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Theory Construction and Model-Building Skills: A Practical Guide for Social Scientists (Methodology in the Social Sciences)

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A Practical Guide for Social Scientists

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Meeting a crucial need for graduate students and newly minted researchers, this innovative text provides hands-on tools for generating ideas and translating them into formal theories. It is illustrated with numerous practical examples drawn from multiple social science disciplines and research settings. The authors offer clear guidance for defining constructs, thinking through relationships and processes that link constructs, and deriving new theoretical models (or building on existing ones) based on those relationships. Step by step, they show readers how to use causal analysis, mathematical modeling, simulations, and grounded and emergent approaches to theory construction. A chapter on writing about theories contains invaluable advice on crafting effective papers and grant applications. Useful pedagogical features in every chapter include: *Application exercises and concept exercises. *Lists of key terms and engaging topical boxes. *Annotated suggestions for further reading.

"This much-needed book fills a gap in the social science literature. The text provides clear examples of how researchers and graduate students can formulate conceptual models, grapple with issues of measurement, and choose the most appropriate data-analytic methods for their conceptual frameworks. The authors have done an exceptional job of providing detailed instruction in the formulation and development of strong theories of behavior. Jaccard and Jacoby have written a high-quality, clear, and useful text. I highly recommend this text for graduate-level research courses and for applied researchers focused on the development of rigorous theoretical frameworks."--Vincent Guilamo-Ramos, PhD, LCSW, Columbia University School of Social Work