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Sociology as a Population Science

John Goldthorpe is one of Britain's most eminent sociologists and a strong advocate of quantitative sociology. In this concise and accessible book, he provides a new rationale for recent developments in sociology which focus on establishing and explaining probabilistic regularities in human populations. Through these developments, Goldthorpe shows how sociology has become more securely placed within the 'probabilistic revolution' that has occurred over the last century in the natural and social sciences alike. The central arguments of the book are illustrated with examples from different areas of sociology, ranging from social stratification and the sociology of the family to the sociology of revolutions. He concludes by considering the implications of these arguments for the proper boundaries of sociology, for its relations with other disciplines, and for its public role.

JOHN H. GOLDTHORPE is Emeritus Fellow of Nuffield College, University of Oxford.

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For Raffi – who came too late for the last one.

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Acknowledgements

This book began life as a draft journal article, which, like Topsy, ‘just grow’d’. It eventually attained a length far beyond what any journal would find acceptable, and so I faced a decision on whether to cut back the draft severely or to extend it further with a book in mind. Another option that sometimes seemed, in dark moments, attractive was simply to put what I had written into a drawer and forget about it. That the present work did eventually emerge is due in large part to the support I received from colleagues, three of whom have to be given particular mention.

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