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Barbara Misztal sets out to argue that certain changes in contemporary societies make the construction of trust more urgent and that the nature of trust necessary to sustain social order and the quality of social relationships is changing (pp. 8–10). Since trust can mean many things, the author first presents an extensive and thorough discussion on the diverse meanings attached to the word by other scholars and its relation to similar concepts such as “faith” and “confidence.” Misztal furthermore notices shortcomings in the self-evident nature of trust that classical sociologists such as Durkheim, Simmel, and Weber seem to propose and discerns three different kinds of trust connected with three different kinds of social order. Stable order is the kind of order in which trust is apparent as a routine background to everyday interaction. Here, trust consists of the formation of habits, reputations, and collective memory (trust as habitus). People are able to live more pleasantly given justifiable trust in their social environment. In cohesive order, trust is based on familiarity, bonds of friendship, and common faith and values as experienced in bonds with family, friends, and society (trust as passion). Finally, for collaborative order one needs trust to cope with the freedom of others and foster cooperation (trust as policy). Trust in other people’s reciprocity is an aid to overcome the detrimental effect of not being able to rely on others.

Misztal fills the last three of the book’s six chapters with an elaboration of her typology, mainly by positioning other work on trust and social order in this typology, thereby clarifying its meaning and impact. Taken together these chapters form convincing evidence that trust can facilitate social order in different ways and that the function of trust can be studied in the light of its role in one of the three kinds of social order. This typology and the place of classical and contemporary research on trust and social order in this typology is, I think, Misztal’s main achievement and one not to be underrated. The coverage of the literature on trust is excellent and ranges from the above-mentioned classics of sociology to recent contributions in anthropology, political science, and, of course, sociology.

The broad coverage of the literature is at the same time its weakness. The majority of the book actually consists of giving the literature its place.

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in this new typology of social order, which easily distracts the reader from the author’s reasoning. As the author argues (p. 9) it is one of her aims “to collect evidence in support of the thesis concerned with the growing significance of trust relationships.” Setting aside the fact that one should not only look for supporting but also for other evidence, I think the book would have benefited from shifting its emphasis away from being a pure literature review and back to the reasoning underlying Misztal’s main claim. The general argument is that the fact that trust gets increasingly important has something to do with globalization, an increasing demand for legitimacy of the state and increasing individualism. I am convinced the author will argue that I missed some important points by summarizing it this way, but this is almost inevitable given that the book is written as an array of linked references, quite densely filled with direct one- or two-sentence quotations from these references, and contains relatively little direct argumentation.

To summarize, I think the typology of social order (and the functions of trust in it) as set forward by the author is a useful one that can prevent a lot of common misunderstandings with regard to trust. The coverage and positioning of the literature on trust is outstanding, but unraveling the main thrust of the author’s arguments about the increasing importance of trust is rather difficult.

Readers interested in an examination of which scholars occupy the sociological stage with respect to trust or in how the classical sociologists can be reinterpreted with respect to their position on social order should definitely obtain a copy of this book. Readers with a relatively up-to-date knowledge on the literature, who are willing to believe at the onset that trust is a complex, multifaceted topic that gets increasingly important, might find it enough just to scan the bibliography.


Edgar Kiser
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Nothing better illustrates the increasing convergence of sociological and economic theory than studies of collective action. Not that long ago, almost all economists and game theorists stressed the ubiquity of free riding in the absence of selective incentives, while most sociologists argued that cultural and structural factors were the sole determinants of collective action. Although these types of arguments still persist in both disciplines, many game theorists are now trying to model the social contexts of collective action, and many sociologists are taking the problem of free riding seriously instead of assuming it away.

Mark Lichbach’s new book not only documents this trend, it illustrates
the value of combining sociological and game theoretic insights. The Cooperator’s Dilemma provides a comprehensive review of theories of collective action that arose in response to Mancur Olson’s seminal work. Lichbach knows both the sociological and economic literatures well and is thus able to combine discussions of the Nash equilibrium in a noncooperative game with analyses of arguments stressing values or power.

The book is organized around a typology of four proposed solutions to the collective action problem. Market, or “invisible hand,” solutions try to specify the conditions under which uncoordinated exchange relations between individuals in a “state of nature” will result in collective action. This set of solutions (Lichbach discusses 12 types in this category) focuses on exogenous changes in the costs and benefits of participation, the nature of the public good desired, the productivity of tactics, and the characteristics of actors (such as their propensity to take risks).

Contract approaches focus on how individuals construct rules and institutions that create and maintain voluntary collective agreements without third-party enforcement (i.e., states). This category includes various forms of self-government, “tit-for-tat” solutions, and mutual exchange agreements. This solution begins to incorporate more sociological factors, mainly in the form of existing social networks that facilitate the information flows necessary to monitor compliance.

The third and fourth solutions are more purely sociological, although game theorists have begun to explore both. Community approaches assume the prior existence of communal organizations with their shared sets of beliefs and values. This is the classic “cultural” solution to the collective action problem, and it works primarily through changing the microfoundations of action from pure rational self-interest to a value-based altruism toward the community. Hierarchy approaches assume the existence of third-party enforcement in the form of institutions that coerce individuals to contribute to public goods. This solution includes most power-based sociological arguments about collective action.

Lichbach evaluates each of these solutions in terms of their logical completeness and logical consistency. He argues that all of the proposed solutions are incomplete because each of them presupposes the existence of at least one of the other solutions. For example, he argues that contract solutions require markets to “permit parties to arrive at the terms of a contract” (p. 25); market solutions require community to create the trust needed to conduct market exchanges; community solutions require hierarchy because common values must be authoritatively enforced; and hierarchy requires contract “because in the very long run only mutually agreed-upon coercion will be accepted” (p. 25). While Lichbach is certainly right that there is some interdependence between each of these types of solutions, his argument that they always require other solutions is overstated. Contracts have often been made in the absence of markets, many markets are not supported by shared values, some communal values have persisted for centuries without hierarchical third-party enforce-
ment, and some autocratic hierarchies have lasted for centuries without mutual contractual agreements between rulers and ruled.

Lichbach argues that many of the solutions to the collective action problem are not logically consistent, since they jettison the collective action research program’s core assumption of rational choice microfoundations (of course, this is not a core assumption for all who study collective action; Lichbach clearly situates himself in the Olsonian tradition). Lichbach argues that the collective action research program should not entirely abandon assumptions of rationality and self-interest (as many community solutions have), but they should not always retain the most narrow version of these assumptions either. His quite reasonable proposal is that rational choice microfoundations be used as an initial baseline and that they should be broadened only when rational action alone cannot account for collective action. This is an increasingly common position among rational choice theorists, but its lineage can be traced to a sociologist, Max Weber.

Lichbach’s book illustrates the inevitable broadening of rational choice models as they have moved from economics into political science and sociology, at both the micro and macro levels of analysis. It should be a valuable resource for anyone interested in surveying the range of solutions to the problem of collective action.


David Ingram
Loyola University of Chicago

The decline of traditional authority and gemeinschaft, in the wake of what, since Weber, has been customarily denoted as social and cultural rationalization, has remained a popular theme among sociologists ever since Marx and Tönnies first broached the subject in the 19th century. As this anthology amply attests, rapid changes in the structure of capitalism, communication media, and international relations have provided a new generation of postmodern sociologists with additional food for thought on the subject. Here, in a single volume, an impressive cast of contributors range over such issues as postmodern morality, social systems complexity, cybernetic subjectivity, global space-time compression, multicultural immigration, and posttraditional communitarianism.

The volume’s 15 essays are grouped under four headings. The essays grouped under the first heading, “Losing the Traditional,” basically subscribe to the radical view that, as one of the contributor’s (John Thompson) puts it, “with the development of modern societies, tradition gradually declines in significance and eventually ceases to play a meaningful
role in the lives of most individuals” (p. 28). Thus, Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim argue in chapter 2 that what is historically new about modern society is the emergence of radical individualism, in which institutions like marriage no longer confront subjects as an objective force limiting their free creativity. Individualism is also correlated with detraditionalization in the essays by Zygmunt Bauman, Thomas Luckmann, and Niklas Luhmann, in which the “break” separating traditional, stratified society from functionally differentiated society is seen as generating contingency in morals, preferences, and responsibilities, on the one side, and a corresponding yearning for inviolate values, on the other.

The second group of essays takes issue with the “triumphalist” view of detraditionalization emphasized above. The contributions in this section challenge the very notion of periodizing a radical break between traditional and modern society, arguing either that so-called traditional societies exhibit an abundance of individualism (Barbara Adam, John B. Thompson) or that so-called modern societies retain residues of tradition (Timothy Luke, Colin Campbell). Although most of the contributors to this coexistence thesis concede that detraditionalization has occurred, they insist that traditions rely on individual critical reappropriations for their continuous efficacy over time and space, and (conversely) that individuals rely on background habits for their freedom of thought. Luke, in particular, does a credible job of showing not only how what we call the modern has become traditional but also how (following David Harvey’s well-known views about the postmodern condition) the compression of space and time due to new techniques of mass production, mass consumption, and mass communication has quickened the pace of life in highly unsettling ways.

The essays in part 3 discuss specific modern traditions, such as nationalism, humanism, universalism, and pluralism, and their impact on such notions as community, identity, and difference. Richard Sennett starts things off by exploring the tension between the 19th-century ideology of national identity—whose ethnocentrism resonates in the communitarian refrain voiced by today’s advocates of a politics of cultural identity—and the experience of belonging to a universal community, which is the lot of the foreigner. Paul Heelas expands upon the notion of humanity as a universal community, arguing along Durkheimian lines that such a notion can serve as a solidifying morality against the relativism of more exclusivist notions of community and identity. This view also informs Scott Lash’s critique of deconstructive philosophies of difference (Heidegger, Levinas, and Derrida), which fail to account for modern traditions of intersubjectivity and solidarity. Finally, in marked contrast to the previous contributors, Paul Morris appeals to the work of Jean-Luc Nancy in elaborating a deconstructive account of community that eschews traditional communitarian notions of identity, solidarity, continuity, and homogeneity. Especially intriguing is his insistence on the complementarity of egalitarian, localized communities of descent and hierarchical, universalistic communities of assent. The latter build on the former (as did early
Christianity on Judaism) while infusing them with singular and utopian meanings.

The last section, “Dissolving Detraditionalization,” contains two essays, both inspired by the work of Michel Foucault, that take issue with the notion that the so-called “autonomous subject” of modernity is either autonomous or individual. Mark Poster, for example, argues that the modern subject is constituted by the effects of power relations that are configured in normed discourses and practices. Furthermore, he adds that a necessary correlate of the “autonomous individual” is a “superpanoptic,” disciplinary society that conditions “subjects” as uniform (normal) yet decentered loci of habitual practices. Developing this position further, Nikolas Rose concludes that the distinction between traditional and posttraditional loses its significance once it is conceded that persons in all societies are constituted by habitually ingrained norms of a heterogeneous and by no means continuous nature.

In sum, although there have been numerous anthologies on traditional, modern, and postmodern societies, few if any of them have devoted themselves as thoroughly to examining the validity of the conceptual distinctions implicit in this periodization as this book has. Thus it is essential reading for any scholar interested in what it means to be modern today.


Steven Tipton
Emory University

If every sociology implies an ethic, as philosophers insist, it is no less true that every ethic implies a sociology. In making the latter point to political philosophers, Michael Sandel has performed a valuable service, starting with his criticism in Liberalism and the Limits of Justice (Cambridge University Press, 1982) of the abstraction of the socially “unencumbered self” at the center of John Rawls’s Theory of Justice (Harvard University Press, 1971). In response, both philosophical defenders and critics of contemporary liberalism have grown more conscious of the sociology of the modern welfare state that their ethics typically imply, and more able to argue over its problematic premises and practices. The political salience of this argument has mushroomed in an era that spans the end of Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society and the rise of current efforts to “reform” welfare for the children of the poor while protecting Social Security and Medicare for the parents of the middle class.

At the heart of democracy’s discontent in our time, begins this book, lie two fears—the loss of self-government and the erosion of community. American political institutions embody ideals of justice and the good life defined in terms of rights and obligations, freedom and citizenship, de-
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democracy and law. So Sandel sets out to “identify the public philosophy implicit in our practices and institutions and to show how tensions in the philosophy show up in the practice” (p. ix). This may help us diagnose, if not resolve, our political predicament, lodged as it is in the moral contrariety of the liberal and republican traditions of our public culture, not only in the gap between our ideals and our institutions.

The liberal tradition conceives persons as free and independent selves, unencumbered by moral or civic ties they have not chosen. Freedom consists in the very capacity of such persons to choose their own values and ends. The rival republican tradition conceives freedom as the fruit of sharing in self-government with fellow citizens whose public-spirited character is cultivated by these very practices of deliberating together over common goods and sharing responsibility for the destiny of the political community.

In the first third of the book, Sandel shows how central features of “procedural liberalism” have come to inform the theory and practice of American constitutional law and family law in recent decades. Fair procedures take priority over particular moral ends posed as public goods. Individual rights function as moral trump cards, played to assure the state’s neutrality among competing conceptions of the good life, in order to respect persons as free selves capable of choosing their own ends. Problems in theory show up in practice. Our “procedural republic” offers a kind of toleration undercut by its attempts at moral neutrality that often rely on implicit answers to the controversies they seek to bracket, for example, abortion. Treating persons as freely choosing, independent individuals may fail to respect persons encumbered by convictions or life circumstances at odds with this liberal self-image, whether they be Sabbath observers, Holocaust survivors, feminists fighting pornography, homosexuals denied privacy, or homemaker-mothers impoverished by divorce.

These practical difficulties, says Sandel, reflect liberalism’s priority of the right to the good and of the self to its ends. Sandel doubts the capacity of liberal toleration to “realize the higher pluralism of persons and communities who appreciate and affirm the distinctive goods their different lives express” (p. 116). He doubts, too, that the liberal self-image of our times is adequate to self-government in the modern welfare state, for democratic self-government depends on consciously cultivated, public-spirited forms of republican citizenship at odds with individual autonomy. Moreover, the modern welfare state consists of a vast network of mutual dependencies, obligations, and administrative rules at odds with ideals of an unencumbered self at the hub of a social network of voluntary associations, free contracts, and consensual agreements. The expansion of government and the dominance of large-scale corporations have banished the voluntarist, autonomous self from contract law and from a political-economic order “increasingly governed by vast structures of power” (p. 118), Sandel observes. Meanwhile, ironically, this liberal self has come to prevail in our constitutional law. There, it justifies individual
autonomy in those matters of religion, speech, and sexual morality that
now mark our personal lives, as if to console us for the sense of independ-
ent agency we have lost in public life.

The welfare state rings true to liberalism, grants Sandel, in its promise
to individuals of legal and civil rights and social and economic entitlements. But public provision of these rights and entitlements depends on
citizens sharing “a strong sense of mutual responsibility and moral en-
gagement” (p. 119) in the common life of communities constituted by so-
cial practices that bind individual identities into social members obliged
to one another and devoted to common conceptions of the good life. With-
out cultivating community in this constitutive sense, Sandel contends, the
case for public provision in the procedural republic suffers a minimalism
similar to the case for toleration.

The latter two-thirds of the book shift from constitutional to political
debates. Stretching from Jefferson and Hamilton to Carter and Reagan,
this section traces a shifting dialogue between two logics of moral argu-
ment in posing the key questions of public life. How can citizens become
capable of self-government, asks the republican, who then seeks the social
conditions and political arrangements needed to promote the civic virtue
self-government requires and the liberty it breeds. The liberal first asks
how government should treat its citizens, then seeks the principles and
procedures of justice needed to treat persons fairly and equally as they
pursue their various ends and interests. Republicanism predominates ear-
er in American history, liberalism later. But the two can be found count-
erposed all the way through, from deliberation over Virginia’s Port Bill
of 1784 to 20th-century debates over the New Deal, the Great Society,
and Reagan’s New Federalism. Noting expansion in the role of govern-
ment following the Civil War and then World Wars I and II, Sandel
seeks to show how the public philosophy of a procedural republic has
come to distinguish our increasingly activist state since the New Deal
and to frame the increasingly problematic terms of its justification (p.
124). The procedural republic, he judges, “cannot secure the liberty it
promises because it cannot inspire the moral and civic engagement self-
government requires” (p. 323).

What is to be done? The hope of our time, Sandel urges, rests with
those “who can summon the conviction and restraint to make sense of
our condition and repair the civic life on which democracy depends” (p.
351) in the corrective light of republican ideals. Is it possible to revitalize
republican ideals of freedom, given the scale and complexity of modern
society? Is it desirable, given their history of political exclusion and coer-
cion in the hands of would-be moral aristocrats? Against these objections,
Sandel follows Tocqueville’s tack in favor of a democratic republic that
is more clamorous than consensual, one that disperses state power and
multiplies sites of civic assembly and formation. Forgoing fundamenta-
list moral absolutism on one side and protean moral drift on the other, San-
del’s republican citizens of the future must be able to “think and act as
multiply-situated selves” in democratic politics played out in social set-
tings that range from local neighborhoods to global political institutions. These citizens among us must be able to “negotiate our way among the sometimes overlapping, sometimes conflicting obligations that claim us, and to live with the tension to which multiple loyalties give rise” (p. 350). They must weave the various strands of their identity, culture, and institutional experience into a coherent whole in the form of moral narratives that order our diverse lives, interpret the common life we share, and anchor our political community even as they enable us to argue over its character, purposes, and ends.

This is certainly no small order. The reader may be forgiven for asking how it is to be achieved and the author for offering in reply only exemplary bits and pieces of a daunting puzzle: the Civil Rights movement, community development corporations, community organizing on the model of the Industrial Areas Foundation; recent political rhetorics of civic virtue and social responsibility to balance equal opportunity and individual rights; global prospects for diffusing the sovereignty of national states into a multiplicity of more and less extensive communities and political bodies (p. 345).

Like comparable works before it, including Habits of the Heart (University of California Press, 1985) and Michael Walzer’s Spheres of Justice (Harvard University Press, 1982), Democracy’s Discontent lacks a blueprint for repairing civic life in a democratic America. It also lacks a close analysis of those forms of economic inequality and social exclusion that bias our polity in the course of dividing Americans by class, race, gender, and generation. Yet Sandel senses the heavy toll these divisions exact from the coherence of public discourse and action in our time, and he sketches a civic rationale for public provision and investment to reverse them. Read in tandem with studies such as Verba, Schlozman, and Brady’s Voice and Equality (Harvard University Press, 1995), Wilson’s When Work Disappears (Knopf, 1996), and Fischer et al.’s Inequality by Design (Princeton University Press, 1996), Sandel’s work sheds welcome light on the powerfully contradictory moral rationale that justifies our peculiar kind of political economy. In doing so, it underscores the need for the middle-class majority of our electorate not simply to check their interests and open their hearts, but to change their minds about our cultural commonsense, if we are to change for the better the way our public institutions work to secure justice, the general well-being, and the blessings of liberty.
Book Reviews


Hans Joas
Free University of Berlin

The recent upsurge of interest in American pragmatism and the widespread rediscovery of pre-Parsonian American social theory have increased the quantity and quality of scholarly output in these fields. Many of these contributions are clearly works of love, written to defend and revitalize older, but neglected traditions.

The author of the present contribution makes it exceedingly clear that he does not want to be counted among these lines of work. For him “critical, humanistic social science, so often arrayed against the market, has just as often been at the vanguard of extending the logic of commodification to the most intimate aspects of people’s lives” (p. xi).

Such a viewpoint is not completely new to those familiar with Marcuse’s “repressive tolerance” and the historiography of Foucault and his followers. But this is not the position from which this author argues. He describes his own perspective as “the Roman Catholic insistence that reason, belief, and even unbelief make sense only in the context of some received tradition of inquiry” (p. xiv). His heroes are the late Christopher Lasch and Alasdair MacIntyre. For him the rise of the work ethic in Reformation Protestantism amounted almost to a new Fall of Man; any critique of consumerism or the decline of communities based on the “producer” values of this work ethic is doomed to failure.

Scientific discourse does not evaluate perspectives, but results. The book contains critical interpretations and reexaminations of six crucial contributions in American social science and cultural criticism: the work of Thorstein Veblen, particularly his Instinct of Workmanship; the Middletown study of Robert Lynd and Helen Lynd; John Dewey’s diagnosis of time in Individualism Old and New; Ruth Benedict’s Patterns of Culture; Robert Lynd’s Knowledge for What? and C. Wright Mills’s work, particularly The Sociological Imagination. Shannon’s chapters on these works are written in a deliberately provocative, sometimes brilliant, often flamboyant style. The scholarly quality of these chapters is very uneven. The first chapter (on Veblen) seems to me by far the best. The author gives a circumspect and serious, if not innovative, interpretation of Veblen’s work, focusing on the notion of workmanship. This makes Veblen’s views on the history of mankind and the American present look much more coherent and less idiosyncratic than they appear in other interpretations.

The chapter on Dewey, on the other hand, is clearly behind contemporary Dewey scholarship. The author introduces his interpretation by sweeping and superficial criticisms of Tocqueville’s emphasis on voluntary associations and the expressive individualism of the Transcendental-
ists (see, e.g., p. 66). The crucial point of his critique of Dewey is surprising indeed: “Dewey’s account of the lost individual proceeds from the classical liberal insistence of the priority of instrumental, man-thing relations to substantive relations between men” (p. 70). Is the author not familiar with Dewey’s early neo-Hegelianism and its assumptions about human intersubjectivity? How would he deal with Dewey’s use of George Herbert Mead’s ideas about mutual role taking and the genesis of the self?

The chapter on Mills attempts to demonstrate that this radical democratic critic of the welfare-warfare state himself had a considerable affinity with technocracy. The author goes to great lengths (see p. 168) to support this claim by citing Mills’s famous advice for the sociologist to keep a journal of all scholarly and private life experience to draw upon for research and writing. Mills himself compared the importance of a journal for a sociologist with its importance for a creative writer. For Shannon, such a journal is a kind of postmodern Puritan diary (p. 170) as well as a bureaucratic file (“the epitome of the bureaucratic organization of modern life” (p. 168) and “ultimately, the file is the factory that produces the commodified perspectives which flood the free marketplace of ideas” (p. 175). When self-exploration, bureaucratic administration, and commercialization are all the same, all sociological distinctions collapse.

When—to use Robert Bellah’s terms—utilitarian and expressive individualism, Republicanism and Protestantism, are all considered alike in their deficiencies, we learn too little about any of them. In his desire to keep clear of the internal tensions of modernity, the author simply treats all cats as grey in the dark night of modernity. He concludes his book (pp. 186–88) with a polemic about abortion and a plea for “the great surviving traditions of the postmodern West: orthodox Judaism, Roman Catholicism, the Orthodox churches, and Islam.” He is aware that his attempt to further his goals through this book on the history of the social sciences leads him to a paradox: by offering a causal account of intellectual-historical developments, Shannon, as he recognizes (p. xi), would subtly reproduce the worldview he tries to avoid. His alternative is to “offer not so much a causal account as an account of causality” (p. xi), whatever this may exactly be. The book fails not only as a contribution to intellectual history, but also—if I may respectfully say so—as a contribution to modern Catholic thinking. Contemporary Catholicism cannot avoid the pitfalls of modern culture, however much a quiet conservative extremism may long for a complete revision of modern history.

Stephen Kalberg
Boston University

Wolfgang Schluchter continues his massive exegesis of Max Weber’s works in Paradoxes of Modernity. Part 1 “Truth, Power, and Ethics: Max Weber’s Political-Philosophical Profile,” argues that Weber must be understood as a philosophical thinker. It first focuses upon his concern to include ethical values in all political action. A chronology of Weber’s political activities during World War I is offered and a detailed analysis of the content and background of the “Science as a Vocation” lecture. Schluchter calls attention to Weber’s broader questions: how do we live ethically and what is the role of science and the nature of “vocational duty” in the modern world? He contends that Weber’s politics were principled and grounded in values rather than “power-obsessed.”

Schluchter seeks in chapter 2 “to uncover a typology of ethics that in part guides [Weber’s] research” and, moreover, constitutes “Weber’s own value position” (p. 50). This chapter interweaves Weber’s biography and the Heidelberg social milieu with Weber’s early inaugural lecture, his sociology of religion, and his writings on the Russian Revolution. Schluchter finds strong evidence for Weber’s advocacy of ethical action and rejection of moral agnosticism and relativism as well as the success-oriented, adjustment-to-life, and eudaemonistic ethics. However, he incorrectly states that Weber views an “orientation to values, especially to ethical values, . . . as a general feature of human beings” (p. 121; my emphasis).

Written with a deep sense of dedication, this chapter reveals the very core of Weber’s appeal to Schluchter. In arguing his case for a distinction in Weber’s writings between a formal and substantive ethic of responsibility and a formal and substantive ethic of conviction, as well as between an ethic of reflexive principle and an ethic of principles, and, finally, for Weber’s embracing of a “criticistic formal ethic of responsibility,” Schluchter asserts that we can find in Weber an ethical system appropriate to our modern epoch, as Kant offered for an earlier era.

The multiple dichotomous concepts and schematic typologies in this chapter appear to me frequently strained, not least owing to the disconnectedness of Schluchter’s finer distinctions from Weber’s empirical sociology. As Schluchter states, “One has to be willing to speculate regarding Weber’s position” (p. 89). Moreover, the Weberian “value theory” reconstructed here banishes, as unfortunate, all internal inconsistency and incompleteness. The tension between concept and empirical reality, the dynamic conflict across concepts, the heroic (and often failed) effort to address a social world perceived as exceedingly complex, and the ubiquity of power, domination, and conflict—all these central features of We-
ber’s sociology are pushed aside. Instead, a static and highly abstract ethical system is offered. Weber’s confrontations and struggles do not play a role but only that which so often eluded Weber: the firm outcome.

Part 2, “Religion, Economy, and Politics: Max Weber’s Historical-Sociological Profile,” reconstructs Weber’s sparse and fragmented comments on Islam (chap. 3, “Hindrances to Modernity”) and his multiple writings on Western Christianity (chap. 4, “The Emergence of Modernity”). Far from treating these “world religions” alone, both chapters emphasize “ideal and material” constellations. In doing so, they seek to “convey a relatively coherent picture of the Western trajectory from a Weberian point of view” (p. 3). Schluchter sees “chains of circumstances” and rejects forcefully the evolutionary positions of Hennis and Tenbruck.

In the context of a number of comparisons to Calvinism, chapter 3 first defines the religious ethic of Islam as “world mastery between world conquest and world adjustment” (p. 121). Its “feudal or petty bourgeois or booty capitalist” (p. 133) economic ethic was devoid of a thrust toward an “economically rational mode of conduct” (p. 134). In addition, Islamic feudalism erected strong obstacles to modern capitalism, the city never attained corporate independence, and the “stereotyped ‘jurists’ law” of Islam “prevented a logical systematization of law in terms of formal juridical concepts” (p. 164) as well as any subjection of domination to legal constraints. Schluchter’s continuous comparisons to the medieval West allow a clear demarcation of the various ways in which Islamic civilization lacked the “structural heterogeneity and pluralism” (pp. 160, 164) characteristic of the Occident. He brilliantly takes the “many pieces . . . [or] historical prerequisites” and “[puts] the puzzle together” in order to explain “why rational capitalism [never] ‘succeeded’ . . . in Islamic civilization” (p. 166).

He then addresses directly the very different “individual constellation” that accounts for the Western trajectory. While the Papal revolution of the 11th and 12th centuries called forth a “relatively rational bureaucratic institution” independent of political domination and paved the way for “legislation by rational enactment,” the feudal revolution “created Western knighthood, with its inner-worldly unified mode of conduct and the idea of the contractual character of political power” (p. 218), and an urban revolution “contributed to the development of the secular concept of the corporation and the ‘birth’ of a particular urban citizenry” (p. 218). Each of these spheres contained their own dynamic conflicts; their relative independence implied a structural heterogeneity and competition across “principles of organization and legitimacy” (p. 222) singular to the West. In addition, and not least, a “rational economic ethic” crystallized with ascetic Protestantism.

With the exception of the treatment of the ways in which a rational economic ethic arose from Calvinism (which remains quite abbreviated) and the near-total omission of the central concepts of Verstehen and meaningful action, this reconstruction is a powerful one that moves quali-
tatively beyond Schlucht's earlier attempts. It is unique in the literature.

This volume has been translated with great care by Neil Solomon. Although the juxtaposition in one study of "political-philosophical" and "historical-sociological" analyses prohibits clear thematic unity, Schluchter's refusal to simplify Weber's project and his sovereignty over the full range of Weber's texts makes this volume indispensable to all today interested in Max Weber. Historians of sociology in particular will find Schluchter's frequent discussions of historical and intellectual contexts quite helpful. Moreover, the dual foci of Schluchter's writings are clearly evident: his concern to reconstruct Weber's "theory of values" and analysis of the rise of the West.

In my view, Schluchter's interpretation omits fully the very core of Weber's achievement as a sociologist. He reads Weber either as a philosopher or as an historian utilizing sociological concepts and pays little attention to Weber as a sociological theorist and rigorous comparative-historical sociologist who undertakes substantive research by reference to an array of demarcated causal strategies and procedures. The societal orders (Lebensordnungen) and orientational models of Economy and Society, for example, which guide all of Weber's empirical work, appear prominently in Schluchter's reconstructions, yet only in an ad hoc fashion. He correctly insists that Weber rejects all closed causal models, yet each of his chapters moves too far in the other direction; each starts from scratch. While every chapter unravels masterfully a different deep reservoir of Weber's knowledge, each takes a relevant summary statement by Weber as its organizational framework rather than his mode of analysis, or practiced methodology. Repeatedly, in this regard, Schluchter refers alone to Weber's most global organizing mechanisms, such as "ideas and interests" or "chain of circumstances." Would sociologists read this classic today were he only an historical sociologist and theorist of ethical values?


Joachim J. Savelsberg
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With this English translation, *Faktizität und Geltung* becomes available to a much larger readership. This is good, as Habermas tackles fundamental problems of modern constitutional states: from endangered social solidarity to a loss of direction and self-confidence in politics. In a Herculean effort, Habermas attempts to provide the intellectual tools toward understanding and solving them. In an age of completely secularized politics, he argues, the rule of law cannot be maintained without radical de-
mocracy and a new and common understanding of what constitutes justi-
fied interests and equal treatment.

As William Rehg, masterful translator, states, this book constitutes the
“culminating effort” (p. ix) in a 30-year project. It resorts to philosophy
of law, legal theory, and sociology. Given “considerable demands on its
readers” (p. x), Rehg provides a length summary (pp. ix–xxxvii), and the
author, in a 1994 postscript, takes “the role of an interpreter and at-
tempt[s] to recapitulate the core idea that informs the whole book as he
sees it” (p. 447).

In the first two (of nine) chapters, Habermas introduces the category
of modern law in the context of his theory of communicative action. After
neither historicism nor philosophical anthropology were able to establish
practical reason, after Nietzsche denied it and systems theory erased it,
Habermas pleads for communicative reason as an alternative, ascribed
neither to macrosocieties nor individuals but to the socially integrative
force of noncoercive processes of reaching understanding. Discourse
theory, indebted to pragmatist thinking, leads to a proceduralist paradigm
of law. Communicative action uses the rationality potential of language
for social integration, and modern law fills gaps in social orders whose
integrative capacities have been overtaxed (law no longer colonizes).

Habermas, while building on Kant, challenges Kant’s subordination
of law to morality for pluralist societies that lack normative consensus.
This critique also applies to Rawlsian moves toward social contract tradi-
tions of rational natural law. Luhmann’s systems theory on the other
hand completely separates law from morality. Against both sides, Ha-
bermas builds on Weber and Parsons, and, through their critique, estab-
lishes the socially integrative meaning of legal communication.

Chapters 3 and 4 are dedicated to the philosophy of law, the former
to clarify the relationship between law and morality, the latter that be-
tween law and politics. Again, Habermas claims middle ground between
the liberal tradition à la Locke and civic republicanism from Plato to
Rousseau: both private and public autonomy are basic for the functioning
of democracy. In dealing with the role of state authority, Habermas links
informal discursive sources of democracy with formal decision-making
institutions. Law transforms communicative power into administrative
power.

Habermas applies his philosophical design to current issues of legal
theory in Germany and the United States, focusing on the tension be-
tween conformity to statutes and precedent versus rightness in terms of
moral standards in judicial decision making and on the role of constitu-
tional courts (chaps. 5–6). He proceeds to address sociological challenges
to the application of normative theory. Chapter 7 outlines a model of
deliberative democracy, and chapter 8 considers challenges of social
power and systemic complexity. Chapter 9 provides a defense of a proce-
duralist paradigm of law in an attempt to bring legal and social theory
together.

In his discussion of political sociology, Habermas rather bluntly sum-
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marizes empirical findings as though instrumentalization of the political process and the role of expert knowledge in administrative-political control did indeed severely damage legitimate democratic rule. His examples for participation in deliberative democracy are unfortunately limited to groups with "good" causes. Theoretically, Habermas argues mostly with rational choice and systems theorists. The absence of other, especially network, literature as a reference point is astonishing. Habermas holds against "empiricist" approaches that they do not incorporate the normative foundation of a theory of democracy, a deficiency that his discourse-theory-based model of deliberative democracy is supposed to overcome.

The book is of burning interest to all who are concerned with basic challenges to modern law and democracy. Readers who master the challenge will gain enormously. Yet, many will not be convinced of the incorporation of normative judgments into an analytical theory. And, while Habermas does confront his theory with institutional reality, the complete lack of reference to any articles in the leading German or American sociology journals is a disturbing indicator. Sociologists know that even most carefully deduced, logically consistent, and convincing theories often flounder in the light of empirical evidence. Further, assumptions regarding the exclusively strategic character of economic and bureaucratic action or the complete lack of moral consensus in pluralist societies (even at a high level of abstraction), reveal risks of mistaking ideal types for empirical reality. And what about empirical consequences of participatory versus bureaucratized modes of decision making and actual implications of technocratization for legitimacy? Incorporating more insights provided by theoretically guided empirical social science would help toward theoretical and operational specification. Such intermediate steps are needed to bridge the gap between abstract deductive theory and practical solutions to problems of legal order and democracy. If Habermas does not do it, maybe others will. His challenge certainly deserves it.


Jack Katz
University of California, Los Angeles

I can only read Michel de Certeau with the interests of a research sociologist, who must ground observations about society in descriptions of people acting with reference to others in particular times and places. From that perspective, it is easy to dismiss him. His texts, full of statements of abstractions affecting abstractions, frustrate a research sociologist's desire to visualize what confirming or disconfirming evidence would look like. He has religious preoccupations with Catholic mysticism that show up in how he wrote and what he argues. And he is not the rage anywhere.
His work dates from the 1970s and now, about 10 years after his death and the English publication of *The Practice of Everyday Life* (University of California, 1984), the attention paid him runs primarily in small corners of cultural studies, French thought, and the history of ideas.

That is unfortunate, and Jeremy Ahearne’s thorough and carefully crafted little book helps show why, even though it is not directed at sociologists. De Certeau wrote primarily about historiography, about various episodes of the interpretation and domination of folk cultures and folk spiritualism over several centuries in France, and about contemporary practices of everyday life. Throughout, he focuses on political, intellectual, and cultural efforts to define, and, in one sense or another, to suppress, phenomena that exist outside of a politically and economically rationalized social order. He is fascinated with a 16th-century text written about Brazil’s Tupinambou people by a Frenchman who was stranded with them for three months. He dwells on the prosecutions of nuns possessed by the devil in 17th-century Loudun. He examines the Abbé Grégoire’s efforts to “annihilate” regional patois. With Dominique Julia and Jacques Revel, he sees censorship in the Second Empire as the beginnings of a “castrating cult” that sought to undermine popular culture by idealizing it. And he considers the cunning, often devious, ways that people read, shop, and get around in cities today.

Lest this focus be dismissed as familiar, Ahearne makes clear that, in distinction from Foucault, de Certeau wants to bring out the survival, usually in a very distorted form, of what the disciplinary apparatus has tried to suppress. Thus the folk anthropological description of the Tupinambou not only set them up for Western manipulation, it also recognized and preserved their “otherness” in an “eroticism” of abiding fascination. The possessed of Loudun resisted their inquisitors with confessions that were so extensive, they became devices for maintaining the impenetrability of their spiritual world. The very effort to suppress regional affiliations has given surprisingly persistent life to efforts that resist national homogenization. And the rationalized maps and professionalized advertising of contemporary life is treated by a city’s residents as the background for shortcuts, “poachings,” and endlessly innovative bricolage work.

Reading de Certeau is an experience of alternating repulsion and fascination. I do not think that is accidental. De Certeau recreates for the reader both the relationship he had to his materials and the relationships of overt revulsion/suppression and secret attraction/nourishment that he tries to document in various historical settings. Just as one is ready to throw one of his texts aside in disgust, some damnably indispensable line of inquiry suddenly breaks through. Thus, in reading his treatment of 17th-century witch trials, it is easy to long for the eminently accessible prose of Kai Erikson’s (*Wayward Puritans* [Wiley, 1966]) treatment of a Puritan prosecution, but then one starts to appreciate that something worth special note was going on when one of the possessed managed to trouble the exorcists by claiming that she had forgotten her name, per-
haps lost it in the wash, or by confessing without pause, “I am Behemoth. I am Dog’s Dick. I am Iscaron.” Why, after all, did these localized outbreaks of religious fervor become so important to the state? De Certeau suggests that the possessed of Loudun were challenging what was becoming essential to the project of nation and power building, a certain version of personal identity and subjectivity, one that insists on a single, singular, and publicly known definition of self.

But he will not take us any farther than this tantalizing suggestion. It was de Certeau’s choice to hover around the openings to the new lines of empirical inquiry he was designating. Whenever he stepped through to begin describing social life in an easily recognizable form, he would quickly step back to scout the boundaries between the conventionally visible and that which must persist secretly.

For social research, the most immediate payoff of his work is its beginning of a social phenomenology of everyday life. Here he leaves touches of substantive contribution, for example, in the appreciation of the archipelago pattern in the informal mapmaking efforts of city dwellers and in noting the synecdochic character of perception as one passes through a city’s streets. Raised to his broader level of social theorizing, de Certeau might reflect on why it is so hard to keep in mind that such cartoonlike maps are not just funny New Yorker covers but the real thing and that the real joke is the assumption that official maps are not fictions.

In cultural sociology, de Certeau would shift attentions to the tactical ways that people move between what are formally designated and usually studied as different domains (the marketplace, elections, work settings, sports arenas, family life). In their interinstitutional, intertextual movements, people constantly create a kind of silent social world, or, more accurately, a social world that is well known and indirectly addressed in folk terms but that remains beyond conventional attentions, including those of sociological research. With his emphasis on people’s everyday tactics, de Certeau cuts against the overly abstract and passive character of much of his writing and points us clearly toward a rich research path.


Robert J. Antonio
University of Kansas

Post–World War II readings of Weber identified him with liberal democracy. In 1959, however, Wolfgang J. Mommsen began an intense debate over Weber and democracy with his controversial treatise about Weber’s nationalism and about how his ideas of bureaucratic domination, rational-legalit, and plebiscitary leadership paved the way for Carl Schmitt’s protofascism. But not until the 1970s did numerous English language works probe the different sides and ambiguities of Weber’s political thought.
Because few of these studies have addressed closely the issue of Weber and direct democracy, however, Peter Breiner’s exploration of the topic fills a distinctive niche in the Weber discourse.

Although holding that Weber’s ideas of bureaucracy, legitimacy, and leadership truncate the possibilities of modern democracy, Breiner also contends that he offered vital resources for vindicating the ideal of direct democracy. In his view, Weber provided essential tools for “sociologically informed political theorizing and political practice” (p. 78; emphasis mine), contributing substantially to a broad stream of thought stressing “political prudence” or “political knowledge as situation-bound advice on the means, ends, and logics of action” faced regularly by political actors (p. 2). Emphasizing the “consequentialist” strand of this tradition (e.g., Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Gramsci), Breiner argues that Weber recognized the “paradoxical” relations between political aspirations and practices. Because political actions transform the very context in which they are first framed, unintended consequences are unavoidable, and all political prescriptions must be treated as tentative. By analyzing normative ends in their sociohistorical contexts and embracing uncertainty, Weber’s practical judgment escapes the formalism of purely normative arguments, transcendental claims about unchanging truths, and totalistic theories of history.

Breiner implies that Weber’s perspectivist emphasis on the formative impact of values on knowledge, ideal-type method of analyzing the potential consequences of different means-ends schemes in divergent historical contexts, and keen sensibility about everpresent, unexpected factors constitute a peak in the prudential tradition. In his view, Weber counters the tendency of elitist and radical theories of democracy to split ends from means and intrinsic from instrumental concerns. Thus, Breiner sheds entirely different light on Weber’s purposive rationality than the critiques of his instrumentalism (e.g., by Marcuse, Habermas, Alexander). To illustrate Weber’s prudence, Breiner elaborates his critique of marginal utility theory (i.e., stressing its ahistorical presuppositions, lack of attention to context, and underappreciation of unintended consequences). This chapter not only demonstrates Weber’s broader approach but explains nicely his view of neoclassical political economy and still instructive vision of an alternative social economics.

By contrast to Weber’s contextual, multicausal, contingent critique of economics, Breiner argues, he invoked objectivist, singular, irreversible processes and conditions against political positions he opposed. Breiner contends that Weber’s claims about bureaucratic rationalization and passive citizenry constrict democratic possibilities to mass plebiscitary politics and lead directly to the conclusion that participatory democracy is an irresponsible pipe dream. However, Breiner also employs Weber’s prudence to criticize Rousseauian radical democrats, implying that they too need to accept the inherent uncertainty of political action and responsibility for its unintended as well as intended consequences. Breiner believes that participatory institutions are feasible if they are seen as a radi-
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calizing addition rather than as a substitute for administration and representative politics. But to fit instrumental means to political ends and avert idealistic flights from reality, even this more modest vision of radical democracy must come to terms with the paradoxical split between aspirations and consequences.

Two critical points are in order. First, Breiner draws heavily from Weber’s methodology, ideal-types, and ethics of politics. Yet, Weber details the tensions, countervailing forces, and unintended consequences that create free spaces, openings, and possibilities for substantive democratization in his historical discussions. Although concurring with the general thrust of Breiner’s critique, I believe that his mode of argument exaggerates somewhat the coherence and narrowness of Weber’s views about democracy. Second, his reading of Weber and view of radical democracy have affinities for John Dewey’s instrumentalism, experimentalism, and uncertainty and the idea of active publics enlivening representative politics. Dewey took seriously the doubts of pessimistic liberals, like Walter Lippmann and Weber, about the masses’ capability and willingness to bear the weight of political responsibility. Their questions are no less pressing today. Although Dewey provided no final answers, he stressed the enormity of the cultural project entailed in radical democratic hopes about creating participatory institutions within mass democracy. Breiner’s argument would have been stronger if he addressed this non-Rousseauian branch of radical democratic theory and other side of prudence.

This short review understates the complexity and sublety of Breiner’s dense, nuanced argument. His book is a serious contribution that should be read by Weber scholars and others concerned with democratic theory. Moreover, Breiner’s position will be of interest to those troubled by the abstract tendencies of contemporary theory. His vision of Weber’s sociologically informed political prudence offers an alternative method to quasi-transcendental and deontological theories (e.g., Habermas and Rawls) that privilege normative over instrumental matters and to modernist and postmodernist approaches that substitute textual criticism and exegesis for historical engagement. This theme alone makes Breiner’s work worth reading.


Lisa Wedeen
Wesleyan University

This book challenges the still-current notion that political movements inspired by contemporary experiences of Islam are monolithic and immutable. The authors apply the term “Muslim politics” to a variety of regional and transnational contexts within which contests over political institu-
tions and over systems of signification take place. These movements are specifically Muslim because they “relate to a widely shared, although not doctrinally defined, tradition of ideas and practice,” which Muslims in “different contexts identify as ‘Islamic’ to support their claims and counterclaims” (p. 4). The authors explain the appeal of “Muslim politics” to diverse classes, and especially among educated young people, as the result of widespread discontent and uncertainty following economic restructuring.

One of the book’s helpful interventions is in the chapter on “Muslim Politics: A Changing Political Geography,” in which the authors use the insights of anthropologist Arjun Appadurai to rethink the effects of technological innovations and global transformations on attachments to and identifications with territory. Ethnicity and religious activism have become, to use Appadurai’s word, “deterritorialized,” so that Muslim activists from different nation-states might identify as much, if not more, with each other than with fellow citizens (p. 136). But as the authors also point out, “deterritorialization has its limits” (p. 153). Nonstate Islamic organizations may help to advertise issues to a transnational Muslim community, but the increasing permeability of national frontiers in the age of globalized communications and migrations does not seem, in most cases, to undermine the primacy of the nation-state. Many Islamic activists use transnational linkages to challenge the limits of state authority, but they tend to imagine remaking their world within the confines of existing territorial arrangements.

The book also makes accessible the important conclusions of prominent theorists of Islamic law and history who argue against persistent popular readings of Islamic religion and politics as fundamentally inseparable. Instead of conflating Islamic doctrine with actual practices, chapter 3, “Sacred Authority in Contemporary Muslim Societies,” makes a historical argument, maintaining that divisions between religious and secular authority were already evident not long after the Prophet Muhammad’s death. The authors’ sensitivity to the context-dependent relationship between political and religious concerns will also help a general audience grasp the ways in which political groups might interpret, appropriate, and manipulate religious language and symbolism.

The authors make a valuable attempt to show that politics is not merely about material interests but also about contests over the symbolic world, over the signification of signs and symbols and the representation of events, conditions, and people. The book thus counters the tendency of conventional studies in political science to view politics as basically a matter of material interests and the groups articulating them. For students of symbolic politics, however, such observations, although always welcome, are unlikely to be perceived as startling or new. And for many political scientists, the absence of a thorough, systematic analysis of how symbols operate, how they mediate, structure, define, sustain, and continually reassert political obedience, for example, probably leaves the authors’ assertions of symbolism’s centrality to political life unconvincing.
The book provides a wealth of information and is ambitious in its scope, in the number of examples selected for study, in the eclectic review of literature across academic disciplines, and in the promises of conceptual clarity it makes. The book’s efforts to question rigid dichotomies, such as between public and private, are successful if not novel, but its goal of clarifying concepts such as tradition, authority, resistance, and ethnicity remains unrealized. The discussion of ethnicity, for instance, may work as a helpful corrective to formulations of identity that posit ethnicities as fixed, natural, and essential, but such descriptions are in no way specific to Islam, nor is it clear from the arguments presented here how constructions of ethnicity and of Islam interact to produce specific constellations of political power. Despite these shortcomings and a sometimes convoluted style, the book is a positive addition to a growing body of scholarship seeking to interrogate popular assumptions about Muslims.


Roger V. Gould
University of Chicago

Inasmuch as a chief strength of network imagery is its abstraction, it would have been natural to expect a steady flow of serious comparative studies employing network methodology as their principal tool. Oddly, many practitioners, having noticed how amenable most data are to translation into network terms, have instead devoted their energies to representing idiosyncratic, not to say trivial, social systems as networks: Ham radio clubs, association football matches, and communities of macaques are about as likely to attract the network analyst’s attention as are labor markets, political patronage systems, and international trade flows. Fortunately, the authors of Comparing Policy Networks have taken it upon themselves to demonstrate the power of abstract structural imagery in studying a topic that is both significant for social science and conducive to comparative research: national-level arenas for labor policy decision making in advanced capitalist societies. The book’s premise is simple: Given the many differences among nation-states in the types of political actors that matter, the rules they must follow, and the way they choose to operate, a coherent analytical framework capable of encompassing a variety of national “policy domains” is indispensable for making comparisons. Knoke et al.’s main aim in this book is to show that what they term “the organizational state perspective,” an approach that centers on network representations of interest overlap, communication, and coordination among highly visible public and private organizations, is a strong candidate for cross-national comparative research in political economy.
The perspective, originally presented in an earlier study of three policy domains in the United States (Edward O. Laumann and David Knoke, *The Organizational State* [University of Wisconsin Press, 1987]), relies principally on multidimensional scaling of information and political support relations among organizational actors. The goal is to render the chaos of lobbying, logrolling, and arm-twisting among policy actors comprehensible by mapping thousands of organizational contacts into two- and three-dimensional space.

In a series of detailed and data-laden chapters, the authors demonstrate that it is indeed possible to portray three national polities in commensurable terms—that is, in terms abstract enough to accommodate all three cases, but not so broad that differences disappear. Overall, the authors find that their data and analyses confirm the conventional wisdom that Japan and Germany are more corporatist than the United States, in the sense that, in the first two nations, peak labor organizations seem to communicate with employer organizations through the mediation of public authorities, whereas in the United States, communication on labor issues is more polarized and contentious.

The authors draw many other, more fine-grained conclusions from their data, but there is a recurring problem in deciding what they mean. The problem is that existing views of state-society relations are imprecise to begin with and in any case have not been framed in the terms used in this study. Knoke et al. do some of the work of translating conventional wisdom into “organizational state” terms, but they do this loosely. For example, the general perception in the literature that Japan’s polity is more dependent than that of the United States or Germany on informal communication motivates the authors’ prediction that communication networks there will be both denser and more centralized than in the other two countries. Yet one could easily imagine arguing that a polity more dependent on informal, behind-the-scenes contact would exhibit less centralized networks (indeed, at the extremes, high centralization and high density are logically incompatible). This slack between theoretical propositions and their operational counterparts makes it difficult to know when to be surprised by the findings and when not to; and, given that there are some surprises, whether to view them as evidence against conventional wisdom, or evidence that the data collection and analysis procedures the authors employ need refinement. This difficulty is endemic to research areas in which alternative methodologies compete; to the degree that one’s confidence in a method is measured in terms of established knowledge, one is unlikely to accept divergent findings as new knowledge.

The book’s last two empirical chapters, the first of which tests a model of policy-making inspired by Coleman’s rational-actor framework, and the second of which applies blockmodel analysis to the three information-exchange networks, are specifically intended to move past the issue of descriptive validity to questions about how policy issues are decided, and—even more generally—how “the underlying power structures of the three labor policy domains” (p. 201) differ. There is some evidence that
taking account of communication patterns helps to predict policy outcomes, but the improvement in fit over a model that merely counts actor preferences is slight enough that even the authors are wary about making strong claims. Similarly, the blockmodels of communication patterns are as sensitive to noise as they are to meaningful patterns, making the reduced-form images they generate very difficult to interpret. The findings that inspire confidence are thus, again, those about which there will be little debate. Social scientists interested in the state may be disappointed after wading through this chapter to read that the central conclusion is “public actors [i.e., state authorities] play a very important role in all three domains” (p. 208).

Cross-national studies on this scale, using a unified research instrument carefully designed to take account of cultural and linguistic differences among respondents, are difficult and correspondingly rare. For this reason alone, Comparing Policy Networks is a noteworthy piece of work. Further exploration of the data, using conceptual language of the sort the authors advocate, will very likely make a major contribution to the political economy literature.


John R. Logan
State University of New York at Albany

Exclusionary zoning in the suburbs illustrates the determined use of public policy to influence future growth, a key element of nonecological theories of community development. It has also proven to be a hotly contested battleground. Arrayed on one side are residents and officials of a select set of suburbs that restrict or exclude construction of apartments or even single-family houses on the usual quarter- or third-acre plot (though they may well promote industrial parks or shopping malls, and they may also tolerate high growth rates for houses on larger lots). On the other are a motley array of builders (seeking profits from higher density projects) and fair housing organizations (promoting opportunities for minorities). Representatives of central cities and minority membership organizations play a more ambivalent role, typically condemning exclusionary practices but also aware that suburban exclusion reinforces their own political base in urban centers.

The state of New Jersey has offered a stunning window on this battle since 1971, when local advocates began a challenge against the small semirural town of Mount Laurel. Now, 20 years after the New Jersey
Supreme Court issued its first rulings in the Mount Laurel case (in 1976), two books offer a chronicle and evaluation of the process that established a legal mandate for the economic integration of suburbia. They will be of special interest to sociologists in the fields of urbanization, race relations, and law, though the substantive issues raised here transcend these specialty areas.

Each book focuses on a different aspect of the story. Charles Haar (Suburbs under Siege) is a legal scholar and longtime advocate for judicial intervention against exclusionary practices. He depicts the Mount Laurel saga as evidence that judicial activism can be successful. A courageous, skillful court can and should stand up against recalcitrant localities and a reluctant legislature to protect poor and minority citizens who have not mobilized effectively on their own behalf. As a result of the New Jersey court’s intervention, he argues, 15,400 affordable housing units were built in the suburbs, with the prospect of at least 54,000 more due to rezoning. “Behavior has changed in suburban municipalities” (p. 131). Haar’s view is based on his own experience as a special master (i.e., a specially selected mediator for individual cases), interviews with judges, lawyers, and others, and a close reading of the long series of court decisions. He carefully analyzes these decisions in terms of the strategic choices made by their authors: how to retain jurisdiction within the state courts and to defend against later legislative challenges, how to facilitate enforcement, when and to what degree to back down. The second Mount Laurel decision (1983) took unusually strong steps. It mandated the use of statewide planning standards to fix numerical targets for providing lower income housing in every municipality; it offered individual builders specific remedies that encouraged them to sue local governments; and it established a special judicial system to accelerate adjudication. Haar’s interviews with the three judges designated to implement this scheme (and many of the special masters that they selected) provide a unique and detailed description of this implementation process.

Our Town, by Kirp, Dwyer, and Rosenthal, focuses less on the legal decisions and more on the political process within which they were forged. This account looks more closely at the local situation from which the Mount Laurel case emerged, including the tensions within the Springville Action Council that first proposed low-income housing in the town, the roles played by local Democratic and Republican politicians, and the backgrounds of the Legal Services attorneys who filed suit. It also digs more deeply into statewide politics. At this level, contradicting Haar’s thesis, these authors depict the second Mount Laurel decision as overreaching the real power of the courts. The consequence of aggressive action, they argue, was an intense reaction by the legislature. The state’s Fair Housing Act (1985) accepted the constitutional principle that suburbs must be responsive to regional housing needs. But it imposed new upper limits on the number of affordable units that a municipality could be required to provide, it transferred authority for implementing the law from the courts to a new state agency, and it allowed suburbs to “buy
off” up to half their fair share of affordable housing by negotiating to provide the housing in central cities instead. This was “a blunt message to the high court: get out of exclusionary zoning” (p. 137). When the law was challenged by housing advocates, it was unclear how the court would respond to this watering down of its mandates. The legislative reconfirmation of Chief Justice Wilentz himself hung in the balance. As a result, in Mount Laurel III (1986) “the Supreme Court capitulated” (p. 137).

Compared to Haar’s praise of judicial activism, Kirp, Dwyer and Rosenthal believe that ground-breaking decisions can be sustained only in unusual conditions, when powerful allies can be enlisted. In this case, the federal courts, the governor, and the legislature were opponents, and neither central city politicians nor statewide minority groups offered much support.

Whether the glass of judicial activism is half full or half empty depends, then, on one’s vantage point. Haar convincingly states the moral case for the obligation of the courts to protect minority rights and identifies strategies for more effective intervention. Kirp, Dwyer, and Rosenthal offer a broader understanding of the political context of the law. On a question so central to our times, and in the context of national struggles over affirmative action, legislative redistricting, and other hot issues, both books are important additions to our thinking.


David Harris

*University of Michigan*

There is little doubt that black and white Americans hold dissimilar views on policy issues. What is less certain is why this disparity exists. The search for such an understanding drives *Divided by Color.* The book begins by documenting the gap in black-white public opinion. It focuses on support for six racial policies: (1) government action to ensure fair treatment in jobs, (2) government efforts to ensure school integration, (3) increased federal funding for programs that assist blacks, (4) government initiatives to improve the economic and social position of blacks, (5) hiring and promotion preferences for blacks, and (6) reserved positions for blacks at colleges and universities. Racial differences across these items are staggering. On a 10-point scale of support for racial programs, 63% of blacks but just 9% of whites fall into the three most liberal categories of the scale. This discrepancy is much larger than gender differences on gender issues or class differences on class issues.

What explains the disparity? Kinder and Sanders consider three explanations. First, they test whether self-interest accounts for racial differences. Self-interested citizens are those individuals who “pursue material
benefits and harms in politics, and [who] have in mind only themselves and their immediate families” (p. 52). The data shows little evidence that self-interest is an important factor. However, when the focus is broadened to group interest, the effects are stronger. Blacks and whites are not as concerned with how a policy will impact their own families as they are with how it will affect their racial group. Despite these findings, Kinder and Sanders remain skeptical about the role of interests because their data reveal that whites’ racial sentiments are an important predictor of their perception of the threat blacks pose. As such, interests are likely a proxy for racial attitudes rather than evidence that whites are concerned about real threats and advantages.

Second, Kinder and Sanders examine the role of group animosities. In response to the decline of biological racism and simultaneous rise of racial code words, they offer racial resentment as a new measure of whites’ distaste for blacks. Racial resentment, a concept that differs little from symbolic racism, “features indignation as a central emotional theme” and is “the conjunction of whites’ feelings toward blacks and their support for American values” (p. 293). Racial resentment is measured by six items that are designed to subtly ascertain whites’ views about blacks. The resulting composite indicator is internally consistent, stable, correlated with racial stereotypes, and distinct from biological racism. Most important, it is a strong predictor of white support for racial policies. When whites judge programs designed to help blacks, they apparently take it as an opportunity to express racial antipathies.

A third potential determinant of public opinion is principles. This argument holds that there is a black-white gap not because of self-interest, group interest, or racial resentment but rather because of differential subscription to core American values. Specifically, Kinder and Sanders evaluate the impact of beliefs about equality, economic individualism, and limited government. Of the three, only economic individualism consistently shows no effect. Beliefs in equality and limited government both significantly predict support for racial policies, though each is a less important factor than racial resentment.

Finally, Kinder and Sanders examine the role elites and the media play in framing issues. They divide their sample into panels and present each with modified versions of the original public opinion questions. This exercise shows that how an issue is framed dramatically affects whether racial resentment, self-interest, or principle is activated. As an additional test of framing, Kinder and Sanders take advantage of the fact that Willie Horton, a black convicted murderer and rapist, became an image in the 1988 presidential campaigns while they were collecting their data. This natural experiment confirms the importance of frames. Whites interviewed before the Horton ads appeared on television were less sensitive to racial resentment than were whites queried later. The lesson of these experiments is that elites and the press have power to affect public opinion and, indirectly, policy by adopting one frame over another.

Kinder and Sanders present a thorough, thoughtful, and compelling
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explanation of why black and white Americans view the political landscape so differently. While there is no doubt that this book should be read by all who attempt to understand the role of race in our society, it is not without problems. First, the discussion has a tendency to overinterpret the effects of racial resentment and downplay the importance of other factors. While racial resentment clearly plays the largest role in determining public opinion, belief in limited government and equality regularly exhibit effects that are at least half as large as those for racial resentment. Second, it is not clear that the racial resentment scale measures racial resentment. An alternative interpretation is that it indicates whether people are racial structuralists (i.e., they believe that blacks face greater obstacles to success). Unlike racial resentment, racial structuralism is a theoretically valid explanation for white and black public opinion. Also, because it is composed of prejudices and information, one’s belief in racial structuralism is susceptible to interventions. Whether racial structuralism or racial resentment better explains the black-white gap in public opinion should be the focus of future research and discussion, as the two frames have differing implications for race relations and policy.


Jeremy Hein
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In *The French Melting Pot*, Gérard Noiriel does for immigrants in France what Eugene Weber did for French regionalism: establish the existence and longevity of diversity in a country portrayed as the paradigm of the assimilationist nation-state. The original publication of *The French Melting Pot* in 1988 was therefore an event for France akin to the publication of *Beyond the Melting Pot* (N. Glazer and D. Moynihan [MIT Press, 1963]) for the United States. Glazer and Moynihan announced that the United States was not an amalgamation of cultures but a segmented hierarchy composed of competing religious, ethnic, and racial groups. Noiriel does not go this far in his characterization of France. But in the French context, his thesis is equally profound and, for some, almost heretical. Noiriel argues that France is not a monolithic national culture that absorbs newcomers but an evolving blend of peoples.

Citing the well-publicized statistic that about one in five inhabitants of France has an immigrant parent or grandparent, Noiriel asks why contemporary foreigners (who account for only about 7% of the population) are thought to be such a novel experience for the country. This anomaly serves as the springboard for an even deeper question: how could a nation with 100 years of immigration history have a national identity myth devoid of immigrants? The main culprit is the social sci-
ences. By failing to study immigrants, French historians have perpetuated a collective amnesia about the role of immigration in the formation of modern France. The late Fernand Braudel comes in for particular criticism. Braudel’s magnum opus, *The Identity of France* (HarperCollins, 1990), portrays French national identity as essentially complete by the late 1600s. This *longue durée* approach to history marginalizes the more than 2 million immigrants who settled in France between the 1880s and 1930s.

French sociologists also share some blame. Durkheim regarded immigration as too plebeian a topic for true scientific inquiry. Nonetheless, Noiriel credits French sociology as the first social science to seriously research immigration, but that did not occur until the 1960s. Once begun, competitive research centers balkanized the study of immigrants, diminishing the impact of findings on other social scientists and public opinion.

After explaining the absence of immigrants from French collective memory, Noiriel spends several chapters reinterpreting the French experience with immigration largely through a rhetorical comparison with the United States. Focusing on the Belgians, Italians, Poles, and Spaniards who arrived during the early 1900s, Noiriel shows that these immigrants contributed to French culture, politics, demographic growth, and agricultural and industrialization productivity. He does not dispute that the descendants of these immigrants became French, but he persuasively insists that the French nation-state never assimilates immigrants; *au contraire*, it is the immigrants who assimilate the ways of France.

American social scientists will find Noiriel’s comparative allusions of interest if for no other reason than that he turns the tables. Rather than the United States being the model melting pot, he suggests that France has much to teach the United States. This shift in perspective is refreshing, but the comparison is more heuristic than analytic. Noiriel draws a general distinction between countries populated by immigration and those where immigration occurred after the development of a centralized state and industrialization. But he goes on to suggest that the cultural integration of European immigrants proceeded in similar ways in France and the United States. References to the relevant American literature, however, are too superficial to substantiate this argument (e.g., there are no citations of articles in the *Journal of American Ethnic History*).

While the U.S.-France comparison remains conjectural, *The French Melting Pot* succeeds brilliantly in putting contemporary French discord over immigrants in a historical context: immigrants, their contributions, their social problems, and nativist reactions have a history of more than 100 years. The current national identity “crisis” is due to amnesia of this past and a national myth that excludes immigrants. Lest American readers think Noiriel has had the last word in the debate, it is important to note other perspectives. Some cite the collapse of national institutions that once integrated newcomers as the source of the crisis. Others (including Braudel) argue that the institutionalization of Islam via North African immigrants and funding from the Middle East has in fact introduced
a new pluralism to France (civilization in Braudel's terms). This debate is far from over, and those in it will have to question long-held assumptions about the French nation-state as a result of Noiriel's book.


Vernetta D. Young
*Howard University*

There have been numerous studies on the relations between the police and minorities, namely African-Americans and Hispanics, in the United States. These studies have examined public opinion about the police, police behavior and discrimination, citizen complaints against the police, and employment practices. This book covers each of these issues. Holdaway, an ex-police officer, sets out to provide an "introduction to the sociological study of relations between police and minority ethnic groups" (p. vii) in Great Britain. Although Afro-Caribbeans and Asians are identified as the primary minority groups, information is presented on Chinese, Vietnamese, Chileans, and Jewish people. Still, most of the discussion centers on Afro-Caribbeans.

Holdaway, in the chapter "Thinking about 'Race,'" argues that it is more appropriate to talk about racialized relations than race relations. For Holdaway, the meaning of race is negotiated as a result of human actions. Structural variables, such as immigration, occupation, income, and gender, as well as social context determine the salience of race. He argues that racialized relations in England can only be explained by looking at the history of immigration and the exclusionary practices used to maintain inequality. These factors influence how minorities experience crime and victimization and set the stage for the discussion of the racialization of policing. Holdaway identifies a number of key areas of policing or "sites of racialisation": victimization, racial attacks and harassment, the race and crime debate, riots, race relations within the police, and reform of the police.

In chapter 2, Holdaway provides a historical context for racialized relations between the police and minority groups in Britain. He reports that during the 1940s and 1950s Caribbean and Asian migrants, without work skills or capital, moved into urban areas that already exhibited high crime rates. Faced with inequality in employment and housing and with social exclusion, they were forced to remain in these high crime areas.

Holdaway reports that Afro-Caribbeans and Asians perceive crime as a significant problem and have higher rates of victimization than whites. The police, however, provide inadequate attention to the concerns of minority groups largely due to stereotypical characterizations of these groups and the areas in which they live. He argues that notions of "race" are ingrained in police policies, practices, ideas, beliefs, and actions. Hol-

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daway seems to be offering an apology for the failure of the police to understand and address the complex nature of these relations. He further notes that for minorities these experiences are compounded because they are not permitted to escape the situation due to structural and social constraints.

The occurrence of racial attacks and harassment is used to further emphasize the consequences of the exclusion and marginalization of minority ethnic groups—the racialization. According to Holdaway, these acts pose an immediate physical and mental harm, but just as important, they pose a “challenge to the right of ethnic minorities to live in Britain” (p. 46). Many incidents are not reported because citizens feel they will not be taken seriously and that the police will not protect them. The resulting fear, insecurity, and intimidation becomes part of everyday life and adds to the burden of racialized discrimination. Again, not only are minority group members defined by their race but these definitions have consequences for their safety and well-being and influence the responses of both offenders and the police, who are sworn to protect.

The remaining chapters illustrate the importance of understanding the contextual meaning of race. Holdaway looks closely at the rank-and-file occupational culture of the police. He reports that race is “intertwined with other features” (p. 76) of the social world of the rank and file. What may be considered routine police stops by other groups may be viewed differently by black and Asian people. Holdaway suggests that in these instances the police are influenced by factors like area of residence and housing type, which “seem to mediate the impact of racial factors” (p. 88).

Holdaway concludes the book by discussing the measures taken by police organizations to improve the quality of service provided to minority groups. He acknowledges a number of different approaches. He also notes that minority police officers have entered the profession and have been confronted with these same problems. Their efforts to organize and deal with these issues are encouraged.

More important, Holdaway emphasizes the need to recognize how social criteria are used to racialize relations. To improve the delivery of services to minorities, these notions, the social processes that led to these ideas about crime and its relationship to minorities, and the organizational and cultural factors that lead to racialized outcomes must be understood (p. 104). This book is appropriate as supplemental reading in an upper level course in issues related to policing or by those interested in cross-cultural comparative policing.
This volume addresses two audiences: sociologists of policing and students of Ireland. In the first pursuit, Weitzer provides a descriptive model of “divided society policing”: systematic bias in favor of the dominant social group, politicized policing that strongly identifies with the regime, dominant-group monopoly of top police positions, dual policing for counterinsurgency and “ordinary law enforcement,” special powers against the subordinate population, absence of effective police accountability, and polarized community-police relations. He proposes that community-police relations in divided societies are shaped at the neighborhood level by police effectiveness at fighting ordinary crime, the intensity of counterinsurgency policing, the legitimacy of the state in the neighborhood, and national-level controversies over policing that spill over into local political discourse.

Finally, in his implicit dynamic model, divided societies with “divided society policing” evolve into “modern” societies with “liberal” policing. Policymakers in “modern” societies such as Britain are more genuine about reform than those in “traditional” societies. Although Weitzer (mercifully) avoids describing Irish divisions as “tribal,” this implies a battle between progressive British reforms and traditional Irish backwardness.

Weitzer tests his models with a thorough case study of policing since the northern Irish state was created in 1922. He distinguishes two periods: overt sectarian Protestant rule before 1968 and “reform” thereafter. His comprehensive use of varied data sources gives his analysis more credibility than some previous studies of policing in northeastern Ireland that uncritically used social attitude surveys or interviews of policemen themselves. Weitzer is knowledgeable about his case. His desire to present a balanced analysis leaves him unwilling to whitewash police harassment, violence, bias against Catholics, and so forth. He also has interesting insights into the contradictory nature of police relations with Protestants.

Despite this, Weitzer’s functionalism and trust in British liberalism limit his analysis. At the outset (pp. 3–4), he contrasts functionalist theories, which assume that policing provides protection and order, with conflict theories, which view police as repressive state organs that protect dominant groups from subordinate groups seeking change. While conflict approaches may explain communally divided societies, he argues, functionalist approaches suit “liberal democracies,” where policing represents broad community interests. Thus, while the pre-1970s sectarian Protestant statelet was biased against the subordinate Catholics, Weitzer implies, post-1960s policing is reformist in intent because it is administered through direct rule by modern “pluralist” Britain.
This leaves Weitzer needing to explain why the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), despite its goodwilled reformist intentions, is still unacceptable to Catholics. One answer is that special wartime conditions require counterinsurgency policing. Although the British and the RUC are sincerely trying to reform policing, they cannot succeed as long as the RUC are responsible for counterinsurgency instead of just “ordinary policing.”

This fails to consider whether Western policing is less benign than functionalist models presume. Ethnic or class biases may affect policing in Western as well as peripheral societies. Moreover, even if states such as Britain were internally pluralist, they might condone or even encourage less progressive policing in their colonies, hinterlands, or ghettos.

Weitzer admits that the nature of policing cannot be divorced from politics. Ethnically divided political regimes limit the degree to which polarized community-police relations can improve. But this conflicts with his central thesis, that liberalization of counterinsurgency policing could make policing more acceptable to the subordinate communities.

Thus, by focusing on counterinsurgency reforms, he fails to address adequately whether the police (and the state in general) must be transformed rather than reformed. He does not even discuss proposals to replace the RUC with community-oriented police services, although he is rightly dismissive of conventional “community policing.” Instead, he concentrates on making the RUC more acceptable by liberalizing its counterinsurgency methods in favor of more “ordinary policing.”

To his credit, Weitzer accepts that policing is a political problem and that, ultimately, police acceptability demands political solutions. But his interim solution underestimates the degree to which “ordinary” policing inevitably has counterinsurgency aspects in states like Northern Ireland.

One wonders whether this book would have been more agnostic of RUC and British state intentions in Ireland had it been written after the events of July 1996 when the British state apparently capitulated to a threat of wholesale police insubordination if RUC officers were forced to confront their violent Protestant neighbors and friends who wanted to march through Catholic neighborhoods. The police subsequently attacked peaceful Catholic protesters with relish and, under the direction of their British chief constable, held whole Catholic neighborhoods under house arrest for days at a time. Even mainstream Catholics and normally prounionist southern Irish politicians reluctantly concluded that little had changed in the basic sectarian nature of policing and the northern state since the 1960s, despite nearly 30 years of putative reforms. A basic premise of Weitzer’s book, that the RUC can reform itself and achieve broader community support short of a political solution, may have been overtaken by events.

Neil Websdale
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As a working class Brit now working in the United States, I thoroughly enjoyed Bad Business: Professional Crime in Modern Britain by Dick Hobbs. Hobbs’s well-written book takes readers on a rich ethnographic tour of the lives of professional criminals. He engages professional criminals on their own terms and in their own language in pubs, clubs, offices, and their homes. Like other books in this genre, such as Wright and Decker’s Burglars on the Job: Street Life and Residential Breakins (Northeastern University Press, 1994), Hobbs presents professional crime through the eyes of those who commit it, as they commit it.

Hobbs argues that it is impossible to distinguish neatly between professional crime and everyday business activities in the marketplace. Professional crime is subject to the same market forces as legitimate business. Consequently we see “bad business” changing with structural alterations in the marketplace, such as the deregulation of the London Stock Exchange in 1986 and the rise of increasingly sophisticated electronic communications. Professional crime may be “bad business” but it is still nonetheless “business.” Hobbs’s central argument then is that “bad business” is best appreciated against the historical ebb and flow of rational economic forces. He does a fine job of contextualizing the historical drift of professional criminals from cracking safes and robbing banks toward myriad economic activities, some legitimate, some illegal, but all designed to accumulate wealth.

The voices of professional criminals assume center stage in Hobbs’s ethnography. The narrative is sprinkled with the linguistic skills of working-class criminals. Banks are “tasty” (i.e., appealing to rob), inmates “flob” (spit) on prison guards, some people are “wankers” (i.e., literally, “masturbators” but colloquially “idiots”), commodities “fall off of lorries [trucks]” (i.e., they are stolen, or perhaps more appropriately, redistributed), men talk of “birds” (women), and at times talk a load of “bollocks” (i.e., literally, “testicles,” colloquially “bullshit”) and all are pursued by “Old Bill” (police). Long interview excerpts weave a rich web of firsthand experiences that alert readers to the motives, justifications, and linguistic codes of “bad business” people.

We learn of the master craftsman, Dick Pooley, whose safecracking exploits depend upon an intimate knowledge of explosives “in the way that any craftsman would with the tools of his craft” (p. 15). Dick, and his like, are now virtually extinct along with other “icons of proletarian identity” (p. 18) such as the shipyards, coal mines, and steelworks. In his account of a father and son team, Danny and Chris, we see the struggle between generations of men and the way in which generational tensions around the development of masculinity are mediated by the need to make
money and to engage in professional crime. In the tale of Danny and Chris, as in other tales, Hobbs echoes the work of Messerschmidt’s *Masculinities and Crime* (Rowman and Littlefield, 1993) on the way in which crime constitutes a vehicle for performing gender. We meet Fat Laurie, whose bowel movement is carefully timed to coincide with the opening of a public house called “The Dog.” At The Dog “pine disinfectant battles with stale tobacco smoke and the phantoms of last night’s beer,” as Fat Laurie takes a “shit and a Scotch” (p. 52). As “men of violence,” Gary and Eric are much more than the dupes of Thatcher’s right-wing ideology. Rather, Hobbs elucidates, they are young people with limited occupational horizons but considerable initiative who drift from dishing out violence to dealing amphetamines.

Through all these excerpts, and many more, we appreciate the agency of professional criminals amid the shifting structural conditions of modern Britain. Changing technologies limit the ease with which banks can be defrauded, safes are safer, the police have greater powers of surveillance, and skilled meaningful labor is increasingly hard to come by. These historical changes mean that a cohesive community of professional criminals that endures across generations is more myth than reality. Citing Zygmunt Bauman (*Intimations of Postmodernity* [Routledge, 1992]), Hobbs points out the professional criminal community is a “retrospective unity” rather than a transhistorical reality. This “unity” is consistent with the characters themselves who are what Hobbs calls “fantasists.”

*Bad Business* will be of immense interest to sociologists and criminologists. It is readable, theoretically eclectic, and richly insightful. If I have a criticism it is that the author could have spent more time talking about the intricacies of his approach. His approach is fairly straightforward, but more methodological reflexivity might cast light on the homologies between life as a professional criminal and social life in general.


Troy L. Armstrong
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In 1978, the New York State Legislature voted, by overwhelming margin, to pass the juvenile offender law, lowering the eligible age of criminal responsibility to 13 years old for murder and 14 years old for other violent offenses. Enactment of this statute shifted the initial locus of legal decision making about juvenile offenders who have been charged with specific violent felonies from juvenile justice officials to the criminal court and culminated a lengthy period of debate over the wisdom of introducing legal procedures to allow waiver, the prosecution in criminal court of designated juveniles under the legally recognized age of majority. At
the same time, New York had long resisted efforts to establish legal procedures for waiver; it was one of the few states that had earlier set the low general age of 16 years old for criminal responsibility. In this historical and legal context, a stringent legislative waiver statute was enacted.

The juvenile offender legislation was widely viewed by the public as being motivated largely by political considerations that promoted a strong stance against a perceived emerging epidemic of violent youth crime. This law appeared to be promulgated as a direct result of several heinous and highly publicized murders perpetrated in a callous, predatory fashion by a 15-year-old chronic juvenile offender, who, due to his age, could not be transferred to adult court. This relatively convenient explanation leaves much to be desired, given what is currently known about the complexity and range of factors identified as playing some role in juvenile justice reform. Using this as an impetus for inquiry, Simon I. Singer, who has previously written extensively on the topic of waiver, constructs a far more expansive and challenging argument examining a wide-ranging set of circumstances and a variety of multidimensional factors postulated as contributing in varying degrees to the creation, passage, and impact of the 1978 juvenile offender law.

Written as a case study in juvenile justice reform, Recriminalizing Delinquency provides a detailed and insightful account of a controversial legislative enactment, its background, content, intent, and impact. Certainly, the publication of this volume is very timely. The perception held by the public and elected officials about the escalating crisis in youth violence has resulted in steps being taken in most states across the United States to launch major initiatives to revise juvenile codes and to broaden correctional statutes to shift policy and law concerning serious juvenile offenders into a far tougher stance. At the heart of these changes have been endeavors to enact new, harsher waiver statutes. This volume addresses one example of such an effort and has made a major contribution to the emerging literature on waiver.

Singer structures his argument and account of the New York events by organizing descriptive materials and analyses into a sequence of three sections focusing upon the origins, implementation, and effects of the juvenile offender law. Discussion of origins explores antecedent activities and evolving perceptions/attitudes that contributed to recriminalizing juvenile offenders, while examination of implementation focuses largely upon the relative importance of those identified principles that appear to have significance for assigning criminal responsibility. In addressing impact, Singer attempts to determine whether any general deterrent effect has been achieved by the juvenile offender law. Both the implementation and impact sections benefit from the inclusion of very thorough multivariate analyses, which provide valuable insight into the respective influence of a substantial array of potentially relevant variables. In addition, a final substantive chapter describes the attitudes and perceptions about the incarceration of youth who had been sentenced as adults and committed to a secure facility under the law.
American Journal of Sociology

To demonstrate that understanding of the dynamics of juvenile justice reform must be grounded in a complexly configured framework, Singer proposes a strategy for explanation that incorporates consideration of a wide set of organizational constructs and principles. At the heart of his argument is a series of assertions and assumptions—derived largely from organizational theory—about the inherent structural and processual nature of this particular bureaucratic arena. From Singer’s perspective, key to a proper assessment and analysis of planned change in juvenile justice is the fact of its being a loosely coupled system in which there is both a tendency for confusion in decision making across subsystem boundaries and little coordination among component parts. Within this framework, he repeatedly asserts that recriminalization (e.g., introduction of legislative waiver) is one optional direction in which a juvenile justice system can be moved as it creates another legal subsystem for responding to deviant behavior. Singer argues that the kind of toughened measures that he examines in the book do little to demolish the existing juvenile justice system but rather serve to preserve a rationale and need for its continued existence.

My only two reservations with Singer’s analyses and conclusions focus upon the deliberate uncertainty that he has introduced into his central argument and the level of interactive complexity he has deemed necessary in his discussion of contributing factors. With regard to the former, by admitting that he does not possess any direct measure of tightly and loosely coupled systems of justice, Singer generates a sense of uncertainty in his analysis that results in an inconclusiveness in his findings. With regard to the latter, the set of organizational concerns and interests identified as being potentially relevant to the sudden emergence of waiver legislation in New York State, as well as the interactive complexity of these factors, left this reader slightly bewildered. Yet, through this ambitious design, Singer has clearly set an agenda for subsequent research that should provide an opportunity for new and important insights to be obtained about the juvenile justice reform process.


Joel Best
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Like athletes, sociologists can become known for characteristic moves, favorite analytic turns. Joseph Gusfield, for instance, likes to dissect taken-for-granted assumptions, taking what everyone seems to accept without question, and exposing it as a construction of unexamined assertions, favored for its convenience to established interests. This analytic turn can be found throughout Contested Meanings; the very title warns
us that knowledge is debatable. This volume collects 13 Gusfield essays about alcohol problems; although eight of the papers, dating from 1967 to 1991, are reprinted, most first appeared in specialized collections and will be new to many readers. Throughout, Gusfield seems to delight in challenging the obvious, in questioning what everyone knows about alcohol problems and policies.

Gusfield argues that, since the 1930s, alcohol problems have been defined by—owned by—“the alcoholism movement,” the coalition of academics, treatment professionals, government agencies, and Alcoholics Anonymous that has promoted the notion of alcoholism. The movement views alcohol problems, such as drunken driving, public drunkenness, and fetal alcohol syndrome, as located in particular individuals (alcoholics or at least “problem drinkers”), therefore it promotes policies designed to identify these individuals and help them “recover” by not drinking. Thus, those arrested for driving under the influence (DUI) are ordered to attend classes on drinking designed to help them recognize that they “have a problem.” Because such policies often have little effect, a “new temperance movement” has emerged, dedicated to limiting access to alcohol, reducing alcohol consumption, and convincing categories of individuals (e.g., pregnant women) to reduce or stop drinking. While these claims are so commonplace as to seem unexceptional, Gusfield dismantles them and makes the familiar strange.

He reminds us that drinking is both a widespread practice and something of a learned skill. Most adults drink, and most drinking does not cause much harm. While it may be true that the people who drink the most are more likely to get in trouble, many people drink heavily without incident, and at least some problems occur because drinkers are inexperienced. There are plenty of individuals who drink regularly but view themselves as competent drinkers who can “handle it”; they may, for example, drink and drive, yet argue that they take extra care, know their limits, and so on. Such individuals are likely to resist the alcoholism movement’s claims that they are problem drinkers, even when they experience arrest or some other difficulty. Gusfield explores this world of ordinary drinking in three chapters reporting on ethnographic fieldwork; two of these describe drinking in bars and the drinkers’ subsequent decisions to drive, while the third examines probation hearings and classes for drivers with DUI arrests. He finds drinkers who believe they can take care of themselves, bartenders who keep a protective eye on regular customers, and offenders who resist claims that their DUI arrests reveal anything more than their bad luck in being stopped when they had high blood-alcohol counts. Where the alcoholism movement sees problem drinkers in denial, Gusfield is willing to ask how drinkers construct their own activities.

In his analysis, drinking becomes a situated activity: people drink, not because they are driven by internal compulsions, but because they enjoy it, because they value the sense of playful release. People drive after they drink for various reasons—notably because driving is often the most
practicable way to get to and from bars—and they drink in bars because the law often limits the public places where drinking can occur. Does it make sense, Gusfield asks, to define drinking problems solely in terms of people’s freedom to choose to drink, while ignoring the limits on their choices for transportation or locations for drinking? Why do we treat drinking and driving as a drinking problem rather than a driving problem?

The ownership of alcohol problems is in the hands of experts and agencies who delimit our sense of what is problematic and thereby promote particular sorts of solutions. If alcohol problems are moral problems, caused by problem drinkers’ irresponsibility, then experts must either convince problem drinkers not to drink or, by limiting access to alcohol, make drinking more difficult. Because such policies ignore the widespread acceptance of drinking, they find little support among ordinary drinkers. Gusfield notes the long history—and limited effectiveness—of alcohol education programs, suggesting that their enduring “is one of the clearest arguments for the persistence of magic in modern societies” (p. 285). He continually challenges the effectiveness of broad policies based on narrow definitions, arguing instead for considering of piecemeal approaches that identify and address key elements in the situations where alcohol use seems most likely to lead to trouble.

While those interested in alcohol problems will, of course, find this book provocative, the questions Gusfield raises are relevant to other social problems, too. Alcohol is not the only product associated with leisure and defined as problematic, for which reduced access is promoted as a solution. There are parallel claims, calls to restrict or ban guns, tobacco, rap music, pornography, illicit drugs, war toys, and so on. It can be argued that, like alcohol, these products sometimes lead to serious trouble, but the great majority of the time they do not, and, also like alcohol, they inspire vigorous debates between their critics and their consumer-defenders. Contested Meanings suggests that, in studying these debates, sociologists should be slow to buy into unexamined assumptions, that the construction of meaning should be studied, not just taken for granted.


Paul M. Roman
University of Georgia

The 1935 beginnings of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) involved an unexpected meeting and bonding between two upper-middle-class male WASPs in Akron, Ohio, a prototypical heartland American city. Their perceptions of releasing each other from the grips of alcohol addiction through mutual confession of shared weaknesses and shared humanity
strongly motivated their search for other alcoholics, mostly like themselves. Their efforts spiraled into an amazing organizational structure, centered around a therapy combining folk, medical, and spiritual elements.

Arising from mainstream American culture, AA has achieved symbolic dominance over America’s popular imagery of routes into and out of alcoholism. How far has AA diffused beyond the narrow boundaries of its beginnings? An important response is this collaboration, framed around excitement about AA’s international diffusion, and providing multifaceted descriptions of the fellowship in the United States, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Poland, Austria, Switzerland, and Mexico. The study attempts an organizational analysis, demarcated from extensive sociological scholarship on individual AA experiences.

The 18 authors apparently concurred on a descriptive framework for presenting their findings that unfortunately discourages analytic insights. Many observations are fragmented and shallow, even trivial for those uninterested in the specifics of AA structure and process. Sidestepped are opportunities for sociological analyses of the interplay among AA process and structure and the host sociocultural environments. For example, a start at an in-depth description shows that AA in Poland is intertwined with the Roman Catholic Church, an incredible contrast with AA’s traditionally strident independence from extraorganizational connections. But I was disappointed when the description trailed off with the pallid comment that the church is a dominant presence in Poland.

Without macroanalyses of structural and cultural supports, the question of the true extent of AA’s diffusion remains. AA’s early leaders were sensitive to the contextual limits of its WASP-ish beginnings, and through the 1960s its General Service Board worried about successful outreach of the fellowship to minorities and women. Today, AA’s success beyond white middle-class males seems widely accepted, and the albeit modest documentation of this achievement is cited in this volume. For some, international diffusion data complete the paradigm that AA can work anywhere. Yet it must be recognized that the “ways of knowing” about AA’s successful diffusion are extraordinarily limited: its guarantees of anonymity and ephemeral definitions of membership preclude valid organizational demography.

Despite extensive AA diffusion, these authors observe that many if not most persons who first attend an AA meeting do not return. These invisible masses for whom AA does not “click” presumably share a belief that they have a significant drinking problem. Yet we know little about them, their lack of attraction to AA, and the ultimate resolution of their troubles. Cross-cultural observations of this attrition might temper this book’s opening assertion that “AA is one of the great success stories of our century” (p. 3).

A different methodological problem is determining the significance of AA in a nation’s collective definitions surrounding alcohol problems. This study affirms that AA is “there” in these eight nations. But the signifi-
cance of its presence is contingent upon its place among other cultural definitions and strategies used to cope with alcohol problems. These issues are avoided almost completely.

To wit, a striking set of data demonstrates dramatic growth of AA activity in Latin America. Despite the national expertise across the writing team, little effort is made to explain this development or why growth is slower elsewhere. Some unique Mexican AA practices are described, but there is no linkage offered between the Latin American sociocultural environment and the upward trajectory of AA activity. Moreover, given the emergence of widespread disruptive drinking in nations in early stages of economic development, insights from AA's growth in Latin America could address future human misery elsewhere in the world.

Further needs for comparative analysis are highlighted by central AA beliefs that abstinence is essential for recovery, and that striving for abstinence is a condition of continued participation in AA. By contrast, especially in Western Europe, an alternative perspective holds that regaining control over drinking may be a reasonable solution for uncontrolled drinking. Abstinent “recovering alcoholics” in U.S. culture comprise a social category, have substantial opportunities for interaction with each other, and enjoy a modicum of social dignity. Such constructions of meanings and of opportunities for social integration may not transcend cultural boundaries; the meaning of AA membership in a non-U.S. culture is encapsulated within that culture’s complex of definitions. The potentially huge implications of such differences are not systematically addressed here.

This book offers a plethora of detail about AA in these eight nations, but meager fare for those seeking sociological knowledge about comparative organizational systems. Future research needs are well articulated, and, in its defense, the volume may be characterized as an invitation for further inquiry. Its impact may be enhanced by a forthcoming companion collection of national case studies of AA.


James A. Inciardi
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Americans have experienced a number of alternative approaches to drug control for generations. One legacy has been limited success while another has been an occasional spate of books on the topic. In fact, criticizing American drug policy seems to have become a cause célèbre for both academics and policy analysts—particularly those who have done little work in the drug field. Drug War Politics represents the latest entry to the literature in this regard.
Book Reviews

The authors state that the book is not just another book about the failure of U.S. drug policy but rather the politics of the drug war—the politics of denial—and the struggle for drug policy reform. The “politics of denial” refers to the reasons why the drug war’s fatal flaws and collateral damage are for the most part ignored.

Part 1 of the book was written to expose the pattern of denial and examines some of the reasons why many Americans fail to see the ways in which the drug war serves to create and exacerbate the problems of drug abuse, addiction, and crime. Part 2 looks at the politics of denial and asks questions about the nature of these politics and why they persist. Part 3 discusses alternatives to the current drug war, such as legalizing drugs (which they agree is also a flawed approach) and implementing a public health paradigm.

On the positive side, the book is extremely well written and contains material that will certainly be of interest to many readers who have had limited exposure to the great drug debate. Of special interest in this regard is the history of the drug wars, from the early struggles during the first three decades of this century through the entrenchment of the “ punitive paradigm” in midcentury, followed by the “presidential drug wars” and the emergence of the “narco-enforcement complex.”

Unfortunately, however, for those of us who have been following the drug wars over the years, there is nothing new in this book. There are at least a dozen or so other monographs and perhaps a hundred or more scholarly papers that have been published in the last three years that have said essentially the same things. All too often we have heard that the supply-reduction strategy of drug control (which includes interdiction, enforcement, asset forfeiture, and foreign assistance initiatives designed to keep drugs out of the United States and drug dealers off the streets) just does not work—which it does not. At the same time, we have been hearing that the demand reduction strategy (which includes prevention, education, and treatment) has been short-changed over the years in the federal drug war budgets—which it has.

When scholars from one or more fields step out of their areas of expertise into others, there is always the risk of making both minor and major errors. The authors of Drug War Politics are not from the drug field: one is a policy analyst and organizational consultant, two are professors of government and political science, the last is a specialist in foreign policy studies, and all have fallen into this trap. One of the more obvious is their belief in what I have often referred to as the “enslavement theory of addiction.” Enslavement theory holds that because of drug prohibition and because of the high price of heroin, cocaine, and other illegal substances on the drug black market, otherwise law-abiding citizens are forced into criminal careers in order to support their expensive drug habits. The theory sounds quite logical, and it has been repeated many times over the years. The problem with enslavement theory is that in most cases it is just not so. For the great majority of drug-involved offenders, drug use did not precede their careers in crime. Although drug use tends to
intensify their law-breaking behaviors, their criminal patterns were well established before their drug initiation. There are dozens of empirical studies documenting this phenomenon, and the authors neglected to mention them.

As a final point, the authors argue quite forcefully that the use of illegal drugs should be treated not as a crime but as a public health problem. This certainly makes sense because, after all, the wars on drugs have for the most part failed. However, this is certainly not a new idea. Although the “public-health paradigm” in one form or another has been called different things by different people—the medical approach, the disease model, demand reduction, and the harm reduction paradigm—it has been suggested for generations and parts of it actually have been implemented as part of the “war on drugs.” In short, although this is a well-written book, it was disappointing because of its failure to offer any new insight on America’s great drug war.


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It was Henry James’s view that criticism was an aesthetic discourse, in contrast to reviewing, which he considered to be practical and journalistic (Literary Reviews and Essays on American, English, and French Literature, [Twayne, 1957]). Yet James would have missed the subtle clarity with which Shrum makes the distinction between critics and reviewers. Shrum’s theoretical point is that critical standards that help to distance audiences from their experiences and direct pleasure are central to a sociological understanding of high art and not relevant for the enjoyment of popular culture. Very specifically, high culture is to criticism as popular culture is to reviewing. Audiences of high culture are engaged, through critical mediation, in the evaluation of art products, whereas popular culture is enjoyed directly, without intervention or an interpretive mediator.

Fringe and Fortune arrived on my desk the week after returning from the Avignon Theater Off Festival, which was the perfect time to read a book on the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. The genre can be described in the terms of a public festival—dense crowds, street theater, and performances in semiofficial as well as in official venues. There is a zany mixture of carnival and authenticity, sublimity and silliness, satires on sublimity and satires on silliness, political happenings, and multimedia events. The genre, as I concluded, and Shrum confirms, can be superficially described as a crossover between P. T. Barnum, Studs Terkel, and funky Aristophanes.
Therefore, my own casual observations in Avignon, supported by much of Shrum’s lively ethnographic description, led me to expect an analysis of a theater festival in terms of a conception of the public sphere or of public culture. Shrum confirms that such a conception is useful but also articulates a theoretical perspective to clarify how aesthetic values apply to some but not all of the theatrical endeavors at the Fringe Festival. His conclusions are based on a clear and insightful overview of the theory and the history of aesthetics as well as his sociological investigation, consisting of interviews—with cab drivers, theatergoers, pub customers, street people, producers, ticket vendors, and actors—as well as an appropriately scaled quantitative analysis of audience composition and of reviews.

The Fringe Festival is an especially ambitious undertaking; in 1988, the year in which Schrum did his research, there were 913 advertised programs, with about 100 to 500 performances a day, and it extended over a two-week period. He distinguishes between events that are defined by high-art standards (theater, opera, mime, dance, orchestra, recitals, poetry) and those that are broadly popular and entertaining (defined by the categories of comedy, musical, revue, cabaret, folk, jazz, rock, and events for children). He is careful to point out that his job as critic for a magazine, the List, gave him access to places and people that he would not otherwise have had. Being a critic also provided him with a way of being a spectator of his own professional reactions and those of other journalist critics.

Thus, the thesis and the corroborating evidence indicate that it is critical discourse that maintains the line between high and low. Critics define and maintain legitimacy and standards within the realm of high art, but in the realm of popular art, personal tastes prevail. The book includes an excellent and stunning review of relevant theories in aesthetics and the sociology of art and of culture.

Against his own thesis, he poses two alternative ones: “convergency theory” (Herbert Gans and my own work), which posits a diminishing difference between audiences and between products with regard to high and popular art, and “cultural capital theory” (Pierre Bourdieu and Paul DiMaggio), which posits that status interests help to maintain the differentiation of high and popular. Shrum provides some support for the “omnivore thesis” (Richard A. Peterson), namely that educated people have wide-ranging interests and indulge in many kinds of art activities. However, Shrum’s arguments are based as much on audiences’ tastes as on the importance of the tastemakers. Shrum’s analysis poses further unanswered queries as well: In their mediation role, what gives critics the warrant to exercise judgment? To the extent that criticism is not grounded in clear aesthetic conventions, who has the right to be a critic? Why is an Olympic gymnastic performance not high art if it must be explained by an expert to television audiences? Is a Mozart piece popular or high art when it is rearranged for a film? Is not jazz the test case that
a genre can cross the “great divide”? Quality—what is intrinsic only to high culture—is constructed through discourse as critics repeatedly evaluate works, and it is our repeated readings of critics that inform our judgments. *Fringe and Fortune* has a charm and wit that novelist James would have liked.

*A Space on the Side of the Road: Cultural Poetics in an “Other” America.*


Karen McCarthy Brown

*Drew University*

Kathleen Stewart has written a subtle and rich ethnography of southwestern West Virginia. From everyday language—what the locals call “just talk”—Stewart conjures a dynamic, conflictual portrait of life in the “hollers” and coal camps. Here is a rendering that evokes liquid cultural patterns never allowed to solidify. *A Space on the Side of the Road* reproduces and analyzes the words of individuals occupying a gap in space/time left when progress deserted the coal camps of West Virginia. The author suggests that telling the story of America and progress from the perspective of the Other “tweak[s] the anxieties and desires that motivate the master narratives of center and margin, self and other” (p. 6). In the United States, so-called Appalachia has surely become one such Other, an object of “both dread and desire” (p. 118). Appalachia has come to embody both old-fashioned authenticity and “a degraded state of nature” (p. 119). But this is not a book about stereotypes. It is something much more interesting—a book about the folk of Egeria, Odd, and ’Miga and the ways they configure their world. Stewart’s compassionate intelligence shines through her text, as does her considerable knowledge of and ease within the hollers and coal towns where she lived and moved during two years of field research (1980–82).

The author invites her reader to “imagine the kind of place where, when something happens, people make sense of it not by constructing an explanation of what happened but by offering accounts of its impacts, traces, and signs” (p. 57). Thus a litany of violence and loss may be provoked by a simple request for directions.

All right, now, go on down Miss Banks’s place past that big ol’ bridge where that McKinney boy went over and it looks like you might go in after’m. . . . Keep on ’til you see the Black Eagle post office. That’s where the snake handlers stay at and Bud said he’s skeered to deliver the mail down there where he might put his hand in a mailbox and there’s a snake in there . . . . *All Right, now, keep on, keep on,* pretty soon you come to the place where they shot up that boy. What was that boy’s name? You know that one kilt his wife. (pp. 56–57)
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Stewart tracks the narrative alchemy whereby tales from a world “got down” (when told just right) produce new hope and new energy to endure daily trials. She notes the “nervous” scanning of the environment—nature, the neighbors, even heaven itself—to look for signs of trouble around the corner. And she names the double bind of a sociality that thrives on an excess of information about others, while at the same time placing a high value on privacy and condemning those who stick their noses into another’s business.

* A Space on the Side of the Road * is also a theoretical book of considerable merit. Stewart situates her work in the center of the “new ethnography,” a diverse collection of recent, experimental, ethnographies responsive to a variety of postmodernist influences. The ethnographer, she believes, cannot resolve the subject/object dilemma through current confessional practices, such as situating oneself in the narrative. Neither can the researcher gather up voices and put them in her text, pretending that they are speaking for themselves. “There is no textual solution,” Stewart says with refreshing candor. The only thing to do, she suggests, is write ethnographic narratives that track the nervous signals of culture in everyday sociality.

Facing a question that pops up frequently these days among anthropologists, “What is a culture anyway?” Stewart gives no more comfort than she gave to ethnographers. But unlike some critics, Stewart does not suggest that we drop the word *culture* from our working vocabulary anymore than she suggests that we stop writing ethnographies. We need not give up on the concept of culture simply because it cannot be reduced to fixed sets of values and beliefs. Culture simply is not “something that can be gotten right,” not ever. According to Stewart, culture can only be evoked through “multilayered narratives of the poetic in the everyday life of things” (p. 210).

* A Place on the Side of the Road * is without a doubt one of the best examples of the new ethnography, but it is not an unproblematic work. Particularly in the first half of the book, the reader strains to accommodate the jolt that comes with frequent shifts between the rhythmic, understated, and wickedly innovative narratives of Stewart’s West Virginia sources and her own densely packed analytic prose. It is one of the great ironies of our time that postmodernism, and I intend the term to refer to the broad intellectual movement with the best chance of bringing new voices into the arena of academic discourse, has adopted a mode of discourse that too often masks its democratic impulse.
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My research shows that at least 40% of all personal charitable contributions are made by households in the top 3.5% of the income distribution. For this reason alone, Ostrower’s examination of the meaning and practice of philanthropy among 88 elite New York City donors is informative for students of philanthropy, culture, and American institutions. The leading question of the book is given by the title—to excavate the culture of elite philanthropy. It is difficult to pin down an analytical definition of elite philanthropy. Ostrower’s functional one is that elite philanthropy is the array of social relationships of power and prestige by which the wealthy “take philanthropy . . . and adapt it into an entire way of life that serves as a vehicle for the cultural and social life of their class” (p. 6). Philanthropy, in short, is one of the most comprehensive indicators and effective producers of the cultural status, social cohesion, and personal identity of the wealthy.

While emphasizing that the wealthy never abandon their class trait to do what they want, where they want, and in the way they want, Ostrower correctly identifies wide variation in specific personal motivations and activities the elite manifest in accomplishing their underlying purposes of power and privilege. She provides important insights about the centrality of the associational ties that elite cultural, medical, and educational institutions use to attract and reward contributors. As in all studies of the elite, we hear much about board memberships, social networks, and the strategies of boundary maintenance aimed at determining who is to be welcomed into the stratosphere of elite philanthropy. We learn that wealth holders of all political stripes concur that they should be able dispose of their wealth however they wish, that they know better than Uncle Sam about how to spend their legacies, and that philanthropic bequests are an honorable alternative to estate taxation. The wealthy agree that philanthropy should never take on the massive social welfare or basic research agendas that are properly the responsibility of government. We learn too that the elite are more likely to follow class rather than religious or ethnic patterns in giving, that they seldom get directly involved with the ultimate beneficiaries of their largesse, and that women are less likely than their male counterparts to hold positions of authority.

The wealthy are thoroughly committed to a positive view of philanthropy and cannot be shaken from it. Employing a wonderfully astute interview technique, Ostrower proposed to her respondents a series of negative criticisms of elite philanthropy, namely that philanthropy induces dependency among the needy, encourages fraud, abets social snobbery, and legitimizes an undemocratic exercise of power. The wealthy
dismissed most of these putative criticisms outright; the rest they reject after only brief consideration. The wealthy readily acknowledge their command over a disproportionate amount of resources. But this only fortifies their social mission: they are obligated to make a public difference, and they are doing so through their philanthropy.

The major shortcoming of the book is that it draws general conclusions about the wealthy population from an unrepresentative and unweighted sample of New York City donors. To her credit, Ostrower warns the reader about her narrow sample, but for some reason she fails to write the bulk of the text with that caution in mind. For example, the first sentence of the conclusion states that “this book has asked why wealthy donors engage in philanthropy” (p. 132). Because her sample does not reflect the wealthy of New York, much less of the nation, her study cannot answer this question. In another example, the book purports to chart the relative distribution of motives, roles, relationships, and functions of philanthropy by the wealthy. However, the sample allows Ostrower only to map the existence of such attributes for some elite New York donors to only 48 of the city’s nonprofit organizations. It does not allow her to generalize—as her tables, multivariate analyses, and conclusions appear to do—about the philanthropy of the American wealthy. Perhaps a more accurate title for the book (one closer to earlier titles she used) would be Why Some of the New York Wealthy Give. To put the wealthy of New York City in perspective, there are nearly 70,000 households with at least $1 million in adjusted gross income, and 4.5 million households with a net worth of at least $1 million. My interviews with millionaires indicate that elite philanthropy is only part of the panorama of wealth and philanthropy engaged in by millions of people. The foundations the wealthy create, the novel programs and community projects they initiate, and the nonelite institutions and organizations they support are all evidence of something more than elite philanthropy. I do not think Ostrower means to say that all philanthropy by the wealthy is elite philanthropy, but this is one meaning of what she says. As a study of why the wealthy give in the United States, the book is flawed. As a study of philanthropy surrounding the elite institutions in New York City, this book has significant merit.

*Intellectuals and Public Life: Between Radicalism and Reform.* Edited by Leon Fink, Stephen T. Leonard, and Donald M. Reid. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996. Pp. xii+327. $47.50 (cloth); $19.95 (paper).

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Originating in a seminar at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, these 12 essays take the sociology of public intellectuals well beyond available collections for their geographical range and historical-theoretical
engagement. The split between intellectual as expert and intellectual as critic serves as a volume leitmotif.

Leonard begins with a genealogy of the politicized intellectual, embedding it in the old sociology of intellectuals and newer postmodern and Gramscian approaches. Lloyd Kramer follows with an account of Enlightenment intellectuals in Habermasian and Foucauldian modes, using the expert/critic divide as a foil and prop to inspire our recuperation of their recombination.

Intellectual histories are the obvious method to analyze public intellectuals. The engaging social theory and fascinating biography of Regis Debray and W. E. B. DuBois are inspiring because, in words and deed, they have been powerful critics of establishment and movements. Reid and Tom Holt magnify their original brilliance with insightful elaboration. Liberation theology’s centering of the poor also inspires, but whom? Roberto Goizueta’s concise account of theological innovations does not assess social consequence, and Protestant Evangelism’s explosion makes a better claim to being the consequential theological innovation in Latin American Christian base communities. A more social history can help assess intellectuality’s embeddedness and ideology’s consequence.

With good timing, intellectual debate can play a vital role in transforming the state. Mary Furner describes how the debate between statist and associative economists “economized” U.S. turn-of-the-century discourse and facilitated the move away from laissez faire’s static individualism. Fink’s exploration of the 1912–15 Commission on Industrial Relations begins with the opportune moment but turns to a careful dissection of how personal conflict and contending visions of intellectuals—as agitators of public opinion and as engineers of policy—destroyed opportunity. Ellen DuBois’s story of U.S. activist women writing history and making archives, 1880–1940, suggests that we consider “effect” as both immediate and longer term. Movement theorists have long thought in these terms as well as about how opportunities for intellectual consequence are made.

Craig Calhoun shows how in 1989 protesting students drew on long traditions of Chinese intellectual praxis and on a global vision of liberalism circulating through indigenous public spheres and international media to define the nation’s cultural crisis. But Chinese students went beyond their advisors to push for what could not be expected. The student demand for dialogue with the authorities was a more radical challenge to hierarchy than most Western observers appreciate in their imaginations of democracy for others. Studying intellectuals directly invites culture and politics to meet in the social and encourages us to explore the variety of critique and the authority for its expression.

Geoff Eley shifts the familiar critique of critical intellectuals—the recurrent gap between rank and file conservatism and the doctrine of ideologues—away from state policy and the pronouncements of elites toward the implication of German socialist ideology in the everyday life of its working class. He shows how the socialists’ prewar cultural conservatism and Kaiserreich’s authoritarian political culture limited counterhegem-
mony and intellectuality’s spread. But he also demonstrates how the social-
ists created the subculture in which cultural radicalism of a wider organic
intelligentsia was produced. Exploding and splitting under Weimar, the
group of organic intellectuals faced other challenges too: their condescen-
sion for everyday worker culture and new media and fascist movements
that captured popular desire better than they.

James Epstein’s story of Richard Carlile and the English *zetetic* clubs
of the first half of the 19th century reinforces the analytical appeal of
such an expanded theory of intellectuality. Carlile’s followers were uncre-
dentialed autodidacts but with a commitment to reason that marginalized
them from the masses. Another story of distance from the masses with
more familiar invocations of intellectual distinction is Jane Burbank’s
magisterial account of the Russian intelligentsia from Peter the Great
through Gorbachev. Her review of debates on the group’s historic role
shows that while they were not Gramscian “organic” intellectuals, they
always managed to claim authority to speak on the nation’s behalf.

When the nation, rather than public policy or popular mobilization, is
the object of intellectuals’ desire, the expert/critical tension looms less
large. The nation’s lability limits obligations of reason and empiricism.
While the popular might resist the intellectual’s refashioning and the
state demand the presentation of expertise, the nation can be held to be
more than what exists and accessible only to peculiar vision. Even with-
out the ear of the state, the support of the movement, or the advantage
of the moment, intellectuals often claim authority to define the nation, if
not always with immediate consequence. What privileges this articula-
tion, and when is it consequential? The answer begins here. This collection
offers the comparative historical sociology of public intellectuals a
wonderful foundation for teaching and puts the public consequence of
intellectuality to the center of our work.

*The Enchantment of Sociology: A Study of Theology and Culture.* By

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Flanagan is a senior lecturer in the sociology of religion at the University
of Bristol. In this book, he surveys not only the complex relationships
between sociology and theology, but he roots them in what he perceives to
be the dominant trends of a postmodern social system. A Roman Catholic
himself, he is at war with theologians who have become too eager for
relevance and with sociologists who fail to discern the truly sacred from
its many false appearances. *The Enchantment of Sociology* is part anal-
ysis, part diatribe on the order of Julian Benda’s Durkheimian attack on
only sociologists but the clergy and theologians have lost their capacity

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to discern the sacred and to pass judgment on false gods. Caught up in a world that they mistakenly believe to be secular, they miss its various forms of sacralization. Secularization, in Flanagan’s view, is a myth; at best it characterized “modernity” when “the rules of engagement” between the religious and the secular were clearer and more widely understood.

If sociologists were to be more to Flanagan’s liking, they would develop a number of critical faculties and capacities for judgment. They would need, first of all, the capacity to distinguish the sacred from the mundane or secular: a difficult task in a world that blurs the boundaries between them. In his sixth chapter, Flanagan argues that sociologists must recognize that they are living in a postsecular world, where “religious objects are resited on a field of religious indifference” (p. 190). Drawing heavily on an earlier discussion of Pierre Bourdieu, Flanagan stipulates that the cultural “field” is a difficult one in which to wage battle for the sacred. There are too many players who can produce and consume the sacred, naming it to their own satisfaction. It is also difficult to know what are the rules for fighting over what is and is not sacred.

According to Flanagan, sociologists ought to be better at this game than they are, but sociologists are caught up in their own subfields, where they talk about postmodernism without the benefit of any “transcending affinities.” Because they are tone-deaf to religion and theologically illiterate, they are in no position to separate the truly sacred from the sham. In a world of overlapping “fields,” sociologists have no sense of their own boundaries and are in a “liminal” relationship to theology. Thus they lack the firm ground and clear boundaries that might otherwise enable them to pass judgment on those who turn religious symbols into commodities. A more serious indictment is Flanagan’s accusation that sociologists are oblivious to their own petty heresies and thus unable to recognize their own Pelagian or Neoplatonic tendencies. A “reflexive” sociology, he would argue, should be more adept at theological self-criticism.

The tone and some of the content of Flanagan’s book echo Durkheim’s diatribe against the utilitarians. There is a similar impatience with those who study the practical and the mundane without discerning the universal; those who see only the parts but fail to recognize the whole miss the very groundwork of social life and mistake form for substance. Flanagan’s sense of despair frequently reminded me of Fritz Stern’s (The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of German Ideology [University of California Press, 1961]) “politics of cultural despair”: the ethos that provided a cultural demand for fascism. Flanagan sees a danger in any demands for purity and totality, but he locates this danger in the residues of the Enlightenment rather than in his own Durkheimian tendencies.

It is crucial, Flanagan argues, for sociologists to speak of “the cultivation of virtue, and the subcultures that embody and realise its basis” (p. 120). A Christian sociology may be in order, but in that venture, sociologists will get little help from theologians, who have sold their birthright for a mess of liberal or utilitarian potage. If Flanagan is right, there also
should have been more protest and judgment from sociologists who have studied the process of secularization. He is particularly scathing with regard to the work of Bryan Wilson. Wilson (*Religion in Sociological Perspective* [Oxford University Press, 1982]) has (rightly) discerned the decline of the sacred in social life but is too dispassionate about it. According to Flanagan, Wilson’s response has been “neutered”; Flanagan even accuses Wilson of using sociology as a “professional mask” for his own “death wish to belief” (p. 115).

His colleagues in the sociology of religion might not agree with Flanagan’s representation of their work. For instance, not only has Wilson explicitly warned of the negative effects of secularization on social life, he has pointed out that Christianity itself has been a major force promoting secularization and the loss of the social ties and constraints that dignify local communities. Conversely, David Martin (*Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* [Blackwell, 1990]) has pointed out that Christianity not only dissolves some forms of traditional obligation but creates new networks of affiliation and obligation to replace the old. Unlike the sociologists whom Flanagan finds illiterate with regard to religion and theology, Martin’s work is theologically sensitive and acute. Wilson and Martin are not the only sociologists whose work Flanagan fails to appreciate; Niklas Luhmann also receives unnecessarily abbreviated treatment, and his work on societal differentiation and on the evolution of religious beliefs is ignored. On the other hand, Flanagan has a particularly high regard for Bourdieu, whose work he finds convenient for discussing the ambiguities of symbolic production and consumption and for suggesting the presence of the sacred in an allegedly postmodern and postsecular world.

Toward the end of his reflections, Flanagan reverses his field. Instead of finding a dearth of meaning in the world, he discovers a surplus: an excess of form over content, as he puts it, in his discussion of Georg Simmel. However, there is no way for individuals to sort out all these meanings or to come to terms with them. Modern individuals have lost the disciplines that enable them to relate form and content to their own experience. It has been a function of magic to protect individuals from the surplus of meaning and to reduce that surplus to something that an individual can grasp. This is now a function, however, that Flanagan attributes to sociology, although he implies that sociologists lack the grace to know that they are standing, so to speak, on holy ground. Hence, he would argue, sociology should seek a certain reenchantment.

Magic, however, is the disease as well as the cure, a recipe for disappointment and renewed helplessness. Unfortunately, Flanagan appears to ignore this point in his longing for a return to an enchanted universe. With his yearnings, it is therefore not surprising that he complains of melancholy and malaise and sees signs of hope primarily in religious virtuosos who have recently rediscovered the monastic vocation. Flanagan wants very much indeed to move beyond dry sociological theory toward a genuine and more conclusive engagement with theology. Unfortunately,
he finds theology by now far too sociological to understand its own basis in faith and grace. After reading this challenging and sometimes acute book, I would hope that Flanagan himself would engage more directly in theological pursuits rather than wait for sociology to become reen-chanted.


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There is no question that media and religion are important elements in U.S. society. Researchers in both mass communication and the sociology of religion have developed strong literatures in these fields, yet neither tends to include the other. In Religion and the Mass Media, Stout and Buddenbaum provide essays integrating these two areas to examine religious institutions and audiences. The significance of this lies in the fact that previous research in these areas has focused on a content-centered approach. Stout and Buddenbaum explore religion and the media centering on the audience, asking, What do churchgoers themselves have to say about media and religion?

The first three sections of the book encompass the current status of religion and media research, institutional perspectives of media, and audience behavior. Current and past research is summarized first, situating the reader within the interdisciplinary approach to religion and the media. Several explanations for mass media use, including community integration, secularization theory, ideological frameworks, and psychological perspectives are described. The historical contexts of media use by U.S. Christian groups guides the second section, highlighting how these groups have incorporated the emergence of media into institutional teachings, evangelistic efforts, and preference/avoidance strategies of media use. Four empirical studies on the comparative use of media across Christian traditions explain how audience members respond to and then practice their religious directives. These studies demonstrate the relationship between religion and tolerance, differential newspaper use and orientations between groups, and group reactions to potentially threatening media events.

The last two sections of the book include case studies and the future of religion in the information society. The case studies focus on audience member adaptations of mass media in everyday life. Mormons and fundamentalists display within group differences of media use, while Quaker and Mennonite groups utilize various strategies for media use that maintain identity in the face of and even through the media. The use/avoidance of “gospel rap” in the black church is also explored. Each study
underlines the point that, although media use by religious groups varies, media plays a very important role in the everyday lives of religious audiences, in support or in spite of institutional directives. Jorge Reina Schement and Hester C. Stephenson conclude by analyzing how media roles are defined and what this means in the emerging information society. These authors explore major trends that shape awareness, as well as major tensions that dominate the information society, and the subsequent implications these have for the practice of religion.

Stout and Buddenbaum have collected essays that take a pointedly different approach to the study of religion and mass media. However, in achieving “a creative synthesis of ideas between mass communication research and the sociology of religion” (p. 5), they fall a little short. Although the emphasis is on integrating these two disciplines, the editors have selected essays that account for religion and media from a communication perspective. In fact, no sociologists of religion have contributed to this collection. Sociological concepts are included, such as secularization theory and Merton’s community integration, but these concepts are simply points of departure. Sociological theory does not overtly drive any of the essays, expanding on, or adding to current sociology of religion.

The editors of this book initially situate the reader in the current state of research in religion and mass media. This is followed by a selection of essays that track the use of media within the traditions of Catholicism, mainline Protestantism, evangelicalism, fundamentalism, and Mormonism. These historical contexts, particularly Quentin J. Schultze’s analysis of evangelicals, are excellent reviews of doctrinal and practical media use by these religious organizations. This particular section is a valuable resource for anyone interested in religion, communication, or the integration of these two areas.

A second critique, then, lies in the book’s consistency. The historical contexts of the traditions set forth in section 2 should set up and organize the essays in the following sections, giving a solid overall view to these particular religious bodies. The remaining empirical and case studies, however, do not follow explicitly from these five traditions, resulting in the second half of the book becoming less focused. Catholic groups are not included in the following case studies, and although Quaker, Mennonite, and black church groups can be folded into one or a mixture of the previously discussed traditions, an understanding of their media use in a larger historical context would certainly enrich and tighten the focus of the collection.

Despite some of these shortcomings, *Religion and Mass Media* initiates an intriguing dialogue between researchers in communication and the sociology of religion. This book takes a fresh approach toward research, stimulating many new research questions. As the editors note, “Given the importance of religion and the mass media in U.S. society, however, the potential value of conducting research in this area seems well worth the effort” (p. 30), and so it does.
Religions differ in their approaches toward the secular sphere. As Max Weber noted, those religions that combine a dualist conception of the nature of the universe with the notion of a personal divine creator tend to devalue the worldly realm. Their religious teachings encourage believers to look past this world and to set their hopes on the beyond instead. Weber termed this a world-rejecting worldview. Nondualist belief systems and religions espousing the idea of impersonal eternal order, in contrast, are more likely to hold favorable views on what goes on in this world; consequently, they are more likely to adopt a world-accepting worldview. James Russell’s book, which is a revision of the author’s doctoral dissertation in historical theology, discusses what happens when these different perspectives collide. It does so in the context of what is commonly called the Christianization of Germanic peoples in early medieval Europe. Russell describes this as a cultural encounter between a predominantly world-accepting Indo-European folk religion and the world-rejecting views of Christian missionaries. His thesis is aptly captured in the title of the book, namely that the Christianization of early medieval Europe was equally a Germanization of early medieval Christianity.

Russell’s argument, while valid to a point, is hardly as novel as it might appear to be. It has long been established that the early medieval Christian Church was heavily involved in ideological boundary work, by which it actively recommissioned some previously inadmissible pagan acts in new forms for Christian ends. As historians have noted, Christian missionaries faced ample competition in the form of diviners, soothsayers, and other manipulators of the supernatural. A well-established part of the culture of pre-Christianized peoples, these magicians offered those who sought their services the affirmation of some preternatural control over nature at a time of widespread social and political instability. Rather than taking this cultural world head on, for which it had neither the personnel nor the necessary means of communication, the Church selectively borrowed practices from competing pagan manipulators and promoted these practices as part of a pool of interceding acts considered legitimate for Christian purposes. At the same time, the Church vilified those who continued to perform such practices under a different authority and without its sanction. Places where people revered stones, fountains, or trees were turned into sites for oratories, chapels, and shrines. Even the drawing of lots and certain forms of astrology were cast into Christian molds. In turn, some licit religious artifacts proved to be amenable to manipulation, as Christian formulas turned into spells and the consecrated host was put to magical use. In the realignment of religious wor-

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ship and magical manipulations, many, but of course not all, of these practices came to run together. A strong Germanic influence on Christianity, Russell argues, can also be found in the development of a proprietary church system, certain military ideals, notions of sacral kingship, and the Adelsheiligwesen.

Most of this has been known for some time, so the value of Russell’s book falls or rises with the adequacy of its theoretical underpinning and the accuracy of its historical analysis. Serious problems exist in both regards. Russell is apparently unaware that the very concepts of world rejection and world acceptance have their origin in the writings of Weber, whom he mentions all but twice. He consequently also fails to consider Wolfgang Schluchter’s recent theoretical elaborations on this subject. Rather than a coherent argument informed by sociological theory, Russell’s approach to religious change seems more like an assembly of disjoint and at times trivial propositions, the empirical usefulness of which remains in doubt. For example, he states that “social structure influences ideological structure and both contribute significantly to a society’s general religious orientation” (p. 102). What insight is gained by such a statement, touted as a “fundamental postulate” of a general model of religious transformation? Is it useful to describe, in a different context, the worldview of early medieval Germanic societies as “sociobiological” (p. 212)?

The weakness of the book’s theoretical formulations are complemented by a historical part that, to a significant extent, consists of an assortment of long quotations in the text and footnotes. Russell habitually tells the reader what various scholars have asserted, stated, observed, noted, discussed, shown, and summarized—without any critical discussion of the views presented. In doing so he all too often mixes arguments that derive from notable analyses of the subject with those of somewhat dubious scholarly merit. It remains unclear, not only how much this study goes beyond what has already been established in historical scholarship (e.g., Valerie Flint’s magisterial *Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* [Princeton University Press, 1991]), but also whether its author has achieved a solid mastery of the relevant literature. For these reasons, I can recommend Russell’s book only with grave reservations.

*Social Change and the Middle Classes.* Edited by Tim Butler and Mike Savage. London: University College of London Press, 1995. Pp. xii+388. $29.95 (paper).

Mark Western

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Whether the object is to theorize how professional and managerial occupations fit into the class structure or to understand middle-class politics or how a diversifying class structure figures in debates about the “death
of class,” contemporary class analysis is increasingly concerned with the middle-class(es) in advanced capitalism. *Social Change and the Middle Classes* examines these issues in recent British society. It is primarily a textbook but contains sufficient new material to also represent the current state of play of British social science in this area.

The book is underwritten by a “class formation problematic” (p. 23) in which class analysis is about examining if and how class structural relations give rise to social collectivities. This approach combines a minimalist view of class structure with a maximalist understanding of class formation. The causal significance of class structure in different areas of social life is an open empirical question, not an a priori assumption, but the kinds of collectivities that potentially emerge are multifarious. Thus, chapters take up (among other things) issues of gender and race in class formation, changing professional and managerial careers, the impact of public-sector restructuring on middle-class state employment, middle-class use of domestic servants, links between geographic and worklife mobility, the role of the middle classes in “colonizing” the British countryside, class differences in diet and home ownership, and middle-class politics. Yet despite its scope, the book is extremely well integrated because several questions emerge repeatedly: What does the class formation problematic entail? How should the middle class be conceptualized to best explain class formation? How are class processes changing over time?

The dominant figure in British class analysis is undoubtedly John Goldthorpe, and many chapters engage either his conception of the middle class or his class analytic agenda. Goldthorpe asserts that professional, administrative, and managerial employees form a “service class” distinguished from other employees by the relationship they have with their employers. In contrast to contractual relationships in which nonservice-class employees exchange specific tasks for specific rewards, the service relationship is defined primarily by prospective benefits that service-class members anticipate over their working lives. Expectations about future benefits link the interests of service-class employees to those of their employers and predispose them to political conservatism. Recently, however, Mike Savage, James Barlow, Peter Dickens, and Tony Fielding (*Property, Bureaucracy and Culture: Middle Class Formation in Contemporary Britain* [Routledge, 1992]) have adapted Erik Wright’s conceptualization to explain British middle-class formation in terms of the way professionals and managers mobilize property, cultural, and organizational resources. In concrete terms, the difference in the views of Goldthorpe and Savage et al. comes down to a disagreement about whether managers and professionals constitute a single class or different middle-class fractions and the consequent implications this has for class formation. Two early theoretical chapters in *Social Change and the Middle Classes* address these issues, while the empirical chapters on career mobility, regional mobility, diet, and politics also examine how well service-class and asset-based conceptions explain differing aspects of class formation. Con-
cluding chapters by Goldthorpe and by Savage and Butler are especially useful in clarifying how the two perspectives differ.

Other chapters, particularly those dealing with the intersection of class and gender, interrogate the concept of class formation through a critique of Goldthorpe’s agenda for class analysis. Goldthorpe has prescribed a research program that takes the structure of class locations as given and investigates mobility patterns and sociopolitical class formation as conditional on this structure. In their chapters, Anne Witz and Rosemary Crompton argue that this characterization misses fundamental questions about the intersection of class and gender relations, particularly those pertaining to the way sex-segregated class and occupational structures arise and the extent to which men’s mobility opportunities are predicated on women’s exclusion from privileged class locations and the domestic labor of service-class wives. Crompton further asserts that as women increasingly enter middle-class occupations, the service class will fragment into a range of household types that will undermine its putative solidarity.

Crompton’s chapter also highlights the third recurring theme of the book—social change. The contemporary reorganization of class processes is a major focus of chapters dealing with public-sector employment, black middle-class formation, middle-class careers, the spatiality of class formation, middle-class politics, and middle-class consumption.

Overall, this book presents British class analysis as theoretically sophisticated, substantively informed, and committed to empirical analysis. It also demonstrates the power of class analysis to inform investigations of social action and social change. U.S. researchers should find it invaluable as a summary of recent British research and a comprehensive treatment of contemporary British society.


Sidney Pollard
*University of Sheffield*

The thesis of this book is that the traditional accounts of Germany’s astonishing rise to industrial power from the 1870s to the present, which concentrate on the large units in cartelized industries aided by the large universal banks, are incomplete. For a full understanding, we have to give equal weight to a range of other industries, consisting of medium- and small-sized firms and financed by regional or cooperative banks. The leading Konzerne in the former sector, above all in iron and steel, coal mining, chemicals, and electrical engineering, were generally able to stand alone and are here dubbed autark. The other set, mainly consumer
goods producers but also some types of engineering, depended on specialization backed by complex horizontal and vertical linkages to obtain components or fulfill mixed orders and is termed “decentralized.” The structure was clearly regional; some regions, such as the Ruhr or Silesia, contained only the autarkic type, while others, such as Baden-Württemberg or Saxony, were devoted exclusively to decentralized industries. The political structure of Germany, from the separate governments included in the Kaiserreich to the federalism imposed by the Allies after 1945, lent itself easily to such regional specialization, but the central government always managed to devise policies to benefit both types of region.

No brief review can do justice to the wealth of detail and the broad range of sources with which this thesis is supported, backed as it is by footnote discussions that add 50% to the length of the book. Though the prevalence of smaller firms has not gone unnoticed in the past, beginning with Clapham’s classic text *Economic Development of France and Germany 1815–1914* (Cambridge University Press, (1921) 1963), pp. 287–88), this very important contribution will make it impossible, at least in the English language literature, to neglect in future the role of the nonautarkic industries in the economic rise of Germany.

Yet many misgivings remain, largely because of the absolute, all-or-nothing tendency to squeeze the complexities of German economic history into a rigid schema of this kind. Regions, and even industries, were simply not all of one type or the other. The historical account in consequence is peppered with what at one point is rather engagingly called “rule-proving exception(s)” (p. 232). Moreover, there were many more influences upon Germany’s economic development than the internal and external structure of firms and the varying training and skill of the workforce, on which this thesis is almost exclusively based.

For example, the on-going debate on the extent to which an emergent regional factory industry was benefited by a previously existing domestic industry, in which both sides can cite numerous historical examples, is simply brushed aside by the dogma that traditional regions could not tolerate major innovations and were therefore avoided by the new industries. Thus the reader is startled to learn that the modern steel industry settled in the Ruhr district, not merely because of the coal and the waterways linking to the iron and the markets, but because there had been no traditional steel-making industry there. A brief glance at Sheffield, leading center of the old and pioneer of the new, would have shown this view to be untenable. Indeed, the failure to cast any glance abroad, in what is after all a fairly generalized view of industrial history, is a major failing of this book. Again, in the Wilhelmine Reich, the one-sided high-tariff protection for iron and steel as well as for grain imposed harmful cost increases on the finished goods industries, but there was no question of even-handed help for them. In Weimar, the division of interests was not, as stated here, so much autarkic versus decentralized industry as it was successful exporters versus those depending on the shrinking home market. Moreover, the bitter debate on social expenditure and its effect on
state-industry relations, a major issue that split industry and society, does not fit the schema and thus fails to get its due.

Lastly, the attempt in the final pages to draw far-reaching conclusions on Germany’s future from the results, and possibly short-term blips, of one or two recent years, would seem to fit more appropriately into a journalistic essay than a serious history. The structural analysis of the earlier chapters, even were it wholly acceptable, can surely provide no legitimate base for ad hoc prophecies.

He who offers sweeping generalizations must expect to be subject to detailed and perhaps even niggling criticism: this does not detract from the value of new perspectives. Backed, as they are in this case, by rich detail and knowledgeable insight, they make an important contribution that no one in the future will be able to ignore.


Jack A. Goldstone
*University of California—Davis*

Major controversies in early modern history may now be approaching closure, thanks to the painstaking work of Philip T. Hoffman. Did French agriculture lag behind that of England and the Netherlands? And was this due to differences in communal land practices, or farm size, or taxation? For those seeking answers to these questions, *Growth in a Traditional Society* will be an essential, indeed foundational, work.

Distilling the work of over a decade in the archives, Hoffman presents new and exceptionally detailed data on French agricultural productivity. The main data are drawn from the lease records of Notre Dame, one of the largest landholders in the Parisian Basin. These data are complemented by leases drawn from 19 additional sites around France, which Hoffman follows for three centuries prior to the French Revolution. Not only are Hoffman’s data new, so too is his analysis. Hoffman aims at the economists’ ultimate measure of agrarian efficiency: total factor productivity (TFP). This is calculated by using the lease data and price data to obtain the total costs of the inputs for each farm (land rents, taxes, animal rentals, wages paid for labor) and comparing those costs with the prices of the outputs (crops and animal products). When price weighted for their shares in production and output, these figures can produce estimates of how much “value added” the farmer provides; in other words, what output he/she gets for a given level of inputs. When these figures are tracked over time, as Hoffman does, we can see the pace of agricultural improvement down the centuries.

Hoffman’s results are sometimes reassuring, sometimes startling, but always backed by detailed investigation of the data, and careful consider-
ation of alternative explanations. Although his findings are too rich to summarize fully in a review, three main results stand out.

First, Robert Brenner, who in the famous “Brenner debates” argued that the class structure of landholding in France shackled its agriculture, is simply wrong. Brenner maintained that the tiny sizes and high rents of French peasant farms, the result of landlord domination of a prostrate peasantry, prohibited high productivity. Yet this picture is mistaken on every count. French farms with tiny plots and high rents did exist in large numbers in the Paris Basin. But despite their large numbers, they covered only a small part of the total farmland and were not the major source of grain for sale. These small farms were more like the cottage gardens of English day laborers. The French peasants who leased these plots were essentially wage workers on larger commercial farms, who kept a small plot to farm on their own. Thus in years when wages were low, a small garden plot provided them a bit of insurance against dearth. In fact, larger farms, which though less numerous covered a far greater area, paid lower rents, grew crops mainly for market, and—at least in the Paris Basin—were as productive as most regions in England.

French agricultural productivity growth lagged badly not in the areas with tiny peasant plots, which only existed where large, efficient commercial farms also provided wage opportunities, but in the areas of medium-size family farms. These farms—which covered most of France outside the Paris Basin—lacked the capital, the market opportunities, and the specialization that led to increased productivity. These family farms throughout France, not the tiny plots of wage workers in regions near Paris, were the reason for the relative backwardness of French agriculture.

Second, the great French rural historians—Marc Bloch, Pierre Goubert, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie—were at least half right. They had argued that French agriculture had remained almost unchanged, immobile, from the late Middle Ages right up to the Revolution. Hoffman shows this to be largely true as a gross average. But it was far from wholly true of all times and places. Hoffman shows that productivity gains in the Paris Basin were consistently high, with total outputs comparable to those of southern England. Moreover, although other parts of France had very little long-term productivity growth, this overall stasis concealed periods of healthy agricultural growth (mainly in peace and good climate) that were undone at intervals by the predations of war, which destroyed accumulated capital in land improvements and livestock and set back productivity by decades. In other words, the pattern of French productivity growth is like a chessboard: seen from a distance, it appears a grainy brown, but when examined in detail, it has areas of light interspersed with areas of dark.

Third, Hoffman confirms my own estimates and those of Ernest Labrousse regarding the contribution that lagging agricultural productivity growth made to economic pressures in the years leading up to the French Revolution. While recent revisionists have suggested that there was really
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little difference between England and France prior to the Industrial Revolution, and that French agriculture experienced its own period of rapid gains in the 17th and 18th centuries, Hoffman shows that such arguments are off base. As Hoffman puts it (pp. 132–35), “The overall performance of French agriculture was disappointing, even under optimistic assumptions. . . . Ultimately, it took them three centuries to accomplish what the English did in two. [In the centuries prior to the Revolution] food supply grew by less than 0.22 percent per year [while] the French population . . . rose at . . . 0.21 to 0.32 percent per year.” Although Paris’s immediate hinterland showed great gains after 1750, this did not change the picture, for “the local food supply perhaps tripled between 1500 and 1789, but the city’s population nearly quadrupled,” and Paris merchants were forced to move ever farther afield, into areas with lower productivity, to seek food for the capital. As a result, “food prices climbed, and real wages . . . failed to keep up. Only landlords had reason to be gleeful, as rents soared under the pressure of the population.”

In sum, French agriculture was capable of great progress, but only where capital, large urban markets, and commercial farms combined. Unfortunately for France, such areas were few. More commonly productivity stagnated, leaving France prone to periods of economic distress when population surged. For presenting this story with unprecedented detail and evidence, and, I should add, clear style and rich argument, we are indebted to Hoffman.


Graeme Salaman
Open University

This book is about time. It is about a group of people for whom the flexibilization of their working time is intended to secure that they “have more time.” These people are called “time pioneers” (TPs), since they are seen to pioneer a new approach to a contested resource—time itself. The authors see the TPs as spearheading a new response to employers’ demands—not with respect to the traditional trade-off between effort and wages, nor even necessarily over the sheer quantity of time worked, but over the flexibility of working hours. TPs do not wish simply to reconfigure their working time to make their work more convenient for other schedules: they wish time for themselves. And they are prepared to pay for it: to trade working hours for their own time. They seek to reconfigure the prevailing time-money exchange by reorganizing everyday life in terms of time.

The analysis is based on the primacy of “lifestyle” as an explanatory concept, which here refers to the capacity for making subjective prioritiz-
lations and interpretations. The focus is thus on choice, associated with individuality and identity. The study claims to address the role of subjectively meaningful time in the constitution of identities—to use time as an analytical category to investigate the conduct of life, the construction of identity and of meaning. Thus the study is not simply of people who wish to shift the boundaries between work and nonwork time, but rather of the possibility that such shifts indicate new social perceptions of time.

The research group was selected by criteria that would identify new forms of time utilization. The researchers specifically set out to find people whose working arrangements deviated from standard working time in a number of practical ways concerning their temporal employment arrangements. However, qualitative criteria were also used to ensure that respondents not only experienced specific employment arrangements but had a definite subjective approach to, placed a high value on, and had a sensitivity toward time. The study’s conclusions are based explicitly on data gathered from this carefully selected sample.

Chapter 2 describes the characteristic time attitudes of the TPs in contrast to conventional attitudes and locates these in the context of employers’ efforts to (re)organize working time in accordance to their priorities. The study focuses on the ways in which TPs’ efforts are contested within the employment relationship. Flexibilization of and reduction in working time frequently result in the intensification of work content, through a number of employer strategies. Other difficulties are also noted, including the impact on relations with colleagues and superiors and on the TPs’ capacity to demonstrate and substantiate work performance.

Chapter 3 addresses the work attitudes of the TPs and discusses the difficulties they encountered in dealing with the reactions of their conventional colleagues—reactions that reveal a clear set of interpretative schema about the meaning of work, identity, and time (e.g., that “free time” is determined by working time).

Clearly the TPs’ decisions about working time have major implications for their income, and TPs are required not simply to manage reduced incomes but to devise strategies whereby they need less money, establish new household regimes, rely on DIY (do it yourself), networking, and so on. This is explored in chapter 5. The time-money balance is now reconfigured in a way in which expenditure patterns and levels are geared to a prime commitment to low and flexible level of time commitment.

At its extreme this reconceptualization of the time-money exchange becomes more than a strategy for getting by with less: it directly questions the central social mechanisms which posit the convertibility of time and money. Chapter 6 furthers the discussion of the TPs’ new lifestyle, with its central rejection of the centrality of work and employment to identity, an associated fundamental revision of consumer patterns and habits, and an increase in self-control over the shaping of individuals’ lives. The final chapter raises some further implications of the study.

The book is useful for its analysis of a relatively underresearched phenomenon. Although TPs are not—despite the claim of the authors—a
new phenomenon, they still merit attention particularly at a time when
employers, through “downsizing,” reengineering, and other initiatives are
intensifying employees’ contributions to the wage/effort exchange. The
book certainly advances our understanding of the content and implica-
tions of the ‘TPs’ approach, if it does not greatly help us to understand
the etiology of this approach. The weaknesses of the book arise from three
features. First, the very focus on TPs as a distinctive and discrete cluster
of attitudes may, paradoxically, serve to represent the “conventional” ap-
proach as more homogeneous and unre¯exive than it is in reality. It may
be that the ‘TPs’ portrayal of the conventional approach re¯ects their
need to de®ne their position as much as it draws any stark and persistent
differences between TPs and non-TPs. Second, it would be useful to be
able to position this analysis demographically, with respect to locations
within the lifecycle. For example, are the young more or less likely to
adopt this stance? Third, while there are en passant references to current
discussions of issues of identity, the full wealth of the possible explora-
tions of these connections is underdeveloped. Speci®cally, the relationship
between consumption and identity is handled in a restricted manner,
whereby TPs’ identities are seen to involve a unique and distinctive bal-
ance between employment, nonwork, and consumption elements. But this
discussion is not grounded in recent debates about the ways in which
new forms of organizational practice have in¯uenced issues of identity
and in particular have blurred differences between production and con-
sumption identities; thus the analysis of identities is somewhat limited.
Finally, while the analysis of contemporary changes in the role of work
in identities is timely and important, it is necessary to note that what it
means to be a worker or an employee is not and never has been set rigidly
but has always been dependent on historical and cultural conditions.
Work has no more “real” meaning than time; and it is one of the strengths
of this book that it advances our understanding of the historically and
socially contingent nature of the role of both of these in identities.

Attorneys. By Carroll Seron. Philadelphia: Temple University Press,
1996. Pp. xiv+224. $49.95 (cloth); $22.95 (paper).

George Gonos
Centenary College

The tension between the traditional norms of professionalism and a ram-
pant new commercialism is being felt across a range of ®elds, and Carroll
Seron’s book, delving into the dilemmas this tension has created in the
legal ®eld, provides a valuable sociological treatment of the subject. Since
the late 1970s, the loosening of rules surrounding legal advertising has
spawned a growing number of highly visible ®rms that operate on the
principle of business ef®ciency. Seron asks whether such entrepreneurial
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firms are replacing more traditional legal practices. Through in-depth interviews with 102 solo and small-firm lawyers in the New York regional metropolitan area, she inquires into how legal professionals are constructing their practices and professional identities given the competing value orientations and options now available in the field.

Rather than a linear trend toward more commercialized firms, Seron finds that the legal field, fueled by robust growth in the suburban service economy, sustains a range of approaches to practice coexisting in “expanding but mutually exclusive segments of the market” (p. 105). Three distinct types of practitioners are delineated—traditionalists, experimenters, and entrepreneurs—and Seron’s interviews focus on the different strategies each pursues with regard to three key aspects of legal practice—getting business, organizing work, and serving clients.

The continued predominance of traditional firms is a major finding. These firms are deeply rooted in local communities and built on collegial, family-like bonds between partners. (It may be disconcerting to find out that, typically, these firms are founded only on a handshake since, as one attorney says, a written agreement “doesn't really mean anything” [p. 70].) Though they believe lawyers should have the right to advertise, the consensus among traditionalists is that unprofessional advertising is wrong. Their primary means of acquiring clients is the careful cultivation of contacts through extracurricular activities, e.g., joining the “animal” clubs. With respect to office technology, they describe themselves (with pride) as computer illiterate and prefer dictation to the computer terminal. Since their legal work is routine, social skills are considered more important than technical knowledge; hence, the work—dealing with individual clients with “real” problems—retains a craft-like feel.

While the experimenters may dabble with advertising, the entrepreneurs use it extensively. They serve not clients, but consumers who, they believe, want legal services to be “cheap and fast” (p. 108). Here, there may be “not even a veneer of collegiality” (p. 98). Manager-partners design marketing plans and training manuals and develop standardized procedures for handling cases. Clients have extended contact with paralegals and only limited access to attorney-employees (or independent contractors). Computerization allows the entrepreneurs to make a “systematic assessment of the return on their marketing and managerial investments” (p. 87).

The persistence of a “deeply gendered” (p. 68) pattern of organization across both traditional and entrepreneurial firms is a theme sustained throughout the book. Through reports elicited about their working days and the division of labor at home, Seron finds that female attorneys “actually share with their male counterparts a deeply traditional and conservative value orientation about ‘proper’ gender roles” (p. 17) and that only in rare cases have they attempted to renegotiate the division of household obligations with their husbands. Male attorneys thus have the advantage of making private arrangements that free them to put in the “expanded professional hours” that are pivotal for effective business development.
At the office as well, Seron finds that small-firm attorneys rely on a traditional division of labor between professionals and support staff (“our girls”).

Other genuinely intriguing aspects of this study must be left aside to take up a more general concern. Though Seron states that the newer entrepreneurial firms “have gone beyond the somewhat rigid, factorylike model developed by Jacoby and Meyers” in the direction of greater “creative flexibility” (p. 97), such claims are left unsupported by her data. With the legal profession’s standardized product, hierarchical decision making, and so on, the reader is struck by just how thoroughly Fordist these operations appear. Similarly, Seron’s frequent assertions to the effect that the entrepreneurial firms represent “a model of postindustrial design” (p. 20) seem based on a superficial use of the term postindustrial and a distortion of the original theory to which it refers that typically understood law as something like an objective arbiter of universalist value orientation, not a commodity for sale. Further, by implying that technological change and general economic development have driven the trend toward the commercialization of legal practice, the postindustrial formulation understates the importance of political choice.

Overall, however, Seron’s work delivers on its promise to further our understanding of attorneys’ work lives in the context of structural change. Considering that its subject area is one in which laments about the demise of professionalism are often substituted for real data, this is a much needed piece of research that will be appreciated by those with interest in the sociology of the professions and, more generally, in work, gender, and inequality.


Joseph Roisman
Colby College

In this ambitious book, Joseph Bryant writes a historical sociology of the political, social, and intellectual life of the ancient Greeks from the Dark Age to early Hellenistic times (ca. 800–300 B.C.E.). Closely following Weber’s and Marx’s perspectives on ancient economy and the state, Bryant seeks to combine sociological, historical, literary, and philosophical analyses in discussing Greek institutions and moral codes. Bryant’s horizons are commendably wide; the endeavor, however, is only partially successful.

The thesis of the book will be familiar to readers of Weber or of Moses Finley, Weber’s most influential follower among ancient historians. Bryant examines the economic, political, military, religious, and family insti-
tutions of the Greeks and links them directly to their values, norms, and ethics. He proceeds to show that any change in the former leads to a response in the latter. The book focuses on the nexus between citizen and polis (or city-state), which Bryant identifies as the essence of the male Greek’s experience. He views Greek history as a cyclic process that begins with the individualistic, aristocratic hero of the Homeric epics, culminates in a polis that is a communality of citizens, and concludes with the individualism of the inhabitants of the Hellenistic city. The Homeric warrior monopolized economic and political resources and any claim for honor and military prowess. Greater prosperity and changes in warfare that emphasized collective effort by the heavy infantrymen, or hoplites, led to greater equality in the legal and political rights of the citizens. The process of democratization, though only available to adult male citizens, was reflected in a value system that stressed collective spirit, patriotism, and self-fulfillment through civic service (p. xiii). Limited economic resources pushed the Greeks into acquisitive, predatory conduct both in interpolis warfare and domestic factionalism. These, in turn, exacted a heavy toll on the citizens and undermined the integrative function of the polis’s institutions. The gaps between rich and poor, the prevalence of unattached mercenaries, and general depolitization weakened the state and its communal, egalitarian-oriented ethos. In the 4th century, the polis was unable to resist the monolithic power of Macedon and lost the cornerstone of its being, independence.

Within this process, Bryant situates intellectual products that mirrored their age. Thus Homer described the aristocratic ethos and Hesiod the commoner’s protest of the dark and archaic ages. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle tried to save the classical polis by suggesting ways of strengthening communal bonds in the face of threatening circumstances. The Cynics, the Epicureans, and the Stoics gave up on the polis and offered as an alternative individualistic self-fulfillment.

My simplification of the author’s leading thesis is dictated by the constraints of a short review. The book offers a wealth of information, and Bryant’s descriptions are often lucid and useful for the layperson—when, for example, he describes Socratic or Platonic thinking—but the work suffers from some fundamental problems as well.

Integrating sociology, history, philosophy, and literature is a task full of tension, because each discipline pulls toward its particular methods and theorems. Such methodological difficulty can be overcome when dealing with a relatively limited topic, but not when dealing with the entire political and cultural history of the independent polis. To accommodate his holistic view, Bryant opts for a textbook format, and his account, though often sound, is largely familiar. There are lengthy, irrelevant discussions (especially of philosophy) and a strong inclination toward generalization, polarization of attitudes, economic determinism, and reductionism. For example, he admits that politics governed economy in the polis but explains wars as an economic necessity. Thus, he
excludes the causal role of, say, individual leaders, prestige, friendship, or even the function of war in fostering unity.

Bryant’s attempt to identify intellectual products with a particular class view negates the universal appeal of the work. The historical outlook is often class oriented and informed by traditional scholarship. Missing are structuralist and anthropological insights or modern reassessments of the evidence. Such omissions are especially telling in the discussion of the Hellenistic age (chap. 6). Bryant resurrects the view that links the “collapse” of the polis with Hellenistic moral philosophy that focused on individual, rather than communal, Greek experience. But the polis’s loss of independence did not mean that it ceased being a very significant focus of political and social life. In fact, the cities took on new responsibilities regarding health care and education that could only have strengthened the bond between polis and citizen (cf. J. K. Davies in Cambridge Ancient History, 2d ed. [Cambridge University Press, 1984]: 7.1: 304–20, which is not really utilized here). Bryant does not discuss dominant social institutions, such as friendship (philia), or the concept of reciprocity, even though both were important to the moral bond between polis and citizen. Especially regrettable is the lack of distinction between ideology and practice or the uncritical reading of some sources. Communalism was the banner of the polis, but public control of private life was often more wishful thinking than reality. David Cohen and Joshua Ober have shown how amenable political and moral ideologies (themselves often fraught with internal contradictions) were to manipulations by individuals of all walks of life (David Cohen, Law Sexuality and Society [Cambridge University Press, 1991]; Josiah Ober, Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens [Princeton University Press, 1989]). Bryant takes Demostenes’ rhetorical stereotyping of the pro-Macedonians as wealthy oligarchs as proof that the upper class supported Macedon, while the lower class stood for war and independence. The demos in fact opposed allocating money to the Athenian war efforts. The conflict between Greece and Macedon showed more realpolitik than class politics.

Students of social and moral institutions, especially of state and ethics, will find Bryant an intelligent reader of Marx and Weber. They should be aware, however, of the existence of other valid interpretations of Greek cultural history and institutions.

Linda J. Waite
University of Chicago

Promises to Keep is an edited volume tightly focused on the single issue clearly stated in its title. The 12 substantive chapters detail changes across various dimensions in the institution of marriage in the contemporary United States, with special attention to the implications of recent trends for children. A final chapter presents a summary of the Council on Families in America’s report on marriage. I enjoyed this volume a great deal, found it uniformly well written and sometimes inspired, and—a surprise for a scholar working in precisely this area—came across some ideas and insights that were completely new to me.

The first five chapters document the decline of marriage from various perspectives. In “The Decline of Marriage as the Social Basis of Child-rearing,” Barbara Dafoe Whitehead argues that children suffer when adults approach marriage and parenthood as individualistic and expressive pursuits. Increasingly, children’s needs for stability conflict with their parents’ pursuit of individual happiness. In a chapter on values and attitudes, Norval Glenn explores the paradox that marriage remains a fundamental value for Americans at the same time that the proportion who are married has fallen and reviews reasons for the decline of marriage. Moira Eastman discusses current myths about marriage that have appeared and presents figures that generally contradict them. This chapter fits neatly with the next, by Arland Thornton, which presents comparative and historical perspectives on family and points to the universal importance of family-based social organization throughout the world. A final chapter in this section of the book, by Janet Giele, outlines conservative, liberal, and feminist views of families.

The next section, titled “Religious, Legal and Cultural Dimensions,” includes chapters by Don Browning, Milton Regan, Jr., Carl Schneider, and Robert Weiss. In a chapter that I found especially insightful, Browning discusses both the “male problematic”—the tendency of men to mate without making an investment in the children which result—and the “female problematic”—the tendency of women to bond tightly with their children but much less securely with the children’s father. Browning discusses marriage as reflected in Christian family theory; Regan and Schneider both focus on family law as it affects marriage. Regan points out that family law has moved from status toward contract, allowing individuals to define what they mean by marriage for themselves and, in the process, undermining the distinctive character of the family. He argues for a new model of status in family law, with a consideration of the shared commitment inherent in marriage. Schneider looks at the fam-
ily as a social institution, supported by the moral discourse in the law. He argues that this moral discourse has diminished and makes suggestions for using the law to reinstitutionalize the family. Weiss discusses the problems inherent in parenting when the adults live in separate households, including the difficulties in forming a parental partnership, alliances between one parent and the child, and parental attachment.

The final section, titled “Rebuilding a Marriage Culture,” begins with a chapter by Maggie Gallagher, who sees a shift in power away from the married who wish to remain so toward the unmarried and spouses who wish to leave. She argues that we must shift power back toward marriage to recreate a promarriage culture. David Popenoe presents a series of suggestions for improving marriage and, especially, children’s well-being. These include later marriage with a lifetime commitment, withdrawal of the mother from the labor force for at least a year after each birth, and parental provision of most child care. In the penultimate chapter, William Galston reviews the essential functions of the two-parent family and sources of its decline. The last chapter summarizes the report on marriage from the Council on Families in America and presents its extensive recommendations for changes needed to reverse the decline in marriage documented in the report.

This is a book with a point of view, a basic set of assumptions on which the authors of the various chapters build and from which they elaborate. Although the chapters generally make a case for a particular point of view, they are thoughtful and well-informed. It is not possible to provide a detailed series of recommendations for sweeping changes without creating controversy about some of them, and that will certainly be the case here. But I found it a pleasure to read these arguments made by serious and concerned scholars on a topic as central as the health of the institution of marriage. I have come to refer to this book frequently and recommend it highly for researchers, teachers, and policymakers. It will also interest general readers concerned with the health of the family today.


Russell R. Dynes
*University of Delaware*

There are many kinds of monographs—those that are tendentious and those that are trivial; those whose ideas do not merit more extensive treatment and those that record afterthoughts; those that explain obscure methods and those that only explain the obscure. Consequently, it is a treat to read a monograph that is both theoretically and pragmatically important. Part of a series of useful monographs, it is published by the
American Journal of Sociology

Natural Hazards Research and Applications Center at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

The book needs to be placed in the author’s previous research. Thomas Drabek, during his long and prolific career in studying disasters, has produced a succession of significant studies from issues of organizational preparation for disaster, to later concerns with search and rescue, family recovery, disaster evacuation, the use of microcomputers in emergency management, and evacuation planning by the tourist industry. In addition to his own research, Drabek performed an important task for others by summarizing the disaster literature in *Human Response to Disaster* (Springer Verlag, 1986). His most current monograph fills some of the gaps that the summary revealed.

Most evacuation studies have assumed a stable residential population who make decisions about evacuations. In reality, all communities have a considerable number of business travelers and homeless people at any one point in time. Also, many disaster-prone communities are located in areas that invite tourism. Drabek’s previous work on the tourist industry’s reluctance to engage in emergency planning leads quite logically to an examination of the evacuation behavior of transient populations. In effect, the monograph raises the question, When people are away from home and affected by disaster, how do they respond? More specifically, the study centers around five objectives: (1) to describe the behavior that culminates in evacuation from disaster sites by nonresidents; (2) to describe the variations in evacuation behavior among different types of evacuees, events, disaster phases, and locations; (3) to identify factors that affect variations in these behavioral sequences; (4) to document perceptions of disaster victims regarding evacuation policies and procedures implemented in the tourist business as well as by government representatives; and (5) to formulate policy recommendations for local emergency managers and business managers.

To study transient populations requires hard work and persistence, but the data, drawn from 800 persons, are fresh, not simply regurgitated from someone else’s data files. The data collection, based on a moving target in unexpected events, was innovative and described in detail.

Drabek concludes his detailed analysis from these data by indicating certain policy challenges and goes further to suggest an action agenda. In his preface, Gary Kreps summarizes that conclusion: “Simply put, customers expect the tourist industry to be prepared for natural or technological hazards and failure to be prepared during an actual emergency will not be good for business. Disaster planning, therefore, is a sound investment for the private as well as the public sectors” (p. xvi).

The present work illustrates Drabek’s ability to reach multiple audiences. His research is mainstream, rooted in his knowledge of the research base and his use of familiar constructs, but it is conducted with an eye toward policy implications. Such work is an asset to the discipline since his research is both significant and interesting.
Ken Hillis
University of Colorado—Boulder

In his introduction to this overview of the applications and implications of virtual reality (VR) technology, Ralph Schroeder identifies the text’s two goals. First, contributing to the sociology of technology, he aims for an account of the emergence and significance of “VR systems,” in part, by describing case studies of VR applications and the contexts within which they operate. Second, Schroeder identifies a lack of interdisciplinary consensus on how communications media, information technology, and technological advances might best be explained and how this lack impedes the development of these explanations. He, therefore, uses VR as an organizing device for modeling the “social relation” he will identify between technology and social forces.

To contextualize his exploration of VR’s social implications, the first half of chapter 2 is an abbreviated history of key technical developments, institutions, and individuals central to the technology’s genesis. An overview of the technical aspects of VR systems follows. Chapter 3 describes the research and development context within which VR has developed. Arguing that specific institutions—such as the Human Interface Technology Lab at the University of Washington at Seattle—shape the directions of VR development, Schroeder outlines the competitive research strategies, which transcend national boundaries and distinctions among the academy, the military, and private enterprise. Such strategies synthesize basic research and commercial applications in the belief that VR will transform information technology and communications networks. Chapter 4 describes the educational and entertainment contexts of immersive and screen-based VR applications. Citing American and British examples, Schroeder seems bemused that educational applications’ potential to free users’ imaginations for building their own virtual worlds remains underutilized, noting that the majority of applications are predesigned entertainment environments. He suggests that failure to capitalize on VR’s power to let users design worlds may prove an important drawback, as future forms of VR applications will be heavily influenced by existing configurations and uses. Turning to the contents of virtual worlds, chapter 5 offers an “inventory” of the “several dominant forms” (p. 122) comprising VR. Schroeder provides a good account of the VR game industry and how its products are developed and achieve marketplace acceptance.

Schroeder’s descriptive accounts of the emergence and significance of VR exemplify the interplay or feedback between society and technology. There is in Possible Worlds, however, a third goal not fully developed: to critique social constructivist or postmodern “antirealist” theories cur-
rently enjoying academic vogue. The author claims equal discomfort with technological determinist approaches, which accord technology the status of savior of culture, and "antirealist" or social constructionist approaches, which, according to him, are "part and parcel" of a range of cultural phenomena springing up around VR (p. 4). Claiming a "realist" and a "Weberian" approach (never explained for nonsociologists), Schroeder suggests that both VR and academic postmodernism blur nature and culture, thereby promoting a belief that the world is increasingly an unreal place.

Chapter 6 attempts to bridge the empirical accounts preceding it and the critique of "antirealist" approaches the author wishes to make. To do so, Schroeder links the lifestyles and value systems of the computer hackers and jammers and the San Francisco and London "smart drug"-taking cyberclubbers, who believe that "advances in computer technology will provide the vehicle for new ways of life" (p. 125) and cultural renovation. The author moves to shakier ground when he critiques such theorists as Donna Haraway and Allucquere Rosanne Stone for mirroring the utopian yearnings that permeate the "cybercultures" just described. His use of these authors suggests a misreading. Stone, for example, pointedly critiques the anomie and social fragmentation of Silicon Valley ("Will the Real Body Please Stand Up" in *Cyberspace: First Steps*, edited by Michael Benedikt [MIT Press, 1992]). Haraway's famous call, "I'd rather be a cyborg than a goddess," is her refusal of depoliticized mysticism. It asserts her belief that feminists reject science at their own peril, and not—as Schroeder infers—that she would fuse her body with technology if the means existed.

Achieving a comprehensive understanding of a complex technology requires analysis. Description constitutes a requisite step in this process. Though numerous lists comparing and contrasting technologies and technical advances assist readers in arriving at their own conclusions, Schroeder hesitates to provide his own analyses. Sandwiching case studies of VR between chapters probing connections between this technology and postmodern theory lends the work an overly sketchy yet repetitive quality and an unresolved dualism of purpose. References and endnotes are detailed and useful and photographs well keyed to the text they enhance. Though short on considering the meaning of VR, *Possible Worlds* is rich in empirical descriptions. This alone recommends it as a good introductory text for social scientists wanting to learn more about VR. It would be a useful component for courses on the sociology of technology and on game playing, globalization, communications studies, and new media.