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978-1-107-10737-3 - Reconstructing Sociology: The Critical Realist Approach

Douglas V. Porpora

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Reconstructing Sociology

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 favorably 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.

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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DOUGLAS V. PORPORA

Professor of Sociology

Drexel University



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To my wife, Lynne, with love

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