

BIROn - Birkbeck Institutional Research Online

Susen, Simon and Turner, B.S. (2011) Introduction: preliminary reflections on the legacy of Pierre Bourdieu. In: Susen, Simon and Turner, B.S. (eds.) *The Legacy of Pierre Bourdieu: Critical Essays. Key Issues in Modern Sociology*. London, UK: Anthem Press, xiii-xxix. ISBN 9780857287687.

Downloaded from: <https://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/id/eprint/3498/>

Usage Guidelines:

Please refer to usage guidelines at <https://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/policies.html> or alternatively contact lib-eprints@bbk.ac.uk.



BIROn - Birkbeck Institutional Research Online

Enabling open access to Birkbeck's published research output

Introduction: preliminary reflections on the legacy of Pierre Bourdieu

Book chapter

<http://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/3498>

Citation:

Susen, S. and Turner, B.S. (2011) Introduction: preliminary reflections on the legacy of Pierre Bourdieu, pp. xiii – xxix
In
The Legacy of Pierre Bourdieu: Critical Essays (ISBN: 9780857287687)

© 2011 Anthem Press

[Publisher version](#)

All articles available through Birkbeck ePrints are protected by intellectual property law, including copyright law. Any use made of the contents should comply with the relevant law.

[Deposit Guide](#)

Contact: lib-eprints@bbk.ac.uk

INTRODUCTION

Preliminary Reflections on the Legacy of Pierre Bourdieu

Simon Susen and Bryan S. Turner

Unsurprisingly, the Second World War had separate and distinctive consequences for different national traditions of sociology. After the War, the dominant and arguably most successful of the Western democracies emerged in North America, and its sociological traditions assumed a celebratory and often triumphalist perspective on modernisation. The defeat of the fascist nations – notably Germany, Italy, and Japan – seemed to demonstrate the superiority of Western liberal democratic systems, and North American sociologists took the lead in developing theories of development and modernisation that were optimistic and forward-looking. The examples are numerous, but we might mention Daniel Lerner's *The Passing of Traditional Society* (1958) or S. M. Lipset's *The First New Nation* (1963). At the centre of this post-war tradition stood *The Social System* of Talcott Parsons (1951), which involved the notion that systems could continuously and successfully adapt to environmental challenges through the master processes of differentiation and adaptive upgrading. In many of his short essays, he analysed the problems of German and Japanese modernisation and saw the United States of America as a social system that had successfully adapted to the rise of industrial modernisation. In its assessment of modern society, Parsons's sociology avoided the pessimistic vision of early critical theory – epitomised in Adorno's analysis of mass society – because he looked forward to America as a 'lead society' in large-scale social development (see Holton and Turner, 1986).

It is also the case that, in general terms, North American sociologists did not show much interest in European sociology, especially with regard to its more critical and negative assessments of modern capitalism. Parsons, of course, translated Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* and published the first English version in 1930, but he did not focus on Weber's bleak and pessimistic view of the iron cage. He did not perceive

the figure of Nietzsche behind Weber. Subsequently, Parsons's reception of Weber was much criticised by writers who sought to 'de-Parsonise' Weber. Later, in 1947, Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills brought out *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, which showed an increased interest in Weber's writings on the state, bureaucracy, power, and authority. Although other North American sociologists – such as Lewis Coser in his *Masters of Sociological Thought* (1971) – were appreciative of the European legacy, most North American sociologists looked to their own traditions, in particular to the Chicago School, pragmatism, and symbolic interactionism. Their 'founding fathers' were Mead, Park, and Thomas, rather than Marx, Weber, and Durkheim.

This gap between a critical-pessimistic Western European sociology and a progressive-optimistic North American sociology persists to a significant extent today. To take one example, Jeffrey C. Alexander has been at the forefront of the study of the European tradition, but his recent work *The Civil Sphere* (2006) has a characteristic positive conclusion based on the view that various social movements in North American history – notably the women's movement and the civil rights movement – as well as the incorporation of the Jewish community into North American public life testify to the success, flexibility, and robustness of political liberalism in general and American liberalism in particular. There has been a long tradition of critical writing in North American sociology; yet, naturally enough, its focus has been on migration and immigrants, the 'racial' divide, the civil rights movement, and US imperialism in Latin America. By contrast, in European sociology after the mid-twentieth century, the Left was preoccupied with both empirical and conceptual problems that emerged from the legacy of Marxism, such as social class and class consciousness, the role of the state in capitalism, and the role of ideology in class societies – to mention only a few. While 1968 had an impact on both sides of the Atlantic, its meaning in the European context was somewhat different (Sica and Turner, 2005). As shall be explained in the chapter on Pierre Bourdieu's treatment of religion, one clear difference between Western European and North American sociology can be described as follows: whereas Western European sociologists – such as the British sociologist Bryan Wilson – mapped the steady decline of religion in the modern world in the secularisation thesis, North American sociologists were inclined to record the resilience of religion and its essential contribution to the North American way of life, as in the works of Talcott Parsons, Will Herberg, Liston Pope, and Gerhard E. Lenski.

Across the Atlantic, although Britain had emerged successfully from the Second World War, European Anglophone sociology was not especially optimistic or triumphant. The British Empire, which had been in decline since the end of the Victorian period, was finally pulled apart by the war effort, and even the Commonwealth survived only as a fragile reminder of the past. Under

the guidance of Harold Macmillan, Britain began to abandon its imperial relationship with its colonies and accepted Macmillan's view of 'the wind of change blowing through the [African] continent', expressed in his famous speech of 1963. Mainstream British sociology was realistic and reformist, rather than optimistic and utopian. In fact, it could be regarded as the parallel of Keynesian economics in focusing on issues around social insurance. Once more, Macmillan had perhaps been prescient in recognising the dawn of modern consumerism in his 1959 election campaign slogan: 'Most of our people have never had it so good'. This mood of gradual reconstruction was captured in sociology by key figures such as Thomas H. Marshall and Richard M. Titmuss, who wrote influential works on social citizenship and welfare reform. Their influence was originally confined to Britain, where the LSE was the dominant institution in the social sciences. Other influential figures within this reformist framework were Michael Young and Peter Willmott, who published their famous investigations of family life in the London East End in the 1950s.

British social science had been blessed by a wave of migrant intellectuals in the twentieth century, particularly by the Jewish refugees who arrived in the 1930s and later, such as Ilya Neustadt and Norbert Elias, both of whom played a major role in creating what became the famous 'Leicester School' (Rojek, 2004). In political philosophy, the dominant figure was Isaiah Berlin, who was fundamentally critical of Marxism and distrustful of sociology, and indeed of any theory that promoted the idea of historical determinism or of the causal priority of 'society' over the 'individual'. By the late 1960s, other émigrés became influential, especially John Rex, who developed conflict theory along Weberian lines, and Ralf Dahrendorf, who combined Weber and Marx in his famous *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* (1959). Both thinkers were deeply critical of Parsons and more generally of North American sociology. Rex's *Key Problems in Sociological Theory* (1961), which contained an important criticism of functionalism, became a basic textbook of undergraduate British sociology. Other critical assessments were delivered by Tom Bottomore (1965) in *Classes in Modern Society* and by David Lockwood (1964) in his article 'Social Integration and System Integration' and, much later, in his book *Solidarity and Schism* (1992). British sociology in the 1960s came to be identified with various radical movements, such as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and the anti-Apartheid campaign. This political mood of criticism and activism was reflected in Alan Dawe's powerful article 'The Two Sociologies', which was published in the *British Journal of Sociology* in 1970 and in which he argued that Parsons's systems theory ruled out agency and was based on a conservative conception of society. With the principal exception of Roland Robertson, few British sociologists were receptive to North American sociology in general and to Parsonian sociology in particular.

In France, the impact of war was much more profound, and in the post-war period the country was socially polarised and politically divided. The French Left accused many national institutions and traditions of effectively playing the role of the unwelcome and unchanged remainders of Vichy France, while Marxism, as the predominant ideology of the French Communist Party, had a strong impact on post-war French sociology and philosophy. French intellectuals grappled more than most with the issues of politics and ethics to question the relationship of the individual to society and the ultimate bases of ethical responsibility. Jean-Paul Sartre exercised enormous influence over these debates through his lectures at the *École normale supérieure*, through newspapers such as *Les Temps modernes*, and through the Communist Party. Aspiring French intellectuals had to weigh themselves against the legacy of Sartre. As a consequence, questions about humanism, the self, and power became dominant issues, notably in the works of Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu (Luxon, 2008).

France, unlike Britain, became involved in two major and unsuccessful colonial wars, one in Vietnam and one in Algeria. Whereas Britain abandoned its colonial past without protracted colonial conflicts, France was divided and traumatised by its attempts to secure its presence in Indo-China and North Africa. British colonial struggles in Suez and clashes with native anti-colonial movements such as Mau Mau were, unlike the war in Algeria, relatively short-lived. The result was that Marxist sociology played a far more dominant role in French intellectual life than was the case in Britain and North America. In the post-war period, sociological debate was shaped by key figures such as Louis Althusser (1969 [1965]) and Nicos Poulantzas (1978 [1978]), both of whom developed innovative readings of Karl Marx that were designed to replace 'bourgeois sociology'. While Raymond Aron (2002) was a major figure in both politics and French intellectual life, he had few disciples and did not create a school. In addition, his work has been important in political, rather than in sociological, theory. At a later stage, Michel Foucault (1980) emerged as another significant figure with an international audience.

While French sociology has had enormous influence beyond France, the outside world has had little impact on French sociology and philosophy. Foucault, for example, was largely ignorant of the work of Max Weber, despite certain similarities in their interests and approach: for instance, one can see a parallel between Weber's writings on 'personality and life orders' and Foucault's writings on 'subjectivity and disciplinary orders'. And, of course, both thinkers were heavily influenced by Nietzsche. Few French sociologists worked abroad or seriously engaged with Anglo-American sociology. Exceptions include not only Foucault and Aron, but also Raymond Boudon (1980 [1971]), who worked with Paul Lazarsfeld and Michel Crozier. The only significant French

interpretation of Parsons was provided by François Bourricaud (1981 [1977]) in *The Sociology of Talcott Parsons*. French social scientists carved out a rich tradition of their own, but it remained largely sealed off from the rest of the world. In epistemological terms, they were often sceptical about, or hostile towards, Anglo-Saxon traditions based on empiricism or positivism, and in political terms they were often hostile to Anglo-Saxon liberalism. The leading figures of French intellectual life were resolutely anti-American, Sartre being a primary example. Boudon and Aron are the exceptions to this norm. Interestingly, they were both appreciative of Alexis de Tocqueville's interpretation of American democracy. Aron included de Tocqueville in his *Main Currents in Sociological Thought* (1965), and Boudon published a study of de Tocqueville in English. Conversely, it was some time before Americans recognised the value of French sociological work – for example, the importance of Crozier's *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon* (1964 [1963]) and of Bourdieu and Passeron's *The Inheritors* (1979 [1964]).

While it may be argued that French sociology was intellectually isolated from the outside world, it is crucial to acknowledge one curious – and in many respects problematic – exogenous influence: the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. Despite Heidegger's active and complicit involvement in German fascism, he was profoundly influential in post-war French thinking – particularly in philosophy. Heidegger's 'anti-humanism' was influential in the intellectual development of Foucault; and Jacques Derrida, deeply influenced by Heidegger, came to his defence over the persistent accusations of his fascist commitment. In an interview in *Ethos* in 1983, Foucault confessed that '[his] entire philosophical development was determined by [his] reading of Heidegger' (see Didier Eribon's *Michel Foucault*, 1992 [1989]: 30). Sociology was a late development in the French university system, and many academics who became sociologists had been trained in philosophy. Consequently, philosophy has played a much more significant role in Francophone than in Anglophone sociology. It is certainly the case that the often hidden and disguised influence of Heidegger is one of the distinctive features of French sociology.

The differences between Anglophone and Francophone – as well as between North American and Western European – academic traditions are, to a large extent, the outcome of vastly dissimilar experiences of mass warfare, occupation, and liberation. These historical differences between North American and West European sociological traditions continue to produce important forms of divergence in research traditions. North American sociology is supported by a powerful professional body, namely the American Sociological Association; sociology in France and Britain, by contrast, has been more fragmented, devolved, and to some extent even marginalised within the university system. In Britain, sociology remains overshadowed by history departments and historical research, which is reflected in the fact that it has mainly flourished

in new universities such as Essex, Lancaster, and Warwick, rather than in the traditional ones. The field of North American sociology is large; national sociology groups in Europe are small. North American sociology is supported by large grants; much European sociology is done with small grants and often depends on observational studies producing qualitative data (Masson, 2008). Although one can list these institutional differences, the divisions between Anglophone and Francophone sociology appear to be the products of long-standing political ideologies and cultural values. This is the socio-historical context within which one has to understand the work of Pierre Bourdieu and the paradigmatic framework within which to discuss his legacy.

Bourdieu was born in Southwest France on 1 August 1930. After training at the *École normale supérieure*, he was a conscript in the French military in the early years of the Algerian War of Independence (1956–8), but eventually gained a post as an assistant at the University of Algiers. He later published three books relating to his Algerian experiences. These works continue to evoke deep interest in his ethnographic methods, and Bourdieu has been identified subsequently as a ‘post-colonial thinker’ (see *The Sociological Review – Special Issue: Post-Colonial Bourdieu*, 2009). Unlike that of many previous French sociologists, Bourdieu’s work has had a wide and diverse reception. It has played an important part in the ‘somaesthetics’ developed by Richard Shusterman, who has combined Bourdieu’s treatment of practice and habitus with the notion of practice in American pragmatism, notably in his *Pragmatist Aesthetics* (1992) and, to some extent, in his volume *Bourdieu: A Critical Reader* (1999). Bourdieu – in particular since the publication of *Distinction* (1984 [1979]) – has had a major impact on cultural sociology, while his work on the logic of practice has deeply influenced what we may call ‘the turn to practice’ in anthropology and history. He has had an equally significant role in the development of the sociology of the body (see, for instance, Shilling, 2004; Turner, 1996). In a recent study, Bourdieu’s reflexive sociology has been cross-fertilised with Habermas’s critical theory (Susen, 2007). In the United States, Bourdieu’s work has been promoted and defended, especially by his disciple, Loïc Wacquant, and other major readers have introduced Bourdieu to an American audience – in particular, through the publication of Calhoun, LiPuma, and Postone’s edited volume *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives* (1993). There is also little doubt that, in Britain, Bourdieu’s work has had a significant impact on the development of the sociology of education – especially Bourdieu and Passeron’s *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (1990 [1970]). In British social theory, this aspect of Bourdieu’s reception has been thoroughly analysed by Derek Robbins.

It may appear that Bourdieu’s sociology is a successful bridge between the Western European ‘critical’ tradition and the North American

‘professionalised’ tradition. In our view, however, this bridge is fragile. Obviously, Bourdieu was largely a product of the forces we have identified in our Introduction. Bourdieu, notably in his political views, was stridently anti-American, particularly in his *The Weight of the World* (1999 [1993]). He was unambiguously a public intellectual of the Left, critical of neoliberal economics in global terms and of French domestic policy (for example, towards immigrants). Various chapters in this study of Bourdieu (see esp. chapters 2 and 3) underline the influence of Marx on Bourdieu’s thinking. While Bourdieu was significantly influenced by Marx and Durkheim, he was not particularly receptive to American social science, despite the obvious similarities between his ideas about agency and practice and American pragmatism. And while French philosophy was openly influenced by Heidegger, Bourdieu launched an attack on Heidegger’s work and the profound impact of his writings in *The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger* (1991 [1988]) (see also Bourdieu, 1975). Bourdieu was also influenced, if only to a limited extent, by Weber (see esp. chapter 5). Turner, for instance, examines Bourdieu’s deployment of Weber in the sociology of religion (see chapter 10).

Ironically, Bourdieu was, to some extent, the intellectual product of a particular field with its specific cultural capital; in this sense, his sociology was profoundly ‘French’: his interest in and engagement with Algeria, his sensitivities to migration in general and Muslim migration in particular, his awareness of the competition over political and economic power between Paris and the French regions, and his – at least implicit – anti-Americanism. Yet, Bourdieu also emphasised that *réflexivité* – conceived of as a self-critical position – was an integral component of his own sociological work, and he was conscious of cultural, institutional, and disciplinary boundaries and their tangible impact on the circulation of ideas in the modern world. Was Bourdieu’s work able to transcend the French field? And where does his legacy lie? To what extent did he span the divide between classical sociology (Marx, Durkheim, and Weber) and contemporary sociology? Did he cross or provide a bridge between Western European and North American sociology? It is the task of this collection of critical essays to respond to these and similar questions. The volume contains fifteen chapters. The wide range of topics covered in these chapters is indicative of the complexity that characterises Bourdieusian thought in at least five respects.

First, Bourdieu’s work is *multithematic*. Bourdieu produced a large number of books and articles on a broad range of topics in various areas of research: cultural sociology, political sociology, economic sociology, the sociology of class, the sociology of gender, the sociology of education, the sociology of language, the sociology of religion, the sociology of power, the sociology of experience, the

sociology of time, the sociology of space, and the sociology of knowledge and science – to mention only some of the key research areas in which his sociological writings are situated. The multithematic nature of Bourdieu's oeuvre is indicative of his commitment to the idea that critical social scientists should resist tendencies towards the specialisation of research programmes, the invention of autopoietic research languages, the creation of inward-looking research communities, the institutionalisation of self-referential research units, and the construction of power-driven research empires.

Second, Bourdieu's work is *multidisciplinary*. Given that Bourdieu was a philosopher by training and a sociologist by choice, a multidisciplinary view of things became an integral part of his intellectual development from an early stage. To be exact, there seems to be a consensus in the literature that Bourdieu's work can be considered as multidisciplinary on three levels: in terms of its multidisciplinary *roots*, in terms of its multidisciplinary *outlook*, and in terms of its multidisciplinary *impact*. There can be little doubt that the three disciplines that have played the most important role both in Bourdieu's intellectual development and in his intellectual influence are philosophy, anthropology, and sociology. Some commentators would rightly insist that other disciplines from the human and social sciences need to be added to this list – in particular, economics, politics, linguistics, semiotics, psychoanalysis, and cultural and historical studies, as well as literature, music, and art history. The multidisciplinary – and, indeed, transdisciplinary – nature of Bourdieu's oeuvre is indicative of his firm conviction that critical social scientists should seek to overcome artificial and counterproductive boundaries between epistemically and institutionally separated disciplines.

Third, Bourdieu's work is intellectually *eclectic*. Bourdieu drew on a number of intellectual traditions in his writings. Although one runs the risk of being overly schematic when classifying these traditions and relating the name of Bourdieu to other influential thinkers, it seems appropriate to suggest that the following intellectual traditions (and thinkers associated with these traditions) are particularly important to Bourdieu's oeuvre: in *philosophy*, metaphysics and German idealism (Leibniz, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel), phenomenology (Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty), existentialism (Pascal, Heidegger, and Sartre), ordinary language philosophy (Wittgenstein, Austin, and Searle), Marxist philosophy (Althusser), and the philosophy of science (Canguilhem, Popper, and Kuhn); in *anthropology*, structuralist anthropology (Mauss and Lévi-Strauss) and symbolic anthropology (Geertz); and, in *sociology*, materialist sociology (Marx), functionalist sociology (Durkheim), interpretive sociology (Weber), micro-sociology (Mead, Garfinkel, and Goffman), and constructivist sociology (Berger and Luckmann). In other words, there is a long list of different intellectual traditions on which Bourdieu drew in his writings. As is widely acknowledged in the literature, Bourdieu's

work not only offers an original synthesis of the ‘Holy Trinity’ of Marx, Durkheim, and Weber but also illustrates the continuing relevance of their writings to contemporary issues in social and political analysis. The three canonical cornerstones of sociological research – that is, Marxian, Durkheimian, and Weberian thought – are just as crucial to Bourdieu’s oeuvre as three of the most influential disciplines in the history of the humanities and social sciences: philosophy, anthropology, and sociology. The eclectic nature of Bourdieu’s writings reflects his willingness to engage with different – and, in many respects, competing – currents of social and political thought, indicating his persuasion that critical social scientists should dare to break with canonical patterns of research by cross-fertilising the conceptual tools and theoretical presuppositions of rival intellectual traditions.

Fourth, Bourdieu’s work is both *empirically grounded and theoretically informed*. It is no secret that Bourdieu, as he stressed on several occasions, was committed to combining empirical and theoretical research in his own work. More specifically, Bourdieu sought to contribute to overcoming the gap between empirically anchored and practically engaged research, on the one hand, and conceptually driven and theoretically oriented research, on the other. From a Bourdieusian standpoint, truly reflexive social research cannot rely on an artificial division of labour between those who engage primarily in the collection of quantitative or qualitative data ‘on the ground’ and those who immerse themselves exclusively in the elaboration of sophisticated conceptual frameworks ‘from the desk’. Reflexive social research is not simply about either doing ethnological tourism – ‘*with* the object of study’ – through the embodied experience of real life, or embracing a position of philosophical transcendentalism – ‘*above* the object of study’ – through the disembodied experience of scholastic life. In other words, the pursuit of critical social research is not about creating a gulf between data collectors and number crunchers, on one side, and conceptual architects and system builders, on the other. Rather, it is about combining the empirical and the theoretical components of social science and thereby demonstrating their interdependence. If one claims to be committed to the idea of critical social science in the Bourdieusian sense, one must seek to overcome the counterproductive divide between empirical and theoretical research. As a *philosophe* by training and a *sociologue* by choice (Hacking, 2004: 147; Susen, 2007: 246), Bourdieu was convinced that ‘research without theory is blind, and theory without research is empty’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 162, italics removed). The fact that his writings are not only guided by sophisticated philosophical frameworks but also substantiated by a large variety of empirical studies illustrates that Bourdieu sought to practise what he preached. The empirically grounded and theoretically informed nature of Bourdieu’s oeuvre proves his commitment to the view that methodologically

rigorous observation and conceptually refined interpretation must go hand in hand if one aims to study the functioning of society in a genuinely scientific manner.

Fifth, Bourdieu's work is *politically committed*. Particularly towards the end of his career, Bourdieu was concerned with establishing a fruitful link between his sociological studies, which were aimed at providing a *deconstructive* grasp of reality, and his various political engagements, which were oriented towards having a *constructive* impact upon society. In this sense, Bourdieusian thought is clearly committed to the Marxist dictum that '[t]he philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it' (Marx, 2000/1977 [1845]: 173). From a Bourdieusian perspective, the social sciences in general and sociology in particular have a normative commitment not only to providing an insightful and critical *understanding* of human reality but also, more importantly, to having a positive and transformative *impact* on the material and symbolic organisation of society. Hence, a critical interpretation of reality should make use of the scientific tools developed by sociology and thereby seek to contribute to the emancipation of society. Precisely, an emancipatory science – in the Bourdieusian sense – needs to confront three essential tasks: first, to *uncover* the underlying mechanisms that perpetuate the reproduction of material and symbolic relations of social domination (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 14–15); second, to '*universalise* the conditions of access to universality' that generate material and symbolic processes of social emancipation (Bourdieu, 1994: 233, italics added); and, third, to *engage* in a '*Realpolitik* of reason' (Bourdieu, 2001: 32, italics in original), thereby mobilising the empowering resources of critical rationality and making use of them for the consolidation of an emancipatory society. The political nature of Bourdieu's oeuvre is an unambiguous sign of his belief that critical sociologists should not only engage in the scientific study of the relational construction of reality but also aim to have a transformative impact upon the historical development of society.

The fifteen chapters of the present volume illustrate – on different levels and with different emphases – the importance of the aforementioned concerns.

First, similarly to Bourdieu's own work, the selection of essays published in the present volume is *multithematic*. Themes covered in this book range from Bourdieu's cultural sociology (Joas/Knöbl, Rahkonen, and Susen), Bourdieu's political sociology (Basaure, Robbins, and Sintomer), Bourdieu's economic sociology (Adkins), Bourdieu's sociology of language (Kögler), and Bourdieu's sociology of religion (Bourdieu/Schultheis/Pfeuffer and Turner) to Bourdieu's sociology of power (Fowler and Paille/van Heerikhuizen/Emirbayer), Bourdieu's sociology of experience (Frère and Karsenti), Bourdieu's sociology of time (Adkins), and Bourdieu's sociology of knowledge

and science (Robbins, Sintomer, and Wacquant). Unsurprisingly, there is some significant overlap between the thematic foci of these chapters. As much as this overlap is symptomatic of the breadth and depth of Bourdieu's oeuvre, it illustrates the difficulty attached to any attempts to divide his various contributions into key thematic areas. In light of the multithematic complexity of Bourdieusian thought, it may be impossible, and indeed pointless, to pigeonhole his main contributions.

Second, following *l'esprit ouvert* that runs through Bourdieu's writings, the volume is *multidisciplinary*. Even if we accept that all disciplinary boundaries are somewhat artificial and that, as Bourdieu points out, they can have counterproductive effects, we cannot deny that the three disciplinary pillars of Bourdieusian thought – philosophy, anthropology, and sociology – are omnipresent in the following chapters. Although, in the broadest sense, all of the contributions to this volume represent critical studies in social and political thought, they fall into these three main disciplines. We may explore Bourdieu's *philosophically* inspired accounts of the age-old preoccupation with the relationships between history and society (Fowler), being and society (Karsenti), language and society (Kögler), reason and society (Sintomer), faith and society (Turner), polity and society (Robbins), recognition and society (Basaure), resentment and society (Rahkonen), aesthetics and society (Susen), or time and society (Adkins). We may focus on Bourdieu's *anthropologically* motivated analyses of the civilisational functions of culture (Joas/Knöbl), religion (Bourdieu/Schultheis/Pfeuffer and Turner), habitus (Frère), individual and collective experiences (Karsenti), or historical development (Karsenti and Wacquant). And, in fact, we may appreciate the relevance of Bourdieu's *sociologically* grounded studies of a number of themes in literally every chapter: practice and society (Joas/Knöbl), capital and society (Fowler), the body and society (Karsenti), knowledge and society (Wacquant), relationality and society (Bourdieu/Schultheis/Pfeuffer), taste and society (Rahkonen), power and society (Paulle/van Heerikhuizen/Emirbayer), culture and society (Susen), intersubjectivity and society (Basaure), religion and society (Turner), habitus and society (Frère), communication and society (Kögler), politics and society (Robbins), the public sphere and society (Sintomer), or economy and society (Adkins). The wide-ranging disciplinary relevance of Bourdieusian thought to anthropology, philosophy, and sociology, which manifests itself in the diverse thematic foci of this volume, illustrates the fact that Bourdieusian thought transcends canonical boundaries not only in terms of its multidisciplinary roots and outlook but also in terms of its transdisciplinary impact on different areas of research in the humanities and social sciences.

Third, resembling the Bourdieusian approach itself, the volume is intellectually *eclectic*. The book seeks to do justice to the fact that Bourdieu

drew on a range of intellectual traditions and on a variety of thinkers whose works are associated with these traditions. Far from covering all of the intellectual schools and paradigmatic trends that influenced Bourdieu's oeuvre, the collection of essays published in the present volume has three main foci. The first set of essays traces the roots of Bourdieu's thought in classical sociology by closely examining his intellectual connections with the writings of the *founding figures of sociology*, that is, with the works of Marx (Fowler and Karsenti), Durkheim (Wacquant), and Weber (Bourdieu/Schultheis/Pfeuffer). The second set of essays is mainly concerned with Bourdieu's relation to *modern social philosophy*, in particular with regard to the works of Nietzsche (Rahkonen), Elias (Paulle/van Heerikhuizen/Emirbayer), Adorno (Susen), and Honneth (Basaure). The third set of essays explores the relevance of Bourdieu's writings to key issues debated in the *contemporary social sciences*, such as the continuous presence of religion (Turner), the transformative power of social movements (Frère), the emancipatory potential of language (Kögler), the political legacy of 1968 (Robbins), the socio-historical significance of the rise of the public sphere (Sintomer), and – particularly important in the current climate – the social consequences of economic crisis (Adkins). The wide range of topics covered in the present volume indicates that it would be a mistake to associate Bourdieu's work exclusively with one particular theme and, in so doing, disregard the fact that intellectual eclecticism constitutes an essential feature of Bourdieu's oeuvre, not only in terms of its roots and points of reference, but also in terms of its overall impact on the contemporary social sciences.

Fourth, in line with one of Bourdieu's deepest convictions, the volume pays tribute to the fact that his work is both *empirically grounded and theoretically informed*. The essays in this book are yet another illustration of the fact that Bourdieu can be praised for practising what he preached in that, in his sociological writings, he was firmly committed to overcoming the divide between 'the empirical' and 'the conceptual', 'the concrete' and 'the abstract', 'the actual' and 'the nominal', and 'the practical' and 'the theoretical'. To be sure, most of the following chapters have a 'theoretical' focus, since they are primarily concerned with the legacy of Bourdieu's work in contemporary social and political thought. Nevertheless, what manifests itself in the contributions to this volume is the fact that we can only make sense of Bourdieu's oeuvre if we consider his conviction that critical social analysis needs to be both empirically grounded and theoretically informed as a central normative position. Indeed, the whole of Bourdieu's famous critique of scholastic thought was motivated by the view that it is the *skholè* – a situation characterised by freedom from necessity – which leads scholastic thinkers to produce scholastic thought, that is, thought which fails to reflect upon the social conditions of its own existence (Bourdieu, 1997: 9, 15, 22, 24, 131, and 143; Susen, 2007: 158–167). According

to Bourdieu, scholastic thinkers ‘remain trapped in the scholastic dilemma of determinism and freedom’ (1997: 131) because their privileged position in the social space permits them to ignore the homological intertwinement of field and habitus. We can look at Bourdieu’s fruitful synthesis of the works of Marx, Durkheim, and Weber (chapters 2–5) and his concern with classical sociological categories such as ‘social struggle’, ‘social facts’, and ‘social understanding’. We can explore Bourdieu’s engagement with modern German social philosophy – for instance, with regard to the works of Nietzsche, Elias, Adorno, and Honneth (chapters 6–9) – and his sociological development of concepts such as ‘taste’, ‘power’, ‘culture’, and ‘recognition’. And, of course, we can assess the usefulness of Bourdieu’s oeuvre for making sense of key issues in the contemporary social sciences, in particular with regard to the sociological significance of religion, language, political change, public debate, and economic transformations (chapters 10–15). All of these themes, which are thoroughly examined in the present volume, were studied by Bourdieu through a fruitful combination of solid empirical data and sophisticated theoretical frameworks. For, as he insisted, only insofar as we do justice to the fact that critical social research needs to be both empirically grounded and theoretically informed can we claim to produce social-scientific knowledge.

Fifth, the contributions to this volume illustrate – some directly, some indirectly – that Bourdieu’s sociology is *politically committed*. From a Bourdieusian standpoint, however, sociology can only be politically committed if it is devoted to both providing a critical analysis of social relations and having a transformative impact upon the daily reproduction of power relations. To a greater or lesser extent, Bourdieu’s normative commitment to the political nature of reflexive sociology is reflected in each of the chapters of this volume. We shall conclude this Introduction by briefly elaborating upon this political dimension and its relevance to the arguments developed in the following contributions.

In the introductory chapter, Joas and Knöbl remind us of the importance of Bourdieu’s experiences in Algeria during a formative time in which Bourdieu gained direct access to the social and political complexities of Algerian colonial and postcolonial realities. In the second chapter, Fowler elegantly shows that, given that he was committed to some of the key presuppositions of historical materialism, Bourdieu not only borrowed powerful conceptual tools and useful methodological frameworks from Marxist social analysis, but he also recognised that the critical study of power relations is pointless if it is not aimed at the emancipatory transformation of social relations. In the third chapter, Karsenti argues, in accordance with both Marx and Bourdieu, that the ‘game of theory’ is worth nothing if it fails to engage with the ‘reality of practice’ and that, due to our bodily immersion in a contradictory

society, there is no such thing as an innocent form of subjectivity. In the fourth chapter, Wacquant, on the basis of a comparative analysis of the works of Durkheim and Bourdieu, contends that the existence of seemingly ineluctable social facts cannot be dissociated from the existence of relatively arbitrary social norms: the social conditions that appear independent of our will are historically specific arrangements that can and often have to be changed through our will. This position ties in with the thematic focus of the fifth chapter: when interviewed by Schultheis and Pfeuffer, Bourdieu asserts that society can be regarded as an ensemble of relatively arbitrary relations between people and groups of people, whose existence is necessarily shaped by the spatiotemporal specificity of a given cultural reality and by field-differentiated codes of practical legitimacy.

The sixth chapter, written by Rahkonen, seems to suggest that, ultimately, Nietzsche's *Wille zur Macht* and Bourdieu's *Wille zum Geschmack* together form the socio-ontological foundation of our *Wille zur Welt*. Paulle, van Heerikhuizen, and Emirbayer demonstrate in the seventh chapter that if our lives are contingent upon the homological interplay between habitus and field, and therefore upon a constant struggle over different forms of capital, the taken-for-grantedness of social relations is necessarily impregnated with the interest-ladenness of power relations. In the eighth chapter, Susen offers a comparative analysis of Adorno's critique of the culture industry and Bourdieu's account of the cultural economy; the obvious political challenge to be confronted in light of the deep pessimism that permeates both Adornean and Bourdieusian thought is to explore the extent to which there is room for empowering forms of culture within disempowering forms of society. In the ninth chapter, Basaure invites us to take on some difficult tasks from which emancipatory forms of sociology cannot hide away – namely the tasks of giving a voice to the voiceless, of making the unrecognised recognisable, and of shedding light on individual and collective experiences of suffering and disrespect caused by a lack of social recognition and access to social resources.

In the tenth chapter, Turner illustrates that, given that religious practices and belief systems have far from disappeared in modern society, critical sociologists are obliged to reflect upon the normative relationship between secular and religious modes of relating to and making sense of the world. In the eleventh chapter, Frère rightly insists that even if we conceive of people primarily as 'homological actors', who are relatively determined by the various positions they occupy in different social spaces, we need to account for the fact that humans have the capacity to invent and reinvent their place in the world by constantly working and acting upon it. Taking into consideration that, as Kögler elucidates in the twelfth chapter, linguistic interactions are always asymmetrically structured because they are inevitably permeated by power

relations, a critical sociology of language needs to explore the extent to which linguistically articulated claims to epistemic validity represent relationally constituted claims to social legitimacy. From Robbins's textual analysis, developed in the thirteenth chapter, it becomes clear that, for Bourdieu, social science and political action have to go hand in hand: a *raisonnement sociologique* that compels us to confront the reality of social domination is, at the same time, a *raisonnement politique* that invites us to contemplate the possibility of social emancipation. As Sintomer explains in the fourteenth chapter, Bourdieu's concept of critical reason is ultimately a form of political reason: just as research without theory is blind and theory without research is empty, politics without critique is edgeless and critique without politics is pointless. Finally, as Adkins convincingly argues in the fifteenth chapter, in Bourdieu's writings we can find powerful resources to make sense not only of the current economic crisis but also of the silent shift from the modern paradigm 'time is money' to the late modern dictum 'money is time': the temporalisation of practice is intimately interrelated with the politicisation of time and, hence, with the restructuring of social life.

We have taken the possibly unusual step of providing an Afterword, which offers the reader a synoptic view of the chapters. We have included this Afterword in part because the chapters, while addressing a common theme, are both diverse and complex. The Afterword contains a clear and concise summary of the overall objectives of this collection. Readers may want to consult both the Introduction and the Afterword before launching into the core of this volume.

Acknowledgements

We are deeply grateful to Elena Knox for her detailed and useful comments on an earlier version of this Introduction.

References

- Alexander, Jeffrey C. (2006) *The Civil Sphere*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Althusser, Louis (1969 [1965]) *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin.
- Aron, Raymond (2002) *Le marxisme de Marx*, Paris: Fallois.
- Aron, Raymond, Richard Howard and Helen Weaver (1965) *Main Currents in Sociological Thought*, trans. Richard Howard and Helen Weaver, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
- Back, Les, Azzedine Haddour and Nirmal Puwar (eds.) (2009) *The Sociological Review – Special Issue: Post-Colonial Bourdieu* 57(3).
- Bottomore, T. B. (1965) *Classes in Modern Society*, London: Allen & Unwin.
- Boudon, Raymond (1980 [1971]) *The Crisis in Sociology: Problems of Sociological Epistemology*, trans. Howard H. Davis, New York: Columbia University Press.

- Bourdieu, Pierre (1975) 'L'ontologie politique de Martin Heidegger', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 5–6: 109–156.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1976) 'Le champ scientifique', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 8–9 [2–3]: 88–104.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1977 [1972]) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1984 [1979]) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1991 [1988]) *The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger*, trans. Peter Collier, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Terry Eagleton (1992) 'Doxa and Common Life', *New Left Review* 191: 111–121.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1994) *Raisons pratiques. Sur la théorie de l'action*, Paris: Seuil.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1997) *Méditations pascaliennes*, Paris: Seuil.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1999 [1993]) *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society*, trans. Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson [et al.], Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (2000) 'Mit Weber gegen Weber: Pierre Bourdieu im Gespräch', in Pierre Bourdieu, *Das religiöse Feld. Texte zur Ökonomie des Heilsgeschehens*, herausgegeben von Franz Schultheis, Andreas Pfeuffer und Stephan Egger, übersetzt von Stephan Egger, Konstanz: Universitätsverlag Konstanz, pp. 111–129.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (2000 [1997]) *Pascalian Meditations*, trans. Richard Nice, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (2001) 'Si le monde social m'est supportable, c'est parce que je peux m'indigner'. *Entretien avec Antoine Spire*, Paris: Éditions de l'Aube.
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Jean-Claude Passeron (1979 [1964]) *The Inheritors: French Students and their Relation to Culture*, trans. Richard Nice, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Jean-Claude Passeron (1990 [1970]) *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, trans. Richard Nice, 2nd Edition, London: Sage.
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Loïc Wacquant (1992) *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bourricaud, François (1981 [1977]) *The Sociology of Talcott Parsons*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Calhoun, Craig, Edward LiPuma and Moishe Postone (eds.) (1993) *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Coser, Lewis A. (1971) *Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in Historical and Social Context*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Crozier, Michel (1964 [1963]) *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon*, London: Tavistock.
- Dahrendorf, Ralf (1959) *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Dawe, Alan (1970) 'The Two Sociologies', *The British Journal of Sociology* 21(2): 207–218.
- Eribon, Didier (1992 [1989]) *Michel Foucault*, trans. Betsy Wing, London: Faber.
- Foucault, Michel (1980) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, edited by Colin Gordon, translated by Colin Gordon [et al.], Brighton: Harvester Press.
- Hacking, Ian (2004) 'Science de la science chez Pierre Bourdieu', in Jacques Bouveresse and Daniel Roche (eds.) *La liberté par la connaissance: Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002)*, Paris: Collège de France, Odile Jacob, pp. 147–162.
- Holton, Robert John and Bryan S. Turner (1986) *Talcott Parsons on Economy and Society*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

- Lerner, Daniel (1958) *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East*, with the collaboration of Lucille W. Pevsner and an introduction by David Riesman, Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin (1963) *The First New Nation: The United States in Historical and Comparative Perspective*, New York: Basic Books.
- Lockwood, David (1964) 'Social Integration and System Integration', in George K. Zollschan and Walter Hirsch (eds.) *Explorations in Social Change*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp. 244–257.
- Lockwood, David (1992) *Solidarity and Schism: 'The Problem of Disorder' in Durkheimian and Marxist Sociology*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Luxon, Nancy (2008) 'Ethics and Subjectivity: Practices of Self-Governance in the Late Lectures of Michel Foucault', *Political Theory* 36(3): 377–402.
- Marx, Karl (2000/1977 [1845]) 'Theses on Feuerbach', in David McLellan (ed.) *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, 2nd Edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 171–174.
- Masson, Philippe (2008) *Faire de la sociologie. Les grandes enquêtes françaises depuis 1945*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Parsons, Talcott (1951) *The Social System*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Poulantzas, Nicos (1978 [1978]) *State, Power, Socialism*, trans. Patrick Camiller, London: NLB.
- Rex, John (1961) *Key Problems of Sociological Theory*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Rojek, Chris (2004) 'An Anatomy of the Leicester School of Sociology: An Interview with Eric Dunning', *Journal of Classical Sociology* 4(3): 337–359.
- Shilling, Chris (2004) 'Physical Capital and Situated Action: A New Direction for Corporeal Sociology', *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 25(4): 473–487.
- Shusterman, Richard (1992) *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Shusterman, Richard (ed.) (1999) *Bourdieu: A Critical Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Sica, Alan and Stephen P. Turner (2005) *The Disobedient Generation: Social Theorists in the Sixties*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Susen, Simon (2007) *The Foundations of the Social: Between Critical Theory and Reflexive Sociology*, Oxford: Bardwell Press.
- Turner, Bryan S. (1996) *The Body and Society*, London: Sage.
- Weber, Max (2001/1930 [1904–05]) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons, London: Routledge.