



An Age of Limits: Social Theory for the 21st Century

Ralph Schroeder

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In this ambitious and bold book, Ralph Schroeder develops a new social theory centred on the notion of limits. The current era, from the 1970s onwards, has seen a departure from the three defining trends of the modern age: the struggle for social citizenship rights, the disembedding of markets, and the transformation of nature. Based on a comparative-historical analysis, the book argues that there are now similar constraints on social development throughout the global North and beyond. These constraints include the waning of conflicts driving the extension and deepening of rights, the instability of increasing financialization, and the progressive lack of control over the exploitation of natural resources. The key challenge for social theory therefore lies in identifying the cleavages between the dominant political, economic and cultural powers, and countervailing forces that can potentially overcome them.

The book explores several advanced Western democracies in depth, as well as China and India. It will fundamentally challenge our theoretical understanding of contemporary societies and their dynamics.

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