



The Logic of Science in Sociology

Walter L. Wallace

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The subject of this book is limited to the abstract form or "logic" of science (as applied particularly to scientific sociology). The chief aim is to compress, to simplify, and to organize into an easily understood and reasonably well-documented scheme some principal answers to questions such as: What makes a discipline "scientific" in the first place? What are theories, empirical generalizations, hypotheses, and observations; and how are they related to each other? What is meant by "the scientific method?" What roles do induction and deduction play in science? What are the places of measurement, sampling techniques, descriptive statistics, statistical inference, scale construction, tests of significance, "grand" theories, and "middle-range" theories? What parts are played by our ideas concerning logic, causality, and chance? What is the significance of the rule of parsimony? How do verbal and mathematical languages compare in expressing scientific statements? The intended use of this book goes beyond these abstract questions. The discussion presented here may serve a practical role in the sociology and history of science by providing a framework for reducing the enormous variety of scientific researches--both within a given field and across all fields--to a limited number of interrelated formal elements. Such a framework, it is hoped, may prove useful in assessing empirical relationships between the formal aspects of scientific work and its substantive social, economic, political, and historical aspects. Wallace identifies four ways of generating and testing the truth of empirical statements--"authoritarian," "mystical," "logico-rational," and "scientific," and considers each in depth. As he concludes, "In science (as in everyday life) things must be believed to be seen, as well as seen to be believed; and questions must already be answered a little, if they are to be asked at all." This is a work of synthesis that merits close attention. It provides an area for viewing theory as something more than a review of the history of any single social science discipline. *Walter L. Wallace* is Professor of Sociology Emeritus at Princeton University. He is also the author of *Sociological Theory: An Introduction, and Principles of Scientific Sociology*, available from AldineTransaction.

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