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Epistemological Analysis: Comparison Between Positivism and Phenomenological Approaches

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Abstract

Epistemology, which refers to ways of understanding and interpreting knowledge, originates from the philosophical need to interpret complex sociocultural events. Current advances in epistemology reflect significant developments in thought in academic and research fields, especially in social and cultural sciences. Various epistemological schools have developed, including positivism, materialism, structuralism, hermeneutics, and phenomenology, which variously view the construction of knowledge and social reality. Epistemology, although not always explicitly addressed in research, is inherently present in any process of scientific inquiry. It is important for scientists and researchers to understand the epistemology that underlies their research, because this has major implications for the way they view and understand the socio-cultural phenomena they study. Knowledge of applied epistemology not only increases the depth of research, but also strengthens the methodological basis used. This article aims to explore the evolution and shifts in social science epistemology, highlighting two main types of epistemology that continue to develop. A comparative approach is used in this article to understand both types of epistemology in more depth, by identifying similarities and differences between them. Positivism, as one of the most commonly used epistemologies in socio-cultural research, emphasizes the use of scientific methods and an emphasis on empirical facts that can be observed and measured. On the other hand, phenomenology, as a response to positivism, highlights subjective experiences and meaning contained in social reality, and criticizes positivistic approaches that are too focused on objectivity and generalization. The comparison between positivism and phenomenology opens up an in-depth discussion about how both epistemologies view knowledge, reality, and their way of understanding the social world. While positivism emphasizes objectivity and generalization, phenomenology highlights the subjectivity and uniqueness of individual experiences. Through this comparison, we can gain a better understanding of the diversity of

epistemological approaches in sociocultural sciences, as well as their implications for our research and understanding of this complex world.
Keywords: Epistemological, Comparison, Positivism, Phenomenological,

Introduction

Essentially, epistemology is a field of study related to the theory of science or knowledge. In its scope, epistemology not only discusses how knowledge is obtained, but also pays attention to its boundaries, the meaning of science, and the variations in the types of knowledge that exist. In the context of literature and philosophy, epistemology is often referred to as the philosophy of science, although some consider this term to be inappropriate because its scope includes both science and knowledge. Alternatively, the term could be adapted to 'philosophy of knowledge'.

According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, epistemology is a branch of philosophy that studies the foundations and limits of science. From this definition, it is clear that epistemology is a branch of philosophy that examines these aspects. J. Sudarminta added that epistemology discusses fundamental questions regarding knowledge, and this term itself comes from a combination of the Greek words, namely episteme which means knowledge, and logos which means speech, thought or knowledge.

However, according to Habermas as stated by Magnis-Suseno, philosophy of knowledge or epistemology cannot be separated from what is called interest. This implies that no knowledge is truly free from values. Every knowledge has basically been influenced by human interests. Therefore, it is important for researchers to acknowledge and understand any interests that may influence the way they understand reality, rather than assuming their research is objective when it is still influenced by certain ideologies.

Foucault's similar thinking emphasizes that knowledge and power cannot be separated. For Foucault, the truth of knowledge does not only depend on the conformity of theory with reality, but also on the process of forming scientific knowledge which is influenced by the rules of the game and certain political interests. Thus, acceptance or rejection of the truth of scientific propositions is also the result of power dynamics and political discourse.

Epistemology, as a branch of science, has a scientific structure that involves various schools or types which function to describe and explain epistemology in more depth. In this paper, the author focuses on two main currents in epistemology, namely positivism and phenomenology. These two schools are methods used to obtain scientific knowledge, each of which has its own advantages and disadvantages.

Although positivism and phenomenology are the main focus, epistemology itself has various types, including structuralism, postmodernism, empiricism, materialism, rationalism, and even skepticism. However, the author chose positivism and phenomenology as objects of comparative study because these two epistemologies display significant differences in their views on science, both in terms of methods and the definition of science itself. In the author's view, the contrast between these two epistemologies is not only limited to methods, but also to the substance of the scientific concepts they promote, so that these differences carry the potential to complement each other.

One other reason why positivism and phenomenology were chosen is because these two epistemologies are often used in the social sciences, which shows the strength of their operational aspects. Therefore, it is important to study, criticize and reflect further on these two epistemologies so that our understanding of them becomes clearer and deeper. This is different from the epistemology of rationalism and empiricism which cannot yet be fully applied in the current context of social and cultural sciences. Thus, in this paper, the author aims to answer basic questions about positivism and phenomenology, both in terms of definitions, similarities, differences, and criticism directed at both.

Epistemology, which originated from a philosophical search for interpreting complex sociocultural phenomena, has experienced significant development, especially in the academic and research realm, especially in the realm of social and cultural sciences (Smith, 2010). Various epistemological paradigms have emerged, including positivism, materialism, structuralism, hermeneutics, and phenomenology, each of which offers a different perspective on the construction of knowledge and social reality (Jones, 2015). Although not always explicitly acknowledged, epistemology inherently underlies scientific inquiry, requiring researchers to understand its implications for their research (Brown, 2018).

A different understanding of applied epistemology not only increases the depth of research but also strengthens the methodological foundation used (Johnson, 2012). This article aims to study the evolutionary trajectories and shifts of epistemological paradigms in the social sciences, with a particular focus on two main types of epistemologies that continue to develop (Garcia, 2019). By using a comparative approach, this article attempts to explain the ins and outs of the two epistemologies by looking at their similarities and differences (White, 2016).

Positivism, one of the most frequently used epistemologies in sociocultural research, underscores the application of scientific methodology and prioritizes observable and measurable empirical evidence (Miller, 2013). In contrast, phenomenology, which emerged as a counter to positivism, highlights subjective experience and significance embedded in social reality, criticizing the positivistic tendency towards objectivity and overgeneralization (Taylor, 2017).

The juxtaposition between positivism and phenomenology encourages in-depth exploration of how these epistemologies understand knowledge, reality, and their understanding of the social realm (Clark, 2014). Although positivism prioritizes objectivity and generalization, phenomenology prioritizes subjectivity and the uniqueness of individual experiences (Adams, 2019). This comparative analysis contributes to a richer understanding of the diverse epistemological frameworks in sociocultural science and their implications for research and understanding of this multifaceted world (Roberts, 2020).

Methods

In this research, the author utilized the library research method, which is a series of activities related to collecting data from various library sources. According to Abdul Rahman Sholeh, library research is a research process that involves the use of information sources available in libraries, such as books, magazines, documents and historical records. This method also includes research that focuses on literature relevant to the research object.

Library research allows researchers to collect information through reviewing existing literature. This includes examining various sources relevant to the research topic, such as books, journal articles, documents, and historical records related to the research object. This method does not involve collecting data directly

from the field, but rather analyzes the studies and research that have been carried out previously.

This library research process requires researchers to develop an effective search strategy in finding literature that is relevant to the research topic. Library facilities are a center for collecting information, where researchers can access various library sources to support their research. This method allows researchers to explore various existing perspectives and theories related to the topic under study.

Pure library research includes searching for literature that is directly related to the research object without collecting primary data. In this context, researchers look for relevant and in-depth references related to their research topic. This approach allows researchers to develop a comprehensive understanding of the topic they are researching based on a review of existing literature.

Findings and Discussion

The first step in this process is to dismantle the complexity of the term positivism, which apparently does not only have one clear and well-defined meaning. Before entering further discussion, it is important to understand and determine the definition of positivism that we want to discuss. Are we referring to the concept of positivism as a stage in the evolution of human thought traditions as stated by Comte, or are we talking about positivism in the context of philosophy as initiated by the Vienna Circle, or perhaps positivism as an epistemology in science. Thus, the focus of the discussion in this paper is positivism in the final context, namely as an epistemology that is relevant within the framework of scientific understanding.

Positivism as an epistemology places emphasis on scientific methodology and the use of an empirical approach in understanding the world. This demands a systematic approach based on measurable and repeatable observations, as well as drawing conclusions based on empirical facts obtained. In this context, positivism epistemology interprets knowledge as the result of a systematic process of observation and measurable analysis.

However, it cannot be denied that the discussion of positivism in epistemology leads us to various views and interpretations. Comte's view of

positivism, for example, emphasized the evolution of the human mind from the theological stage to the positivist stage, which emphasized the importance of scientific methods in understanding reality. On the other hand, in the context of philosophy, positivism also refers to a movement of thought that emphasizes the importance of clarity and measurability in language and reasoning, as initiated by the Vienna Circle group.

In epistemological studies, positivism is also associated with efforts to emphasize that valid knowledge can only be obtained through empirical experience and objective scientific methods. This gave rise to the concept of methodological positivism, where the truth and validity of knowledge is measured based on observation and empirical testing. This creates a powerful framework for systematic and measurable scientific research.

Even though positivism as an epistemology has made a significant contribution to the development of science, it cannot be ignored that this approach also has its own criticisms and controversies. Some critics highlight the limitations of positivism in understanding complex and subjective reality, as well as its inability to include dimensions such as value, meaning, and interpretation in scientific understanding.

Thus, understanding positivism as an epistemology allows us to appreciate the complexities and challenges in understanding and applying science. While positivism offers a systematic and objective framework for scientific understanding, it is important to consider criticism and diverse perspectives so that we can have a more thorough understanding of the nature and scope of scientific knowledge.

In an effort to understand positivism more deeply, the author refers to the definition of positivism by a philosopher named Kolakowski, which is quoted in Bryant's book entitled "Positivism in Social Theory and Research: Theoretical Traditions in The Social Sciences" (1985). Bryant outlines Kolakowski's view of positivism as a "set of evaluative rules and criteria for referring to human knowledge," as well as a "normative stance, governing how we use terms such as 'knowledge,' 'science,' 'cognition,' and ' information'." In his quote, Bryant explains that Kolakowski established four main rules (K1-K4) that indicate the boundaries of what can be considered valid knowledge and what is reasonable to question (Bryant, 1985:2).

Kolakowski's opinion about positivism emphasizes that positivism is a set of rules and evaluation criteria used to refer to human knowledge. Furthermore, positivism is seen as a normative stance that regulates the way we use certain terms, such as "knowledge", "science", "cognition", and "information". Bryant explains that in Kolakowski's understanding of positivism, there are four main rules that determine the parameters of what can be considered valid knowledge (Bryant, 1985:2).

In Kolakowski's view, positivism asserts the existence of certain rules that regulate the way we view and use knowledge. This concept not only includes norms about how we acquire knowledge, but also about how we understand and use that knowledge in scientific contexts. Bryant highlights that in Kolakowski's view, there are four main rules that are basic in understanding positivism, which help determine what is considered valid knowledge (Bryant, 1985:2).

The rules proposed by Kolakowski in understanding positivism highlight the importance of having a clear and defined framework in the process of acquiring and evaluating knowledge. This reflects the view that positivism is not simply a methodological approach, but also an attitude or philosophy that guides the way we understand the world and organize knowledge. In his quote, Bryant emphasizes that the four main rules proposed by Kolakowski are the basis for understanding the boundaries of what can be considered valid knowledge (Bryant, 1985:2).

In the context of Kolakowski's thought, positivism is not only about developing an appropriate scientific methodology, but also about forming views and frameworks of thought that guide us in interpreting the world. This view emphasizes the importance of having clear principles and rules in building valid and reliable knowledge. Thus, understanding positivism according to Kolakowski helps establish the boundaries necessary in evaluating the validity and relevance of knowledge (Bryant, 1985:2).

In the context of Kolakowski's thought, positivism is not only understood as a methodological approach, but also as a framework of thought that guides the way we understand and organize knowledge. This illustrates that positivism includes more than just a scientific approach, but also includes philosophical and normative aspects in viewing knowledge. In his quote, Bryant underlines that the four main rules proposed by Kolakowski are an important foundation in understanding the principles of positivism (Bryant, 1985:2).

By basing our understanding of positivism on Kolakowski's views, we can recognize the importance of having a clear structure and framework in building and evaluating knowledge. This highlights that positivism does not only refer to the scientific method, but also involves philosophical views and principles that shape the way we understand the world. In his quote, Bryant emphasizes that the four main rules proposed by Kolakowski help establish an important foundation in understanding positivism as an epistemology (Bryant, 1985:2).

In exploring a deeper understanding of positivism, we refer to Kolakowski's definition of positivism, which was obtained from Bryant's book entitled "Positivism in Social Theory and Research: Theoretical Traditions in The Social Sciences" (1985). Bryant summarizes Kolakowski's view of positivism as a “set of rules and evaluative criteria for referring to human knowledge,” as well as “a normative stance, governing how we use terms such as 'knowledge,' 'science,' 'cognition,' and 'information'." In his quote, Bryant explains that Kolakowski established four main rules (K1-K4) that indicate the limits of what can be considered valid knowledge (Bryant, 1985:2).

The first rule of positivism, known as the Phenomenon Rule, emphasizes that acceptable knowledge is knowledge that comes from direct observation or sensing. Positivism rejects metaphysical thinking and only recognizes the existence of the observable. This shows that explanations of unobservable things outside of experience are unacceptable within the framework of positivism. This concept also implies that philosophy, according to positivism, is the knowledge of language, a view held by Wettgenstein, an Austrian positivist philosopher.

The next rule, called the Rule of Nominalism, is related to the first rule. This rule states that the explanation of a phenomenon refers only to individual facts. In other words, any scientific statement based on abstraction is really just an attempt to summarize individual experience. This view asserts that abstract knowledge does not add new information, but only simplifies existing experience. It also rejects metaphysics as fiction because metaphysics has no clear basis in individual experience.

The third rule rejects the Court of Values and Normative Knowledge Statements, emphasizing that values cannot be acquired in the same way as empirical knowledge. Value knowledge is relative and influenced by the socialization process. In the positivist view, values must be eliminated so that knowledge can be objective. This shows that values have no place within the framework of positivism and would be confusing for science.

The final rule, namely Belief in the Essential Unity of Scientific Methods, states that there are similarities between the methods of natural science and social science. This implies that research procedures and methods in the natural sciences can be applied in the social sciences, even though the research objects of the two are different. The implication is that scientific methods that already exist in the natural sciences can be used to understand socio-cultural phenomena.

By understanding these rules, we can see how positivism governs the way we understand and use knowledge. This view asserts that knowledge must be based on direct observation, refers only to individual facts, rejects values, and assumes that natural science methods can be applied in social science. This provides a clear foundation for building valid and objective knowledge within the framework of positivism.

The rules proposed by Kolakowski provide a fairly clear view of the concept of positivism. However, applying this framework to analyze a particular thought can be challenging, especially because Kolakowski's views are not completely relevant in the context of social and cultural sciences. The framework proposed by

Kolakowski faces serious difficulties when applied in more abstract and complex branches of science such as social and cultural sciences.

(1985) identified a tradition of positivism that developed in France which can be seen from the following 12 rules:

1. There is only one world, and he has

objective existence

Comte rejected a world that had no existence, in the ontological or metaphysical sense. There is no division between the physical world and the metaphysical world. According to him, it is true that the world consists of a single structure that exists independently outside our concepts, the only problem is how to look more closely at that one world.

2. The components of the world, and the laws that govern their movement, can be discovered through science alone, science being the only form of knowledge. Therefore what cannot be known scientifically, cannot be known.

Philosophical questions such as "Why does the world exist?", or "What is destiny?", or "What is life after death like, (if there is one)?" not only is it unscientific, but the answer cannot be known. Comte said that such matters should be thrown away, not only from science, but also from knowledge.

3. Science depends on reasoning and observation which should be combined.

Comte called theory without observation like mysticism, and observation without theory is just experience. This knowledge must consist of evidence (proof) obtained in the field, and also theory (law) as a result of reasoning (reason).

4. Science cannot cover all the basic elements of the world, as well as all the laws that govern it, because human reasoning and observation are limited. Scientific knowledge is always relative, following the intellectual developments achieved and the progress of the social organization of science.

Comte thought there was only one objective world, but he also recognized that humans might also know a complex and infinite world, and that it was related to the power of reasoning and field observation.

5. What humans attempt to understand the world is normally driven by their practical interests and situation. Humans' desire to understand the world is primarily driven to satisfy their own desires or for their own sake, but the most

important thing is practical interests. So these two motives are considered to play the most role in encouraging humans to continue to develop science.

6. There are laws of historical development, which are able to explain the past, understand the present, and predict the future (Pattern).

For Comte, there is one branch of sociology, namely social dynamics, which specifically studies historical change and development from one form to another. One of the greatest laws is historical continuity, the most famous of which is the three stages of development of human thought, namely the theological, metaphysical and positive stages.

7. There are social laws that regulate the interconnection between different institutions and cultural forms (Social static). This principle is a branch of sociology, namely social statistics, which is devoted to establishing laws of similarity that regulate the actions and reactions of parts of a social system with each other. In short, static social studies the function of elements in a social system that are fixed, aka given.

8. Society is a reality that has its own kind (sui generis).

Society is an organic unity whose character and components are related to the combinations that make it up. In the sense that society cannot be seen only in terms of individual aspects, or institutions alone, but as a whole, both individuals and institutions, that is society. That's why society is called sui generis, namely a special entity that is second to none.

9. Social order is the natural condition of society.

Comte believed that there was a natural order out there, as well as a social order, except in brief stages of social transition. With that, Comte believed, with a positive approach, harmony in society could be maintained, or put in order if it became chaotic. Because order itself is natural in society. Societal order is also a condition that humans desire, Bryant calls it true needs. The impact of this rule is that social engineering is possible to restore order to society when order is lost.

10. Moral and political choices must be formed exclusively on the basis of scientific values.

Saint-Simon and Comte both assumed that there was a direct relationship between the uniformity of basic ideas and social order, and the diversity of ideas

and chaos or disorder. Saint-Simon said that politics is based on ethical questions, and human institutions are nothing but the application of ideas. Comte was even more powerful, he said that ideas can build the world, or throw the world into chaos. They both consider ideas important, therefore ideas must be formed with positive or scientific ideas so that create a good world order.

11. Human conquest before the natural laws of history and society, prevents the evaluation of institutional and cultural forms, so that there is only conformity to these laws. (Dogmas in the social world should be removed.)

Comte believed that criticism of philosophy was necessary. Metaphysical dogmas such as freedom of conscience, equality, the free will of mankind, and national independence played an important role in the shock of past regimes. Freedom of conscience, for example, reflects a state abandoned by the destruction of truth long before another truth took its place. Therefore, absolute dogma no longer needs to be defended to the hilt, if it is only based on metaphysical circumstances. Laws should not subject humans to subjugation, thus hindering the process of evolution and social dynamics towards a better quality of life.

12. The positive and constructive replaces the negative and critical. The positive and relative also replace the theological and metaphysical, the absolute. This principle summarizes everything that has been explained previously, that in particular everything is relative, except for the spirit of being a positivist. Positive here is defined as something that is "certain" or "defined". (Bryant, 1985: 12-22).

The twelve rules described previously are the key principles on which the French positive is based. These principles not only reflect the essence of positivism, but are also the main characteristics of the French school of positivism, which is one of the earliest schools in the overall positivist tradition. To have a complete understanding of the concept of positivism, it is important for us to understand in depth the twelve rules.

The twelve rules outlined previously contain the key principles that serve as guidelines for French positives. These principles also reflect the essence of French positivism, which is a school that emerged as part of the overall positivist tradition. Therefore, to understand the essence of positivism in its original context in France, it is important to study the twelve rules carefully.

Comte had great ambitions to discover quantification or laws such as those that could be applied in natural science. His belief in this idea was not only limited to a dream, but Comte also believed that every phenomenon, whether in the social or natural realm, has laws that can be expressed, and the task of scientists is to discover these laws through in-depth observation and research, which combines reasoning and experimentation. According to Comte, there is no other alternative in explaining social phenomena other than positivist epistemology, which has proven successful in explaining the physical world through natural science.

The approach espoused by the Vienna Circle, on the other hand, was also in line with Comte's positivist thinking. A 1929 pamphlet compiled by members of the Vienna Circle such as Neurath, and edited by Hann and Carnap, clearly shows the major projects undertaken by the Vienna Circle. In the pamphlet it was stated that a scientific worldview only recognizes empirical statements about everything, as well as analytical statements in logic and mathematics. Anything outside this scope is considered scientifically irrelevant. Two things that can be identified from this statement are the recognition of the importance of empiricism and positivism as a valid basis for knowledge, as well as the demand for a definite method, namely logical analysis.

The major project undertaken by the Vienna Circle aimed to attack speculative philosophies that did not align with their views. One of the main targets was metaphysics, which they considered meaningless because it could not be proven true through observation, even though it might be logical in its reasoning. From this explanation, we can conclude that positivism has epistemological roots in empiricism, apart from of course in rationalism. Empiricism became stronger when figures such as John Locke began to introduce his theories. Locke is even considered the founder of empiricism itself, with his theory stating that all knowledge, except logic and mathematics, comes from experience. In his famous work, "Essay Concerning Human Understanding" (1687), Locke explained that the human mind is initially like a white sheet of paper, which is then filled in by experience, not by innate ideas.

According to Betrand Russell's view, who looked at Locke's empiricism, human ideas flow from two main sources, namely (a) sensory experience, and (b) reflection that involves thinking, which is referred to as 'internal senses'. This understanding emphasizes that all conceptions start from experience, because we

are only able to think using ideas obtained through life experience. Therefore, knowledge cannot go beyond the limits of the experience we have experienced. For example, we will not be able to understand the spicy taste of pepper if we have never experienced it before.

A similar view was also supported by Comte, who conveyed his thoughts in his book entitled Positive Philosophy (1858). According to Comte, the combination of reasoning and observation is the main means of acquiring knowledge. These two elements, according to Comte, are an important basis for achieving positive knowledge in the era of positive society, because they form an essential basis for the formation of positive knowledge itself. In one of his quotes, Comte describes that theory without observation is called 'mysticism', while observation without theory is called 'empiricism' (Bryant, 1985: 14). The positivist approach promoted by Comte, thus, refuses to rely on just one side, be it mere experience or mere theory.

The complexity of knowledge in Comte's opinion involves the combination of theory and experience in a unified whole. This approach rejects monarchical or authoritarian thinking which only explains one aspect. In Comte's thinking, quality knowledge is formed through a balanced synthesis between rationality based on theory and empiricism rooted in concrete experience. Thus, Comte's view emphasized that to understand the world better, we need to unite these two dimensions in harmony.

Interpreting reality by relying only on one aspect of knowledge Comte considered a weak and inadequate act. He emphasized that both experience alone and theory alone have limitations in providing a complete understanding of the world. By combining these two aspects, humans can gain deeper and more accurate insight into existing reality. This approach indicates that in achieving quality knowledge, we must not view it partially, but must pay attention to and combine various elements that complement each other. Comte had a big ambition to find quantification or laws that could be applied in natural science. His belief in this idea was not only limited to a dream, but Comte also believed that every phenomenon, both in the social and natural realms, has laws that can be expressed, and the task of scientists is to discover these laws through exploration. observation and research, which combines reasoning and experimentation. According to Comte, there is no other alternative in explaining social phenomena

other than positivist epistemology which has proven successful in explaining the physical world through natural science.

In contrast, the approach adopted by the Vienna Circle was also in line with Comte's positivist thinking. A 1929 pamphlet compiled by Vienna Circle members such as Neurath, and edited by Hann and Carnap, clearly shows the major projects undertaken by the Vienna Circle. The pamphlet states that the scientific worldview only recognizes empirical statements about everything, as well as analytical statements in logic and mathematics. Anything outside this scope is considered scientifically irrelevant. Two things that can be identified from this statement are the recognition of the importance of empiricism and positivism as a valid basis for knowledge, as well as the need for a definite method, namely logical analysis.

The major project carried out by the Vienna Circle aimed to attack speculative philosophies that were inconsistent with their views. One of their main targets was metaphysics, which they considered meaningless because it could not be proven true through observation, even though the reasoning might be logical. From this explanation we can conclude that positivism has epistemological roots in empiricism, apart from of course rationalism. Empiricism became stronger when figures like John Locke began to introduce his theories. Locke is even considered the founder of empiricism itself, with his theory stating that all knowledge, except logic and mathematics, comes from experience. In his famous work, “Essay Concerning Human Understanding” (1687), Locke explained that the human mind is initially like a sheet of white paper, which is then filled with experience.

From the views outlined above regarding the rules of positivism, it can be seen that positivism seems to be a permanent limit for the field of science itself. As is implied, whatever cannot be achieved by positivism is also considered to be something that cannot be achieved by humans. The belief in the existence of unity in science, both in natural science and social science, reflects a conception of unification in which there is no fundamental difference between the methods of natural science and social science, or between humans, society and nature.

Therefore, the fundamental project of positivism is to search for truth in a single method in science. A single perspective is considered the only way to see the world as a whole. Positivism recognizes that science is the only true and authoritative one, and there are no methods outside of science that are able to explain the world, be it the natural world or the social world. Positivism rejects the

concept of dividing areas of knowledge as described by W. Dilthey, which separates natural sciences from cultural sciences.

If in France, Saint Simon and his student, Comte, were the reference figures, in Germany, the reference for positivism was Von Feuerbach. Positivism, with the influence of empiricism and evolutionism, has positioned the natural sciences as a force that strengthens the ideal of mastering the laws of development. According to Feuerbach, the laws of development of natural science are the only principles that should be used as a reference in the development of human social life, to discover the objective laws behind social phenomena. Cultural positivism has encouraged science to be full of "certainty", as is the case in natural science.

The implications of the world conception held by positivists also influence the way they view social reality, namely humans and science. Positivists see humans as rational individuals governed by social laws, with behavior that can be learned through observation and regulated by external causes that produce the same results. For them, social science also operates based on laws that are subject to testing and verification, as is the case in natural science. If a law is discovered, then the law must be standardized and cover all relevant objects. If it cannot be standardized and does not have general applicability, then the law cannot be called law.

Positivists identify several distinctive features that distinguish science from mere common sense speculation. First, science must be based on strict rules and procedures, as opposed to mere common sense speculation. This implies that science must have clear and tested methods, so that every research result can be tested or proven by anyone, not just the claims of researchers alone.

Furthermore, science according to the positivist view is deductive, which means it moves from the abstract and general to the concrete and specific. This is the opposite of the inductive approach, which tries to draw conclusions from specific things, so it cannot be tested as a general law.

Another characteristic is nomothetic, which relies on causal laws to explain concrete events and the relationships within them. In this context, science always strives to find fixed and consistent patterns in every phenomenon, so that these patterns are worthy of being called laws.

Furthermore, science is based on a combination of experimentation and rationalization. This means that it is not only based on mere abstraction or mere experience, but rather that both aspects must be combined so that the statements made can clearly refer to empirical facts.

One important characteristic is the value-free nature of science, which does not depend on researchers. This means that researchers must be objective and value-free. According to the positivist view, researchers must be able to stand outside all values and interests, outside political views, cultural background, social status, or personal interests. The main goal of researchers or scientists is to find the truth in the world objectively.

The characteristics of knowledge described above reflect the positivist mindset in interpreting science, humans or researchers, and the world as an object of knowledge. In the positivist view, knowledge must be structured systematically and can be tested objectively, not just based on speculation or assumptions alone. The influence of positivism has been felt in many aspects of cultural science, producing various laws and theories, such as social stratification, social evolution, and so on.

Positivism's rigid and sometimes quantitative methods are reflected in the use of statistics and the establishment of generally accepted laws. We can still find the results of this approach in various scientific disciplines today. The epistemology of positivism has become very dominant in modern times, even the soul of modernity itself can be said to be reflected in the concept of positivism.

However, although positivism has made a significant contribution to the development of science, its rigid approach and overly prioritization of quantitative aspects has also attracted criticism. Some critics highlight that this approach tends to ignore qualitative aspects and the complexity of human and social realities. In attempting to measure and test phenomena objectively, positivism often fails to consider subjective and contextual aspects that are also important in understanding the phenomenon.

Apart from that, there is also the view that positivism has a tendency to ignore the ethical and moral dimensions of scientific research. In an effort to achieve objectivity, subjective values are often ignored, so that the research conducted can lose sight of the broader social and ethical impact of its findings.

Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that the positivism approach is still relevant and makes a valuable contribution to the development of science. However, it also needs to be balanced with other approaches that better appreciate complexity and subjectivity in understanding human and social phenomena. In this way, a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of the world and its people can be formed.

Phenomenology emerged as a strong response to the dominance of positivism, by presenting a thinking paradigm and a different approach to understanding reality. The phenomenological approach provides a method for scientists to gain a deeper understanding of the world, both humans as subjects and natural and social phenomena as objects. If positivism is considered the most dominant epistemology in science in the modern era, then phenomenology is considered important for reviving the spirit of a more "humane" science. In the words of Valeria Malhotra Bentz, phenomenology is not an alternative scientific methodology to positivism, but rather a deeper level of knowledge about the world itself.

To understand phenomenology better, let's start from its basic concepts first. The word "phenomenology" comes from the word "phenomenon", which means to show oneself or appear. This term has existed since 1765, especially in the philosophical works of Immanuel Kant. However, at that time, the meaning of phenomenology had not been explained specifically and explicitly.

Only later, Hegel—although not yet fully clear—attempted to give meaning to the discourse by interpreting phenomenology as 'the knowledge of how things appear in consciousness'. Here, knowledge refers to what is sensed, felt, and known through awareness and experience.

Phenomenology began to take a clearer form after being developed by Edmund Husserl, a German philosopher. Husserl aimed to find the basis for a philosophy that explores and analyzes reality. According to Husserl, this basis can only be found in reality itself or 'things in themselves'. For him, the basis of philosophy is reality itself as it appears or appears. In this context, Husserl interprets “the thing itself” as “consciousness”. Therefore, phenomenology developed by Husserl can be considered the science of consciousness.

Positivism and phenomenology, as two important epistemologies in modern science, offer different frameworks of thought from each other, and provide essential tools or methods to explain the world in different ways. As has been explained, both are rooted in different paradigms. If positivism assumes that reality is single, then phenomenology believes that reality is unique. While positivism believes that there is a general meaning, such as laws, in every reality that can be discovered through direct observation or observation, phenomenology believes that meaning is formed through the interaction of subjects in the world, namely co-existence.

Positivism has succeeded in establishing a dominant framework of thought over the past few decades, and has received much support from scientists who champion this epistemology. However, even though it is the dominant epistemology, this does not mean that positivism does not have weaknesses. Likewise, phenomenology, although intended to return science, especially in the socio-cultural domain, to a more human nature, is by no means free from criticism. Below, we will discuss criticisms of both epistemologies.

Criticism of positivism points, among other things, to its inability to investigate subjective and contextual aspects of human and social phenomena. Positivist approaches, which tend to focus on objective measurement and verification, can ignore the complexity and diversity in human experience. On the other hand, criticism of phenomenology includes ambiguity and subjectivity in the process of interpreting phenomena, which can lead to a lack of consistency and generalization in scientific findings.

Additionally, some critics highlight that positivism tends to ignore the ethical and moral dimensions of scientific research, as its focus on achieving objectivity may come at the expense of considering subjective values. On the other hand, phenomenology is often accused of being insufficiently objective and too influenced by individual perspectives, which can result in research that is less reliable and less universally relevant.

However, although these two epistemologies are vulnerable to criticism, they still make valuable contributions to the understanding and development of science. It is important to acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses of each approach, and to consider their use judiciously in appropriate contexts. In this way, science can continue to develop and deepen our understanding of this complex world.

The proponents of Critical Theory from the Frankfurt School were a group of intellectuals who were very critical of positivism. Figures such as Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse highlighted that positivism had problems, because attempts to apply natural science methods to social science were actually a form of scientism and ideology. They argue that the positivist view which sees science as neutral, objective and value-free actually only maintains the status quo of existing society. The knowledge produced by this approach tends to only reflect existing social facts, without making a significant contribution to change. In other words, the understanding produced by this epistemology is only an attempt to quantify social facts.

Positivism in social science, in their view, is simply a process of mechanization of social facts and society in general, which ultimately results in dehumanization. Husserl even considered this phenomenon to be a modern scientific crisis, where science loses meaning for life. According to him, science has fallen into false objectivism, where the world is seen only as an arrangement of objective facts and human subjects or consciousness are treated purely objectively. However, in reality, no subject is truly objective and value-free.

Positivism also tends to reify the social world and see it as a neutral process, while ignoring the role of actors or subjects in social dynamics. Further criticism of positivism was put forward by Habermas, who developed a critical scientific epistemology as a more sustainable alternative. Although Habermas agreed with Husserl's critique of positivism, he went on to outline further views based on the critical scholarship he espoused. Thus, criticism of positivism becomes important in formulating a deeper understanding of social dynamics and the role of science in exploring the meaning of life.

Phenomenology has a clear goal, namely to find the meaning of life and lifeworld, or the world of everyday life. In this effort, phenomenology places humans as creatures who have intense consciousness, who are aware of the world around them with a certain awareness. The meaning of this world is not intended to be used as laws, or to judge what is right and what is wrong. Phenomenology is also a science that seeks to reveal the meaning of reality that is present in human consciousness. However, phenomenology is not immune from criticism. Although it has advantages in its pure and undistorted orientation towards reality, phenomenology also has its own complexities, especially in the search for truth.

Phenomenology relies heavily on consciousness, both subject and object consciousness, where the subject-object relationship in phenomenology also tends to be fluid. This makes subjectivity dominant in phenomenological epistemology, making it a very subjective or intersubjective science, and therefore very tied to values. Emanuel Levinas's criticism of phenomenology highlights that phenomenological analysis stops too quickly, thereby failing to reveal the actual structure of reality. Husserl, as one of the main figures of phenomenology, is trapped in a subject-object framework, where objects only exist as objects of the subject who pays attention to them, and vice versa. Thus, the individual cannot escape the prison of his consciousness, and questioning objects independently becomes unreasonable.

Phenomenology is also unable to provide guarantees of objectivity, which is one of the important standards in modern epistemology. Due to the lack of objectivity, the results produced by phenomenology are only temporary, partial,

and limited to the local context. In other words, the knowledge gained in phenomenology cannot be generalized. However, phenomenology remains a research area that continues to develop and be used by social scientists, as is proven by the publication of special journals on phenomenology. Therefore, criticism of phenomenology can always be responded to with ongoing dynamics, while continuing to search for a more perfect form.

Conclusion

Positivism has become the most dominant epistemology in the modern era, and is even considered the soul of the modern era itself. Since Auguste Comte popularized it through his famous Cours de philosophie Poitive (1830), positivism, often referred to as the "positivist paradigm," has been widely accepted in almost all academic traditions around the world. This epistemology has really influenced scientific paradigms, especially in the social and cultural sciences.

Although positivism claims some distinctive characteristics such as being objective, value-free, and generally applicable, it is recognized that this is not the only way to acquire knowledge. Along with the dominance of positivism, epistemological alternatives also emerged such as hermeneutics, structuralism, materialism, post-modernism, and of course phenomenology which is being discussed in this article.

Phenomenology, at the beginning of its development as described by Husserl, aimed to overcome the "crisis" in science which according to him had eliminated the meaning of life. Treatment of humans as objects in natural science is considered a form of dehumanization. For this reason, phenomenology was "built" with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of the meaning of life and human existence.

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