


Research Philosophy



‘Research philosophy is an over-arching term relating to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge’

Adapted from Saunders *et al*, (2009)

Place of Research in Philosophy

Ontology

“Study about what kinds of things exist or what entities are there in the universe”

“a set of concepts such as things, events and relations which are specified in some way in order to show what is existent”

“exploration of the fundamental kinds of things that exist in the world”

Epistemology

Science of knowledge or study of how people know things and how they know they know things”

“Considers views about the most appropriate ways of enquiring into the nature of the world”

“concerned with nature, sources, limits and forms of knowledge”

Methodology

“A system or organization of practices, techniques, procedures, measures and rules used by those who work in a discipline or an inquiry or research”

- Three Dimensions:
 - Research Strategies
 - Research Methods
 - Data

Aspects of Philosophy

Positivism....

“Research approaches that employ empirical methods, make extensive use of quantitative analysis, or develop logical calculi to build formal explanatory theory”

Aspects of Philosophy

Realism....

“Is another philosophical position which relates to scientific enquiry. The essence of realism is that what the senses show us as reality is the truth; that objects have an existence independent of the human mind. In this sense, realism is opposed to idealism, the theory that only the mind and its contents exist”

Aspects of Philosophy

Interpretivism....

“advocates it is necessary for the researcher to understand differences between humans in our role as social actors. This emphasizes the differences between conducting research among people rather than objects such as trucks and computers”

Aspects of Philosophy

Pragmatism....

holds that the most important determinant of the epistemology, ontology, axiology adopted is the research question

What is a Paradigm?

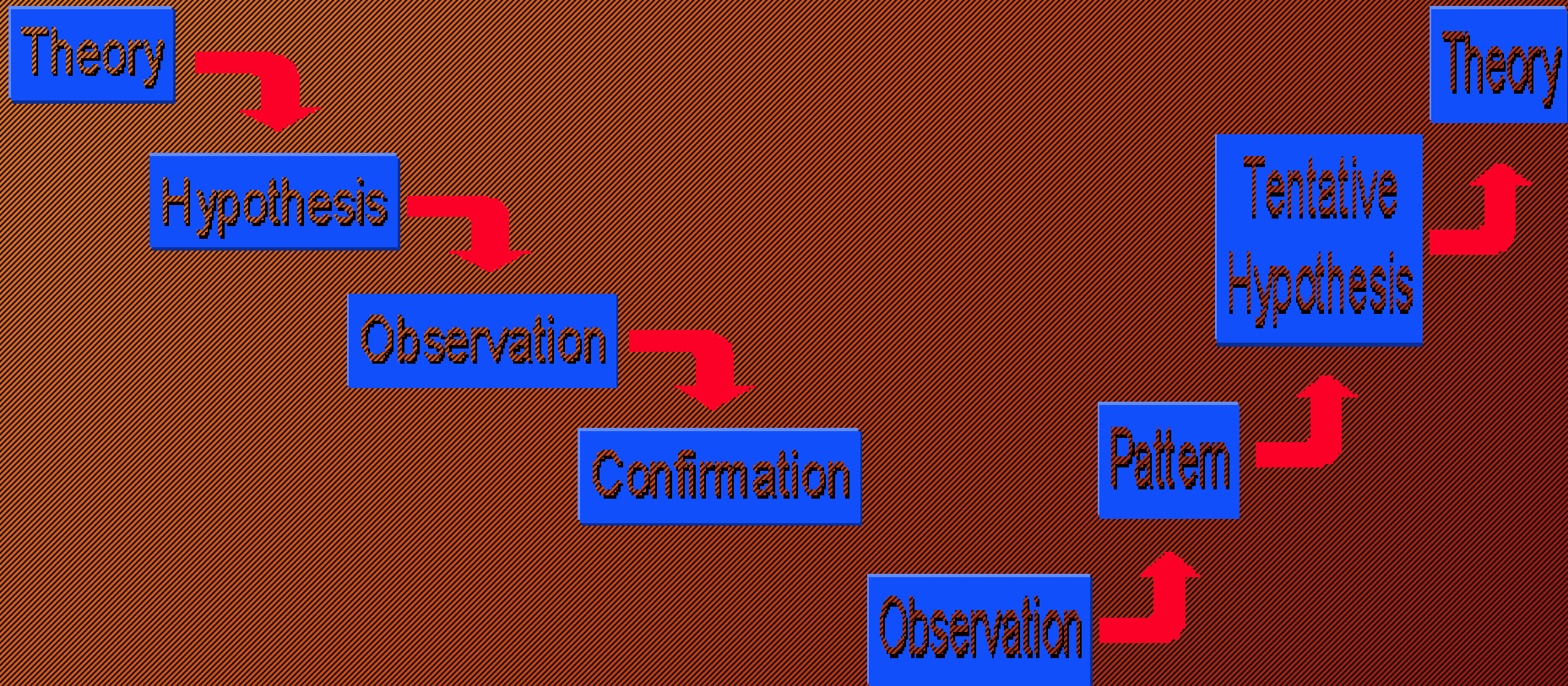
When studying a problem the researcher does so within a certain framework of defined ideas or a pattern of thinking”

- Three Different Types:
 - Positivist Approach - “Objective”
 - Interpretative Approach - “Subjective”

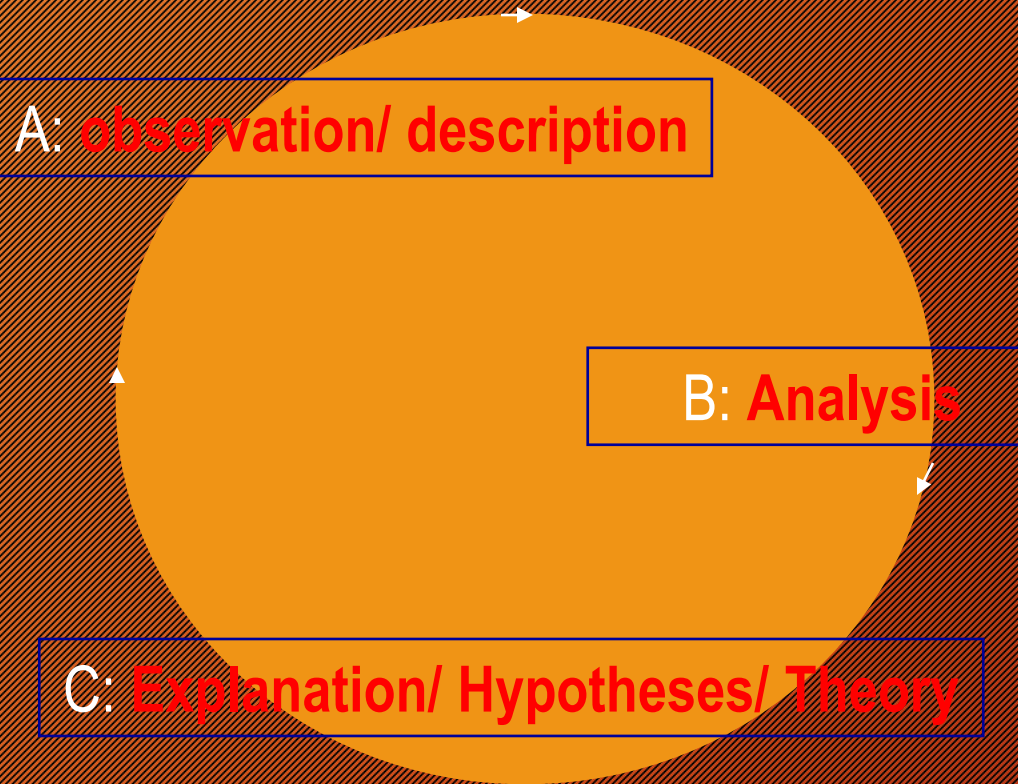
Criteria for Evaluating Research

- Reliability
 - Repeatability
 - Consistency
- Validity
 - Measurement validity
 - Internal validity
 - External validity
 - Ecological validity

Deductive vs Inductive Reasoning

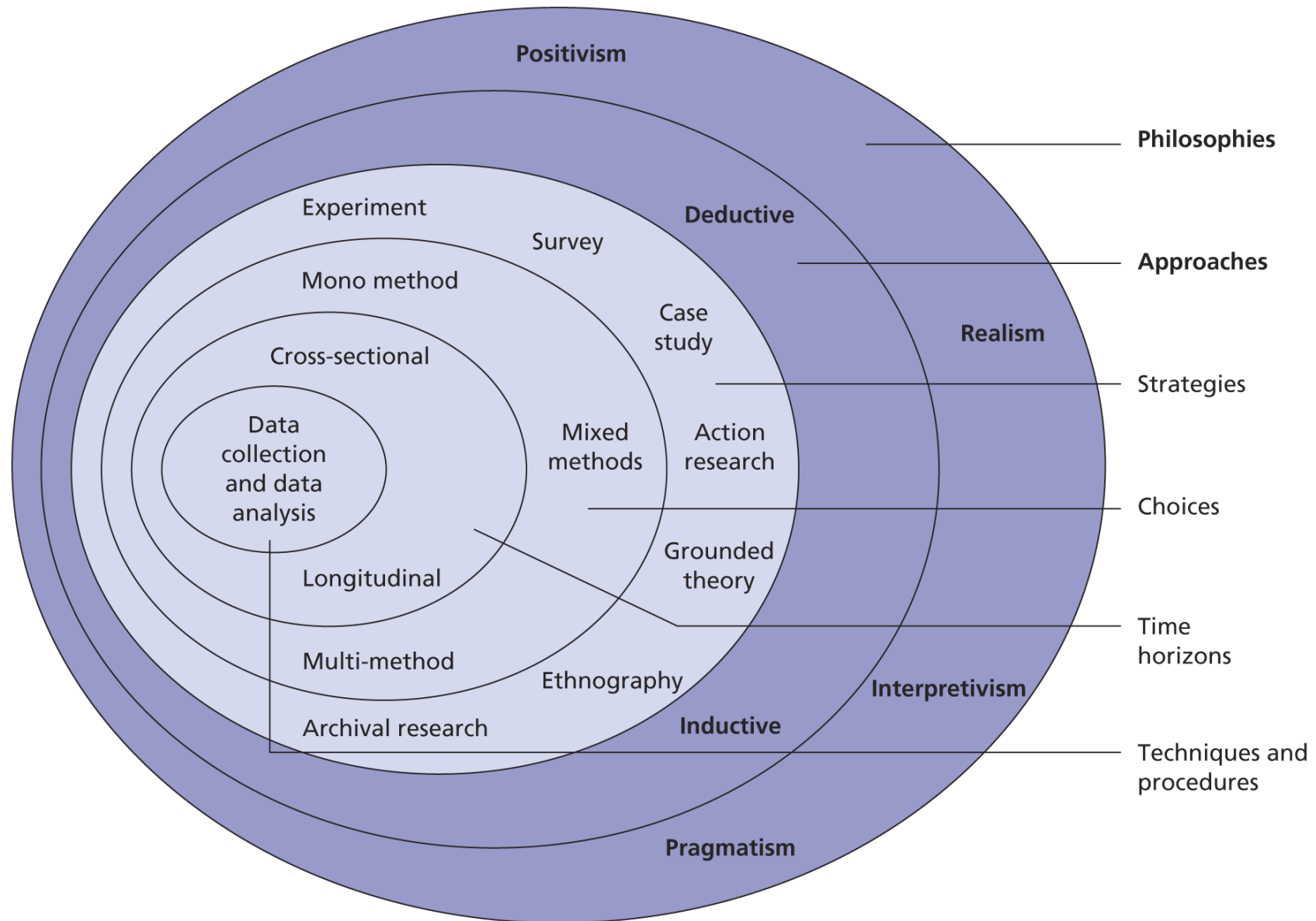


Circular Model of Research Process



- **Inductive:** begin at A (observation/ description), proceed to B (analysis), arrive at C (explanation)
- **Deductive:** begin at C (hypothesis), proceed to A (gathering data to test hypotheses), proceed to B to test hypotheses against data

“Research Onion”



How to determine your own research philosophy

- Consider your own research background/experience
- Consider your topic (theoretical basis, research subjects, desired knowledge etc)
- Engage in philosophical debate with peers, supervisors, yourself
 - Where MARKET fail? Where GOVERNMENT fail?
- Show this in your thesis, **building a case for your own philosophical stance**

Let this then lead your methodology