

# KI Social Science Key Concepts

## Social Science is Invalid

Social Science	Science
<p>Simplifying Assumptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practicality and Testability sacrificed for Certain Knowledge</li> <li>• E.g. Coase Theorem that interested parties would bargain to correct externalities in the absence of transaction costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Coase: Zero Transaction Costs "Could not be further from the truth"</li> </ul> </li> <li>• BUT: Could be used as benchmarks for ideal situations to effect change based on theoretical conceptions</li> </ul>	<p>Simplifying Assumptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E.g. Frictionless Surface</li> <li>• Applied when applying mathematics to make predictions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Confirmation Holism</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Observer Effect: Observer affects the observed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Studied subject would be more conscious of actions</li> <li>• Making of predictions could lead to the opposite result as people react to predictions (e.g. recession) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Impossible to confirm or falsify predictions</li> </ul> </li> <li>• BUT: Interpretivist Social Science which involves living with foreign cultures</li> </ul>	<p>Apart from Quantum Indeterminism, Observer does not affect the observed</p>
<p>Value-ladenness: Researcher's own cultural perspective and values would interfere with the interpretation of data ≠ Objectivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inevitable need for prescriptive judgements in social science for practical applications</li> <li>• Inevitable need for cultural perspective to interpret meanings</li> </ul>	<p>Theory-Ladenness</p> <p>Values, Ethics and Emotions hardly involved</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E.g. The idealisation of Liberal Individualism and Autonomy</li> <li>• BUT: Peer Review and Corroboration</li> </ul>	
<p>Difficult to Control and Isolate Variables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interdependence of Variables</li> <li>• Difficult to Quantify Variables</li> <li>• Cannot distinguish Correlation from Causation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Other variables may have contributed to event</li> </ul> </li> <li>• BUT: Explanation and Meaning &gt; Causation</li> </ul>	Able to control, isolate and quantify Variables
<p>Difficult to Generalise findings due to Irreducibility of Human Behavior to Laws</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different Reactions to Social forces</li> <li>• Abstractions from Observed social groups could lead to neglect of significant contributing social forces</li> <li>• Society is always in flux: Every hyperinflation is different from the previous as governments learn from mistakes</li> <li>• Too General: Devoid of meaning and applicability</li> <li>• Too Specific: Cannot be extrapolated to other cases</li> <li>• BUT: Probabilistic, Pragmatic Theory of Truth</li> </ul>	

## Arguments for Naturalism

Social science should be subject to the same standards as natural science

- Need not make explicit reference to meanings and interpretations (the human-constructed vocab that is in a double-hermeneutic)
1. Social science need not appeal to meaning to explain human behavior
    - a. Macroeconomics: Can speak of causal mechanisms and relations amongst various factors from safe assumptions (e.g. Humans are primarily concerned with their self-interest)

- b. BUT: Meaning and Interpretation need not be individualist; it is not necessarily the case that people are primarily concerned with self-interest
  - i. Artificially constructed meanings could be socially held
  - ii. The assumption of self-interest is also meaning-based

## Interpretivism

Social Science should extend our folk psychology (our common sense understanding of the social world from everyday interactions) to the understanding of interactions among large numbers of individuals in social institutions and other cultures

- Aim of understanding of people through interpretation beyond our daily interactions within our own societies
  - Induction and Abstraction to different/larger contexts > The formulation of hard and fast laws
  - Not about the formulation of general laws, but instead about the understanding of particular cases
    - Predictive power is a by-product of understanding
- Key Tension in Different types of Clarity: Intelligibility vs Reliability
  - Interpretivism: Intelligibility in the understanding of human behaviour through unobservable meanings and purposes
  - Naturalism: Reliability from predictability and testability

## Constant Human Nature

### **Challenges to Constant Human Nature**

1. Single Hermeneutic (Paradigmatic Nature)
  - a. Presence of Intention and Artificially constructed meaning
  - b. // Paradigmatic Nature of Science: Typifications formed by communities within the conceptual vocabulary that influence observation, induction, abstraction and communication shape the scientific process
2. Double-Hermeneutic: A two-way interpretive street
  - a. Humans are self-interpreting beings: Typifications are constantly interpreted and reinterpreted in Flux by different communities
    - i. Even in the process of Social Science
    - ii. Self-definitions and Self-understandings change
  - b. Social scientists are constantly engaged in the interpretation and reinterpretation of language
3. Observed objects of study (humans) are also constantly in flux

### **Attempts to Ground Human Nature**

Aims to find relatively fixed frameworks of meaning to serve as paradigms

Meaningful - Rational - Social Causation

- Max Weber's Ideal Types of Capitalism and World Religions