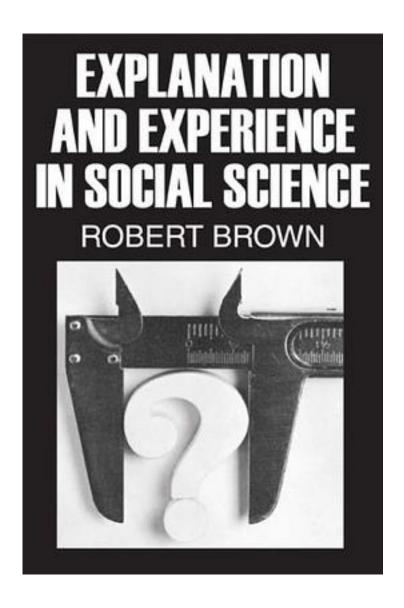
Explanation and Experience in Social Science



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著者:Brown, Robert

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According to their critics, social scientists rarely ask the right questions and cannot provide satisfactory answers even to the questions they ask themselves. Social scientists often discuss the nature of knowledge in their fields with a notable lack of clarity. Explanation and Experience in Social Science by Robert Brown dispels the confusion with cogency and wit; it is a systematic, sensible, and lucid analysis of the nature of the explanations put forward by social scientists. Explanation-making is first distinguished from "describing" and "reporting," and then classified into different types, based on different kinds of information used. The greater part of the book consists in discussion and examination of these types of explanation and their relationships, in which the usefulness and limitations of each are assessed. An extraordinary variety of examples from contemporary work in all the social sciences is used, including the fields of sociology, anthropology, psychology, history, demography, political science, and economics. The author makes it clear that good social explanation is possible and that it conforms to the requirements of all good scientific explanation. Explanation and Experience in Social Science is of interest to the practicing scientist-in fact-it is a must-have for any personal or public library with collections in the social sciences. Most studies in the philosophy of the sciences, natural and social, fall into two distinct groups: those written by philosophers for other philosophers and those produced by scientists for their fellow-scientists. The aim of this book is to discuss guestions of philosophical interest as they come to be imbedded in the work of social scientists.

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