



Durkheimian Sociology: Cultural Studies

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The best-known classic works of Emile Durkheim are characterized by a structural approach to the understanding of society, and it is this element of his writings that has been most taken up by modern social science. This volume rejects the dominant structural approach, drawing instead on Durkheim's later work, in which he shifted to a symbolic theory of modern industrial societies that emphasized the importance of ritual to collective behavior. By doing so, the contributors offer not only a radically different interpretation of Durkheim, but also a challenging new way of linking the interpretation of culture and the interpretation of society.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Any new interpretation or framework must be judged by its fruits and in this case the results are very promising...It is to be hoped that this is only the first in a series of works drawing out the implications of Durkheim's sociology for a new theoretical synthesis. Such a synthesis is badly needed, particularly in American sociology. Jeffrey Alexander's contribution to the revitalization is already outstanding and his intellectual leadership is evident here." Kenneth Thompson, The Times Higher Education Supplement

"...a series of stimulating chapters...The book is filled with gems of insight, making it a most provocative use of the Durkheimian tradition." Contemporary Sociology

From the Back Cover

This book is designed to bring the analysis of symbolic phenomena more directly into the discourse of sociology. The human studies are in the midst of an explosion of cultural interest. In diverse disciplinary orientations throughout Europe and in literary studies in the United States, semiotics and structuralism-and the poststructuralist movements which have followed in their wake-have fundamentally affected contemporary understandings of social experience and ideas.

About the Author

Jeffrey Alexander is a leading social theorist who helped create the contemporary field of cultural sociology. He has written and edited dozens of books, among them *The Meanings of Social Life*, *Trauma: A Social Theory*, *Performance and Power*, *The Civil Sphere*, *The Dark Side of Modernity*, and *Obama Power* (with Bernadette Jaworsky). His books and articles have won various national and international awards.

Users Review

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