

# Bourdieu in American Sociology, 1980–2004

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## Abstract

This article traces the transatlantic diffusion of Pierre Bourdieu's ideas into American sociology. We find that rather than being received as abstract theory, Bourdieu has been actively put to use to generate new empirical research. In addition, American sociologists have used their findings to problematize and extend his theory. Bourdieu's sociology, in other words, has inspired a progressive research program in the United States. We trace this process in the two main forums for presenting research: journal articles and books. Content analysis of articles published in four major sociology journals reveals that, far from a recent fad, Bourdieu's ideas steadily diffused into American sociology between 1980 and 2004. Case studies of four influential books in turn illustrate how researchers have used Bourdieu's key concepts (capital, field, habitus, and symbolic power) to inform debates in four core subfields (political, economic, cultural, and urban sociology).

*Texts such as mine, produced in a definite position in a definite state of the French intellectual or academic field, have little chance of being grasped without distortion or deformation in the American field.*

(Bourdieu 2000b, p. 241)

## INTRODUCTION

The passing in 2002 of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu provides us pause to examine his influence on the practice of research in American sociology over the past three decades. From his position as Chair of Sociology at the Collège de France, Bourdieu became a global public intellectual, shaping scholarship internationally in a wide range of disciplines. It is often forgotten, however, that he first forged his unique scholastic vision through an engagement with American sociology. Schooled originally in philosophy, Bourdieu entered sociology as an autodidact, by reading American sociology while doing fieldwork in Algeria and as a visiting scholar at Princeton University. Bourdieu would later translate and publish major works of U.S. social science (including the first French editions of key works by Erving Goffman, whom he had befriended during his U.S. stay) in his own book series and journal. U.S. sociology was for him a means by which to break with the antiscientific bent of the French academic field (Calhoun 2003). However, Bourdieu (1990a, p. 5) was deeply critical of what he saw to be a “mediocre and empirical” strand within much sociology. In the United States, such dry empiricism resulted from disciplinary insularity, itself a historical product of the premature specialization of the various social and human sciences (Ross 1991, Gulbenkian Comm. Restruct. Soc. Sci. 1996).

Just as Bourdieu was highly reflexive about his use of American sociology, so too did the initial publication of Bourdieu’s works in English stimulate debate within American sociology (e.g., DiMaggio 1979, Brubaker 1985, Calhoun et al. 1993, Alexander 1995). This early debate was organized around an over-

arching metaphor of Bourdieu as a producer of knowledge that American sociologists received and consumed. Typically, as the opening epigraph attests, the latter were found guilty of hermeneutical errors. Wacquant (1993), for example, blamed “recurrent misinterpretations” by American scholars on various factors, including unfamiliarity with the philosophical underpinnings of many of Bourdieu’s concepts and a general frustration with his opaque writing style (see also Simeoni 2000; Swartz 1997, pp. 3–6; Lane 2000, p. 3).

We seek to spark a second wave of reflection, one that, in the spirit of Bourdieu, transcends the binary opposition of knowledge producers versus consumers. Indeed, Bourdieu (2000a [1997], p. 62) himself argued that his conceptual oeuvre is not to be treated as an “end in itself”; rather, we should “do something with [his concepts] . . . bring them, as useful, perfectible instruments, into a practical use” (cf. Brubaker 1993, p. 217; Breiger 2000). To what extent, we ask, have actors in American sociology both used Bourdieu’s ideas to advance key debates in the field and attempted to extend these ideas in turn? Has, in other words, Bourdieu’s sociology constituted a progressive research program for sociological research in the United States (Lakatos 1978)?

To address these questions, we first provide a brief overview of Bourdieu’s main concepts, the range of empirical topics to which they were applied over his career, and common critiques of his work. Second, we examine how Bourdieu’s ideas have been put to use in research published in major American sociology journals since 1980, through a quantitative content analysis.<sup>1</sup> Third, we present case studies of four books that have explicitly applied Bourdieu’s key concepts to a major

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<sup>1</sup>These data of course do not permit a thorough mapping of the American academic field in the Bourdieuan sense; that would require systematic study of the positions, trajectories, and dispositions of sociologists, as well as the relationship between academic and scientific capital in the field in which they operate (Bourdieu 1988 [1984]).

substantive area of the discipline (the four we consider are economic sociology, political sociology, urban sociology, and the sociology of culture). In general we find that the recent upsurge of interest in Bourdieu's theory is neither fad nor homage, but rather the culmination of a long and steady diffusion of Bourdieu's ideas into American sociology. Not only are scholars increasingly likely to cite and acknowledge Bourdieu, but many are using their findings to problematize and push forward his research program. Bourdieu the outsider, we may say, has gradually acquired insider status.

## OVERVIEW OF BOURDIEU'S SOCIOLOGY

The son of a rural postman, Bourdieu would become the most prominent sociologist in France, and at the time of his death, a global public intellectual. This unusual trajectory sensitized him to both the power of social structures to reproduce themselves and the possibility for social change (Wacquant 2002). Following graduate work in philosophy, Bourdieu was drafted into the French army during the Algerian War for Independence of the late 1950s. There he conducted his first major study, on the Kabyle people's experience of colonization (Bourdieu 1962 [1958], 1979 [1977]).<sup>2</sup> The most important work to emerge from this study is *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977 [1972])—later revised and expanded in the book *The Logic of Practice* (1990b [1980])—in which he develops his theory of social structure and social action. Moving from philosophy through anthropology to sociology, Bourdieu continued to develop his conceptual system through sustained empirical research on a wide range of topics. Upon returning from Algeria, he first

turned his attention to the role of education in the reproduction of inequality in France (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977, Bourdieu 1988 [1984]). This interest in social inequality next led him to study cultural production and consumption (Bourdieu 1984 [1979], 1993, 1996 [1992]). In later work, Bourdieu developed his theory of the state through studies of language (1991 [1982]), elite schools (1998 [1989]), and housing markets (2005 [2000]).

Bourdieu's theoretical project bridges the deep philosophical divide between the structuralism of Lévi-Strauss and the existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre. Structuralism establishes "objective regularities independent of individual consciousness and wills," privileging scientists' formal models of social relations over agents' commonsense understandings of the world (Bourdieu 1990b [1980], p. 26). Phenomenology, by contrast, equates agents' representations of the world with reality itself, without analyzing the conditions of possibility of subjective experience (Bourdieu 1990b [1980], p. 25). Neither perspective takes into account the scientist's own relationship to the social world and the attendant effects on the production of knowledge. The novelty of Bourdieu's theory lies in the synthesis of the objectivist and subjectivist epistemologies underpinning these two traditions. Social structures inculcate mental structures into individuals; these mental structures in turn reproduce or (under certain conditions) change social structures (Bourdieu 1988 [1984], p. 27; 1989, p. 15; 1991 [1982], pp. 135–36).

Furthermore, Bourdieu assembled a set of concepts to describe these processes: capital, field, habitus, and symbolic power. We briefly define each concept in turn. The various species of capital are resources that provide different forms of power. Economic capital consists of not just monetary income, but accumulated wealth and ownership of productive assets. To possess cultural capital is to demonstrate competence in some socially valued area of practice. Bourdieu speaks of three subspecies of cultural capital: an embodied disposition that expresses itself in tastes

<sup>2</sup>During this period, Bourdieu also conducted a parallel study of his childhood village in France. Most of this work has yet to appear in English, but some initial translations are available in a special issue of the journal *Ethnography* [Volume 5, Issue 4 (2004)].

and practices (an incorporated form), formal certification by educational institutions of skills and knowledge (an institutional form), and possession of esteemed cultural goods (an objectified form). Social capital consists of durable networks of relationships through which individuals can mobilize power and resources (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 119). Any form of capital can serve as symbolic capital if people recognize its unequal distribution as legitimate (Bourdieu 1991 [1982], p. 118).

In American sociology, the forms of capital are usually operationalized and analyzed as individual-level variables. Bourdieu (1984 [1979], pp. 105–6), however, was critical of variable-oriented analysis, in particular regression approaches that try to separate the effects of independent variables. Although people may vary in the overall volume and composition of the capitals that they possess (Bourdieu 1985, p. 231), it is insufficient to study social space as an aggregate of individuals and their capital holdings. This is because the power that capital provides depends on the structure of the field in which it is activated.

Field is a mesolevel concept denoting the local social world in which actors are embedded and toward which they orient their actions. In his review of field theory, Martin delineates three senses of the concept of field—a topological space of positions, a field of relational forces, and a battlefield of contestation. All three senses are present in Bourdieu's writings, but the sense of contest is most significant (Martin 2003, pp. 28–30), as exemplified by his frequent use of a game metaphor. Like a game, a field has rules for how to play, stakes or forms of value (i.e., capital), and strategies for playing the game. In the process of playing, participants become invested in and absorbed by the game itself (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, pp. 98–100).<sup>3</sup> Yet the most

important game in any field is establishing the rules to define “the legitimate principles of the field” (Bourdieu 1991 [1982], p. 242). Bourdieu (1991 [1982], p. 167) considers this the most effective form of power, the capacity of dominant groups to impose “the definition of the social world that is best suited to their interests,” which he calls symbolic power.

What are the different types of fields, and how are they related? We can identify fields by what is at stake within them: “In empirical work, it is one and the same thing to determine what the field is, where its limits lie . . . and to determine what species of capital are active in it” (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, pp. 98–99; cf. Bourdieu 1989, pp. 132–33). The “fundamental species of capital” (economic, cultural, and social) tend to operate in all fields, whereas specialized forms exist that have value only within a particular field—for example, scientific capital within the academic field (Bourdieu 1991 [1982], pp. 124–25). The concept of field also provides entrée into Bourdieu's theory of history: Premodern societies did not have fields per se, as all action occurred in a single social space, whereas modern societies are characterized by a proliferation of fields. The relations among differentiated fields are governed by the modern state, characterized by Bourdieu as the possessor of a metacapital through which rules and hierarchies of value are established across fields. It is, in Bourdieu's (1989, p. 22) famous extension of Weber's formulation, the “holder of the monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence.”

The metaphor of field is reminiscent of physics. However, “social science is not a social physics” because people, unlike particles, can change the principles that structure a field (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, pp. 101–2). To theorize the relationship between structure and agent, Bourdieu (1991 [1982], p. 53) introduces the concept of habitus, a system of “durable, transposable dispositions.” Habitus is a slippery concept; we offer what we think to be its three essential characteristics. First, as

<sup>3</sup>For applications of the game metaphor in Bourdieu's sociology, see the analysis of the field of power as a “gaming space” in *The State Nobility* (Bourdieu 1998 [1989], pp. 264–78) and the explication of the relationship between habitus and field as a “feel for the game” in *The Logic of Practice* (Bourdieu 1990b [1980], pp. 66–69).

a disposition, habitus is less a set of conscious strategies and preferences than an embodied sense of the world and one's place within it—a tacit “feel for the game” (Bourdieu 1984 [1979], p. 114; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, pp. 128–35). Second, because it is internalized in individuals through early socialization in the family or primary group, habitus is durable (although never immutable). Third, habitus is transposable, in that people carry their dispositions with them as they enter new settings.

Bourdieu's work is frequently criticized on two grounds: for being too static and for being too specific to French society (e.g., Gartman 1991, Alexander 1995, Griswold 1998). According to the stasis critique, the interlocking concepts of field, capital, and habitus depict an airtight system in which structures produce individuals who in turn reproduce structures. Whereas Bourdieu did document a great deal of reproduction of inequality in his empirical work, he also argued that his theory can account for change. Mental structures and social structures rarely correspond perfectly. Under such circumstances, such as those observed by Bourdieu in revolutionary Algeria, a displacement of the habitus occurs: The everyday world is now problematic. This in turn may open “space for symbolic strategies aimed at exploiting the discrepancies between the nominal and the real” (Bourdieu 1984 [1979], p. 481). Even relatively stable fields can be destabilized by exposing the symbolic violence supporting existing power relations—for Bourdieu, this is a central task of sociological inquiry.

What of the criticism that Bourdieu is too French? Early critiques of Bourdieu argued that he attempted to universalize the particularities of French society and that his empirical findings could not be generalized to America. However, scholars are increasingly adopting a relativist rather than substantivist view of his theory. Bourdieu himself did not expect that his empirical findings on France could be directly reproduced elsewhere; he merely identified underlying

structures whose contents could differ cross-nationally:

Those who dismiss my analyses on account of their “Frenchness” (every time I visit the United States, there is somebody to tell me that “in the mass culture of America, taste does not differentiate between class positions”) fail to see that what is truly important in them is not so much the substantive results as the process through which they are obtained. “Theories” are research programs that call not for “theoretical debate” but for a practical utilization (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 77).

## BOURDIEU IN AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY JOURNALS

To see precisely how Bourdieu's research program has been utilized practically in American sociology since 1980, we indexed its influence on empirical research published in major journals. We compiled a database of all articles published between 1980 and 2004 in four sociology journals with consistently high impact on the field (according to the Social Science Citation Index). These were the *American Journal of Sociology*, the *American Sociological Review*, *Social Forces*, and *Social Problems*. It is possible that this selection of journals understates Bourdieu's influence, as his work may have entered American sociology via less mainstream journals (although a preliminary analysis yields little evidence of such a trend).<sup>4</sup> By concentrating on general journals in the

<sup>4</sup>This is certainly true of *Theory and Society*, to which Bourdieu was a frequent contributor. As early as 1980–1984, approximately 11% of articles in *Theory and Society* were citing Bourdieu. By 2000–2004, Bourdieu appeared in nearly one of every three articles in that journal. Conversely, we found scant reference to Bourdieu in two other journals that one might expect to have been early adopters. In *Qualitative Sociology*, only 3 out of 200 articles cited Bourdieu between 1983–1994. Citations have increased since then—with 5 articles (5%) from 1994–1999 and 8 articles (8%) from 2000–2004, a rate below that of the journals we analyze. Similarly, only 3 articles citing Bourdieu appeared in *Gender and Society* from 1987–1994, with 7 articles (4%) from 1995–1999, and 6 articles (3%) from 2000–2004.

discipline, we develop a barometer for Bourdieu's influence where it may be least expected, constituting a strong test of the mainstreaming of his theory.

From this database of 4040 articles, we extracted all that cited Bourdieu at least once, generating a total of 235 articles (5.8% of all articles published in the period).<sup>5</sup> We subsequently analyzed and coded them so as to track the following: the general diffusion of Bourdieu's ideas and concepts into the field over this time period and the level of engagement with Bourdieu by scholars, as well as trends in the main concepts used and specific works cited.

### Finding 1: Citations of Bourdieu Are Increasing

**Figure 1** documents a marked increase during our 25-year study period in the percentage of articles in the top four sociology journals that cite at least one writing of Bourdieu (numbers given are totals per five-year period). Whereas only 2% of all articles did so in the 1980–1984 period, 11% did so during the 2000–2004 period.

**Figure 2** displays this growth in terms of the total number of articles citing Bourdieu in each journal during each five-year period. The number more than doubled from 1984 to 1994 (from 16 to 40) and then doubled again from 1995–2004 (from 40 to 80). **Figure 2** also illustrates trends across journals. Whereas during the first 15 years of the study period, the majority (69%) of Bourdieu-citing articles appeared in *American Journal of Sociology* or *American Sociological Review*, during the past 10 years the distribution across journals has equalized consid-

erably. In sum, **Figures 1** and **2** demonstrate a steady diffusion of Bourdieu's writings into American sociology throughout the past 25 years.

### Finding 2: Increasingly Comprehensive Citations

All citations of course do not have equal significance. Having documented an increase in the total number and percentage of articles citing Bourdieu, we sought to discern precisely how Bourdieu's work was being put to use in these articles. To what extent has Bourdieu inspired a research program, in that sociologists draw on his work to formulate questions, design research, and interpret results? We classified each article according to a three-category schema to capture the degree to which the author engaged Bourdieu. At one extreme are what we call limited citations. These are articles that mention Bourdieu but briefly (typically only once, rarely in the text itself, and often in a string of related citations) and without any further elucidation of his theory or works. The following example, taken from the data-analysis section of an *American Journal of Sociology* article by Giordano et al. (2002, p. 1028), qualifies as a limited citation:

As we indicated in the previous examination of the lives of three specific women, the ways in which the respondents are positioned structurally varies and is a foundation upon which any change efforts will be constructed. However, the respondent's comments above make clear that this involves perceptual as well as objective elements (Bourdieu 1977).

We label this article's engagement limited because, although stating that one respondent's comments can be interpreted as generally in line with Bourdieu's framework, the authors neither mention Bourdieu again nor deploy any of his concepts specifically in their research design. Of course, in labeling an article a limited citation, we are not evaluating the article's overall quality. These citations

<sup>5</sup>Some of these articles were authored by scholars who might not be identified as American sociologists (e.g., economists, or sociologists based outside the United States). We nevertheless included them in the final sample insofar as articles published in these four journals are generally written for and read by scholars situated in the field of U.S. sociology.

signal awareness of the general significance of Bourdieu's research program, even if that program is not essential to the study's sociological contribution.

We label as an intermediate citation one that goes beyond a cursory reference, but stops short of a comprehensive engagement with Bourdieu's theory. An intermediate citation provides some discussion of specific writings, often engages Bourdieu at multiple points in the article, and may even structure a measure around one of his concepts. Consider Paxton's (1999) article "Is Social Capital Declining in the United States?", in which she develops several measures of social capital with which to test Putnam's "bowling alone" thesis. Although her results are striking in that they challenge conventional assumptions regarding the decline of trust and associations in America, what is important for our purposes is that one of her social capital measures is specifically derived from Bourdieu's conceptualization, a connection she dedicates several paragraphs to explaining.

We in turn label an article a comprehensive citation if it sustains a theoretical engagement with Bourdieu. Such articles derive their central research questions and/or hypotheses from his theory. Furthermore, they typically mention Bourdieu in the abstract and cite three or more of his works. A good example is the article "Forms of Capital and Social Structure in Cultural Fields: Examining Bourdieu's Social Topography" (Anheier et al. 1995). As signaled by both the title and the first sentence of the abstract—"This article tests one key assumption of Bourdieu's theory of culture fields"—this article is centered entirely on a prolonged dialogue with Bourdieu.

**Figure 3** presents our findings concerning the depth of citations. Overall we witness a fourfold increase in the raw number of articles with an intermediate or comprehensive engagement, from 7 in the initial period of our study (1980–1984) to 27 in the final period (2000–2004). The percentage of such articles, however, is decreasing, as limited citations proliferate. Whereas in the 1980–1994

period just over half of all citations were limited, by 1995–2004 approximately two-thirds were. This increase in limited engagements does not necessarily mean that citing Bourdieu is a purely ceremonial act. It may in fact be a sign that at least some of Bourdieu's core concepts have become so taken for granted within the sociological lexicon that they may serve as building blocks for larger arguments and therefore their elaboration is no longer needed in the context of a journal article.

### Finding 3: Progression of Bourdieu's Research Program

Having shown that Bourdieu is increasingly cited in American sociology journals, we next sought to discern whether these articles push back on Bourdieu by problematizing and/or developing his key concepts. We asked, in other words, whether Bourdieu's work has engendered a progressive research program in American sociology. As elaborated by Lakatos (1978), there are two types of research programs. A degenerative program is one in which troubling findings are assiduously avoided. In contrast, a research program is progressive to the extent that its core postulates and concepts are aggressively applied to new areas of empirical research, resulting in anomalies. These anomalies in turn represent challenges to which the researcher responds by extending the program through the refinement of core postulates or the specification of auxiliary ones.

We thus coded all 49 articles in our study that comprehensively engage Bourdieu according to whether they either use their empirical findings to extend Bourdieu's theory or use Bourdieu's theory to extend a subfield within sociology. Of these 49 articles, 25 (51%) explicitly attempt to extend Bourdieu's research program. A good example of this type of project is Erickson's (1996) article "Class, Culture and Connections." In it she applies Bourdieu's two-dimensional schema of social spaces (accounting for the distribution

**Table 1 Bourdieu's key concepts used over time**

|                                | 1980–1984       | 1985–1989 | 1990–1994 | 1995–1999 | 2000–2004 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Key concept</b>             |                 |           |           |           |           |
| Capital                        | 44 <sup>a</sup> | 45        | 55        | 40        | 32        |
| Field                          | 0               | 3         | 3         | 12        | 11        |
| Habitus                        | 13              | 14        | 15        | 3         | 8         |
| Symbolic power                 | 6               | 3         | 2         | 4         | 9         |
| None                           | 37              | 35        | 25        | 41        | 40        |
| <b>Key capital<sup>b</sup></b> |                 |           |           |           |           |
| Cultural                       | 86              | 92        | 86        | 79        | 46        |
| Social                         | 0               | 8         | 5         | 18        | 42        |
| Other                          | 14              | 0         | 9         | 3         | 12        |

<sup>a</sup>Percentages based on our analysis of four American sociology journals (*American Journal of Sociology*, *American Sociological Review*, *Social Forces*, and *Social Problems*).

<sup>b</sup>Key capital is listed as a percentage of those articles for which capital is the key concept.

of economic and cultural capitals) to the organization of a private security industry. Contra Bourdieu's well-known findings reported in *Distinction* on the importance of high-culture knowledge, Erickson discovers that the breadth of one's cultural knowledge along with one's networks are responsible for intrafirm patterns of hierarchy. These results, she claims, allow us to expand and modify Bourdieu's theory, by specifying the different sorts of capital that might structure a field (Erickson 1996, p. 247).

The remaining 24 comprehensive articles (49%) use Bourdieu's ideas to engage and extend an existing research program in American sociology. Ron (2000), for instance, interviewed Israeli soldiers regarding the use of repression during actions against Palestinians. By putting to use Bourdieu's distinction between rules and practices, Ron's article advances political sociology's understanding of state violence.

#### **Finding 4: Capital (Especially Cultural) Dominates**

Our final set of questions concerns trends in the use of specific concepts and the citation of specific works. For each article in the database, we coded which, if any, of Bourdieu's

four primary concepts (capital, field, habitus, and symbolic power) was most central to the analysis. We also checked whether each article employed all these concepts relationally, as Bourdieu intended—only 9% did so, and nearly all of these engaged Bourdieu's ideas in some depth.

**Table 1** demonstrates that capital is and has been the most popular concept. Capital was cited by 45% of all articles in our analysis, and in each period it prevailed over the second most frequently cited concept by at least a three-to-one ratio. Capital's popularity among researchers, however, seems to have declined over the past ten years, dropping from a high of 55% of cites in the 1990–1994 period to just 32% in the 2000–2004 period. The same holds for habitus, which was the second most frequently used concept from 1980 to 1994, but whose use has since declined. The field concept, in contrast, has slowly worked its way into American sociology. Although it was cited only rarely in the first 15 years of our study, it now is cited in approximately 10% of articles.

Considering the importance of the capital concept to research published in U.S. sociology journals, we investigated further which species of capital was the primary focus of these articles. Overall, 74% of these articles



centered on cultural capital and 18% on social capital. There appears, however, to be an ongoing dramatic shift in the relative popularity of these two capitals. In 1980–1984, 86% of articles that employed capital as the core concept concentrated on cultural capital (undoubtedly reflecting the popularity at this time of Bourdieu’s work on education, buoyed later by the popularity of *Distinction*), while none focused on social capital. By 2000–2004, cultural capital’s share had declined to 46%, while social capital’s had risen to 42%. This trend can likely be accounted for by the increasing interest in social capital across several subfields: social network analysis, race/immigration, and political sociology.

To understand these changing patterns, we examined trends in the citations of specific works. **Figure 4** presents these data for all writings that were cited by at least 10% of the articles in any time period. We see, first, a sharp decline in citations of Bourdieu’s main book on education, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977). Cited by approximately 40% of articles in the 1980s, it is now cited by only approximately 10%. Citations of the two Practice books also dropped in the early 1990s, although they have since regained their place as the second most frequently cited works. By far the most influential work over the past 15 years, however, is *Distinction*, which during its peak period of 1990–1994 was cited by nearly 60% of all articles. In sum, Bourdieu’s cultural capital—especially as elaborated in *Distinction*—remains the key influence on research in American sociology journals. These trends may be attributed in part to the timing of the translation of Bourdieu’s works into English. The books that appeared earliest have experienced a dip in popularity as translations of additional works appear. Time will tell whether more recently translated works such as *The State Nobility* and *The Social Structure of the Economy* will gain a broad audience, or whether reference to Bourdieu will be mostly limited to a few canonical texts.

## FOUR BOOKS EXTENDING AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY

We now turn from a quantitative study of citation patterns to a qualitative analysis of how Bourdieu has been put to use in recent book-length studies. We chose four monographs to examine in detail based on the following four criteria: First, the author is a prominent scholar in a particular sociological subfield; second, he or she is based at an American university; third, the monograph incorporates at least one of Bourdieu’s major concepts into its research design; and fourth, it has been subsequently judged as an important text in the subfield. They are Eyal et al.’s (1999) *Making Capitalism Without Capitalists*, on forms of capital in political sociology; Fligstein’s (2002) *The Architecture of Markets*, on fields in economic sociology; Lamont’s (1994) *Money, Morals and Manners*, on symbolic power in the sociology of culture; and Wacquant’s (2004) *Body and Soul*, on habitus in urban sociology. These books also employ a diverse range of research methods, including survey analysis, interviewing, comparative historical, and ethnography. For each of the four books we ask the following questions: What role do Bourdieu’s concepts play in the project’s research design? How do the authors use Bourdieu’s ideas to advance key debates in the subfield? And how are the findings used to extend Bourdieu’s research program?

### Capital and Political Sociology

In their book *Making Capitalism Without Capitalists*, Eyal et al. (1999) pose a puzzle: How did capitalism emerge in postcommunist Central Europe without the formation of a propertied bourgeoisie? Some predicted that communist elites would become a bourgeois class by turning state resources into their own private wealth. However, Eyal et al.’s survey evidence in Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic reveals divergent patterns of mobility among fractions of the Soviet elite. They employ Bourdieu’s concept of capital to

describe the winners and losers in the field of power. Holders of Soviet political capital (i.e., party bureaucrats) and economic capital (i.e., informal entrepreneurs) failed to adjust to new conditions, whereas the holders of cultural capital used knowledge rather than property to foster a new variety of capitalism (Eyal et al. 1999, p. 74).

What allowed cultural elites to dominate the economic and political fields after socialism? The hybrid property forms that emerged during the transition period created an opening for new types of strategies for controlling assets without formally owning them (Stark & Bruszt 1998). Cultural capital provided certain elites with not simply knowledge on how to manage an economy, but the ability to stake symbolic claims to legitimate the new order. In tracing elite power struggles, Eyal et al. (1999) show how a “governmentality of managerialism”—in Foucault’s sense of the production of truth claims as a means to power (cf. Eyal 2003)—emerged via an uneasy alliance between communist technocrats and dissident intellectuals. Neoliberal technologies such as monetarism appealed to the managerial ethos of technocrats, whereas dissidents embraced the ideology of civil society. This alliance grafted dissident rituals of sacrifice, purification, and confession of communist sins onto neoliberal ideologies that called for collective belt-tightening, personal responsibility, and fiscal austerity.

Eyal et al. (1999) deploy Bourdieu to advance political sociology in two ways: They develop a framework for understanding intralite power struggles, and they merge Bourdieu and Weber to propose a new schema for classifying social systems. The book’s emphasis on elites is both a strength and a source of controversy. Eyal et al. follow Bourdieu (1984 [1979], pp. 176, 421) in analyzing the “dominant and dominated fractions of the dominant class,” thus moving beyond a simple story of elites versus masses. Having found that cultural capital is ascendant in Central Europe, the authors highlight the crucial role

of control over symbolic meanings in political power struggles. In their words, “We see the essence of ‘cultural capital’ not as the appropriation of ‘surplus-value’ but as the exercise of symbolic domination” (Eyal et al. 1999, p. 236).

A sophisticated treatment of postcommunist elites, the book ignores the lower classes because “capitalism is being made from above” (Eyal et al. 1999, p. 160). This decision may appear to reflect Bourdieu’s lead: In defining the lower classes in terms of what they lack (capital), Bourdieu has more to say about struggle among elites than about variation within other classes (Crane 2000, p. 27). In a review of *Making Capitalism Without Capitalists*, Burawoy (2001, pp. 1103, 1112) points out that Bourdieu, in analyzing “the reproduction and mystification of class relations,” does present extensive evidence about the working classes. Eyal et al. (2001, p. 1122) respond that elites simply matter more in Central Europe, where there is no collective working class, but rather a “demobilized, disorganized mass of workers.” Nevertheless, whether the lower classes recognize the cultural elite and their capitalist project as legitimate is an important question, unanswered in *Making Capitalism Without Capitalists*.

This study of the transition to capitalism in Central Europe motivates a broad theoretical agenda: to reconstruct Weber’s theory of history via Bourdieu’s theory of social structure. Eyal et al. (1999) map Weber’s classification of stratification orders onto Bourdieu’s forms of capital: Social capital dominates societies stratified by rank (status), whereas economic capital is ascendant in class societies. They historicize these concepts by asking what forms of capital dominate at various times, leading them to rethink neo-Weberian theories of both socialism and capitalism. Many analysts of socialism characterize Soviet societies as having a neotraditional status order, in contrast to the modern class order of capitalism (Jowitt 1992). However, a status order can be modern: In the Soviet case it was

institutionalized as political capital and founded on the substantive rationality of the party-state (Eyal et al. 1999, pp. 66–67). Similarly, contra both Weber and Marx, some of the chief institutions of capitalism—i.e., markets for commodities, labor, and capital—can exist without a propertied bourgeoisie. This can still be considered capitalism if “we define the bourgeoisie not ‘structurally,’ by its position in the relations of production, but ‘historically,’ as the class whose historical project is to modernize society” (Eyal et al. 1999, p. 60). This “forms of capital” approach to stratification systems provides a more flexible classification schema that accommodates different types of modernity as well as different varieties of capitalism.

*Making Capitalism Without Capitalists* extends Bourdieu’s theory by applying his conceptual framework to a new historical context, and in so doing develops a novel typology for the comparative study of capitalism. Eyal et al. (1999) apply Bourdieu’s concept of trajectory adjustment, originally developed to account for social mobility in more stable societies, to show how his conceptual apparatus can be applied to the study of transformation (see Eyal 2003 for a more extended development of this idea). The focus on Eastern Europe also reveals a novel potential for cultural capital to predominate in the field of power, a possibility not considered by Bourdieu (1984 [1979], p. 291), who characterized cultural capital as “the dominated principle of domination.” Nevertheless, Eyal et al. conclude that the current ascendance of cultural capital in Central Europe is unlikely to last long. Like charismatic authority, rule by cultural capital must be recognized to be effective. Regime stability depends on the often transitory recognition by other actors of the “the validity of their truth claims, or the usefulness of their knowledge” (Eyal et al. 1999, p. 68). In the case of postcommunism, those claims support the eventual transition to a class society in which economic capital is ascendant.

## Fields and Economic Sociology

*The Architecture of Markets* is Fligstein’s (2002) attempt to outline a conceptual apparatus for economic sociology. The first part of the book delineates his main concepts, the most important of which for our purposes is the idea of organizational fields. Fligstein’s (2002, p. 29) “theory of fields assumes that actors try to produce a ‘local’ stable world where the dominant actors produce meanings that allow them to reproduce their advantage.” Economic fields specifically are stabilized through four sets of rules: property rights defining who may legitimately be a player; governance structures specifying the rules these actors must obey; rules of exchange of various resources; and conceptions of control, essentially the commonsense strategies of field actors. The second part of the book then uses the field concept to illuminate several empirical topics: why countries differ in their dominant employment systems, the evolution of corporate management styles in the United States, and the dynamics of globalization.

How does Fligstein’s use of the field concept advance current debates on the organization of capitalist economies? First, it avoids the pitfalls associated with rational-choice accounts, which “use interests as the main explanatory variable” for understanding economic action (Fligstein 2002, p. 30). Such interests are typically taken to be universal: the maximization of a set of preferences such as happiness or, in the context of firms, profits. Yet field theory problematizes the notion of invariant interests instead inquiring how actors conceptualize their interests in the first place (Guillen 2003, Martin 2003). Nor is field theory congruent with attempts to rescue rational choice theory through accounts of bounded rationality or managerial satisficing (Simon 1957), through which variations in decision making are explained through information constraints. Fligstein (1990) instead traces managers’ conceptions of control to their trainings and career trajectories. Action in the economic field, in short, is reasonable

rather than rational (Bourdieu 2005 [2000], p. 2).

Second, the field concept avoids the mistake of treating markets as either dynamic and constantly in flux or stable and durable. On one hand, both economic and Marxist perspectives portray the ideal-typical capitalist economy as a competitive free market in which firms struggle to maximize profits. In such accounts, the strategies through which firms compete—e.g., by suppressing workers' wages or undercutting competitors' prices—undermine stability and cause regular episodes of market destruction. The economic sociology of fields argues "in contradiction to theories of competitive markets, [that] many markets have complex and *stable social structures*" (Fligstein 2002, p. 7; emphasis added). Rather than an anarchic market, an economic field is characterized by implicit understandings about how competition is handled, what roles various firms have in the market, and the general hierarchy of firms (Carroll & Swaminathan 2000, White 2002).

On the other hand, some have argued that the field concept as it is used by Fligstein and Bourdieu overstates the durability of market arrangements, thus losing sight of the conflict and dynamism that do occur in the economy (Roy 2004). Others point out, however, that field theory specifies both the conditions under which market structures become open to transformation, as well as the strategies used by actors at these moments to reshape these structures (Krippner 2001). Although stable fields are vertically stratified, they are also open to revolutions from below in which subordinate firms or actors from outside the field challenge the existent hierarchy of producers. At these moments the prevailing governance structures and conceptions of control are rendered problematic. During such field crises, what is at stake is not simply the distribution of resources, but the very rules by which the field will operate. And although Fligstein (2002, pp. 76–77) does not use Bourdieu's terminology exactly, he does specify the various forms of capital—coalitions, framing strategies, po-

litical opportunities—mobilized by actors in incipient or transitional economic fields.

The third way in which the field concept contributes to economic sociology is by deepening accepted understandings of globalization, most notably by theorizing the political dimension of the process. Both Bourdieu and Fligstein argue that states are essential for making and maintaining market fields. In Bourdieu's (2005 [2000], p. 223) only extended treatise on the economic field, *Social Structures of the Economy*, he argues that, "historically, the economic field was constructed within the framework of the national state." Fligstein (2002, p. 8), drawing on Polanyi (1957), also emphasizes the false antimony between free markets and state regulation that neoliberal economics takes for granted. By bringing the state back in, field theory refutes those who posit an inevitable move toward the American model of minimal state regulation, maximum corporate flexibility, and a shareholder value conception of control (Strange 1996). Hence we see a convergence in their accounts of globalization:

The "global market" is a political creation . . . . [W]hat is universally proposed and imposed as the norm of all rational economic practices is, in reality, the universalization of the particular characteristics of an economy embedded in a particular history and social structure—those of the United States (Bourdieu 2005 [2000], pp. 225–26).

[G]lobalization and shareholder value have become united . . . . [S]hareholder value means that firms should maximize profits for owners, and governments should just stay out of it. This ideology is a generalization about the American experience (Fligstein 2002, p. 221).

The dynamics of the incipient global economic field, in both of these accounts, derive less from inherent efficiencies of U.S.-style capitalism than from the deployment by American firms and right-leaning politicians of their material and symbolic capital to

construct field rules that cement their standing as dominant actors.

To conclude we consider two important ways in which Fligstein's and Bourdieu's accounts diverge: regarding consumers and institutions. Fligstein (2002) excises consumers from his story, concerned as he is to refute economic theories of market demand as structuring production fields. Producer identities, in most economic sociology accounts, derive primarily from horizontal ties with other producers. Bourdieu (2005 [2000], p. 19; 1984 [1979]; 1990c [1965]), however, argues that the "particular characteristic of the product," especially its symbolic meaning for consumers, exerts an independent effect on the structure of suppliers. The field of house builders in France is thus characterized by a divide between producers of traditional craftsmen houses and producers of prefabricated modern houses. It would in our opinion be an interesting line of research to discern whether the field formation projects that Fligstein treats as generic do in fact vary across industrial sectors, depending on the meaning of the product to consumers themselves.

The second point of divergence relates to the greater weight given by Fligstein (2002, p. 39) to the institutional context or policy domain in which field struggles take place. For instance, even in state systems in which dominant firms have captured the executive and legislative branches, field challengers can mount attacks within the legal domain. Some, however, have argued that in Bourdieu's writings we often find a lacuna between abstract field struggles and concrete practices within fields (Swartz 1997, p. 293; Lareau 2003, p. 277). A notable exception is the aforementioned study of housing policy, in which we see how policy decisions were made by bureaucrats and legitimated via a formally independent commission of inquiry. Paying attention to how action plays out in concrete institutional locations such as policy domains can but give flesh to the conceptual foundations of field theory (Sallaz 2006).

## Symbolic Power and Cultural Sociology

In *Money, Morals and Manners*, Lamont (1994) asks how upper-middle-class white men in the United States and France draw "symbolic boundaries" to define themselves and classify others. A follow-up book, *The Dignity of Working Men*, extends the study to working-class and nonwhite men in both countries (Lamont 2000). Symbolic boundaries, she argues, support stratification systems to the extent that they facilitate exclusion and hierarchy. Lamont (1994, p. 5) develops this concept through an extended engagement with Bourdieu—in her own words, the study "builds directly on Bourdieu's apparatus. Indeed, it adopts the Bourdieuan view that shared cultural style contributes to class reproduction."

Lamont (1994) identifies three modes of symbolic exclusion in her respondents' discourses: cultural boundaries drawn on the basis of education and refined tastes; socioeconomic boundaries rooted in wealth, power, occupation, and race; and moral boundaries valuing qualities such as integrity, work ethic, and egalitarianism. Lamont classifies her respondents according to the salience of these three types of boundaries and finds that cultural boundaries are much less salient than socioeconomic and moral boundaries in the United States, whereas the opposite holds for France. This difference is attributed to variation in both structural conditions (i.e., education and welfare systems, job security, and mobility patterns) and cultural repertoires (e.g., intellectual traditions of individualism versus humanism).

Prior to Lamont, Bourdieu-influenced cultural sociology consisted mostly of survey research on the association between cultural capital and highbrow taste to test whether Bourdieu's findings for France hold true for the United States (e.g., DiMaggio 1982, Peterson & Kern 1996, Bryson 1996; see Holt 1997 for a review). Lamont (1994) argues that survey researchers predefine what

counts as status markers through the closed format of their questions. She turns to qualitative methods—specifically to in-depth interviews—to inquire inductively into how people actually draw symbolic boundaries. In the process, she discovers new types of boundary work (Lamont 1994, p. 3). Class distinctions in the United States, she finds, are drawn primarily by moral discourses, as opposed to the cultural boundary work that predominates in France. Bourdieu (1984 [1979], pp. 41, 48) viewed such moral opprobrium as predominant among the working classes, whose tastes refer “explicitly to norms of morality or agreeableness in all of their judgments” (cf. Lamont 1994, p. 277). In finding that the upper classes also employ explicitly moral discourses in drawing boundaries, Lamont has inspired greater attention to morality in recent studies of culture and inequality (e.g., Southerton 2002).

Just as Lamont brings a renewed focus on class into the study of culture, she also brings culture into the study of stratification by providing qualitative evidence on the “lived experience of class” (Thompson 1963). Although ethnographers have long studied working-class culture from the perspective of the shop floor, relatively few qualitative studies explore the cultural experience of class in other settings [Halle’s (1993) study of home interiors and Lareau’s (2003) study of child-rearing practices are exceptions]. Lamont’s (1994, 2000) two volumes follow Bourdieu in drawing attention to the symbolic dimension of class inequality and reproduction.

This work also demonstrates the analytical utility of cross-national comparisons, which remain rare in sociological studies of culture. Lamont may not have noticed moral and socioeconomic boundaries in France without first studying them in the United States, where they are more apparent. These comparative findings lead her to question and ultimately reject Bourdieu’s research program. In her view, the concept of cultural capital is flawed because it leads analysts to focus exclusively on one type of symbolic boundary. She

thus proposes to replace Bourdieu’s forms of capital with her typology of symbolic boundaries. Similarly, she dispenses with the concept of field as suggesting a zero-sum game with fixed rules (Lamont 1994, p. 183). Boundary work only leads to class reproduction to the extent that a social consensus exists on the signals of high status, a state of affairs that analysts should investigate rather than presume (Lamont 1994, pp. 177–78).

Rather than extending Bourdieu, Lamont (1994, 2000) moves beyond him and ultimately leaves him behind (he is scarcely mentioned in *The Dignity of Working Men*). Thus sociologists appear to be faced with a choice of theories for relating culture and inequality: Lamont’s symbolic boundaries versus Bourdieu’s forms of capital. However, we think the two frameworks can be synthesized by returning to Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic power, which Lamont does not discuss. Bourdieu (1991 [1982], p. 105) defines symbolic power as control over “the perception which social agents have of the social world.” We view symbolic boundary work as a bid for a form of symbolic power, the power to define the “criteria which are used to evaluate status,” which Lamont (1994, p. 5) defines as the purpose of boundary work. Although Bourdieu’s work on class culture focuses empirically on the legitimation of cultural capital, the theory can accommodate other types of boundary work. The effects of boundary work on legitimation are an empirical question, and Lamont (1994, p. 179) calls for more observational studies to illustrate how boundary work is “translated into social profits,” which is difficult to assess from interviews alone. Future scholars could profitably extend both her work and that of Bourdieu through ethnographic research on boundary work in practice.

## Habitus and Urban Ethnography

In *Body and Soul*, Wacquant (2004) uses participant observation data collected while he was a graduate student at the University of

Chicago to describe daily life in an African-American boxing gym situated in the city's impoverished south side. Although Wacquant (2004) argues both that the process of becoming a boxer entails learning how to manage one's "bodily capital" (p. 127) and that the larger world of prizefighting can be conceptualized as a "pugilistic field" (p. 141), the bulk of his ethnographic data is mobilized toward describing the genesis and functioning of the habitus of this sporting world. The pugilistic habitus is that of "a virtual punching machine, but an intelligent and creative machine capable of self-regulation while innovating within a fixed and relatively restricted panoply of moves as an instantaneous function of the actions of the opponent" (Wacquant 2004, p. 95). The book itself follows Wacquant's own acquisition of the pugilistic habitus, culminating with an appearance in the Chicago Golden Gloves tournament. Insofar as the habitus concept proves useful for describing and explaining the corporal dimension of experience, *Body and Soul* becomes an object lesson for bringing the body into sociological research.

How does Wacquant's (2004) study advance the subfield of urban sociology? The book is firmly embedded within the tradition of urban sociology as practiced by the first and second Chicago schools (Abbott 1999). Like classic studies of the city, it avoids the temptation to treat the urban ghetto as a disorganized social world, instead elucidating the underlying principles that produce regularity and order. And like the Chicago school's symbolic interactionist tradition, *Body and Soul* takes seriously the point of view of its subjects, especially how they make sense of their daily lifeworlds (Hughes 1971). Yet by putting to use the concept of habitus, Wacquant is able to move beyond the Chicago school in three ways.

First, *Body and Soul* situates the worldview of the urban dweller within the larger social structure. In classic accounts, the urban slum occupied a transition zone within the city (Park & Burgess 1925). These natural ar-

reas were products of processes beyond anyone's control, and their inhabitants were typically immigrants unsocialized into the mores of American society (Downes & Rock 1998, p. 71). Habitus, however, serves as a prophylactic against such apolitical accounts. For insofar as the habitus consists of dispositions that are in essence internalized social structures, it can never be analyzed as cut off from the outside world. Nor can shifts in the larger environment be attributed to natural forces. Wacquant (2004) thus moves out from the gym and its boxers to document the workings of the surrounding ghetto. He describes at length the political-economic processes—the disappearance of work, the city's failed urban renewal projects, the militarization of street gangs—precipitating in these otherwise formidable young men a sense of "claustrophobia" (Wacquant 2004, p. 26) that both draws them into and ties them to the gym.

Second, habitus restores a picture of the social actor as embedded in history. The Chicago school of ethnography, especially as represented by the symbolic interactionist tradition, remained mired in an eternal present (Bourdieu 1989, p. 21). It treated local interaction orders as worlds unto themselves whose dynamics could be analyzed without regard to participants' life trajectories or the "biography of the occasion" (Drew & Wootton 1988, p. 4). In contrast, Wacquant's (2004) analysis reveals how the past lives on in the present. He demonstrates that it is young men with roots in the stable working class who can most readily adopt the pugilistic habitus (Wacquant 2004, pp. 44–46). For them the rigor and discipline required of the craft invoke memories of an affluent black Chicago in which their fathers held blue-collar jobs. This analysis, we may note, mirrors that of Bourdieu's (1979 [1977]) own study of colonial Algeria. Bourdieu documented the struggles of peasants, equipped with a traditional habitus forged in a precapitalist economy of symbolic honor, thrust into a market society. Wacquant describes the converse: the travails of an urban proletariat cast out of the modern labor

market. The dispositions necessary to survive the Fordist factory live on in the progeny of the industrial proletariat, even as they navigate a deindustrialized urban wasteland.

Third, the habitus concept transcends the polarization typical of current scholarly and media accounts depicting the urban poor as either a depraved underclass trapped in a culture of poverty (Jones & Luo 1999) or noble creatures struggling to “live in accordance with standards of ‘moral’ worth” (Duneier 1999, p. 341). By studying boxers, Wacquant (2004) is able to make this point quite clearly. Like the ghetto itself, the boxing ring is equated in the popular imagination with fury and chaos; it is a space where punches and blood fly wildly. But the gym for its denizens is actually quite prosaic, an “island of order and virtue” within the ghetto (Wacquant 2004, p. 17; see also Geurts 2005). Here they engage in camaraderie with fellow boxers, learn valuable life lessons from the beloved coach DeeDee, and inject excitement into an otherwise dreary existence. Indeed, the pugilistic habitus is a complex of physical dispositions resonant with other value spheres. The gym provides a surrogate family; putting one’s time in mimics the time cycle of industrial work, whereas the devotion required of the craft (e.g., resisting the temptations of sex and sweets) mirrors that of a religious discipline.

How could Wacquant’s (2004) study extend Bourdieu’s research program? *Body and Soul* remains faithful to Bourdieu’s concepts and ideas; we see the major contribution as that of deploying the concept of habitus as a methodological tool for producing field data. Though he pronounced a “kinship and a solidarity” with those who “put their noses to the ground” (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992), Bourdieu’s writings expressed grave doubt about ethnography. He labeled it a “primitive participation,” a fallacy of scholastic reasoning (Bourdieu 1990b [1980], p. 14). Researchers, he claimed, can never truly see the world from their subjects’ point of view, insofar as they cannot overcome their *skhole*, the aloofness created by their distance from practical neces-

sity. Wacquant, as Bourdieu’s student, was undoubtedly aware of his mentor’s admonitions. He goes to great lengths to demonstrate both that he was reflexive about his position as a researcher and that he was able to overcome this position—through rigorous apprenticeship—to gain acceptance from other boxers. Indeed, Wacquant claims to have been so seduced by the taste and ache of action that he contemplated leaving the academy to pursue a boxing career. While it is debatable whether Wacquant did overcome the social and economic gulfs separating him from his subjects, especially those for whom the ring represented the one and only chance to escape poverty (Fine 2004, Krueger & SaintOnge 2005), the book stands as an exemplar of how concepts such as field, habitus, and capital can be put to use in ethnographic research.

## CONCLUSION

To document the influence of Bourdieu on the practice of research in American sociology over the past two-and-a-half decades, we have deployed methods both quantitative (an empirical study of citation trends in major sociology journals) and qualitative (focused exegesis of four monographs). To conclude this review article, we offer three general observations to conjoin the preceding two sections. In the process, we suggest future directions in Bourdieu-inspired research.

First, our study of citation patterns in journal articles shows conclusively that the recent surge of interest in Bourdieu’s work is not merely a fad, nor is it a short-lived homage following his passing in 2002. Today over 10% of all articles published in the four leading sociology journals cite Bourdieu. Although our data do not permit us to make direct comparisons of the relative popularity of Bourdieu vis-à-vis other social theorists over this time period, they do demonstrate a steady increase in the influence of Bourdieu’s theory since at least 1980.

We decided to focus on the four most influential sociology journals insofar as they



could serve as barometers with which to gauge the increasing presence of Bourdieu in the mainstream or core of the discipline. Although well-suited for the purpose of a brief review article, this dataset does not permit insight into the mechanisms of diffusion of Bourdieu's theory into U.S. sociology conceptualized as a Bourdieuian field. This sort of project would entail documenting not just citation patterns but also the institutional locations and biographical trajectories of citing authors. Bourdieu's (1988 [1984]) own study of French sociology and its place in the larger academic field, *Homo Academicus*, would suggest as a preliminary hypothesis that early adopters were scholars seeking to challenge the prevailing status hierarchy of the field. We would here expect to find earlier and more frequent citations in peripheral journals, similarly, with articles utilizing peripheral methods (participant observation, feminist methods, etc.). An alternative hypothesis is that agents rich in academic capital (i.e., those with PhDs from high-status departments or universities) were most predisposed to attempt the risky tactic of citing the then-outsider Bourdieu. Adjudication between these two hypotheses must await a future, more thorough study of American sociology as a Bourdieuian field. Such a project could also inform the new sociology of ideas, which examines the concrete processes by which ideas diffuse across boundaries—national, disciplinary, and otherwise (Camic & Gross 2001, Vaughan 2006).

Second, as shown by both our quantitative analysis of citation patterns and our case studies of books, Bourdieu's writings are not being cited in a strictly ceremonious manner. On the contrary, Bourdieu's core theoretical concepts are increasingly used to design empirical research and to advance debates in core sociological subfields. Besides the four fields discussed herein (sociology of culture, economic sociology, urban sociology, and political sociology), recent work has used Bourdieu's concepts to advance debates in the sociology of ethnicity and na-

tionalism (e.g., Brubaker 2004), media studies (e.g., Benson & Neveu 2005), education (Carter 2005), the family (Lareau 2003), state formation (Loveman 2005), and many other fields. We would, however, like to point out a relative dearth of work from a Bourdieuian perspective in the sociology of gender (however, see Fodor 2003, Adkins & Skeggs 2004, Martin 2005, Lizardo 2006). All the books reviewed for this article, for instance, focused mainly on the experiences of men [Wacquant (2004) on urban boxers, Lamont (1994) on boundary work by French and American men, Eyal et al. (1999) and Fligstein (2002) on mostly male political and economic elites]. Considering that Bourdieu (2001 [1998]) held gender inequality to be the most intractable and pernicious form of domination, this represents a subfield in which new research could further advance a Bourdieuian research program.

Third, the works reviewed herein demonstrate the dynamism of Bourdieu's theory. While many have argued that Bourdieu's concepts and findings—especially regarding the importance of cultural capital and distinction—are applicable only to contemporary French society, we have shown that they are in fact transposable to the American case and other countries as well. The reviewed works, by applying Bourdieu's concept to dynamic worlds of social change, also put to rest the accusation that he is simply a reproduction theorist (cf. Gorski 2006). Eyal et al. (1999), for example, use the notion of capital portfolios to understand the transition from socialism to capitalism, whereas Fligstein (2002) theorizes the conditions under which fields can be transformed. Finally, we have shown that Bourdieu's conceptual oeuvre has not been imported unreflexively into the United States, but rather has been treated as a progressive research program. In other words, researchers have aggressively applied his concepts to new empirical domains, generating anomalies that can only be resolved by refining these concepts and enriching social science generally.

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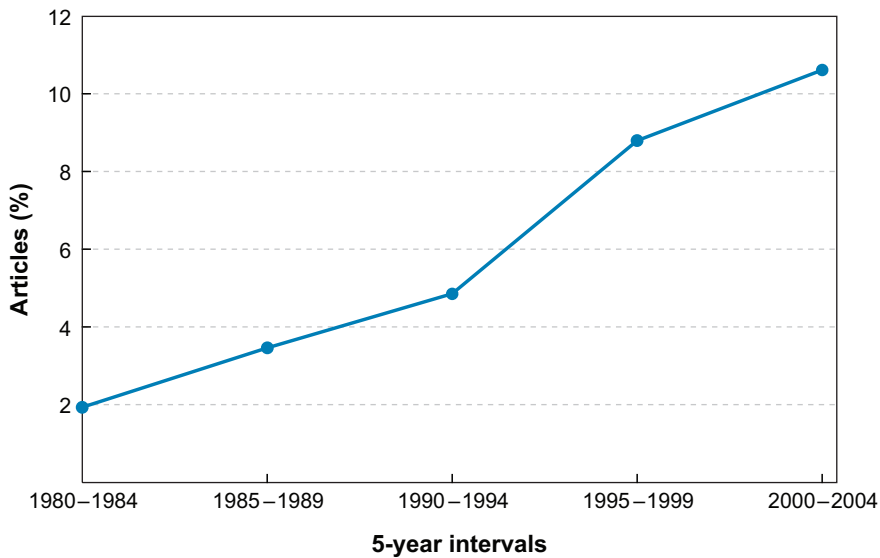
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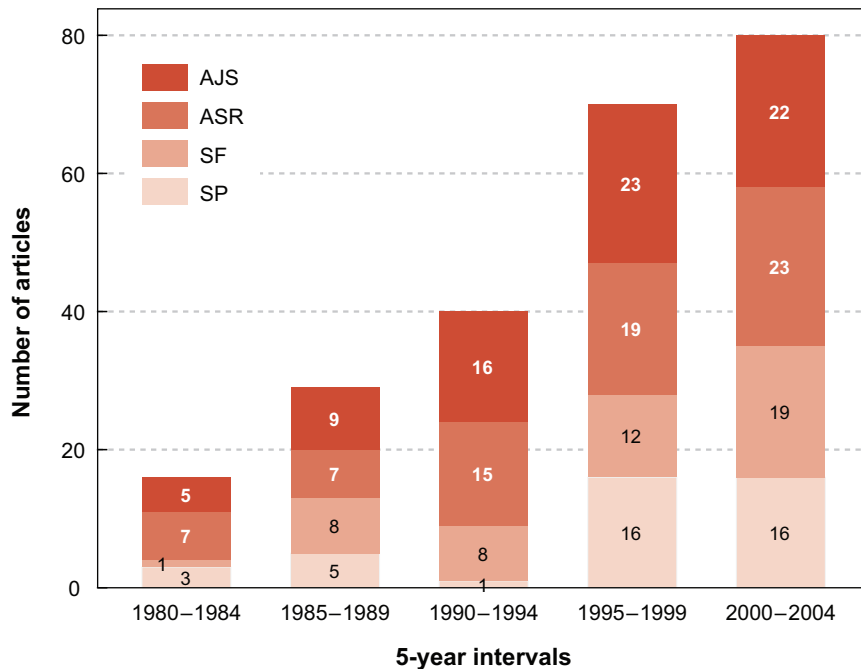
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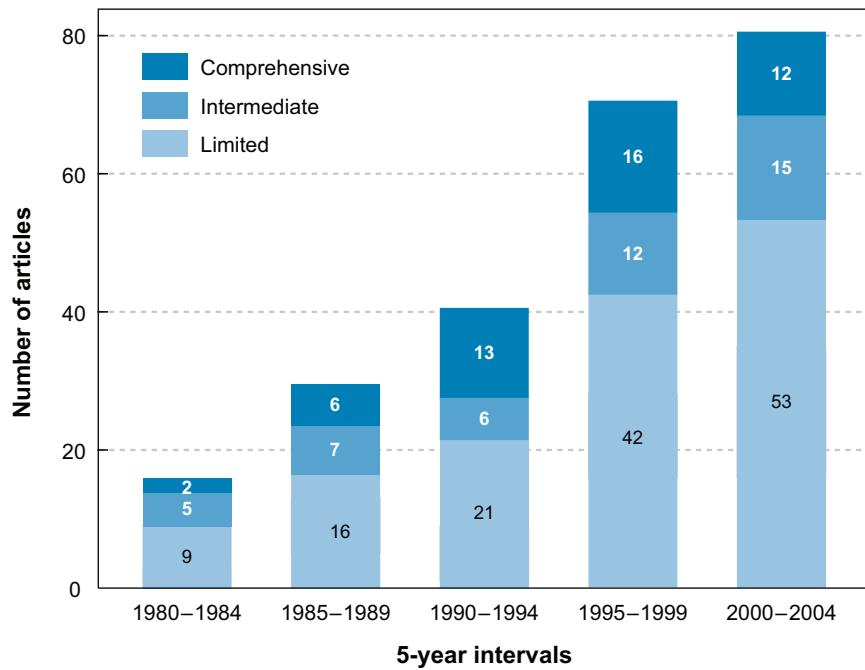
**Figure 1**

Percent of articles in top sociology journals citing Bourdieu.

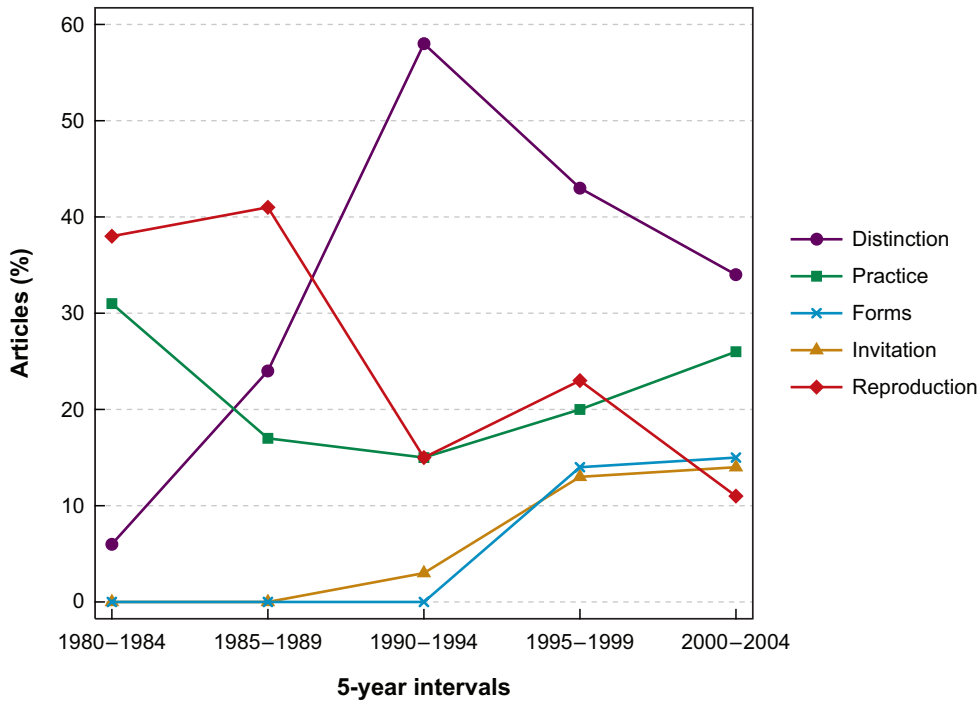


**Figure 2**

Number of articles citing Bourdieu by time period and journal (AJS, *American Journal of Sociology*; ASR, *American Sociological Review*; SF, *Social Forces*; SP, *Social Problems*).



**Figure 3**  
Depth of citations by time period.



**Figure 4**

Percent of articles citing key works (“Distinction” refers to the book by the same name; “Practice” refers to either of the books *Outline of a Theory of Practice* or *The Logic of Practice*, which we group together because so much of their content overlaps; “Invitation” refers to *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*; “Forms” refers to the 1986 article, “Forms of Capital”; and “Reproduction” refers to the book *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*).





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