

Contents

Introduction by Donald G. MacRae	vii
Preface	ix
1. The Nature of Sociological Theory	1
Introduction. Types of Theory. Some Characteristics of Sociological Theory. Sociological 'Meta-Theories'. The Nature of Social Reality. Two Approaches to Social Reality. Explanations and Problems	
2. The Central Problems of Sociological Theory	18
The Problem of Order. Aspects of Social Order. Explanations of Social Order: The Coercion Theory. The 'Interest' Theory of Social Order. The Value-Consensus Theory of Social Order. The 'Inertia' Theory of Social Order. Conclusion	
3. Functionalism or the 'Holistic' Approach	34
Introduction. Functionalism Established. Functionalism Continued. Criticisms: Logical. Criticisms: Substantive. Criticisms: Ideological. Conclusion	
4. The Action Approach	69
The Assumptions of the Theory of Action. Types of Social Action. An Evaluation of Action Theory	
5. Social Action, Interaction, Structure and System	95
Introduction. The Parsonian System. Further Criticisms of Parsonian Theory. The Nature of Social Constraints. On Power and Exchange. The Value of Interaction Theories and Models	

6. Social Structures and Social Systems

Page

129

Introduction. The Problem of Participation. The Problem of Cohesion. The Problem of Solidarity. The Problem of Compliance, Commitment, Conformity and Consensus. Role Congruence, Reciprocity and Cooperation. System Integration, or Functional Interdependence. Persistence or Continuity in Social Systems. Antinomies and Oppositions. The Two Models of Society: A Critique

7. Explaining Social Change

174

Introduction. The Nature of Social Change: What is to be Explained. Problem Areas in the Study of Social Change. The Technological Theory. The Economic Theory of Change. The Conflict Theory of Change. The Malintegration Theory. The Adaptation Theory. The Ideational Theory of Change. The Cultural Interaction Theory. The Search for a Theory of Social Change

8. Directions of Social Change

208

Introduction. Stages of Social Development. Diffusionist Critique of Theories Asserting Stages of Social Development. Methodological Critique of Theories of Social Development. Evaluation of Developmental Doctrines. From Simple to Complex Social Systems

9. Conclusions

236

Summary of Principal Arguments. The Uses of Social Theory. Concluding Remarks

Index

245