
It may be worth considering separately the value of the project of this book and its actual achievement. Abercrombie and Longhurst aim to outline a new, sociological theory of audiences. That is to say, they propose that the act of ‘being an audience’ has to be conceived as an evolving series of social relations, from ‘simple’, through ‘mass’, to (the one that mainly interests them) ‘diffused’. The notion of grounding our understanding of audiences within a broader social frame is surely a valuable one and continues the move away from the obsessive textualism of earlier cultural studies. Whether the framework offered here advances us much is more arguable. ‘Simple’ audiences are, for the authors, largely though never entirely, a thing of the past, of pre-modern societies. There, to receive a communication regularly carried high levels of ceremony and a strong awareness of locale. Essentially face-to-face, these situations demanded high levels of attention. Their contemporary remnants are certain kinds of theatre, public speeches, trials and live football matches. ‘Mass’ audiences, the second stage, are associated with reduced attention, a decline in ceremony and an awareness divided between locale of reception and global reach of the communication. The new situation is the emergence of ‘diffused’ audiences, who are bathed permanently in a drench of communications, for whom therefore the notion of individual, all-consuming texts is unlikely. Instead, people are endlessly performing, playing out shifting and mobile roles.

To each of these kinds of audiencing, argue Abercrombie and Longhurst, there has broadly corresponded a paradigm of the communicative process. Under the headings of the ‘Behavioural paradigm’ and the ‘Incorporation/resistance Paradigm’ (IRP), they review the ‘effects’, uses and gratifications, and encoding/decoding traditions of research. Their discussion of these, in some ways very traditional, is none the less very clear and sharp, in particular (and perhaps most needed) in the case of IRP. Their proposal is that a new paradigm is needed, and indeed is emerging: the Spectacle/Performance Paradigm. This does not so much replace previous paradigms as subsume them, as ‘the qualities and experiences of being a member of an audience have begun to leak out from specific performance events which previously contained them, into the wider realms of everyday life. Being a member of an audience becomes a mundane event’ (pp. 36–7). Though the word hardly occurs, if at all, this is a theory of audiences for supposedly postmodern times. One can hear the subjectivities shifting and realigning endlessly. As a general account, this has something going for it. It is in its elaboration that the doubts arise. Spectacular participation, they argue, associates strongly with ‘narcissistic’ attitudes to self. Building on a review of contributions to this notion of such people as Lasch, Sennett and Stacey, they claim that narcissism should now be seen as a ‘cultural condition’ (p. 93), in which ‘there is no boundary between the self and the world of people and things and so what stands outside the self is merely a reflection, as in a mirror, of the self’. Here, I happily part company, protesting that this is either a charming but risky metaphor, or just untrue for very many people.

The same thing happens in their penultimate chapter, on ‘Fans and Enthusiasts’. After some careful reviewing of some of the rich studies that have emerged in this area, they construct and offer a model of a continuum, from ‘consumer’ to ‘petty producer’, within which they distinguish (following Tulloch...
and Jenkins) ‘fans’ from ‘followers’. Carefully avoiding any judgements of worth to these, they none the less conclude: ‘our suggestion is that consumers are becoming increasingly follower-like in their tastes, as society becomes more media-saturated’ (p. 141).

My problem with this is not so much its truth or untruth, as its lack of specificity. The book as a whole has an at times overwhelming sense of teleology. By historical processes never quite detailed, ‘society’ has moved towards spectacular engagements, and ‘people’ engage differently. The changes are simultaneously mundane and dramatic. Did you know for instance that ‘the advent of the mass media successfully privatises performance (p. 42)? Let us consider a Radio 1 Roadshow. Or that day-dreaming is a ‘specifically modern’ form of imagination (p. 103)? What, one wonders, were those peasants doing leaning on their hoes?

The grand sweep of theory here threatens to undermine just the most interesting developments in recent audience research, where the differences and conflicts between audiences, and the variance in the degree to which media matter to audiences is coming into focus. One wonders how this book would survive a test against some of the important research on historically located film audiences. My worry is, rather poorly.

University of Sussex


Growing up in Stepfamilies is about fifty adults, all in their 30s, who became members of stepfamilies during their middle to late childhood. The fifty respondents were selected from the National Child Development Study, a longitudinal cohort study, which has followed all British children born during a single week in 1958. Over the years some have dropped out of the study and a few have refused to participate. None the less the empirical base of Growing up in Stepfamilies is a representative, non-clinical sample. It therefore combines both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The research and its data analysis strategies draw upon ideas and expertise from a number of different spheres: social sciences, and therapeutic and clinical work, the latter covering a combination of family systems theory and life story approaches. Questions about cultural stereotypes, gender roles in families and the specific roles of stepmothers and stepfathers, and the subjective self are examined and discussed. All this takes the reader on a journey from the respondents’ families of origin, to their stepfamilies, and finally to their present families of orientation. This makes for hard reading as the structure of the book is rather unwieldy; it is easy to lose track among the abundance of different accounts.

The book is chiefly about how these stepfamily adults have developed a version of their life stories which they can live with, and which has provided them with positive identities. The analysis focuses on the coherence and reflexivity of the life stories: the ‘ideal life story’ contains few internal contradictions since the individual has the reflexive ability to connect different experiences from the past and the present, and also has the ability to look forward. Not surprisingly, not all of the informants presented coherent life stories, but rather they talked about memories of parental loss and engaged in struggles to unite a number of competing narratives. Some of the most powerful life stories are far from ideal: instead, they are often incoherent, at the same time revealing family secrets and an ability to suppress painful memories.

However, it is also obvious that
respondents' lives are shaped externally as well as by their own subjective will and internal resources, for example by supportive parents, their stepparents, and their wider social networks. It is not only the case, therefore, that coherent life stories emerge as a consequence of learning positive lessons from past negative experiences. Yet those who told their stepfamily stories did not look upon themselves as social failures. Indeed, the authors admit that this finding challenged their underlying assumptions and led them to rethink some of the theoretical premises of the study, notably relating to the significance of emotional attachment and the meaning of stability during childhood and adolescence. Many of the life stories revealed the continuing capacity for individuals to change during adulthood as well as childhood. Thus, the authors argue in their conclusions that there is a need to reassess theories of child development and practices which follow from that theory.

Stepfamilies are here to stay and at present one in eight children in Britain (one in three in the United States) will have experienced stepfamily life by the time they have reached the age of 16. For those interested in the variety of childhoods and the complicated nature of how people in late modernity organise their family relationships and take on responsibilities for their own and others' children, Growing Up in Stepfamilies is useful reading. Its most important lesson, both for further theoretical development and for the practice of social work, is to learn to understand how people develop reflexive awareness about their own lives and how they develop a life story they can live with.

University of Goteborg
MARGARETA BACK-WIKLUND


This volume brings to a conclusion Castells's massive work on the transition to a new form of capitalism, indeed to a new era, that of global informationalism. This review is being written on the day that digital television goes on sale for the first time in Britain and the news programmes, even on the BBC, look like extended adverts for Murdoch's media group. What clearer vindication could Castells have wished for his core claim that the relations of production (technical and social), power and experience are undergoing a transformation perhaps as profound as the Industrial Revolution? But how is one to assess such a claim? How, indeed, to write a review of a work which renders criticism seemingly impertinent and throws down the challenge, 'Well, you do better then'?

Reading the volumes of The Information Age can have the same effect as a visit to an exhibition of the works of Castells's compatriot Picasso; one can simply become overwhelmed by the sheer energy of their creator. The third volume alone takes us from post-Soviet Russia through sub-Saharan Africa, post-Tian'anmen China, the Pacific region and on to the new 'network state', the EU. On the way we are told about global crime, bombarded with data and (appropriately) information, and finally we are offered a theoretical synthesis.

The task of the reviewer is made even more difficult by invitations, reproduced on the back cover, to compare Castells's work to that of Weber and Marx (by Anthony Giddens and Peter Hall respectively). Such comparisons are begged not just by the level of the work's ambition, but also by much of what it says and seeks to achieve. The account of the global sexual exploitation of children is as harrowing as anything Marx or Engels wrote about child labour in early factories, while the work shares Weber's concern with the triad of state, culture and market. But in the end I am not sure
that these comparisons do Castells any favours. The book has to be assessed in its own terms, in the light of its own strengths and weaknesses.

The strengths are easily recounted. We simply will not need a better case, either theoretically or empirically, to be made that the information age is qualitatively different from that which preceded it or that capitalism is not merely different in its (now global) scope but qualitatively in its ability to use technology, particularly IT, to deploy and mould cultural resources. Castells has marshalled a vast array of material and mobilised his full theoretical armoury to make the case definitively. Almost incidentally, he has created a reservoir of information and argument from which researchers and teachers will be drinking for some time to come. In an information age one might almost have expected the whole work to be presented on the internet with its tables and data automatically up-dated as new supporting material comes in.

Lack of despair is another admirable quality. Castells neither disguises the horror of the present order, nor lets that horror corrupt his optimism that there remains the potential for a better world. This ethical, even Utopian, stance is the remnant of his earlier Marxism, and the book is all the better for it.

But what of its possible weaknesses? First, some of the theoretical formulations are vague, or even sloppy; for example, ‘nation-states will survive, but not so their sovereignty’ (p. 355). Since one of the few things political scientists and sociologists seem to agree on is that sovereignty is constitutive of the nation-state, what can such a survival mean? Similarly, ‘network state’ is a neat but very loose description of the EU. Secondly, ‘informationalism’ and related terms sometimes appear reified to the point that one wonders whether they take on the role of a ‘spirit of history’ in an almost Hegelian way. Is Castells occasionally trapped into imputing the qualities of agency to ‘informationalism’?

Finally, and most significantly, however careful Castells is to avoid futurology, the main thrust of the argument consistently seems to confirm rather than challenge conventional wisdom about globalisation, informationalisation, network organisations, etc. Perhaps this is because the conventional diagnosis is simply correct and it would be perverse to demand that the author say otherwise. But there are dissenting voices, such as those of Hirst and Thompson, whose objections to conventional wisdom are largely ignored.

University of East Anglia  ALAN SCOTT


Barry Troya’s death in February 1996 robbed those working to understand and fight racism in education of significant inspiration. He was one of the leading figures in the development of anti-racist education principles, practice and research strategies, influencing many researchers and practitioners including contributors to this volume. Troya died before this text was completed and it is dedicated to his memory. Paul Connolly and the other contributors have produced a work which is a fitting tribute.

As the subtitle suggests, the book is concerned with the relationship between the politics and the practice of researching racism in education. Exploring this complex area was a leitmotif of Troya’s work. It is no surprise to find debates about the precise nature and status of anti-racist research forming a sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit, theme in this volume. Yet, as Troya and Connolly intended, this text is not only for the specialist.

Chapters from Blair, Hammersley and Gillborn focus upon debates about ‘neutrality’, ‘partisanship’, and the status of qualitative research respectively.
Connolly enters this latter arena by exploring the relationship between ethno-
graphic research and ‘generalisation’. The contributions by Mirza, Neal, Rakhit,
Troyna and Wright are concerned to explore the complex interface between the
political and the personal, providing reflective and poignant accounts of their
own research into various dimensions of racism in educational settings and sectors.
In the final contribution, Drew and Demack critically review the use (and
abuse) of statistics in research into racism in education. To the extent that
‘objectivity’, ‘generalisability’, the validity of particular research strategies, the
relation between researcher and research subjects, or the politics of statistical
research cut across substantive social research fields, this collection is directly
relevant to an audience beyond those specialising in ‘race’, racism and ethnicity.
However, there is more to it than that.

Each chapter reveals something about the current condition of our discipline.
On the one hand, classical, theoretical and methodological controversies con-
tinue to haunt us, as the debate about ‘objectivity’ and ‘partisanship’ between
Hammersley, Troyna, Blair and Gillborn testifies. On the other, those who once
saw ‘feminist’ or ‘anti-racist’ or other critical perspectives as providing a way to
move beyond (or around?) these matters are now forced to re-consider bedrock
assumptions in the light of experience, as the chapters by Mirza, Neal, Rakhit and
Wright cogently demonstrate. Neither ‘classical’ models nor more contem-
porary theoretical movements and methodologies seem able adequately to
grasp ‘the complexities, contingencies and contradictions of racism’ (p. 3). The
process of researching racism foregrounds the complex relationship between the
politics of identity and structures of inequality. It simultaneously confronts
both old and new ‘certainties’ and uncertainties. All of the contributions to
this work offer suggestions for ways forward. This is not a pessimistic
collection. It is, however, a thoughtful and thought-provoking one.

There are some weaknesses. There is considerable overlap and some repetition
in the first three chapters. Connolly and Gillborn also tend to cover similar
ground albeit from different directions. The same might be said of the reflective
accounts. The chapter by Drew and Demack may be less accessible to some
students than the others, but it is, nevertheless, an important contribution.
These are, however, very minor points.

This is a book for every social and educational researcher, student of social
research methods as well as those studying racism and education. The specialist
will find new insights into well-known research studies. The field researcher will
find many stimulating, poignant and significant sections in the reflective
accounts. Those interested in the wider context will find a wealth of material to
inform debates about the current condition of, and future direction for, social
theory and research. The book is exceptionally well written, appropriate
for both undergraduate and postgraduate courses, and should be essential reading
on any undergraduate and postgraduate social and/or educational research methods
course.

University of Northumbria
STUART BILLINGHAM

Martyn Denscombe, The Good
Research Guide: For Small Scale
Research Projects, Buckingham: Open
University Press, 1998, £40.00
0-335-19805-8).

Guides which style themselves as ‘good
. . . guides’ commonly provide brief,
critical evaluations to help consumers
take a path towards reliable satisfaction
without the risks of learning by trial and
error. Like such guides, this guide is
concise and practical in its advice,
attempting ‘to provide project researchers
with vital information which is easily
accessible’ (p. 1). It spans the research
process with discussions, guidelines and recommendations to help students complete their research projects, aiming to help those with little time and few resources to complete their assignments. In keeping with this, the orientation is towards pragmatic resolution of research dilemmas, for example; ‘The crucial thing for good research is that the choices are reasonable and that they are made explicit as part of any research’ (p. 3, emphasis in original).

The research process is treated in three main sections: strategies, methods and analysis. The first section includes discussion of surveys, case studies, experiments, action research and ethnography. The second section considers data collection and construction through the use of questionnaires, interviews, observation and documents. The final section provides guidance on analysis of quantitative data, qualitative data and report writing. Each chapter includes guidelines on research design, evaluations of the strategy or method, and cautionary notes. By way of summary, there are checklists at the conclusion of each chapter.

The format combines conventions derived from books and computer packages, with bullet points, boxes containing key points, appropriate icons to indicate cross-referencing, warning notes and high-lighted quotes and definitions. Readers and regular internet users will be equally at ease with how the material is presented. If read sequentially, the linear development of the argument is clear but if the aim is to jump to key points, the icons can be found and the main recommendations for research practice are easily located. There is a brief glossary, with the title ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ offering definitions of about half a dozen terms (including reflexivity, reliability and validity).

The presentation is resolutely practical and there is every likelihood that a student who uses the book will be carried through a research project from beginning to end with the benefit of informed advice covering most of the research process. This includes the craft of writing a well-structured report incorporating acknowledgement of its own limitations, for the last point on the final checklist is ‘Have the limitations of the research methodology been acknowledged?’ (p. 238, emphasis in original).

Inevitably, questions arise about the educational consequences of the working assumptions and the omissions of the book. The emphasis on tactical or technical decisions tilts the orientation towards variable-centred research and leads to relative neglect of methodological debates. The presentation of content analysis as a means of analysis of documents and the absence of discussion of methodologies derived from discourse analysis and conversation analysis are consistent with this approach. There are ways in which the implicit model of research strategy might have been stretched further.

The location of research issues or the construction of research questions and hypotheses as starting points for research are essential activities that students commonly find difficult. However, here the first set of questions for evaluation assumes that this stage has been reached. Also, quantitative data analysis is not presented with a sense of strategic direction (for example, data = fit + residual), although there is coverage of ‘descriptive’ and ‘inferential’ statistics. The author’s recommendations appear to be considered self-sufficient as there are no guides to further reading for more detailed information or discussion of research dilemmas. Yet such links might introduce readers to issues and controversies which interconnect research problems, theory and method. Despite these reservations, I have no doubt that this guide will be a useful aid to helping students manage their projects ‘commonly their most complex assignments’ so keeping them on target and on time.

University of Leeds

ROY TODD


These two collections contrast sharply, in tone and emphasis. *Statistics in Society* is the book that may change your mind if you ever thought statistics was just about number-crunching. Developed from the work of the Radical Statistics group, it more than succeeds in its main aim of putting the politics back into statistics. Unashamedly left-wing, and refreshingly honest about its use of examples taken mostly (but not exclusively) from the British context, this book manages to be both a fascinating read as well as a valuable resource. For example, did you know that almost half of all monies spent on Research and Development in this country go towards research on defence (p. 41)? Or that there used to be a question in the Census asking whether anyone in the household was an ‘idiot’ (p. 16, perhaps the two are connected?).

The book contains an excellent range of easily digestible chapters, divided into sections which cover the Collection (and dissemination) of statistics, models and theory, the classification of people, measuring poverty, health, education, employment and finally, economics and politics. The central tenet is that all statistics are political, and therefore ‘when evidence is presented, you should question it’ (p. 1). The material presented clearly illustrates this point. For example, Chapter 15 shows how statistics which excluded women were presented to legitimate the privatisation of pensions under the last Conservative government, while in Chapter 23 the social construction of homelessness as a mental health problem is explored in the light of the policy changes brought in by the 1990 Community Care Act.

Rather than just making the case for improving the ‘creation, interpretation and presentation of statistics’ (p. 5), this book puts theory into practice. The quality of analysis and breadth of subject areas are honed to develop the reader’s skills of critical interpretation, and the description of national surveys, organisations (and e-mail addresses, Chapter 6) provide an accessible resource for trained social researchers and lay or ‘barefoot’ statisticians (p. 74) alike. Key issues such as confidentiality, sampling and response rates are all covered, and the centrality of definitions is fully discussed, for example, in relation to ethnicity (Chapter 16), as well as whether some questions should be asked at all (Religion, Chapter 17). No purists here, the case for mixing methods is made throughout. This is statistics without crude positivism, and, as such, constitutes essential reading for all social scientists, even those of the most qualitative persuasion. What more can one say, except ‘Buy this book’.

Without wishing to state the obvious, what readers will get out of *Critical Issues in Social Research* will depend on what is expected of it and what has been read before. It is problematic whether a collection of such disparate studies, which have in common only the fact that they have been done (like most) with socially disadvantaged groups, can form the basis for a systematic analysis of how power and prejudice can enter into every stage of the research process. The studies do, however, offer an interesting range of issues and experiences. These include the way Chapter 2 shows that the contribution to globalisation of wholesale policy transfer from the dominant ‘Minority world’ frequently lacks recognition of cultural specificity; insights into the different worlds and consequent gulf in understanding between medical professionals and service-users/clients (Chapter 3) and social researchers (Chapter 6). Client groups covered include children (with separate chapters on ‘Majority world’ children, and those
labelled as ‘disturbed’), people with learning disabilities, women, (Caribbean) Black people, frail elderly people, gay men, poor people and, that most disempowered group of all, dead people (‘They cannot say, for example, “No, that’s not true”, or “What about us?”’: p. 76).

However, concepts of power are only discussed briefly (pp. 5, 30, 119) and thus remain theoretically underdeveloped. The disconnected exploration of problematisation, medicalisation and pathologisation (which are issues for most of these client groups) is a missed opportunity for a unifying theme.

It is not only the ‘standpoint and values’ (p. 3) of the authors which vary, but also the quality of insight into the power dynamics of the research process. For example, while in Chapter 1 Mayall cites the example of an ‘angry mother confronting a male researcher who asks to accompany children to their favourite play spaces, this is done solely within the discourse of adult control over children’s lives, and (worryingly) fails to address the intersecting power dimension of gender: male sexual dominance, child vulnerability and adult, female protection. Scott’s celebration of the effect of shared culture on the development of rapport – ‘where the interviewee lived alone family photographs . . . were brought out and displayed’ (p. 88) – fails to take into account the real vulnerability of clients or the ‘deeper, more dangerous form of exploitation’ of qualitative research (p. 165) alluded to by Oakley in the final chapter.

Despite the assertion that authorial differences are meant to ‘offer explorations of complexities’ (p. 3), the reality is that the qualitative/quantitative debate resurfaces in several chapters, and is only really dealt with in any meaningful way at the end (Oakley, Chapter 11). Insights gained into intersecting sites of power between the researcher, the disadvantaged group/individual and culturally dominant structures/organisations remain somewhat limited, as they are not dealt with systematically. In common with Hey’s comment after interviewing an elderly client (p. 102), I found reading this book, ‘a very postmodern experience’ (p. 102).

University of York
SUE EASTON


Sociologists can learn a lot from applied philosophy. In the first half of this excellent book Adrian Favell shows how and why the French came to see themselves as integrating immigrés into their universalist national community, via access to full participatory citoyenneté. He contrasts it with the British conception of the integration of ethnic minorities into a tolerant multi-national state, via the management strategies of race relations and multiculturalism. By opposing France and Britain, Favell distracts attention from the many similarities between the two countries, but an understanding of the differences in outlook is essential to anyone who wonders why there was so much fuss in France over Muslim girls coming to school wearing head-scarves, and so little over The Satanic Verses. As he demonstrates, the cultural distinctiveness of immigrant groups has posed problems for liberals in both countries. Favell is well qualified to draw these comparisons for he has studied in the United States, France and Belgium, and spent four years at the European Institute in Florence – a veritable curriculum privilegi.

The French approach is from deontology, from duties. France, as a political entity, sees itself as the constitutional paragon of a nation-state entirely conforming to the universal model of international human rights. Its laws serve this end. The British approach is consequentialist. It asks what is necessary to preserve public order, about the functions laws can serve, and produces ‘a calculated, paternalistic attempt to
engineer a kind of social harmony and multicultural equilibrium well in advance of the preferences of the general public’. Neither country has found it easy to reach its consensus.

The inclusion of a glossary of French expressions will make it easier for the British reader to follow the account of how the generation of 1968 came to proclaim a ‘right to be different’ (which was music to the ears of the far right), and of how, in the 1980s, alarmed by their own creation, the philosophers then constructed a nouvelle synthèse républicaine on the basis of citoyenneté, laïcité and égalité. The synthesis, which treated public order as a normative goal rather than a pragmatic outcome, was celebrated as a restatement of the nation-building politics of 1871–1914, and as distinguishing France from Germany and the Anglo-Saxon world. According to Favell it confirmed, once again, that if philosophers were ever likely to rule the world, they would surely be French. The very different public philosophy in Britain has been worked out in response to Hobbes, drawing upon the utilitarian tradition. It assumed from the outset that individuals might not share religious values. The state has to tolerate such differences in order to assure the moral public order, and minorities have to respect the state’s laws. Favell observes that British politicians are more likely to conceive of citizens as consumers than as political participants in a classical public forum.

The second half of the book contends that in each country the triumph of the public philosophy has constrained adaptation to new circumstances and is encouraging departures from liberal democratic goals. Their stress on norms makes it difficult for the French to recognise the décalage, or disjunction, between the normative model and the evidence of everyday racial discrimination. Nor has their synthesis put paid to Le Pen. The British are in trouble because European citizenship and rights provisions embody a normative logic than can find no place in their institutional set-up.

In this second half the underlying argument becomes much less convincing, more reliant on unsupported political assertions and the input from applied philosophy weakens. Favell’s claims conflict with his own comment that ‘British politics has been remarkably willing to play openly cavalier games with its national myths in the service of short-term instrumental ends’. The enactment of the Human Rights Act 1998 gives the lie to his statement that no place can be found for a normative logic, and shows that it might have been better had the narrative been terminated some years earlier. These criticisms notwithstanding, this remains a book of superior quality that repays more careful study than most of the current works about immigration and the idea of citizenship.

University of Bristol    MICHAEL BANTON


This book is yet another welcome sign of the revival of interest among sociologists in the notoriously slippery concept of ‘community’. After some truly ground-breaking work in the 1950s and 1960s, the study of community in Britain became mired, for the most part, in an almost literal parochialism, tied too closely to locality and with too little attention being paid to the wider social and economic forces that impact upon the ways in which communities are formed, sustained and transformed. It is only in recent years that attempts have been made to understand communities in the context of increased geographical mobility, globalisation and structural changes in patterns of employment and public and private investment.

Foster’s detailed ethnographic study of the London Docklands describes how a settled working-class community was affected by the decline of traditional employment followed by an extremely
rapid period of urban regeneration and redevelopment under the aegis of the London Dockland Development Corporation (LDDC). Although, as the excellent historical overview in Chapter 1 makes clear, the population of the area was never as homogeneous as might have appeared at first sight, the period of regeneration was accompanied by profound changes in demographic composition. Largely as a result of local authority housing policies, there was a considerable increase in the population of immigrant, particularly Bangladeshi, origin. Moreover, the nature of the economic development brought about by the LDDC, as well as the area’s proximity to the City, led to an influx of wealthy, middle-class residents and commuters.

In Chapters 2 and 3 the author provides a vivid account of how, in the free-market context of the 1980s, the LDDC was given a more or less free hand. The Corporation, not subject to democratic control, was able to proceed with little in the way of consultation with interested parties. It not only ignored the concerns of the established community but also attracted criticism from powerful interest groups in the world of business and finance. Chapter 4, tellingly entitled ‘Grab and Greed’, shows how long-term residents of Docklands attempted to mobilise resistance in the face of the Corporation’s insensitivity.

Foster suggests in Chapters 5 and 6 that the relationships between the established working-class community and the middle-class community were not always as fraught as might have been expected. The intensity of commercial development and the LDDC’s behaviour led to a ‘common struggle against a common enemy’ (p. 205), but a major factor was that working-class antagonism tended to turn, not towards the developers or the middle-class incomers, but towards the Bengalis.

Foster reminds us that the dockers had been among the most vociferous supporters of Enoch Powell and that a certain tradition of working-class racism not only persisted but was intensified during the period of regeneration. Chapter 7 shows how conflict over scarce resources – particularly council housing at a time when no new homes were being provided by the local authority – led to a depressing catalogue of racial incidents, with perhaps the most symptomatic event of the prevailing atmosphere being the election of Derek Beackon as the British National Party’s first and only local councillor.

What had been a community defined on the one hand by locality and ‘bricks and mortar’ and on the other by a class-diverse environment, shared ethnicity and a sense of transgenerational history now found itself living cheek-by-jowl with a wealthy white middle class and with a poor population of immigrant origin. In Chapter 8 and in her Postscript Foster documents the ‘state of play’ as it now stands, whilst in Chapter 9 she turns her attention to theoretical issues. She agrees with Giddens that ‘micro’ and ‘macro’ issues should be given equal consideration, but argues that many of Docklands’ problems can be ascribed to the fragmented nature of the British approach to urban regeneration and the area’s location in a major global financial centre.

The book should be of interest to sociologists not only from the point of view of its fascinating insights into communities at a time of enormous upheaval but also as a piece of ethnographic research in which great care was taken to elicit the views of a wide range of witnesses to and participants in the regeneration process. The value of the book is enhanced by there being over seventy photographs, mostly taken by the author herself.

University of Sheffield  STEPHEN HUCKERBY


Few if any sociologists reviewed in this
journal can have such apparent political importance. In the midst of a presidential crisis of possible impeachment proportions, Bill Clinton flew out of Washington to attend a conference on the third way in New York addressed by Anthony Giddens. Within the same week a lesser-known figure, William Hague, the leader of the British Conservatives, devoted his entire party conference speech to attacking the notion, contrasting it with 'the British way'.

The reason for this, of course, is that Anthony Giddens, writer of The Third Way, is Tony Blair's favourite intellectual adviser. The dust jacket of the book, in fact, refers to him as the British prime minister's 'guru'. However, beyond mention in the preface that the book is based on a series of discussions between the author and Geoff Mulgan, head of the Downing Street policy think tank (and Ian Hargreaves, the 'Blairite' former editor of New Statesman and The Independent), there is no discussion within it of what Giddens's relationship to New Labour has actually been. Instead, the book sets itself the task of contributing to the theoretical renewal of social democracy. This issue is worth returning to. What, though, is the general outline of Giddens's argument?

The book starts with the self-evident assertion that is now a virtual common place: socialism is dead. This applies, Giddens argues, not only to Marxism but also to social democracy as both its objectives – full employment and universal welfare through Keynesian economic management, etc. – and its electoral base in the manual working class, have been systematically eroded through a series of developments in international political-economy grouped under the rubric of globalisation. The crisis of social democratic political parties has been most acute in Europe but is discernible elsewhere.

However, it is not just the political left that is in disarray. Although right-wing political parties have championed neoliberalism over the last twenty years, they have done so at the cost of undermining the loadstones of conservatism of stability, custom and deference by inadvertently accentuating individualism and reflexivity. Capitalism has no respect for tradition.

The confusion of what exactly left and right actually mean in relation to day-to-day politics is now such that Giddens questions their continued relevance, and instead favours a radical approach – the third way – of the political centre ground, unencumbered by antiquated ideological co-ordinates. Like Beck, Giddens sees ecological concerns as presenting a set of issues and concerns around which a new consensus can and is emerging. But as the subtitle of the book suggests, Giddens wants to retain the term social democracy because it indicates that no matter how far 'third way politics' may travel, it retains through its point of departure an ethical link to equality and emancipation, the historic aspirations of the left.

The scale and contours of the overhaul social democracy requires for the twenty-first century are sketched in the third, fourth and fifth chapters. They range over a wide variety of subjects, some of which, as Giddens acknowledges, are only tentatively covered. Amongst other things, he advocates the revitalisation of the relationship between state and civil society by constitutional reform and the application of business management techniques to enhance bureaucratic efficiency. He calls for a 'social investment state' committed through life-long education and positive welfare measures to an inclusive, one nation, conception of society, and the consolidation of the cosmopolitan trajectory of globalisation via the encouragement of both regional and international agencies. The latter is particularly important, Giddens argues, given the turbulence of world financial markets.

The strength of The Third Way is simultaneously its major form of defence and starting point: 'there is no alternative'. Though Giddens would no doubt wish formally to disavow the crudity of this Thatcherite mantra, his thesis rests upon an analysis in which globalisation
has pulverised ideological alternatives. Therefore, although, as some have alleged, Giddens might well be guilty of sounding rather sanguine about the iniquities, antagonism and volatility of capitalism, to reject wholesale the policy initiatives suggested would appear as negative sniping by those who have little left to offer save ideological bitterness from an age that has passed them by. Indeed, some of the book’s ideas about, for instance, community initiatives to combat crime, are interesting and imaginative. More generally, most people in British academic sociology would probably welcome the re-entry of our discipline to policy formation, after so many years of being vilified as, at best, worthless. However, the familiar problems involved in the tying of analysis to government are evident.

Giddens claims to be a ‘critical’ supporter of the government, but there is precious little by way of even implied criticism of the Blair administration in The Third Way (see BSA Network, summer 1998). At one level he exempts himself from such an engagement as the book is not intended as an assessment of New Labour’s track record. However, he is not reticent about praising the government’s achievement over the last eighteen months. National devolution within the United Kingdom, for instance, is described as being ‘bold’. But Giddens does not comment on whether the government’s refusal to increase the highest rate of income tax is consistent with his conception of how greater equality in Britain might be attained.

At other points the evasion is more irritating still. For example, his analysis of the accentuation of reflexive choice and individualism is not easily squared with a government that refuses even to contemplate the idea that the legalisation of certain forms of pornography and some illegal drugs might be a case of the state catching up with developments within civil society (and which would, moreover, allow the concentration of resources upon combating coercive pornography and hard drugs respectively). The point here is not to ‘blame’ Giddens for Labour’s moral authoritarianism, but to suggest that with a number of issues, his apparent lack of critical distance seemingly blocks consideration of controversial but constructive policy suggestions, that would appear to flow from his own analysis.

Curiously enough it is an issue with which Giddens should be familiar. In a recent Guardian interview he identified Weber’s ‘Politics as a Vocation’ as his favourite text. In it Weber struggled to separate science (understood in the broadest sense) from politics, as engagement with the former would inevitably taint the rules of the latter and vice versa. Now, however conservative and ultimately erroneous Weber may have been, there is no denying that alignment to a political project does potentially hinder the critical trajectory of analysis. The Third Way is a good example of this.

Liverpool Hope
University College
SAM PRYKE


Sociological methodology continues to variegate, and Greenwood and Levin’s text takes stock of the growing family of ‘action research’ strategies. Such an approach will still be associated in many a mind with a vision of the intrepid teacher, as ‘practitioner/researcher’, struggling to improve classroom conduct through trial and error with those lesson plans. Greenwood and Levin come from a rather different world, the former having been involved with co-operatives and community development projects in the Basque country and the latter leading several Scandinavian programmes in technological innovation and management. They take us on an international
journey though action research (AR) and fetch up some fine new specimens, including participatory action research (PAR I), pragmatic action research (PAR II), southern participatory action research (SPAR), liberation-oriented participatory action research (LOPAR), participatory rural appraisal (PRA) and feminist action research (FAR).

Much of the methodological ground is, nevertheless, familiar, and the authors extol the virtues of co-operative inquiry, the critique of positivism, the analysis of power relationships, respect for the knowledge of the silenced, research as transformative praxis, and so on. Somehow unexpectedly, given the pragmatic aims of the method, the book takes us on a long excursion through the epistemological foundations of action research. And somewhat astonishingly, given the emancipatory, value-driven intentions of many in the participatory fold, the book goes on make claims for the scientific pedigree of action research. This asseveration is made via an admixture of strong-programme sociology of science, general systems theory (GST) and Deweyian pragmatic philosophy. As ever, there is an element of vanquishing the straw man in this deed, as the virtues of these strategies are compared to an ‘orthodox social science’, which apparently is ‘still largely carried out in the stratigraphic, particulate world, based on images of social facts that stand out on their own’.

Customarily it is the case that the greatest lessons of an action research story lie in ‘show-and-tell’, and Greenwood and Levin provide us with many splendid examples of the achievements of the participatory approach. These include a Norwegian business development programme (BUNT) in support of small and medium size enterprises (SMEs); the Hercencia Project – a community problem solving approach based on Investigación-Acción-Participativa (IAP); and the US Programs for Employment and Workplace Systems (PEWS) dealing with the effects of the introduction of new manufacturing systems. What is interesting about the accounts is the preparedness to let rose-coloured spectacles slip, in order to acknowledge the inevitability of crisis and failure along the path to collective wisdom.

Where do we stand after this grand journey through the ‘democratic research process’? For this reviewer, it was a bumpy ride. There are some trendy bits of nonsense in here, such as when the authors portray ‘the relationship between the reader and the authors as a collaborative one’ (at £21 for a paperback?). There are moments in the text when Greenwood and/or Levin appear to see exploitation, or its exact opposite, as the only human conditions. There is also a rather ingratiating curtsy to feminist methodology. Against this, however, is the achievement of producing an authoritative history of AR and the erudite disquisition of the family of AR methods. Each approach is issued as ‘an invitation’ and the welcoming style of the text demonstrates that the authors have experienced the real delights and dilemmas of playing the role of ‘friendly outsider’.

This is a text of eclecticism and compassion, which I can recommend (especially if you like acronyms).

*University of Leeds*  
RAY PAWSON


This is probably the most comprehensive introduction to the theory and method of conversation analysis (CA) to date. The authors – who have both written extensively on CA – write in a clear and accessible manner, and manage to cover an enormous range of issues. Indeed, this breadth of coverage – unmatched by other introductory texts – makes it a valuable reference book for those new to, or already familiar with, the field.

The main aims of the book are threefold: first, to introduce CA’s
theoretical foundations and its key studies and concepts (Part One); secondly, to outline the methodological principals and analytic techniques of CA analysis, using empirical examples from instances of naturally occurring talk (from telephone conversations and dinner discussions, for example) (Part Two); and, thirdly, to illustrate its practical applications, or relevance for ‘real world’ issues and problems (Part Three).

While the authors insist on the interdisciplinary relevance of CA to linguistics, social psychology and sociology, there is a greater leaning towards sociology, which is unsurprising given their respective backgrounds in the field. CA, they claim, offers much to sociologists—an understanding of the local construction of social order, the nature of inter-subjectivity, and institutional interaction—to reconceptualise how we understand the agency/structure dualism, or ‘how social action is related to social structures’ (p. 4) and ‘contextual and sociological variables’ (p. 5).

Readers already familiar with CA, as well as those sceptical but interested in its possibilities, will be particularly attracted to the final part of the book. Here the authors attempt to demonstrate how the techniques of CA can be applied to some of the major problems in the social sciences, and not just (as the criticisms often levelled against it imply) to the small scale features of interaction. They advocate the utility of CA to the world beyond academic research, and the ‘role of talk in wider social processes’ (p. 1). With my background in sociology and social policy, and an interest in analyzing gender from a CA and discursive perspective, I found this an attractive remit—as, no doubt, will other sociologists, who constitute one of the key target audiences of the book.

The book’s main limitation, however, is that it does not really deliver in terms of this objective. Chapter 9, for example, entitled ‘The practical relevance of conversation analysis’, will be the part most critical readers turn to first. There we are told about how CA can help politicians make their speeches more persuasive, how human-computer interaction might be improved, and its influence on therapy for people with speech disorders. Apart from the latter example of speech therapy, however, it is not clear how these are the most likely topics to attract those new to the field. Moreover, exactly who do these studies benefit in the ‘real world’? The ‘world outside of academic social science’ (p. 229) is debatable, given the primary focus on the talk of those in positions of power. It remains unclear whether CA can influence research and policy in the areas that most social scientists would see as the crucial test ground for the value of this kind of work (in the areas of gender, class, race, and power, for example).

The study of power is confined to a small section on ‘asymmetry and power’ in the chapter on institutional talk. This is one of the most interesting, yet under-developed sections of the book. As such, the relevance of CA to the ‘macro’ concerns of many social scientists is hinted at rather than demonstrated. A more ‘up front’ and developed focus on these issues would be a better way to market the radical potential of CA, as well as being a more accurate reflection of the important work on racism and gender that is currently being carried out at the intersection of CA and discursive psychology.

Despite these limitations, there is so much of interest in this book (both theoretically and methodologically) that it thoroughly deserves a place on the shelf of anyone interested in the subject. While not intended as a ‘manual’, it is far better at demystifying the ‘how to do it’ of CA practice than other books of its type.

Loughborough University  SUSAN A. SPEER


Along with other recent theorists of
intimacy, Jamieson suggests that late modernity has been associated—in a range of media—with the apparent centrality of personal relations. We are increasingly searching for relationships characterised by emotional commitment, equality and understanding. We expect to be closer to sexual partners, friends and family, and to choose those to whom we commit rather than have them foisted upon us. Emotional needs and personal narratives are to be confronted and developed reflexively; disclosure is no longer derided but cathartic.

In *Intimacy* Jamieson’s aim is to question the extent to which this is so. Has intimacy really become central to our personal lives or are relationships still fundamentally shaped by structural power imbalances? In order to answer these questions Jamieson reviews an impressive selection of empirical data, asking what exactly do we mean by intimacy and what evidence exists for its theorised transformation.

Based on this evidence Jamieson argues that while the emergence of an idealised ‘disclosing intimacy has had repercussions in both public and private spheres, we too often overestimate its practice in everyday life. While we do emphasise the importance of mutually sustaining relationships (rather than stress their responsibilities), Jamieson claims that empirical data reveal a bleaker picture of reality. She suggests that the so-called negotiation that is supposed to occur in relationships once characterised by disparities of power (parent/child, husband/wife) is often lacking, and that power imbalances may merely be more subtly enforced. Gendered divisions of labour are still common—particularly in parenting where the growth of ‘sensitive fatherhood’ is shown to be rare. There is less evidence for actual parent–child negotiation than that desired by parents and children.

Moreover, the choice and diversity that is supposed to characterise our sexual relations is undermined by the continued emphasis on phallocentric heterosexuality. In this way the over-optimism of liberal (s)experts who contrasted our sadly repressed past with the coming liberation is countered. All the liberal legislation, the disengagement of sexuality from reproduction, the growth of rights-based pressure groups has produced little actual social change. Thus, although Jamieson finds plenty of evidence that we express a desire for intimacy, its existence as an organising principle of everyday life is less apparent. The social and economic divisions that have traditionally existed between those with more or less power still have an impact on the organisation of relationships and seem likely to do so well into the next century.

Sadly, the focus here is more on the past than the future. While the pre-existing sociological literature is adequately surveyed, there seems little attempt to go beyond the confines of either the discipline or the present. There is no reference, for example, to queer theory, gender trouble, cybersex, postmodernist theorising, or computer-mediated communication. Surely these have such an impact on the nature of personal relations that they warrant at least a few sentences?

In the popular media the potential decline of skin against skin sex and the extension of the body into new dimensions has been extensively discussed. If the law acknowledges cyber-sex as adulterous, for example, the repercussions on the way in which sex is currently defined (as involving the physical contact of bodies) will be enormous. This, in turn, has implications for our definitions of intimacy. Already data suggest cyber-dating has the potential to minimise the risk of emotional harm for young women. As Jamieson locates intimacy in the (reflexive) self rather than the (physical) body, cyber-trends may exacerbate this process of dislocation.

The absence of a discussion of these issues makes *Intimacy* less groundbreaking than it could have been. However, what is discussed is done well. The book provides a solid argument against the optimistic idea that our newly
reflexive lifestyles enable us to transcend the constitutive function of old socio-economic structures. Moreover, it is very clearly written and structured, and so is eminently suitable for students, introducing not only recent theories of personal life as well as a good range of academic scholarship, but doing so in a stimulating and rigorous fashion. For those whose interests lie in the sociology of the family or in the changing nature of primary relationships, *Intimacy* is worth putting on your reading list.

**Staffordshire University KAREN STEVENSON**


This book scrutinises the growth of ‘new managerialism’ within local government. As the subtitle of the book suggests, the authors view with some suspicion the notion that ‘new managerialism’ is a well established and widespread phenomenon. Does it actually exist as a set of daily practices and widely adopted procedures which inform and impact upon the behaviour of managers, or does it operate largely at the level of rhetoric and managerial discourse? What, as the authors put it, is ‘the fit between rhetoric and reality?’ (p. 1).

The first three chapters make up a detailed and comprehensive review of the relevant literature, as well as being a critical appraisal of a range of theoretical approaches to the study of organisations and managerial roles within the public and the private sector. The empirical heart of the book constitutes a detailed case study of a large local authority which has undergone a programme of change since the mid 1980s. This is primarily based on interviews with senior and middle managers and a close analysis of internal documents.

Throughout, the authors utilise contingency theory in an interesting and informative way and employ, to excellent effect, Mintzberg's model of organisations and managerial roles. The case study is carried off meticulously and provides a wealth of material, particularly the interviews which are deployed effectively throughout and give a real insight into the problems, pressures and dilemmas that managers, such as those at ‘Barset County Council’ (BCC), encounter.

Is ‘new managerialism’ alive and well in BCC? Yes, to some extent, is the shorthand answer. Across all three of Mintzberg’s managerial ‘role sets’ – the ‘interpersonal’, the ‘informational and the ‘decisional’ – they found that ‘real and substantive changes have taken place’ (p. 157). For example, management at ‘Barset’ had adopted a more ‘entrepreneurial’ style in contrast to more ‘traditional’ public sector forms of ‘administration’. The organisation at BCC had become more ‘open’ and ‘flexible’ than before and cultures of ‘performance’ and ‘customer care’ had permeated through the organisation. However, these tendencies were often countered by a prevailing ethos of ‘good administration’, ‘public accountability’, and a ‘risk-averse’ mentality.

Such attitudes were clearly linked to the structural and operational imperatives of BCC. The peculiar characteristics of local government organisations, as compared to organisations in the private sector – e.g. being accountable to an elected body, the purchaser-provider split, the often politically sensitive nature of many services etc. – can severely curtail the adoption of an all-embracing ‘new managerialism’ within local authorities such as BCC.

Thus, as the authors tell us, ‘from the perspective of the managers participating in this study, the new managerialism amounted to both rhetoric and reality’ (p. 163). Certainly the ‘hybrid’ and contingent nature of an organisation such as BCC comes through clearly in the comments of the managers keen and Scase interviewed. In effect, ‘The
rhetoric of entrepreneurialism can only partially be turned into reality under such circumstances' (p. 163).

Keen and Scase have produced an informative and useful book. Even if ultimately the conclusions they reach are somewhat predictable, along the way they provide us with a detailed – almost ethnographic – account of the realities of managing a local government organisation whilst trying to adapt to, and cope with, growing pressures to change the nature and delivery of local government service provision. That they also manage to do this in such a balanced and even-handed manner, letting those they interviewed assess the merits and demerits of the ‘new managerialism’, is in itself no small achievement.

University of Stirling IAN MCINTOSH


One does not, thankfully, have to be a post-modernist these days to appreciate the significance of emotions in social life. Previously banished to the margins of sociological thought and practice, emotions, like the body to which they are inextricably tied, have truly come of age. In one sense, of course, they have proved an abiding theme, from Marx’s deliberations on alienation to Weber’s analysis of charismatic authority and the ‘erotic sphere’, and from Durkheim’s insights into collective effervescence to Simmel’s ‘Mental life in the metropolis’. In another sense, however, it is only within the last few decades that landmark books, such as Hochschild’s (1985) The Managed Heart, have served to put emotions on the sociological ‘map’.

In this respect, Lupton’s book, Australian in origin, represents a welcome addition to what has hitherto been – some recent British in-roads apart – a mainly American-dominated field. Five chapters sandwiched between a brief introduction and conclusion, the book comprises both original empirical material and a diverse array of other interdisciplinary literature – from sociology, anthropology and social history, to gender, cultural studies and critical psychology – bearing on the emotional body/self, both past and present. The central theoretical perspective, as Lupton explains, is a ‘version of social constructionism that is informed by a poststructuralist interest in discourse’, yet one which is ‘tempered’ by a recognition of ‘the sensual, embodies aspects of the emotion’, including both the phenomenology of the ‘emotional self’ as well as the unconscious dimensions of emotional experience (p. 8). Such an approach, indebted as it is to post-structuralism, seeks to ‘disrupt the taken-for-granted assumptions about how we understand subjectivity and embodiment and to identify those conditions in which these assumptions are developed and reproduced’ (p. 8).

Chapter 1 considers two contrasting perspectives on emotions, emotions as ‘inherent’ (i.e. biological) and emotions as ‘sociocultural products’ (i.e. social constructionist): greater attention, as might be expected, is given to the latter perspective. Chapter 2 draws on Lupton’s own empirical research with forty-one men and women concerning lay accounts, images and metaphors of emotions in everyday life. This chapter makes a valuable contribution to debates over issues such as ‘emotionality’, emotion management, gender and emotional expression, the embodiment of emotions, and the relationship between emotions and health states.

Building on these empirical insights, Chapters 3 and 4 return us to more theoretical matters concerning, respectively the socio-cultural and historical contexts within which these discourses are located, and a more detailed consideration of the complexities surrounding gender and emotional expression. Chapter 3, for example, contrasts Western representations of the ‘unruliness
of fluid emotions’, with more romantically based notions of emotions as a source of humanity and self-expression. The ‘fate’ of traditional archetypes such as the ‘emotional women’ and ‘un-emotional men’ are then considered in Chapter 4, with some interesting twists and turns along the way. Particular attention here is focused on the symbolic constructions of masculine and feminine embodiment and the psychodynamic dimensions of emotion, including Kristeva’s notion of the ‘abject’ and Chodorow and Holloway’s work on gender and the production of subjectivity.

In the last chapter, the best I think alongside Chapter 2, Lupton considers the issue of ‘Emotions, things and places’, focusing in particular on the emotional relationships we have with objects and places. Here issues such as emotions and consumption, including process of de-commodification and appropriation as ‘extensions’ of the emotional self are considered, alongside our ‘topophilic’ tendencies for places and spaces such as ‘home’. Finally, a summary of major themes and findings, including a restatement of the complexity of the emotional self in contemporary Western culture, provides an albeit brief conclusion to the book as a whole.

This is, without doubt, a well-written, well-argued book, with some important new data to boot. Timely and topical, it provides a welcome addition to this growing corpus of new interdisciplinary work on emotions in social life. It is customary, however, for reviewers to have quibbles. First, for all Lupton’s emphasis on a ‘tempered’, multi-faceted approach to emotions, one which takes embodiment seriously, her commitment to discourse mires the analysis somewhat through its indebtedness to post-structuralism. Lived experience, in this sense, takes second place to cultural representation, materiality to discourse: a world, in short, in which all things, including the unconscious, are linguistically mediated to a greater or lesser extent. The opportunities emotions afford us to return to and rethink the biological, not to mention the ‘pre-discursive’ or ‘extra-social’ realms of bodily being and experience, are therefore minimised or lost – despite recent clarion calls, such as Benton’s, to give the biological an albeit ‘cautious’ welcome back in.

Secondly, following directly on from this first post-structuralist legacy, Lupton’s prioritisation of fluid emotions and reflexive selves tends to underplay important elements of continuity as well as change, including the ‘organic moorings’ of our emotional selves and personal identities – see, for example, Archer, M. (1995) Realist Social Theory, Cambridge University Press. Thirdly, despite its impressive interdisciplinary coverage, writers such as Bataille on eroticism, Jonathan Turner on Darwinian/Durkheimian evolutionary approaches, Mestrovic on the ‘new barbarism’ and ‘postemotional society’, not to mention fellow post-structuralists such as Cixous, Irigary, Deleuze and Guattari, are strangely missing.

It is also possible to object to Lupton’s implicit if not explicit poststructuralist scepticism about the possibilities of a truly ‘authentic’ emotional response or self, given the multiple linguistic mediations within which the emotional self is (forever) ensnared. In this respect I side with Hochschild who, against her critics, in Rousseausque style, champions the (un)managed heart in a world of commoditised feeling. This may be romantic, to be sure, but in searching for these emotional interstices, and in celebrating the ‘pockets of resistance if not ‘authenticity’ they call forth, we may indeed find a cure to the ‘ailments’ of modernity in an ‘inauthentic age’.

University of Warwick Simon J. Williams


An ethnographic study of the pseudo-
nymous Carnan on the Isle of Skye was undertaken from the 1980s onwards. Utilising specific examples from it as a way to unlock the wider issues, this book unashamedly sets out to tell stories. Each chapter begins with a vignette that serves not only to ground the following analysis but also, as the author points out, serves to remind us of the situatedness of ethnographic analysis. As such, it is written in a straightforward narrative form with a welcome clarity of expression that is often lacking in much contemporary social analysis.

The book is organised into three sections dealing with histories, identities and the cultural renaissance since the 1980s. The first argues that these histories – with the emphasis on the plural – are used as repertoires for imagining, and traces the development of Gaelic as the heart of national culture and as a means of identifying a distinct people. In turn, this grew out of the formation of a distinct highland identity, which was later romanticised as being distinctly Scottish. Unlike other forms of minority national identity within Europe, language was neither as central to Scots identity nor as politicised, indeed its redevelopment as a central feature was comparatively late, dating from the late 1960s onwards. No study of Scotland is complete without a discussion of the effects of the clearances and the land wars, and indeed the romanticism of the Highlands. In this sense the book is travelling over well-trodden, but no less important, ground.

In the second section, Identities, the ethnography begins to develop beyond the initial context by tackling issues of locality, place and belonging, the status of incomers and the complexities of local politics. In themselves, such concerns have been central to the ethnography of the Celtic fringe ever since the first ethnographers ventured there. What is of interest here, though, is not only how kinship, gender, households, inheritance and marriage pattern social relations within Carnan, but also how these patterns are shifting in response to both internal and external pressures. Although Carnan may be physically remote from the rest of Britain and its inhabitants have a distinct sense of their difference, as much from the rest of Scotland as the rest of Britain, they are also bound up in a set of wider social and political institutions such as the European Union.

The third section, Cultural Renaissance, focuses on a number of specific projects designed to facilitate the revival – or the invention – of Gaelic language and culture, such as the extension of Gaelic schooling and broadcasting. It is here that the Carnan people's ambivalence towards their own culture – and the romanticisation of it – becomes clear. In turn, this is one of the central themes that runs through this ethnography, a critique of the idea that modernity results in individuated cultures and singular essential forms of identity. The analysis itself owes much to the influence of Saussure, filtered through the anthropology of the late Edwin Ardener, which sees identity as being patterned through a system of cultural relations rather than possessing essential characteristics. Such constructions are in turn, often messy and contradictory, and as the author continually reminds us, are as much enacted in the mundane aspects of daily life as anything else.

Given that such contradictions and ambivalences are of central concern, it is perhaps a bit surprising that more recent theoretical works dealing with issues such as the nature of locality, identity and global processes have mostly been relegated to a few footnote references. However, this book is an invaluable contribution to the ethnography of Scotland, or Gaelic studies, or indeed of the peripheral regions of contemporary Europe. Like all good ethnography the concerns are of wider significance and is worth a wider readership than its regional specialism may imply.

University of Plymouth KEVIN MEETHAN

Caste and untouchability in India have occupied social scientists and historians alike since the colonial episode, in their obsession with categorisation, and continue to be one of the points of focus of post-colonial scholarship on India today. *The Untouchables* is yet another addition to the literature on the structural obstacles to social mobility that the practice of untouchability presents. However, there exists a fine line between the objectifying descriptive accounts of Orientalist scholarship on caste and recent interventions, which throw into question the notion of caste as constituting the essence of India. This book teeters between these debates.

The first chapter's title, ‘Who are the Untouchables?’, reflects the dilemma faced when trying to adopt a terminology for an oppressive practice which is widespread but in which those who are oppressed do not necessarily constitute a single identifiable community. After reviewing the various terminologies and their connotations, such as the term used by Gandhi ‘Harijan’, the more self-representative and resistive ‘Dalit’, the institutional and policy-related term ‘Scheduled Castes’ and others, Mendelsohn and Vicziany rest upon ‘untouchable’: ‘Unfortunately, there is no generally acceptable alternative for the people in question or for sympathetic observers such as ourselves (p. 3). It is precisely this positioning of the argument which is symbolic of the problems of such an exercise, which uses terminology and categorisation, rather than the processes, as its starting point. The result is a denial of the history of the terminologies in their relation to the political contexts of resistance and accommodation that created them. Even the most ‘sympathetic’ observers of the cruelty of untouchability must be careful in not denying agency and subjectivity in the process of academic scholarship.

Despite this problem, *The Untouchables* has a number of illuminating sections. The most interesting and thorough part of the book is in the accounts of atrocities committed towards untouchables, in which a number of different cases of violence and resistance are documented, highlighting the continued subordination and protest that exists in contemporary India. These accounts, ranging from incidents around land conflicts in villages in Bihar to Naxalite activism in various parts of India, are extremely well documented. The following chapter analyses the complexities of religious, caste and political identities by examining colonial policies and the institutionalisation of caste identities. The leadership of Ambedkar and Gandhi in the nationalist movement, their views on untouchability and how they saw the untouchables within the independence movement are compared in great detail.

However, one area that this chapter only touches upon is religious conversion. A particularly interesting aspect of caste and the subordination of non-caste groups is in its transcendence across religions which officially reject the notion of caste and inegalitarianism. In the context of reservations, identities of disadvantage cannot be so easily defined. Christianity, Sikhism and Islam drew heavily from untouchables. However, though the practice of caste within even these communities exists, their members are not officially recognised as disadvantaged other than as minority groups in a Hindu majority India.

The book proceeds to take a look at the effects of state policies towards untouchables through adverse and compensatory discrimination and anti-poverty programmes. The detailed account of the Mandal controversy and the reactions from ‘Scheduled Castes’ and non-‘Scheduled Castes’ provides a backdrop to some of the contemporary
debates concerning the relationship between public policy and social subordination. A particularly poignant discussion is made regarding politicians and political parties in their role in attracting votes from ‘the untouchables’ as well as in contributing to the emergence of a national political identity.

Overall, the task that the book sets out to accomplish is one which, at the outset, is a problematic project. When the Census Commission of the British colonial government in India in 1931 attempted to enumerate the ‘Depressed Classes’ as a distinct social grouping, its motivations, while multi-fold, were also a utilisation of such an exercise in naming, counting and describing objectified, constructed groupings for a purpose of maintaining the social order. Mendelsohn and Vicziany refer to the intentions of the British Census Commission as an exercise in ‘intellectual curiosity’. However, the objectification of ‘the untouchables’ in this book is open to similar scrutiny as to why certain terminologies are chosen, who they are supposed to relate to and, most importantly, what the purpose of such an exercise is. While the authors acknowledge the difficulties and problems in describing a non-cohesive social grouping, they still fall into the trap of reverting to the notion of caste itself, similar to much of the Cambridge School of writing on India, as the quintessential unit of oppression rather than the universality of subordinating practices of which caste is only one, though crucial, example.

University of Manchester
NAVTEJ K. PUREWAL


In recent years, the universality of embodied experience has been placed at the centre of our theoretical attention. Sociologists of the body have crafted theories, uncovering the lived body not only as a production of biomedicine but also indicative of a normative stance which has existed in the human sciences. Within this context, the main attraction of The Body in Everyday Life is twofold. The reader sees how various bodies, in a variety of social spaces, become culturally and corporeally embedded, and how providing analyses of embodied knowledge and experience is a relatively new type of sociological intervention. Its methodologies are as varied as they are instructive, while authors contribute to one of four relevant areas: Physical and Emotional Bodies; Health and Illness; Gender; and Ageing.

Nettleton and Watson’s Introduction (Chapter 1) outlines the contents and flags up the text’s concern to explore ‘the salience of the body to the creation and recreation of everyday life’ (p. 8). Bloor, Monaghan, Dobash and Dobash (Chapter 2) offer illuminating insights into the world of bodybuilding in which steroid users engage in chemical as well as social construction. Taking drugs for instrumental reasons, these drug users manoeuvre themselves in a normative order by upholding the body beautiful, the body powerful and/or the body health-full. Martin’s chapter on Immunology exposes her respondents’ images of the immune system as a complex, interacting, adaptable bodily system meeting a whole series of physical and emotional challenges.

The embodied experience of the ‘let down’ sensation of breastfeeding women is presented in Chapter 4 by Britton. Here, the reader is confronted with post-natal women struggling to describe the sensations they feel when breast milk has a ‘mind of its own’. Lupton (Chapter 5) offers a captivating text – this time on accounts of emotional states and the ways in which individuals understand, experience and describe feelings related to their sense of body image. She contends that while one fears that emotions may lead to a leaky body or loss of containment, patrolling emotional
release acts as a way of maintaining what is perceived to be inside and outside bodies.

Williams and Bendelow contextualise the human embodiment of cancer within the frame of children’s bodies, health and risk. They skilfully manage to convey how children’s ideas of cancer ‘in bodies’ create images of malignant bodies, mapping tensions and dilemmas on the terrain of emotions. In a related later chapter, the same authors offer a phenomenological, gender-sensitive and embodied approach to pain. In Chapter 7, Williams and Barlow demonstrate how arthritis can have a profound affect not only on the experience of the body but also perceptions of the body with regard to its parts, posture and movement. Arthritis threatens the totality of the body experience and not surprisingly, the sufferer becomes disaffected with the body as a whole. The body as experienced in middle years is the topic of Cunningham-Burley and Backett-Millburn’s Chapter 8. While they point out that the body in middle years is often pathologised, they emphasise that this body is a site of biographical experience and passage which is unique for each person. At the same time, ‘middle years’ bodies affirm corporeality, predicting decline and death.

Watson presents data gathered from a qualitative study of men’s health. His findings support the case that key features of male embodiment were located in the gendered spaces of marriage, fatherhood and work. Higate’s fascinating Chapter 10 tells the story of the somewhat hidden world of the military and how physical differences of subordinated bodies can blur hierarchal differences and how these male bodies can be used as a resource. Cervical screening, Howson’s topic, provides an absorbing turn on women’s experience of health surveillance practices. Embodiment, obligation and citizenship all become linked as women not only internalise key disciplinary techniques of surveillance medicine but also become critical through their own embodied knowledge of routine medical procedures.

Bytheway and Johnson consider the disaggregation of the old human body with regard to wrinkles, a zimmer frame, dependency and the consequences of this as a strategy for the social construction of old age. The ways in which middle-aged women and men represent the implications of growing older and how these are socially constructed are explored by Fairhurst. ‘Growing old gracefully’ is set in opposition to ‘mutton dressed as lamb’ – images having salience in that they link changing physical appearance and bodily comportment with chronological age. The concluding chapter by Hepworth and Featherstone focuses on male menopause and how the lived male, menopausal body conceptualises external and internal states. The idea emerges that stories of male menopause can be open to continuous re-building, while at the same time shaped by social and cultural forces and displaying clear social patterns.

Given the above, a major sociological task of all of the contributors has been to re-shape traditional representations of the body, while at the same time re-shaping our traditional investigative tools. This volume is a thoroughly interesting contribution to the growing theoretical and philosophical developments in the sociology of the body. It is immensely informative, interesting and very accessible, features which should not only attract students of sociology but also make one feel proud to be a contemporary sociologist.

University of Plymouth

ELIZABETH ETTORRE


Researching Society and Culture offers a collection of pieces that provide an overview of, and introduction to, the
research methods used in social science and cultural studies. The text aims to provide undergraduate and postgraduate students with the skills needed to practise key research methods for investigating society and culture, and examines the methodological and theoretical issues involved in doing social research. Seale has brought together members, both past and present, from the Sociology Department in Goldsmiths College. All the contributors share a strong belief that social researchers do not just apply a set of neutral techniques to the issues that they investigate. They argue that research is part of a dynamic, reflexive engagement with social and cultural worlds, and the way in which students learn methods requires a continual awareness of this.

Following an introductory chapter in which the editor sets out the key influences on the book, the book divides into four parts. The first section, Philosophy, Methodology and History, discusses the philosophy of social science, developments in social theory, methodology and the use of historical perspectives in research. Part Two, Beginning Research, offers considerations of importance at the beginning of a research project and explores the writing of research proposals. The third, most substantial part of the text, examines ‘Doing Research’ and offers a range of methods in use by social and cultural researchers. The topics include doing social surveys, coding and analyzing data, doing ethnography, analyzing discourse, reading and writing research. Finally, Part Four of the book concludes with a series of workshop and discussion exercises, tailored to each chapter.

As with any edited collection it is difficult not to single out chapters which for some personal reason appeal more than others. Two chapters of particular interest to this reviewer were Chapters 5 and 20. Chapter 5, ‘Gender, ethnicity and fieldwork: a case study’ by Anne-Marie Fortier provides a personal account of an ethnographic study conducted for the completion of her doctorate in sociology, guiding the reader through the process of ethnography and its methods. She draws attention to the problems associated with ethnographic study, providing examples of the advantages, as well as the disadvantages, associated with conducting social research. The pages on ‘troubles in the field: gender, ethnicity and negotiating belonging’ were particularly enjoyable, but would have benefited from further discussion on the problems encountered in the field.

David Silverman’s chapter provides a succinct account of how to analyse conversation, in terms both understandable and challenging. Discussions on preparing transcripts and basic features of institutional talk provide background knowledge and are likely to stimulate the desire to seek out further information about analyzing conversations.

Overall, Researching Society and Culture is a very comprehensive and well-written text. The presentation and the structure are both clear and precise and the strength of the book is the breath of issues covered. A welcome feature is the recommended reading list at the end of each chapter, something many other such books fail to provide. This book is an informative ‘read’: undergraduate and postgraduate students in both social sciences and cultural studies will find it invaluable and of great interest. At £14.99, it is well within the reach of anyone wanting a readable and comprehensive introduction to the subject.

University of Lincolnshire & Humberside DEBRA TURNER


No introductory text on Harvey Sacks would please everyone, and David Silverman is to be congratulated for his fortitude in writing this book. The intellectual reach of Sacks’s work is
enormous, and his sophisticated considerations of the use of language, logic, method and mind stretch far beyond conversation analysis (CA). Having judiciously expanded upon his (1993) Review Article of Sacks’s (1992) Lectures in Conversation, Silverman’s fascinating book is intended for undergraduate students without prior knowledge of Sacks or CA. Aside from some cluttered quotations, Silverman is clear, un-patronising and maintains a sociological focus throughout.

The author’s canvas is broad, providing an intellectual profile; the relationship of Sacks’s work to social sciences (anthropology, linguistics, sociology); and Sacks’s methods of inquiry. Silverman separates his treatment of Sacks’s work into Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA) and CA, with a further divide into ‘Using’ MCA and CA. He concludes with a chapter on the impact that Sacks has had on research since his death. The chapters on turn-taking are conceptually and technically stronger than those on MCA; the chapter on method is surprisingly short; the sections explicitly following Emanuel Schegloff’s introductions to the Lectures are the best.

Silverman works to make esoteric observations, for example, ‘On suicide threats getting laughed off’ and ‘Everyone has to lie’, intelligible and reasonable to a sociological audience. Using important issues and key sociological concepts (social change and order, power, suicide), Silverman lists implications of Sacks’s work for sociologists, and gradually draws out salient points of Sacks’s analyses. Although this layout is a good teaching aid, it attempts to situate Sacks within mainstream sociology, and traditional sociological concerns, in order to minimise differences between them.

Some readers will welcome summaries of key points, and in this sense it works as a student text. However, its reader-friendly format may be its undoing, as it leaves too much implicit and tries to cope with material not reducible to synopses. Course directors will constantly have to address the book’s shortcomings: for example, drawing upon the ‘inference-making machine’ (pp. 9–10) to illustrate Sacks’s originality of thought without ever explicating the logic behind it; and neglecting the use of membership entailed in having ‘no-one to turn to’ (pp. 2–3). Effectively pigeonholing Sacks as a behaviourist (p. 62) is wrong and reduces his work to the very mentalism that was anathema to Sacks. For an avowedly introductory text such lacunae and incompleteness undermine the usability of the book as a free-standing teaching resource.

Through such oversimplification, what Sacks used as a pedagogic device becomes an ironic orientation towards the explication of practical actions and practical reasoning: ‘there is no doubt that, unlike Garfinkel, Sacks aimed for a cumulative science of conversation’ (p. 184). This is misleading as for Sacks (and on p. 61, Silverman even quotes him on this), conversation was just an occasion to develop a rigorous observational sociology (LC1: pp. 621–2; LC2: p. 26).

Reiterating a stereotypical view of ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts by imputing postures through hyperbole (‘battles between theorists who constitute themselves as members of armed camps’ – p. 132) distorts the debates. A separation of MCA and CA assumes each has a different analytic status in terms of the other; whereas the author maintains CA is actually the study of the organization of turns in conversation. CA is the study of turn-organisation and membership categorisation. This separation was not of Sacks’s own making and enters into the realm of what Silverman calls ‘the politics of readings’.

There is little on Sacks’s earliest contribution to sociology, ‘Sociological Description.’ As if ‘influence’ was not reciprocal, a short summary of differences and affinities between Sacks and Harold Garfinkel (pp. 36–42) fails to acknowledge the extent of Sacks’s contribution to the development of ethnomethodology; the foundational paper
published with Garfinkel is not mentioned, nor what is ethnomethodological about Sacks's work. The book also omits the contributions of Gail Jefferson.

This book will interest those doing sociology, sociolinguistics, ethnography and research methods. Whilst aiming for students in various social sciences, short sections do not reflect the scope of generic concerns of particular interest to ethnographers and anthropologists in Sacks's work, and the 'key references' appendix does not address this. This is a missed opportunity for, as this book suggests, Sacks's work is far from limited to conversation. Although this is an entertaining book, it is to be hoped that it inspires readers to consult the Lectures as Silverman (p. 180) puts it, 'to locate his legacy for themselves'.

References


Universally of Stirling ANDREW CARLIN


The editor of this encyclopaedia is to be warmly congratulated for this impressive and well-presented new publication that fills a long-standing gap in the field of the sociology of religion. Swatos has assembled a prestigious and international group of associate-assistant editors, and an equally international and well-known 109 contributors. Most of the British contributors are, naturally, members of the BSA Sociology of Religion Study Group. The quality of the entries will ensure that this encyclopaedia becomes the standard reference work in the sociology of religion for the coming decades.

The encyclopaedia takes a sociological approach to the phenomenon of religion, but is mindful of related disciplines such as psychology and anthropology. The breadth in scope that arises from this inter-disciplinary awareness will no doubt make the book a valuable asset to those working in related fields, as well as sociology. The entries vary considerably in length, some being just a few sentences, others being the length of short essays. By including informative and critical entries on the key scholars and personalities in the sociology of religion, both past and present, plus the professional associations associated with the discipline, the volume provides a valuable historical overview of the development of the field up to the present day. Each entry is supplemented by references to further literature, whilst the very detailed index will help researchers identify all the occurrences of topics and terms.

Indeed, it is hard to identify gaps in this comprehensive volume. There are entries for all key concepts and ideas in the sociology of religion. Furthermore, the encyclopaedia includes entries on topics that are relevant to mainstream sociology, such as 'deviance', 'family', and 'community', thus making the book a valuable asset across the discipline.

Despite the wide range of international contributors, there is an unmistakably American, Christian bias to the volume. For example, there is a lengthy entry on 'Biblical Studies' but no entry or reference in the index to either 'Quranic Studies or the 'Bhagavad Gita'. To some extent, this American, Christian bias is a reflection of the development of the sociology of religion, but there are instances where the lack of comparative awareness deters from the overall value of the book.

For example, the entry on 'decision making' states that in traditional societies, religious groups were held together by automatically determined custom, and taken-for-granted support from the entire community. In comparison, in modern societies, 'religious groups are voluntary associations ... governed by written con-
This assertion oversimplifies the complexity of religious life in modern societies, and fails especially to recognise the largely traditional norms that continue to govern the religious life of immigrant minority faith groups living in modern societies.

Some of the entries betray a lack of expertise in world religions, and the editor might have been advised to consult specialists in religious studies prior to publication. For example, the entry on Buddhism begins by stating that ‘the founder of Buddhism is a Hindu’. The terms ‘Hindu’ and ‘Hinduism’ were not in existence at the time of the Buddha, and there is in fact little evidence about the religious identity of the Buddha during his early life, except for his familiarity with the Vedas. Similarly, the entry refers to the ‘Three Jewels’ of Buddhism, and these are given as the Buddha, the dharma (the teaching) and ‘the shanghai’. The latter word is incorrect; the contributor meant perhaps to refer to the more correct term ‘sangha’ (the community). In other instances, there are inaccuracies in the spelling and use of Arabic terms in relations to Islam, for example in the entry on ‘Ecology of Religion’. These, and other mistakes, suggest that specialists in the different religious traditions might have been invited to check the accuracy of the relevant entries. Despite a small number of weaker entries, the generally authoritative and well-written entries will make this new and very user-friendly volume particularly accessible and valuable to students. It should certainly find a place on library shelves. Similarly Swatos’s book is likely to become a valuable teaching tool for those who are professionally involved in the sociology of religion, and deserves to be regarded as a standard reference work in the field.

University of Exeter  SOPHIE GILLIAT-RAY


As theorists such as Gordon, O’Neill and Owen have shown, there are a number of affinities between the work of Max Weber and Michel Foucault. These include a shared interest in forms of modern domination and discipline; a common concern for the impact of instrumental rationality on the leading of life; and an interest in the work of Nietzsche. Szakolczai, in Max Weber and Michel Foucault, argues that there is a further, and as yet unexplored, connection between Weber and Foucault: their ‘life-works’. In view of this, Szakolczai attempts to establish the parallel points of contact which exist between the respective lives and works of the two theorists, an approach which he terms a ‘bio-logo-graphy’ (p. 33).

The first part of the book comprises a methodological reflection on the practice of ‘reflexive historical sociology’, in which the author states that it is not his intention to explain the content of ideas ‘but the conditions of possibility of a project’ (p. 27). Following this, Szakolczai proceeds to analyse the ‘keys’ to the work of Weber and Foucault, and the central problems these thinkers address. In regards to the former of these points, Szakolczai argues that the key to Weber’s work is his 1920 ‘Author’s Introduction’ to the Collected Essays on the Sociology of Religions, whilst the key to Foucault’s work is his ‘Introduction’ to the History of Sexuality. In regards to the latter, he argues against Tenbruck and Hennis (and in rather vague fashion) that Weber’s central problem, whilst stemming from the connection between his life and work, remains largely undefined. Foucault’s central problem is, in short, that of the ‘effects of . . . discourse about the self on the self itself’ (p. 81).

The second part of the book comprises a lengthy analysis of Weber’s life and work. This analysis is imaginative and thought-provoking but is also limited in a number of respects. Szakolczai fails to consider, for example, the impact of
Weber's trips to Ascona in 1913 and 1914 on his work, and overlooks the connections made by Baumgarten, Green and Whimster between the revisions Weber made to the 'Zwischenbetrachtung' ('Intermediate Reflection') between 1915 and 1920 and important developments in his personal life.

There is, moreover, little evidence to support a number of the conclusions Szakolczai draws from his analysis of Weber's 'life-work'. How do we know that Weber's relationship with his wife, Marianne, was 'severely handicapped' intellectually, for she 'would never be his Nietzschean companion' (p. 126) or that Weber's 'secrets' were 'the “beautiful” women in his life'; his 'reading experiences' of Marx, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, and his 'effective self-reflexions' (p. 172)? On what grounds can it be said that in the autumn of 1916 Weber 'suddenly found his status and his role model in the Ancient Hebrew prophet, Jeremiah' (p. 177), and that Weber, like Foucault, was an 'anti-prophetic prophet', or 'parrhesiast' (p. 181)?

Szakolczai's analysis of Foucault's 'life-work' is also problematic. He stresses the importance of Foucault's 'reading experiences' (of Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Nietzsche) and makes detailed references to a number of his lesser-known documents and lectures, but offers little discussion of Foucault's political activity. Szakolczai here does not analyse the radical nature of Foucault's 'life-work' but makes a number of anodyne remarks about his personal qualities. He notes, for example, that Foucault was a 'nice person' (p. 195), and, following Pierre Nora, that he 'had a tremendous need to be loved' (p. 196). In addition, Szakolczai also makes a number of claims which, without serious analysis of the content of Foucault's work, are difficult to substantiate, one being, for example, that 'Heidegger remained for Foucault the philosopher' (p. 202).

This book is, I believe, unlikely to appeal either to students or to experienced Weber or Foucault scholars, for, on the one hand, it is rather long-winded and disjointed, and, on the other, lacks biographical detail and rarely moves beyond a superficial consideration of the actual work of the two thinkers. As a result, Szakolczai's claims regarding the connections between the respective lives and works of Weber and Foucault often appear forced or simply ungrounded. In view of this, I would argue that this is not a particularly successful exercise in 'reflexive-historical sociology'.

London Guildhall University
NICHOLAS GANE


'So what?' asks Chris Tilly and Charles Tilly, son and father, in the last chapter of this book, 'Why should workers, managers, officials, citizens or students of work care about what the eleven, dense chapters that precede this one have said?' (p. 256). Their twelve chapters furnish a long answer. A brief answer is that anyone who wants to make sure that neoliberal economic theory is dead and buried, will care. They will relish this book's message, that work under capitalism has to be understood as complex and variable and as subject to analytical comprehension.

Drawing on institutionalist, Marxist and organisational analyses, the authors build an interactional model of work which starts with transactions between individuals rather than individuals themselves, and which sees these transactions as bundled to form work contracts and contracts elaborated into variable systems of production and distribution. Further, they see these processes as embedded in culture. They argue that people work, and make others work, on the basis of strong understandings of what forms of interaction are possible, desirable and effective for particular kinds of outcomes.
Unequal power affects the context and the execution of work contracts.

Recurrently they compare cotton textiles, coal mining and health care to illustrate the culturally embedded development of different kinds of industries and firms. However, the Tillys emphasise that even in capitalist societies the bulk of work goes on outside of tightly organised labour markets. It takes place in households, schools, prisons, the informal economy, family farms, petty commodity production and other settings that lack the apparatus of firms and jobs. The Tillys’ final statement (p. 264) embraces ‘hard bargaining’ and ‘struggle that is (sometimes) muted, (sometimes) routine or (sometimes) openly contentious’ within ‘stringent institutional limits’, into determining the character of work under capitalism.

In the course of the book they are at pains to point out that whilst institutions constrain, they are modified over time through social interactions large and small. Thus workers act to change the range of jobs available to their level of skill collectively and dramatically through action such as professionalisation, and by individual action; they cite an American study of non-faculty university personnel which found that 1 to 2 per cent of jobs per year were officially reclassified based on the evolution of incumbents’ duties.

Such a view of work, of its cultural, embedded nature and its determination by institutions that can be affected by the creativity of interaction, lie at the heart of the discipline of sociology. A great deal of the book’s strength lies in the scope and detail of the empirical sources that are assembled to flesh out the overall argument. The bibliography lists close to 800 items that are filleted with skill and written about with clarity. Although it is something of an oversight that whilst the two authors give us much vivacious detail and many reminders of their own researches, nowhere do they tell us of the form or process of their intellectual collaboration to produce this book.

On a larger critical front the detailed development of the analytical framework is less than powerfully persuasive. Whilst the framework is frequently expounded and is often conveyed in schematic form, accumulation of empirical detail rather analytic thrust gives the book its impetus. The book is giving voice to the general sociological view that changing power relations will have a greater impact on the character of work than will new technologies or alterations in market efficiency. It is, however, empirical detail rather than conceptual argument that carries the burden of the argument.

University of Salford  PATRICIA A. WALTERS

SHORTER REVIEWS OF NEW EDITIONS


Joe Bailey’s second edition of Social Europe continues the useful function established by the popular first edition as a thoughtful collection of chapters on the social profile of Europe. It achieves an interesting appraisal of that amorphous and growing collection to people to which in many ways we are still tentatively applying the label ‘European Society’. The editor understandably writes of the difficulties in getting a clear perception of Europe, especially given the lack of reference between the different social sciences. This is compounded too by sociology’s general neglect of Europe and the ensuing problems in obtaining any series of sociologically significant and comparable statistics across Europe despite the existence of Eurostat, the EU’s official database.

These setbacks would seem sufficient to confound any sociological approach to Europe, and yet this collection demonstrates the ability to prevail and even provide some surprises. From the text for instance, it is only to be expected that new EU member Sweden should top the list for equality of income and wealth,
and for welfare benefits. But for the UK to be third in this measure of equality but at the same time worst, with the exception of Ireland, for welfare benefits will be a revelation to most. On a completely different level, as we compete more defiantly for space to live and park our cars, the reflection that Europe’s population is melting away may provide some consolation.

Turning from these snatches taken at random and out of context, the materials presented are easy to read and yet extremely rich in insights that will be usable, making it attractive for reading lists. The familiar sociological dimensions of stratification, gender and race are present and the institutions of education, work, crime, healthcare, religion and leisure. But the writers take the opportunity to go beyond the normal parameters for these accepted sociological fields and in fact the pan-European context facilitates this.

Weaknesses stem from the difficulties in obtaining the most useful data, as mentioned earlier, which prevents, for example, full use of the newer Scandinavian members of the EU. This affects the chapter on gender to some extent. In the chapter on trade unions, however, it is presumably the generally messy state of industrial relations in Britain that leads the author to stick to a comparison of Germany, Italy and France. In healthcare all comparison tends to pale before a reminder of the World Health Assembly’s 1977 declaration of ‘health for all by the year 2000’. These are all agendas for discussion which will make the book all the more useful.

Staffordshire University TONY SPYBEY


This book, first published in hardback in 1994, is an exemplary piece of comparative historical analysis. It is essentially an attack on the economic reductionist version of the theory of the state, arguing convincingly that politics matter—and that, furthermore, state economic policies are not merely politically constructed, but emerge from identifiable social relations and practices.

The vehicle (no pun intended) for this analysis is a comparative historical study of the development of the railway systems of the United States, Great Britain and France during the nineteenth century. In caricature terms, the United States lies at the laissez-faire end of the spectrum, with France at the opposite extreme where the state rationally planned and closely controlled both the development and the operation of the railway system. Britain lay in-between, proceeding by the state managing by meddling—never quite able to allow the market free rein, but never able, either, to develop a capacity for state planning.

These distinctions are set out in three, inevitably short, essays written to a tight analytical framework developed at the beginning of the book. Railway historians will inevitably cavil at the broad sweep of Dobbin’s historical narratives, which perforce deal with broad generalisations, rather than the detailed minutiae. But this would be to miss the point of his book: like Barrington Moore’s The Social Basis of Dictatorship and Democracy, written over thirty years earlier, Dobbin’s real aim is to demonstrate the force of his analysis with reference to comparative historical material, rather than to engage in a detailed description of railway development; the latter is a means not an end.

Much more, therefore, depends upon the rigour of the analytical framework. Cynics might suggest that his polemic against rational economic theory is aimed at an easy target, but we have just witnessed two decades in which economic liberalism has been the dominant force among governments in Europe and North America and a number of Dobbin’s arguments deserve re-stating,
not least when various mythical golden age notions of nineteenth-century capitalist development have become popularised on both sides of the Atlantic. Nevertheless Dobbin expresses his argument with great clarity and conviction and at the very least his three historical essays present their case with considerable plausibility.

From the turmoil of nineteenth-century railway mania Dobbin demonstrates that industrial policies, deemed economically ‘rational’ in each case, were very much social and political constructs. The choice of railway policy to illustrate this is astute: that development of railways everywhere faced governments with unavoidable issues of regulation, finance and, as it becomes known, line management (literally and metaphorically). Each case therefore provides unique insights into what Dobbin calls ‘the institutionalisation of rationalised meaning’ in public policy. Yet these are so variable that any notion of ‘objective’ interests and ‘rational’ behaviour is quickly rendered implausible.

It is ironic that these same countries are all now entering a new era of railway development, this time driven by a new allegedly ‘rational’ set of policies: privatisation, the separate management of infrastructure and operating companies, etc. The rhetoric of nineteenth-century economic liberalism is now being deployed in a new context. But is it any more ‘rational’? Perhaps Dobbin should undertake a contemporary study to complement this fine book.

University of Southampton

HOWARD NEWBY


A book about sociological research methods in America 1920–1960 might not seem to be required reading for contemporary practising and apprentice sociologists. But despite the title, the argument of this book (now more widely available in paperback) is very much about continuing central concerns in the discipline and about perceptions of its own history and character as it is about its nominal content. Indeed, much of the volume is a critique of what J. K. Galbraith calls the ‘conventional wisdom’ of the era, the relatively unexamined assumptions and prejudices that influence present-day thought and practice.

By means of a detailed analysis of available archives, relevant documentary sources such as monographs and textbooks, and through extensive and ingeniously procured interviewing of key informants, Jennifer Platt demonstrates that the alleged coherence that many subsequent ‘theoretical’ studies have given to the era, and its conception and practice of sociology, are intellectual caricatures or stereotypes that grossly simplify or even fictionalise the concrete complexity of actuality.

The discipline was much more diverse and contentious than is commonly allowed. Schools were not coherent and there were varying versions of ‘scientism’. The ‘Chicago School’ covered a range of methodological approaches, although the grounding of research in the gathering of empirical evidence was a unifying theme. Participant-observation covered a range of meanings and practices and ‘symbolic interactionists’ did not all agree with the label bestowed on them by subsequent analysts. Methodological approaches, such as the ‘case study’ method, were not well elaborated. The proponents of particular methods did not follow their own precepts; the centrality of the survey approach in the latter phase of the period studied was never uncontested and its alleged affinity with functionalism was an ecological correlation rather than an actual or inherent relationship. The discipline as a whole lacked cohesion, with competing paradigms and power centres, sects and movements.

Through her diligent research Platt
Napier University


For Ivan Reid social class is the most fundamental form of social stratification. The experience and intensity of other kinds of inequality, related to gender, age or ethnicity, vary according to the class context within which they occur. It has become fashionable, for New Labour as much as amongst moderate Conservatives, not only to proclaim classlessness as a goal but to imply that in Britain we are already a long way towards achieving it. Reid argues forcefully that, on the contrary, there is little evidence of any profound change taking place and ‘few if any signs of social and political interest in attempting to achieve significant change’.

This is the latest and best in a series of collections of class-linked data Reid has been producing since 1977. With admirable thoroughness he has assembled the most recently available, sometimes otherwise unpublished, evidence principally from a wide range of large-scale social surveys and official statistics. Beginning with a useful introduction to the various, mainly occupation-based, class scales used in British social research (detailed in a very handy Appendix) he proceeds in the next chapter to describe the basic demographics of the British class structure with distributions by gender, age, ethnic identity, geographical distribution and the empirical data on the elusive relationship of subjective and objective class. He then deals with Life Chances, Health and Mortality; Income, Wealth and Poverty; Work, Unemployment and Social Mobility; Family Patterns; Education; Religion, Crime, Politics and Opinion; and Leisure patterns. The data are very clearly set out with a helpful commentary bringing out the principal features of the tables and sometimes discussing the recent sociological literature on the topic. Though the evidence is cumulatively compelling on the continued importance of class differences in Britain, the absence of historical and international perspective makes it hard to evaluate the patterns he reveals. And although he notes in general the considerable amount of within-class variation, his neglect of the issue in, for example, earnings or educational attainment, tends to obscure the crucial distinction between class-related and class-determined distributions.

But there has to be something left for teachers to do for their students and Reid has provided those on courses dealing with Modern British Social Structure with an invaluable source of reliable and accessible information.

University of Sheffield

TREVOR NOBLE