



Logics of Critical Explanation in Social and Political Theory (Routledge Innovations in Political Theory (Numbered))

Jason Glynos, David Howarth

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The Social Science Wars have precipitated a renewed interest in the character, purpose and methods of social science. Positivists and naturalists are criticized by interpretivists and critical theorists, while quantitative researchers are challenged by those who favour qualitative and ethnographic techniques. In turn, mainstream social scientists have responded with a vigorous defence and restatement of their commitments.

Logics of Critical Explanation in Social and Political Theory proposes a novel approach to practising social and political analysis based on the role of logics. The authors articulate a distinctive perspective on social science explanation that avoids the problems of scientism and subjectivism by steering a careful course between lawlike explanations and thick descriptions. Drawing upon hermeneutics, poststructuralism, psychoanalysis, and post-analytical philosophy, this new approach offers a particular set of logics – social, political and fantasmatic – with which to construct critical explanations of practices and regimes.

While the first part of the book critically engages with lawlike, interpretivist and causal approaches to critical explanation, the second part elaborates an alternative grammar of concepts informed by an ontological stance rooted in poststructuralist theory. In developing this approach, a number of empirical cases are included to illustrate its basic concepts and logics, ranging from the apartheid regime in South Africa to recent changes in higher education.

The book will be a valuable tool for scholars and researchers in a variety of related fields of study in the social sciences, especially the disciplines of political science and political theory, international relations, social theory, cultural studies, anthropology and philosophy.



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