



Social Theory: Twenty Introductory Lectures

By Hans Joas, Wolfgang Knöbl

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Social theory is the theoretical core of the social sciences, clearly distinguishable from political theory and cultural analysis. This book offers a unique overview of the development of social theory from the end of the Second World War in 1945 to the present day. Spanning the literature in English, French and German, it provides an excellent background to the most important social theorists and theories in contemporary sociological thought, with crisp summaries of the main books, arguments and controversies. It also deals with newly emerging schools from rational choice to symbolic interactionism, with new ambitious approaches (Habermas, Luhmann, Giddens, Bourdieu), structuralism and antistructuralism, critical revisions of modernization theory, feminism and neopragmatism. Written by two of the world's leading sociologists and based on their extensive academic teaching, this unrivalled work is ideal both for students in the social sciences and humanities and for anyone interested in contemporary theoretical debates.

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"Social Theory does a remarkable job of making a complex and sometimes difficult subject matter into a clear and continuously interesting book. Without claiming a false neutrality Joas and Knöbl combine exposition and criticism in a way that is consistently fair even to positions that are farthest from their own. This should be an indispensable book for at least a generation." - Robert N. Bellah, Professor of Sociology Emeritus, University of California, Berkeley, and coauthor of *Habits of the Heart*

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About the Author

Hans Joas is the Max Weber Professor and Director of the Max Weber Center for Advanced Cultural and Social Studies at the University of Erfurt. He is also Professor of Sociology and a member of the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago.

Wolfgang Knöbl is Professor of Sociology at the University of Göttingen.

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