

BOOK REVIEWS

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Monica Prasad. *Problem-Solving Sociology: A Guide for Students*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021. ISBN: 978-0-19-755849. Pp. 234.

Monica Prasad's *Problem-Solving Sociology: A Guide for Students* embarks on an ambitious journey to reorient sociology toward addressing and solving social problems, positioning the discipline as a potent tool for societal change. Prasad critiques the current state of sociology, which she perceives as bogged down by an overabundance of descriptive research that, while valuable, often stops short of proposing solutions. She identifies a core tension within the discipline: the conflict between the sociological values of resistibility—skepticism toward absolute claims of truth—and solidarity—the collective action necessary for social change. This tension, Prasad argues, has led to a scholarly impasse where descriptive analysis predominates at the expense of problem-solving research.

Prasad's argument unfolds against the backdrop of sociology's fundamental dilemma: how to remain critically engaged with the world without succumbing to paralysis by analysis. She suggests that the discipline's strength lies in its ability to theorize, or engage with the "thought machine" of sociology, not just for its own sake but as a means toward solving real-world issues. Theorization, according to Prasad, is not antithetical to practical problem-solving but is, in fact, indispensable to it. She advocates for a pragmatic approach to sociology that does not lose sight of the importance of theory. The crux of her argument is that theory and practice are not separate domains but are interconnected in a feedback loop that can enhance our understanding of social problems and the most effective ways to address them.

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