

David

Methods of Interpretive Sociology

Should cultural meaning be understood in terms of psychological motivations and intentions, or in terms of collective codes and belief systems? Max Weber saw the task of the interpretive sociologist as that of reconstructing the objective and subjective rationality of ideal typical actors. Neo-Kantians, phenomenologists, critical interpretivists, pragmatists, symbolic interactionists, ethnomethodologists, cultural anthropologists and others have struggled for over a century over what such an approach entails. The development of an interpretive or verstehen approach to understanding social life draws itself in distinction from approaches that seek causal explanation in terms of variables external to the beliefs of social actors, but this collection attempts to disrupt the comfortable polarities between macro and micro, structure and agency, explanation and description that dog sociology and through which the term interpretive has been quarantined.



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