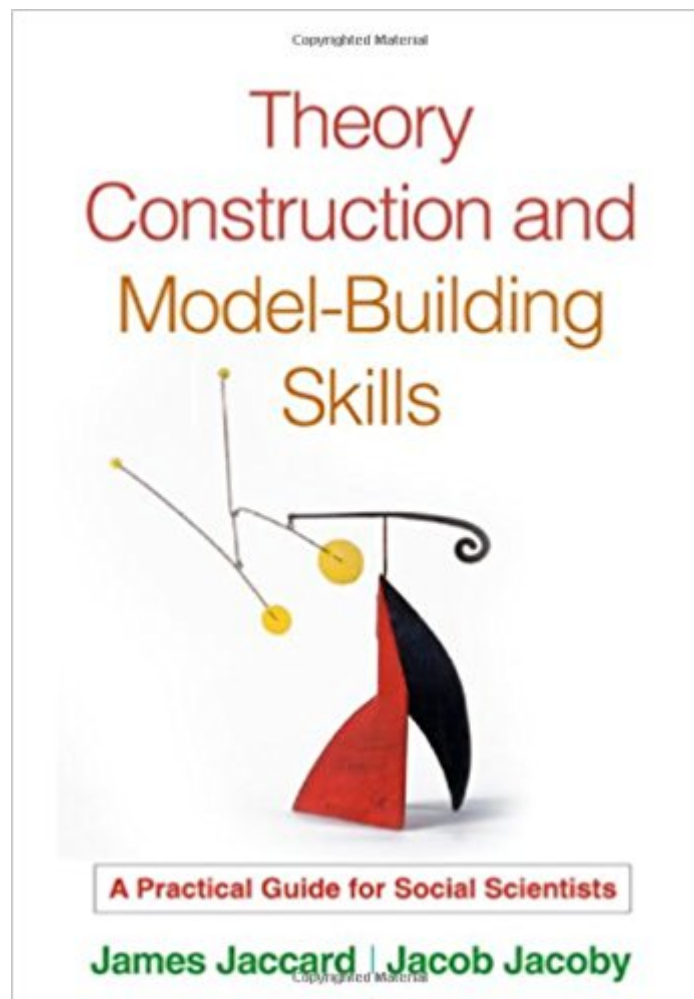


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# Theory Construction And Model-Building Skills: A Practical Guide For Social Scientists (Methodology In The Social Sciences)



## Synopsis

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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

First off, I'm an assistant prof doing political communication/communication technology research. I've picked up this book because it seemed fun to read, as I'm interested in philosophy of social science and quantitative methodology. The book gives great advice on how to do research well and think outside the box. Many of the tips match my own experience and advice I've received from my many excellent grad school mentors/teachers. Much of the book would be quite familiar to experienced researchers (as the authors acknowledge this volume is primarily for advanced grad

students and new ph.ds.). However, here and there there are really cool nuggets of information that might make even experienced scholars think (e.g., Simpson's paradox on p. 128) or might be useful to scholars trying to persuade other scholars of their point of view (e.g., excellent section on typology of bad arguments filled with advice based on formal logic) or would help one's grad students greatly (e.g., 8 strategies for formulating conceptual definitions, or 26 strategies for advancing/extending theory). If you've done quite a bit of research, the book might seem to go a bit too slowly or make simple points in more detail than you'd like (e.g., examples of various variable types in thought experiments and contingency tables). But, this might be invaluable for grad students who encounter such ideas for the first time. The best part of the book is its clarity and lack of pretentiousness. Authors lay it all out there honestly, simply and intelligently (e.g., why examining curvilinear relationships isn't as big a part of theorizing as it should be). This book is 5 out of 5 stars, especially for those who are aspiring or new social scientists, or who are in a position to train social scientists. When I'm teaching grad theory-building class - this book will be on the "required readings" list, for sure.

It's great to finally have some concrete guidelines to follow when constructing or evaluating a theory! Not the be-all end-all, but a wonderful guide to follow as long as you also look for other resources. I used this to help me pass my comprehensive exams, and will continue to use it in my theoretical publication articles.

This is an excellent book. I have searched for a long time for a book to help me write my theory, and this is the best book I have found, in fact it's the only book I have found. Once you start reading this book you can't put it down, even if you don't have a theory to write. It's mind-opening and a well-written book.

I think this book is very useful if you are interested in learning more about theory building. It takes a mostly quantitative approach, but also has information on qualitative processes. It's nice because you can jump around the chapters and get the information you need. Very practical as well as theoretical so you can really know what to do instead of just getting information in the abstract.

this is a good book indeed, which gives a cogent account of the process of construction of theories--covering several aspects of it. The focus are the social sciences, but lot of points can be extended to natural sciences too.

The abstraction of dissertation made easyâ. I love it

Got this for my wife's class and she uses it.

It was a required textbook for my doctoral program and I received well in advance to start on my reading assignments

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