

Can Sociology be a Science?

YES!



Are the sciences even scientific?



NO!



Positivists would suggest that Sociologist can use objective facts that are directly observable through the senses. These facts are not able to be influenced by researchers as long as appropriate methods are used:
Durkheim's *Suicide*

Popper – Science is falsifiable
In theory sociology can be a science – as long as sociologists use a deductive approach – there needs to be an initial theory. Once research has been conducted to test the theory, if further research can disprove the theory then it can be classes as scientific – **We may assume all swans are white, until we see a black swan – science evolves**

Kuhn suggested that the use of paradigms leads to the rejection of potential truths if they go against the prevailing ideas of the time (the Earth was once flat...) until a wealth of evidence builds up against the existing paradigm and a new one evolves (e.g. Global Warming) – Science changes as does human behaviour.

Conclusion
Sociology can adopt some of the features of science such as falsification and objective measurements, but it is difficult to disentangle social factors from human ones. People are unpredictable, perhaps we should focus on why things have happened rather than predict what will happen – similar to other sciences like seismology – which explains why an earthquake has happened but cannot predict them

Interpretivists would suggest sociology cannot be seen as scientific as human beings do not act in the same way as the elements in the natural world. They have choices, interpret actions in different ways and people's self-concepts are made up of millions of different interactions which makes them highly unpredictable.

Phenomenologists and Post-Modernists see the world as being constructed by symbols and language and therefore it is socially constructed. As a consequence, it varies from society to society and is unpredictable how people will behave from one culture to the next. There is no one universal truth, only versions of the truth based upon social context.