

Olsen

Realist Methodology

Realism is an approach to humanity which recognizes the real existence of social objects as well as physical objects. Thus realism does involve being realistic. But more importantly, it asserts that the things we are studying in social research have some prior existence and would continue to exist even if our knowledge of them was limited. Indeed, sometimes our knowledge is quite wrong, and realists assert that the real world will tend to constrain science so that wrong claims get challenged. Volume One: Practical Realist Ontology covers the nature of the world, the role of the person, the need for social theory, the nature of language, open systems theorizing, and the avoidance of the fallacies of upward and downward conflation. Volume Two: Realist Methods takes up the triangulation debate in some detail as well as querying the nature of quantitative data and of qualitative data. Volume Three: Knowledge and Meta-knowledge in Realism explores the concept of epistemology and the social basis of human knowledge. Volume Four: Realist Empirical Research runs through lessons to be learned from research that has been conducted under explicit realist assumptions in many disciplines in many different countries.



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