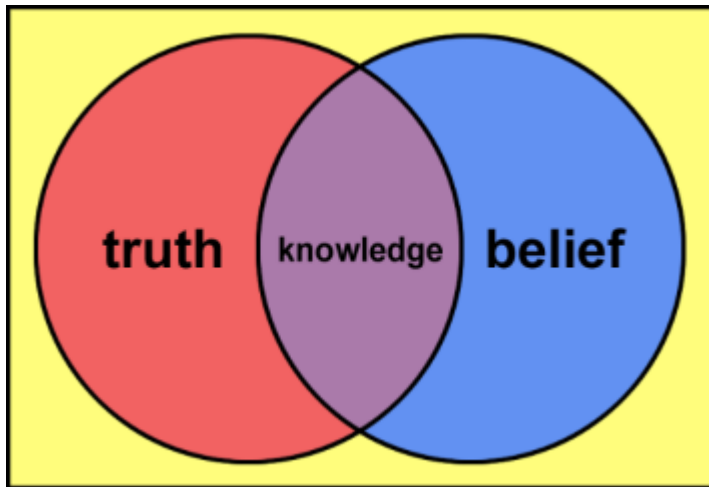


The epistemology of social justice

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I made a joke on twitter, that I wasn't going to write this post, because *"Make shit up based on your feelings"* would not make a very good blog post.

However, the thought ruminated for a moment in my mind, and I figured that social justice lives and breathes in academia. It seeks to legitimize feelings by through giving them an air of sophistication and legitimacy through abusing the tools of science. Much of the theory that feminists and modern social justice warriors base their belief system on is Marxist theory applied to social structures and groups, which is then validated by abusing the tools of science. Epistemology is Greek and roughly translates to *"word of knowledge"*, which includes the scientific method, logic as a system and other tools and opinions on how we as humans gain knowledge.

The purpose of this post is to outline how social justice warriors obtain knowledge from their environments contrasted with how research is conducted in order to obtain knowledge.

A quick rundown of research

Usually research starts with a literature review to get an overview of the field and to trigger the reader into coming up with their own research question or general field of interest. Once a field is narrowed down to a topic, and perhaps even a research question, the person conducts in an depth review of all the data available in the field in order to make sure that nobody has asked and answered the same question before, to gauge the literature base, and so on. Once this is done the person tries to synthesize the various sources. For instance if your research question was *"Is feminism cancer"* then you would need to find information on both feminism and cancer, and then synthesize the two topics into a coherent framework.

The next step after designing a theoretical research framework is to determine the philosophical perspective of the research, which is normally a choice between positivism and phenomenology, of course feminist research also comes in here. The reason for picking a philosophical framework first, is that your chosen framework will impact your methodology quite a bit. For instance, positivism is best suited for hard sciences and trends towards larger sample sizes, whereas phenomenology trends towards social sciences and smaller sample sizes. This comes from the fact that positivists have historically been focused on the "what" and "how" of events, where phenomenologists have been focused on the "why".

Once you narrow down to methodological approach, you can start to design your research, determining confidence limits, sample sizes, your sources of data and data access, data types and so on. Then you carry out your research, according to the theoretical framework using the methodology you designed and then analyze the data and make your conclusions.

SJW research largely focuses on grounded theory or phenomenological research, trying to answer why

questions, frequently using qualitative methods, and small sample sizes to investigate specific situations. This is where qualitative, phenomenological researcher is the strongest it can be, and what it was developed for, however, SJWs take “*small sample size*” to a whole new level, when they try to paint single situations as a part of a bigger picture that proves their bias.

The application of research

So far, feminist research tends to not be completely horrible, except for the tendency of being extremely poor at avoiding bias, especially when using soft methods. However, the major issue comes when one tries to apply the research in a general manner. Positivist research often gives the most approximate right answer due to often relying on large sample sizes, statistical methods and having very high replicability. This means that Positivist research if documented well, can have its findings replicated and thus they become stronger. Positivist methods tell us that a wage gap exists, but feminists want to answer why it does and they are invested in that answer being sexism. When alternative explanations are offered such as the choices females and males make, the amount of hours work, amount of job risk, and inconvenience, the gap is rapidly reduced [1] [2] but such answers are rejected not on the basis of evidence but that of investment in your existing conclusion.

I’ve mentioned numerous times that with the track record of countries that have tried and miserably failed at applying Marxist theory, the theory should be rejected. However, there are ardent supporters of Marx’s theories all over the world, including in governments in an academia that believe, but cannot prove that it can work. From a research perspective, Marx’s theories have been tested and found wanting.

Social justice and feminist theory on the other hand has never truly been applied, however they are so invested in their answer and what little support they can get from small-scale exploratory studies,

Summary and conclusions

There are two major things that stand out about social justice warrior epistemology, the focus on the individual and the dedication towards finding the answer the researcher wants to find. The latter is not uncommon in research, many researchers spend large parts of their lives working within a field, developing theories, some build their careers of the discoveries they may. If they suddenly find out that their long held beliefs that they have invested 20 or more years of their life into, it is a shock and they have to go through the 5 stages of grief. The former on the other hand spells trouble, because while you can generalize from the population to the individual, you cannot generalize from the individual to a population.

“*Listen and Believe*” is fine if you’re a religious leader, it’s not a recipe for how to run a state or for how to decide what is the best approximate explanation that accommodates all the known facts. This is where SJW epistemology fails, as their theory of knowledge, trends towards the experiences of a single person, meaning that subjective perception of events becomes the baseline for what is factual in their mind. This is no different than a religion, where adherents are asked to believe in things that cannot be proven, against their best judgment.

The SJW epistemology is based on belief, and extreme subjectivity, which is also why feminists and SJWs can be presented with clear cut objective truth, and still maintain their belief. Their subjective truth, trumps the objective truth of others. The interesting events happen when subjective “listen and believe” meets another subjective “listen and believe” and the two are fundamentally incompatible, in that case for SJWs their epistemology changes from extreme subjectivity of the individual to the extreme subjectivity of the group, and a majority vote is taken for which subjective view prevails.

Sources:

[1] Sowell, economic facts and fallacies

[2]

<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/harvard-prof.-takes-down-gender-wage-gap-myth/article/2580405>

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