Paul F. Lazarsfeld
An Empirical Theory of Social Action - Collected Writings

Edited by Christian Fleck & Nico Stehr
Foreword by Raymond Boudon
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Paul F. Lazarsfeld (1901–1976) was a highly influential figure in the development of modern empirical methods in sociology and the social sciences. He laid many of the foundations for reliable social survey techniques and qualitative methods for understanding key aspects of contemporary society, such as voting studies, opinion polling, occupational and mass media research. Lazarsfeld's pioneering work in what he termed "administrative research" provided the intellectual basis for much of market and business research.

The essays are accompanied by a detailed and illuminating biographical introduction by the editors, both eminent sociologists. It includes a foreword by the leading French sociologist Raymond Boudon who worked with and knew Lazarsfeld well. This collection is an invaluable contribution to the history of sociology in the 20th century, and represents the only source in English of his early writings.

Christian Fleck teaches sociology at the University of Graz, Austria. He was president of the Austrian Sociological Association (2005–2009) and of ISA's Research Committee on History of Sociology (2006–2010). His most recent publication is: A Transatlantic History of the Social Sciences: Robber Barons, the Third Reich and the Invention of Empirical Social Research (Bloomsbury Academic, 2011).

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