

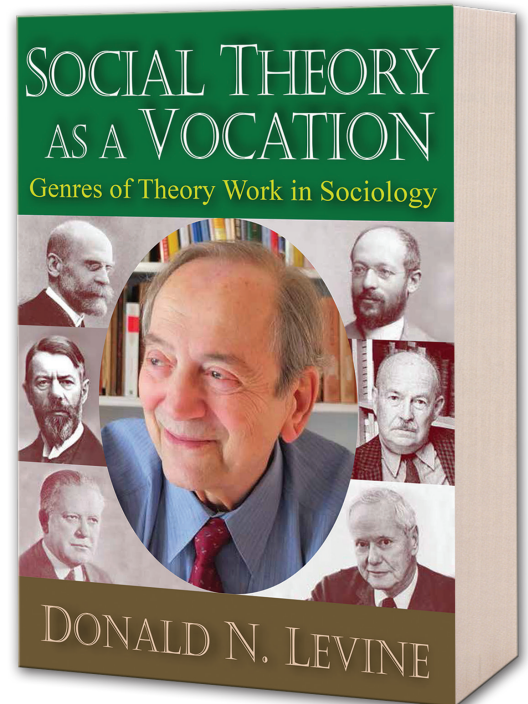
SOCIAL THEORY AS A VOCATION

LOOK FOR THIS BOOK AT THE ASA 2014 ANNUAL MEETING BOOTH #212

In this unprecedented collection, Donald N. Levine rejuvenates the field of social theory in the face of lagging institutional support. The work canvasses the universe of types of theory work in sociology and offers probing examples from his array of scholarly investigations.

Social Theory as a Vocation throws fresh light on the texts of classic authors (Comte, Durkheim, Simmel, Weber, Park, Parsons, and Merton). Its substantive chapters deal with the sociology of strangers and the somatic dimensions of social conflict; the social functions of ambiguity and the use of metaphors in science; contemporary dilemmas of Ethiopian society; logical tensions in the ideas of freedom and reason; and the meaning of nationhood in our global era. The book includes Levine's transformative analysis of the field of Ethiopian studies, and his acclaimed interpretation of the discontents of modernity. It makes the bold move to merge philosophically informed analyses with empirical work.

Finally, Levine focuses on what he views as the contemporary crisis of liberal education, and offers suggestions for ways to stimulate new efforts in teaching and learning to do social theory. This book is an integral contribution to social science collections and should be read by all interested in the future of the social sciences.



ISBN: 978-1-4128-5502-0 (cloth) 2014 429 pp. \$49.95

An eBook (978-1-4128-5543-3) version of this title is available from Google Play, Amazon, Barnes and Noble, ebrary, EBSCOhost, and many other eBook vendors.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Donald N. Levine has published nine books, including *The Flight from Ambiguity*, *Visions of the Sociological Tradition*, and *Powers of the Mind*. He is professor emeritus of sociology at the University of Chicago and was founder of an NGO, Aiki Extensions. He received an honorary doctorate from Addis Ababa University; a festschrift, *The Dialogical Turn*; and a lifetime achievement award from the American Sociological Association.

 **transaction**
Publisher of Record in International Social Science

To order, visit www.transactionpub.com or call (888) 999-6778 (toll-free in the US) or (732) 445-1245

Praise Comments

SOCIAL THEORY AS A VOCATION

“No one among our contemporaries knows more about social theory than Donald Levine. The essays between these covers offer both a cornucopia of insights into classical social thought and a rousing call for the intelligent practice of theory today. Lucid, humane, historically rich, and productive of new ideas and connections between ideas, *Social Theory as a Vocation* is a beacon of good sense and intellectual integrity. Kudos to Transaction Publishers for making these updated essays available in an accessible, compact form.”

—Peter Baehr, Lingnan, University, Hong Kong

“Exhilarating! For the last half century, Donald Levine has been one of the world’s preeminent voices in the field of sociological theory, and this volume brings together over two dozen of the dazzling gems from his extraordinarily productive career. With razor-sharp analyses of thinkers from the classical to the contemporary era, along with seminal treatments of some of the most basic concepts in the discourse of sociological theory, Levine’s chapters serve to inform users of that discourse everywhere. The volume’s previously-uncirculated opening chapter, ‘Social Theory as a Vocation’ presents the most eloquent and persuasive case ever put forth for pursuing the project of social theory. No sociologist, whether novice or veteran, can afford to miss it.”

—Charles Camic, Northwestern University

“In a remarkable collection of essays spanning classical and modern social theory as well as essays on modernization and revolutions, Donald Levine addresses various perennial and troublesome questions: what is social theory for? Is it in decline? Why read the classics? His answers are at once robust, energetic, and urgent. Without social theory, empirical research is blind. Without social theory, sociology is fragmented and incoherent. Indeed, without a living tradition of social theory, sociology has forsaken its calling to any systematic understanding of social life.”

—Bryan S. Turner, The Graduate Center, CUNY

“With this book Donald Levine has given us a spirited and much needed defense of theory in sociology, as well as a collection of essays that shows the range and power a theoretical mind attuned to the classics and engaged with the present. Levine has a subtle and unique voice, which challenges superficial readings of familiar thinkers, and allows their ambiguities and difficulties to be fruitful and inspiring.”

—Stephen Turner, University of South Florida

On Donald N. Levine’s earlier book, *Visions of the Sociological Tradition*:

“A major work of social theory for our time. A knowing and brilliant synthesis of diverse readings of the developing sociological tradition.”

—Robert K. Merton

On Donald N. Levine’s earlier book, *Flight from Ambiguity*:

“A sheer intellectual delight. *The Flight from Ambiguity* is a splendid book; lucidly written and argued, exhibiting superb scholarship yet modest, as behoves a true scholar.”

—Lewis A. Coser

 **transaction**
Publisher of Record in International Social Science

To order, visit www.transactionpub.com or call (888) 999-6778 (toll-free in the US) or (732) 445-1245