



Naturalism and Social Science: A Post-Empiricist Philosophy of Social Science (Themes in the Social Sciences)

David Thomas

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This 1979 text addresses the ways in which the dominant theories in large areas of Western social science have been subject to strong criticisms, particularly of their supposed philosophical deficiencies. In the philosophy of science, this resulted in empiricist views being replaced by an emphasis on the potential obstinacy of theory in the face of the empirical world. After introducing this contemporary philosophy of science, Dr Thomas uses it to argue that social study can both retain the natural scientific commitment to the constraint of the external world and assimilate the sorts of philosophical criticisms that were made of the old social scientific theories. In particular, he shows that social study understood in terms of the new philosophy of science can give an account of the former's distinctive concerns with issues of the meaning and value of social life. Dr Thomas supports his abstract arguments by detailed case studies.

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