

# Social Theory in the Twentieth Century and Beyond

---

Second Edition

PATRICK BAERT AND FILIPE CARREIRA DA SILVA

polity

The right of Patrick Baert and Filipe Carreira da Silva to be identified as Authors of this Work has been asserted in accordance with the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First edition published in 1998 by Polity Press.  
This edition published in 2010 by Polity Press.

Polity Press  
65 Bridge Street  
Cambridge CB2 1UR, UK

Polity Press  
350 Main Street  
Malden, MA 02148, USA

All rights reserved. Except for the quotation of short passages for the purpose of criticism and review, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

ISBN-13: 978-0-7456-3980-2  
ISBN-13: 978-0-7456-3981-9(pb)

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Typeset in 11.25 on 13 pt Monotype Dante  
by Toppan Best-set Premedia Limited  
Printed and bound in Great Britain by MPG Books Limited, Bodmin, Cornwall.

The publisher has used its best endeavours to ensure that the URLs for external websites referred to in this book are correct and active at the time of going to press. However, the publisher has no responsibility for the websites and can make no guarantee that a site will remain live or that the content is or will remain appropriate.

Every effort has been made to trace all copyright holders, but if any have been inadvertently overlooked the publisher will be pleased to include any necessary credits in any subsequent reprint or edition.

For further information on Polity, visit our website: [www.politybooks.com](http://www.politybooks.com)

# Contents

<i>Preface to the Second Edition</i>	viii
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
What this book is about	1
Our agenda	8
<b>1 One Hundred Years of French Social Theory: From Structuralism to Pragmatism</b>	<b>12</b>
Durkheim's contribution	15
Saussure's approach to linguistics	19
Lévi-Strauss's anthropology	24
Bourdieu's genetic structuralism	34
French pragmatism	42
Further reading	48
References	48
<b>2 The Biological Metaphor: Functionalism and Neo-functionalism</b>	<b>52</b>
Early functionalism	53
Talcott Parsons	64
Robert Merton	71
Neo-functionalism and Niklas Luhmann	78
Jeffrey Alexander and cultural sociology	82
Further reading	86
References	87
<b>3 The Enigma of Everyday Life: Symbolic Interactionism, the Dramaturgical Approach and Ethnomethodology</b>	<b>90</b>
G. H. Mead and symbolic interactionism	91
Erving Goffman's dramaturgical approach	101
Ethnomethodology	108

Social rituals, emotions and trust: Collins and Hardin	116	<b>8 A Brave New World? The Empirical Turn in Social Theory</b>	<b>248</b>
Further reading	121	How distinctive is our age?	248
References	121	Manuel Castells and the network society	249
<b>4 The Invasion of Economic Man: From Rational Choice Theory to the New Institutionalism</b>	<b>125</b>	Ulrich Beck and risk society	255
Rational choice explanations	127	Zygmunt Bauman and liquid modernity	262
Game theory	130	Saskia Sassen and the global city	268
The new institutionalism	136	Richard Sennett and the fall of the public man	274
Examples of rational choice and new institutionalism applications	141	Further reading	279
Problems with rational choice theory	144	References	280
Further reading	151	<b>9 Conclusion: Social Theory for the Twenty-First Century</b>	<b>285</b>
References	152	The roles of social theory	285
<b>5 Sociology Meets History: Giddens's Theory of Modernity</b>	<b>155</b>	Why social theory?	287
Sociology and modernity	155	Pragmatism and pragmatisms	292
Giddens's structuration theory	159	Social research, reflexivity and societal engagement	301
Time is of the essence: Tilly, Skocpol, Mann and Eisenstadt	170	Final remarks	304
Further reading	180	References	305
References	181	<i>Notes</i>	308
<b>6 The History of the Present: Foucault's Archaeology and Genealogy</b>	<b>185</b>	<i>Index</i>	311
A new conception of knowledge acquisition	187		
Archaeology	190		
Genealogy	194		
Evaluation and current developments	203		
Further reading	211		
References	212		
<b>7 The Spread of Reason: Habermas's Critical Theory and Beyond</b>	<b>215</b>		
Influences and early writings	218		
The theory of communicative action	224		
Between facts and norms	229		
Evaluation and current developments	235		
Further reading	243		
References	243		