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Table 1.2 Summary of the three perspectives of organization theory

Modernism	Symbolic interpretivism	Postmodernism
<p>Ontology Objectivism—belief in an objective, external reality whose existence is independent of our knowledge of it</p> <p>Epistemology Positivism—we discover Truth through valid conceptualization and reliable measurement that allows us to test knowledge against an objective world; knowledge accumulates, allowing humans to progress and evolve</p> <p>Organizations are Objectively real entities operating in a real world. When well-designed and managed they are systems of decision and action driven by norms of rationality, efficiency and effectiveness for stated purposes</p> <p>Focus of Organization Theory Finding universal laws, methods and techniques of organization and control; favors rational structures, rules, standardized procedures and routine practices</p>	<p>Ontology Subjectivism—the belief that we cannot know an external or objective existence apart from our subjective awareness of it; that which exists is that which we agree exists</p> <p>Epistemology Interpretivism—all knowledge is relative to the knower and can only be understood from the point of view of the individuals who are directly involved; truth is socially constructed via multiple interpretations of the objects of knowledge thereby constructed and therefore shifts and changes through time</p> <p>Organizations are Continually constructed and reconstructed by their members through symbolically mediated interaction. Organizations are socially constructed realities where meanings promote and are promoted by understanding of the self and others that occurs within the organizational context</p> <p>Focus of Organization Theory Describing how people give meaning and order to their experience within specific contexts, through interpretive and symbolic acts, forms and processes</p>	<p>Ontology Postmodernism—the belief that the world appears through language and is situated in discourse; what is spoken of exists, therefore everything that exists is a text to be read or performed</p> <p>Epistemology Postmodernism—knowledge cannot be an accurate account of Truth because meanings cannot be fixed; there is no independent reality; there are no facts, only interpretations; knowledge is a power play</p> <p>Organizations are Sites for enacting power relations, oppression, irrationality, communicative distortion—or arenas of fun and playful irony. Organizations are texts produced by and in language; we can rewrite them so as to emancipate ourselves from human folly and degradation</p> <p>Focus of Organization Theory Deconstructing organizational texts; destabilizing managerial ideologies and modernist modes of organizing and theorizing; revealing marginalized and oppressed viewpoints; encouraging reflexive and inclusive forms of theorizing and organizing</p>



