



# The Sociology of Anthony Giddens

*Steven Loyal*

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Anthony Giddens is one of the most famous and influential sociologists of recent decades. Largely credited with the concept of the 'Third Way', he continues to be a key advisor to Tony Blair, and is generally presented as an exponent of liberalism and socialism. He was the 1999 BBC Reith lecturer and he has been Professor of Sociology at Cambridge University since 1986. This original and controversial book provides an excellent introduction to Giddens' work, covering the wide range of his writing from theory to self-reflexivity, modernity and politics, placing them all within the illuminating framework of a historical context. Steven Loyal argues that Giddens' writing has always embodied a political and ethical position, one that has changed considerably over the years and is best understood through the social context in which it was written. Giddens' work in the 1970s attempted to marry liberalism and socialism, but, following the collapse of Communism in the 1990 East-European revolutions, his worldview became liberal rather than socialist, and his later work on reflexivity and the 'Third Way' embodies this. Loyal explores how this worldview accounts for many tensions and failures in Giddens' theory and that, overall, his work is fundamentally flawed.

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