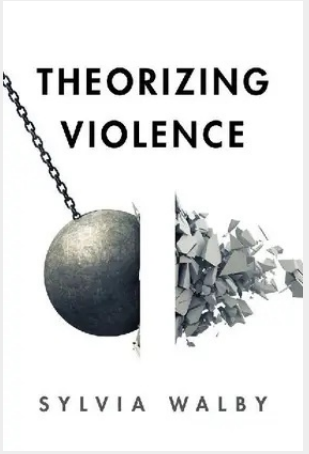
Walby

Theorizing Violence



Violence is increasing on many measures. As criminal justice and security interventions become more punitive, rising inequalities diminish the resources needed for resilience. When all governments proclaim the need to end violence, how can we make sense of this? Sylvia Walby offers new ways to theorize violence, placing it at the centre of society, not the periphery, and rethinking the relationship between violence and security. Arguing for an integrated analysis of internal and external security within a theory of society, she shows how neoliberal transformations have led to the growth of violence. Understanding these changes requires gendering theories of the state, the economy and civil society. With securitization growing while welfare and the regulation of the economy shrink, Walby uses complexity science to investigate the contradictions in state responses. Crucially, this book offers a way forward, drawing on inspirational practices and cutting-edge social theory, to better understand violence and the causes of its variations.

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69,00 €
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vorbestellbar, Erscheinungstermin ca. Januar 2027

Artikelnummer: 9780745647586
Medium: Buch
ISBN: 978-0-7456-4758-6
Verlag: John Wiley and Sons Ltd
Erscheinungstermin: 21.01.2027
Sprache(n): Englisch
Auflage: 1. Auflage 2027
Produktform: Gebunden
Seiten: 224
Format (B x H): 152 x 229 mm

Kundenservice Verlag Dr. Otto Schmidt KG
Neumannstraße 10, 40235 Düsseldorf | kundenservice@otto-schmidt.de | 0221-93738-997 (Inland)