



Reconstructing Sociology: The Critical Realist Approach

By Douglas V. Porpora

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Critical realism is a philosophy of science that positions itself against the major alternative philosophies underlying contemporary sociology. This book offers a general critique of sociology, particularly sociology in the United States, from a critical realist perspective. It also acts as an introduction to critical realism for students and scholars of sociology. Written in a lively, accessible style, Douglas V. Porpora argues that sociology currently operates with deficient accounts of truth, culture, structure, agency, and causality that are all better served by a critical realist perspective. This approach argues against the alternative sociological perspectives, in particular the dominant positivism which privileges statistical techniques and experimental design over ethnographic and historical approaches. However, the book also compares critical realism favourably with a range of other approaches, including poststructuralism, pragmatism, interpretivism, practice theory, and relational sociology. Numerous sociological examples are included, and each chapter addresses well-known and current work in sociology.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Critical realism is hard to categorize. It appears to be a philosophy of science, which Porpora thinks sociology should adopt ... Sociologists should abandon the vision of 'value neutrality' and instead proudly proclaim themselves as engaged and trying to transform the world. Summing up: recommended. Upper-division undergraduates and above."

Y. R. Magrass, Choice

About the Author

Douglas V. Porpora is a Professor of Sociology at Drexel University, Philadelphia. His previous publications include Post-Ethical Society: The Iraq War, Abu Ghraib, and the Moral Failure of the Secular (2013).

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