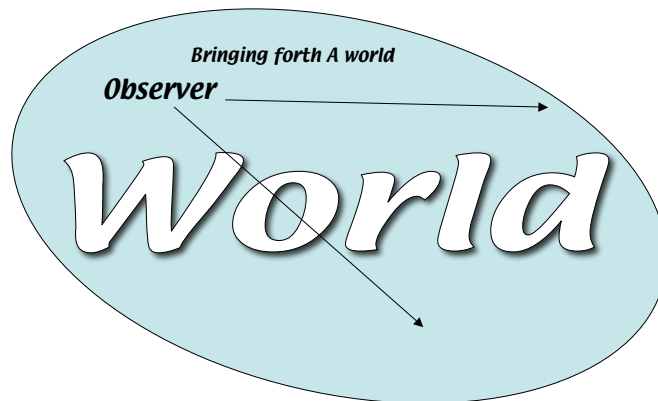
## The Positivist View

- First formulated by French social scientist Auguste Comte in the 19th century
- Distinction between
  - Positive Science
    - Grounded in empirically verifiable research
    - Repeatability
    - Principle of validity
  - Metaphysics
    - Beliefs, hunches, emotions, intuitions, superstitions, etc.
  - Religion
- Rejection of metaphysics and religion as part of positive science

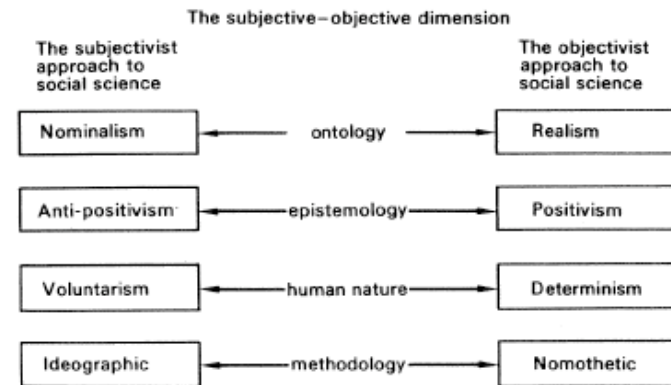
## The Positivist View (2)



## A Post-Positivist View

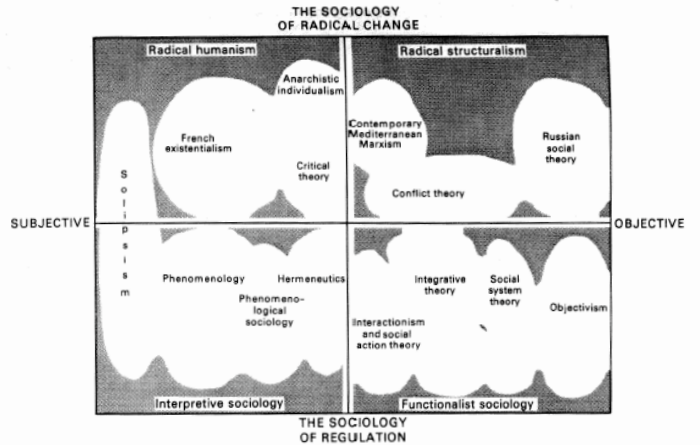


## Academic Paradigms



# The Burrell-Morgan Scheme

## Sociological Paradigms



# The Burrell-Morgan Scheme

## Organizational Analysis

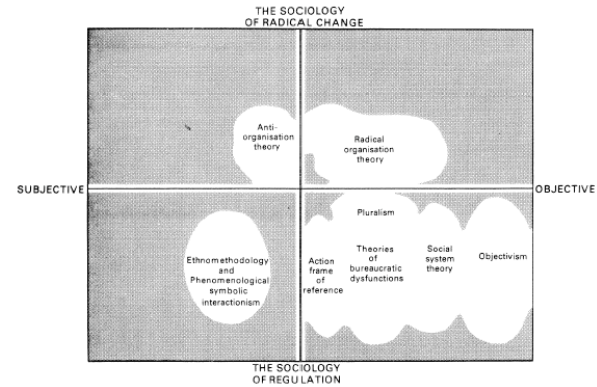
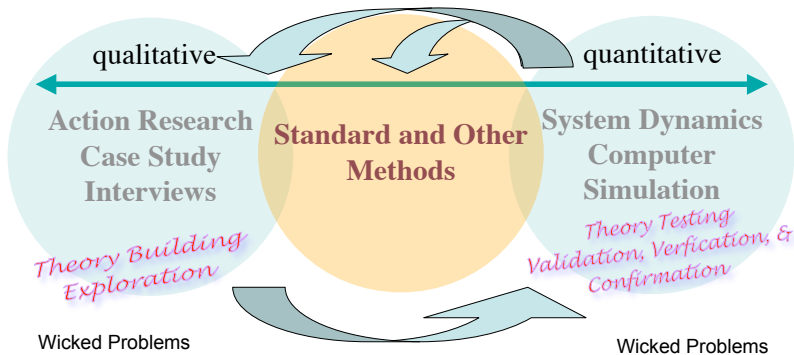


Figure 3.4 The main schools of organisational analysis

# The Methods Continuum



# Does Qualitative Research Incorporate Scientific Rigor?

- Depends on the definition of both science and rigor
- Science as iterative pursuit of understanding
- Rigor as systematic research on the basis of skepticism and empiricism

## The Dilemma of Disciplinary Research on Complex Phenomena & Wicked Problems

- Any one discipline has developed and is using its focus areas and methods leading to effective and accepted research in that discipline
- It is relatively easy to determine what is inside and what is outside the focus area (errors of inclusion and exclusion)
- The narrower the definition the more rigid (and “rigorous”) is the research tradition
- However, some phenomena (typically complex and wicked problems as typically found in social sciences) defy a satisfactory explanation from a single perspective
- Even comparing the results accumulated by separate disciplines regarding a complex “phenomenon” proves inconclusive
- However, treating wicked and complex problems with insufficient understanding is suboptimal at best and dangerous at worst

## An Interdisciplinary Approach

### Research Framework for Electronic and Mobile Government

Adaptation & Extension of the Hess et al Framework (2005)

