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Philip S. Gorski, ed., *Bourdieu and Historical Analysis*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013. vii + 422 pp. Tables, figures, appendices, works cited, contributors, and index. \$99.95 U.S. (cl). ISBN 978-0-8223-5255-6; \$27.95 (pb). ISBN 978-0-8332-5273-0.

Review by Deborah Reed-Danahay, State University of New York at Buffalo.

This edited collection is the first to place at center stage the contributions to the study of social transformation made by French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu. The editor, Philip S. Gorski, positions the book as one challenging what he refers to as the dominant view of Bourdieu as “first and foremost a theorist of social reproduction” (p. 1). *Bourdieu and Historical Analysis* follows several other edited volumes that have appeared since Bourdieu’s death in 2002. These include two recent works published in English: one edited by sociologists Simon Susen and Bryan S. Turner, *The Legacy of Pierre Bourdieu: Critical Essays* [1], which places Bourdieu’s work in the context of that of other theorists and bodies of theory; and one edited by anthropologists Jane E. Goodman and Paul A. Silverstein, *Bourdieu in Algeria: Colonial Politics, Ethnographic Practices, Theoretical Developments* [2], which examines the influence of his ethnographic work on the development of Bourdieu’s theoretical concepts. The book under review here is based on a set of essays first presented at a conference sponsored by the Center for Comparative Research at Yale University, the home institution of its editor, who also organized of the conference. Gorski has also contributed a chapter, introduction, and conclusion to the book. The chapters in this book extend Pierre Bourdieu’s thought in creative ways and open up a “space of possibilities” (to use one of Bourdieu’s own phrases) for exploring the implications of his work for sociological studies of social transformation. As emphasized by its editor, this volume is a work of historical sociology, rather than history—a point to which I will return at the end of this review.

The authors of the first two chapters in this book, sociologists David L. Swartz and Craig Calhoun, provide overviews of Bourdieu’s work that underscore its potential for studies of social change. In his chapter, Swartz outlines what he calls the “metaprinciples” and “master concepts” (habitus, field, cultural capital) in Bourdieu’s approach. He argues that the concepts “are not straightjackets but are designed to foster research” (p. 33), and are thereby applicable to diverse purposes. Craig Calhoun delves more into the specifics of how Bourdieu approached issues of social change and provides a concise overview that should prove very useful for those less familiar with the entirety of Bourdieu’s work. Calhoun prefers to see Bourdieu’s writings in terms of “working concepts” (p. 36) rather than part of an abstract theoretical system, and makes a strong case for Bourdieu as a historical sociologist even though he did not always make this aspect of his work explicit. There were four areas of social transformation that informed the theoretical and empirical work of Bourdieu, according to Calhoun. These include the external forces of the state and the market that led to the uprooting of traditional peasant life in Algeria and France; the development of fields in modern society that came about as a result of the differentiation of state and market power; the expansion of the welfare state after World War II; and struggles related to the rise of neoliberal globalization and its effects on social fields. Calhoun points out that Bourdieu “rejected the structuralist refusal of history” (p.64) and was deeply engaged with the possibilities of societal change—if only after a recognition of the socially-produced nature of history.

The first two chapters set the tone for a focus on “field” (*champ*) as the unit most amenable to applying Bourdieu’s thought to a sociological understanding of social transformation and it is the concept employed most often by contributors to the volume. Bourdieu described this concept as “separate social universe having its own laws of functioning independent of those of politics and the economy.”^[3] Central to this was an understanding that a field is relational and not substantialist, and that it can be viewed as a form of “objectified history,” meaning that it was produced by social actors and through their various positionings within it.^[4] “Modern” (as opposed to “traditional”) societies in Bourdieu’s thinking are composed of various fields (literary, economic, educational, journalistic, and so on). It is important to realize that this more specific and theoretical idea is not the same as the common term used in scholarship for various disciplines as “fields,” although they can be seen to operate as Bourdieusian fields when considered from his perspective.

Several chapters employ a field-focused analysis in order to understand societal transformations. These include a chapter by French historian Christophe Charle, in which he argues for a comparative and transnational history that carefully controls for questions of appropriate units, concepts, and scales for comparison. Charle draws upon his own comparative historical research in order to show how he has applied Bourdieu’s ideas to the university field and to the study of intellectuals in Europe (in particular, comparisons between Germany and France). French sociologists Gisèle Sapiro (chapter eleven) and Jacques Defrance (chapter thirteen) both deal with French history. Sapiro shows how the literary field was shaped by mid-twentieth century developments and, in particular, the Vichy regime. Defrance shows how sport developed as a weakly autonomous field during the period from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century in France. Gil Eyal (chapter seven), drawing upon articulations between the network theory of Bruno Latour and field theory of Bourdieu, calls attention to the spaces between fields which create boundaries, but also possibilities for developing new fields. Gorski (chapter ten) and Chad Alan Goldberg (chapter nine) both draw upon Bourdieu’s concept of “classification struggles” related to the formation of social groups within social space in order to explore issues related to nationalism and the rise of nation-states (Gorski) and transformations in modern welfare institutions in the United States (Goldberg). Both of these chapters also take the field as their primary unit of study.

Other chapters in this book consider Bourdieu’s work in dialogue with related bodies of theory. These chapters supplement and extend the approach taken in the previous volume by Susen and Turner cited above. George Steinmetz (chapter four) calls attention to the close affinity between Bourdieu’s socioanalysis and psychoanalysis. Mustafa Emirbayer and Erik Schneiderhan (chapter six) draw parallels between John Dewey and Bourdieu and reflect upon Bourdieu’s implications for studies of the historical sociology of democracy. In a provocative, although less convincing chapter, Ivan Ermakoff tries to reconcile rational choice (or actor) theory (RAT), with Bourdieu’s theory of practice.

Two other chapters depart from the approaches described above in their applications of Bourdieu’s thought to the study of history. An important chapter that illuminates Bourdieu’s contributions to the history of sociology is that by Charles Camic, who suggests that Bourdieu is productively seen to have contributed two sociologies of knowledge—one a more programmatic and dualistic model, and the other a more multiplex and empirically-based “model in use” (p. 201). The first model relies upon the concept of field to a greater degree than the second, which deploys the broader idea of social space, a crucial concept to Bourdieu’s thought that is neglected by many of the chapters in this book. The chapter by historian Robert Nye is a refreshing change from the more sociologically-oriented chapters in this book, and shifts the discourse in how to approach Bourdieu in relationship to history that dominates this volume. Nye is the only contributor to the book who seriously engages with Bourdieu’s concepts of practice and embodiment, and he acknowledges that Bourdieu was not only a sociologist, but also an ethnologist and historian of culture (p. 288). Using Bourdieu’s book *Masculine Domination* as his starting point ^[5], Nye looks back to early modern Europe, especially France, to explore the role of masculine sociability in the transmission of gendered skills and knowledge. This is a very exciting approach to the study of transformations in gender and family life in European history.

This volume is not the first publication to argue that Bourdieu should not be viewed primarily as a “reproduction theorist.” As Loïc Wacquant and I have pointed out, partial readings of Bourdieu lead to partial understandings of his body of work, and it has long been the case that different readers take different messages from his writings.[6] Anthropologist Sherry Ortner, for example, celebrated the “practice” approach of Bourdieu several decades ago (an approach in stark contrast to that of reproduction theory). [7] The contributors to Goodman and Silverstein’s edited collection show how Bourdieu’s conceptual frameworks were developed in situations of what he considered “rupture” and “crisis,” leading to the conclusion that there is no basis for seeing him as a theorist of social reproduction. And yet, his work on education and distinction in France would sometimes lead one toward this view. It is perhaps most accurate to see Bourdieu as a theorist of power, and to understand that he was interested in how social actors reinforce the dominance of their habitus and position (and how this is, in turn, reinforced by more structural factors), but that he was also interested in how circumstances can lead to alterations and transformations of such positions. The chapters in this volume point to ways in which the concept of field, in particular, can be helpful in understanding such transformations.

In his conclusion to this volume, Philip Gorski describes historical sociology as quite distinct from the discipline of history, and more theoretically oriented. He contrasts historical versus social science approaches, drawing upon the Bourdieusian warning not to confuse “folk theories” with sociological analysis. Gorski depicts historians as scholars focused primarily on description and subjectivism (p. 363), who do not explain change but merely describe it. Historical sociology deploys middle-range theorizing, according to Gorski, and this is a good fit with Bourdieu’s approach. Differentiation and positioning within and between fields are, of course, topics addressed by many of the contributors to this volume. Being able to appreciate how much the project of this book may be about defining a Bourdieusian field of historical sociology, and distinguishing this from the scholarly field of history, does not detract from its overall message that Bourdieu cannot be viewed solely as a theorist of social reproduction. For sociologists, this volume expands the possibilities for doing more historical research using Bourdieu’s thought. I hope that it will also encourage more historians to consider, along the model provided by Robert Nye, the ways in which some of Bourdieu’s “working concepts” and ethnographic perspectives on social life may be useful in understandings of history and social transformation. Perhaps in the near future, a volume on Bourdieu and history will elaborate upon such possibilities.

LIST OF ESSAYS

Philip S. Gorski, “Introduction. Bourdieu as a Theorist of Change”

David L. Swartz, “Metaprinciples for Sociological Research in a Bourdieusian Perspective”

Craig Calhoun, “For the Social History of the Present: Bourdieu as Historical Sociologist”

Christophe Charle, “Comparative and Transnational History and the Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu: Theory and Practice”

Ivan Ermakoff, “Rational Choice May Take Over”

George Steinmetz, “Toward Socioanalysis: The ‘Traumatic Kernel’ of Psychoanalysis and Neo-Bourdieuian Theory”

Mustafa Emirbayer and Erik Scheiderhan, “Dewey and Bourdieu on Democracy”

Gil Eyal, "Spaces Between Fields"

Charles Camic, "Bourdieu's Two Sociologies of Knowledge"

Chad Alan Goldberg, "T. H. Marshall Meets Pierre Bourdieu: Citizens and Paupers in the Development of the U. S. Welfare State"

Philip S. Gorski, "Nation-ization Struggles: A Bourdieusian Theory of Nationalism"

Gisèle Sapiro, "Structural History and Crisis Analysis: The Literary Field in France during the Second World War"

Robert Nye, "The Transmission of Masculinities: The Case of Early Modern France"

Jacques Defrance, "The Making of a Field with Weak Autonomy: The Case of the Sport Field in France, 1895-1955"

Philip S. Gorski, "Conclusion. Bourdieusian Theory and Historical Analysis: Maps, Mechanisms, and Methods"

NOTES

[1] Simon Susen and Bryan S. Turner, eds., *The Legacy of Pierre Bourdieu: Critical Essays* (London: Anthem Press, 2011).

[2] Jane E. Goodman and Paul A. Silverstein, eds., *Bourdieu in Algeria: Colonial Politics, Ethnographic Practices, Theoretical Developments* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009).

[3] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), as quoted in Deborah Reed-Danahay, *Locating Bourdieu* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), p. 162.

[4] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. by Richard Nice (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1990).

[5] Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, trans. by Richard Nice (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 2001).

[6] Loïc Wacquant, "Bourdieu in America: Notes on the Transatlantic Importation of Social Theory," in Craig Calhoun, Edward LiPuma, and Moishe Postone, eds., *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 235-262; and Deborah Reed-Danahay, "The Kabyle and the French: Occidentalism in Bourdieu's Theory of Practice," in James Carrier, ed., *Occidentalism: Images of the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 61-84, and idem., *Locating Bourdieu*.

[7] Sherry Ortner, "Theory in Anthropology Since the Sixties," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26(1984): 126-166.

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