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Theories of Social Order: A Reader, Second Edition (Stanford Social Sciences)

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Already a standard in its first edition, this newly expanded and reorganized reader provides a compelling exploration of what arguably remains the single most important problem in social theory: the problem of social order. Contending that theory's purpose in the social sciences lies in its ability to explain real-world phenomena, *Theories of Social Order* presents classic texts alongside contemporary theoretical extensions and recent empirical applications.

Building on the success of the first edition, the second edition focuses readings around five key social structures that affect social order: individuals, hierarchies, markets, groups, and networks. Its unique approach—focusing on theor*ies* rather than theor*ists*—encourages students to compare various factors and mechanisms, seek common analytical themes, and develop a deeper theoretical understanding of the problem of social order. By pairing alternative explanations with empirical research, it helps students grasp the essential lesson that social theory must have empirical implications. This critical lesson emphasizes the relevance of theory to real life, the research enterprise, and the development of better social policies.

Added readings in the second edition highlight the extent to which the problem of social order is of interest across the sciences and demonstrate the relevance of social order in understanding gender and ethnic group dynamics. Editorial introductions to each section discuss the causal mechanisms in each theory and make clear links between classical and modern texts.

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