

Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews

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Fighting for the Farm : Rural America Transformed

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Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews 2004 33: 213

DOI: 10.1177/009430610403300247

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://csx.sagepub.com/content/33/2/213.citation>

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experienced by so many of its residents, a symbolic hell. Taylor shows that, for many, the actual experience lies somewhere in-between these two polemics, just as the reality of Harlem features classic sociological dynamics of insiders versus outsiders, rich and poor, and black and white.

The significance is found in how these dynamics have interacted with historical events. For instance, Taylor discusses how the building of the New York State Office Building at 125th Street and 7th Avenue in 1969 set the stage for later conflicts within the community. The building reflected the interests of the state in terms of urban redevelopment, but the state was perceived within the community as an outsider force, representative of white America and of capital. The incident also established patterns (still found today) wherein the interests involved in Harlem's preservation and development were different between middle class blacks, who tended to stress the historic significance of the neighborhood and the need for middle class housing, and poorer blacks who tended to stress employment and services. These patterns were found and even magnified during the following decades as Harlem was subject to increasing gentrification. This gentrification was due, in part, to the historic significance of the neighborhood.

Numerous interview quotes point to the contradictions of race and class in this historic community, painting a picture of a more diverse black experience than is commonly portrayed. As many black gentrifiers moved into the neighborhood seeking racial solidarity, they were frequently met with a native community that perceived them as outsiders. In addition, many of the new residents were of higher socioeconomic status, a group Taylor calls the "black gentry." These class differences have forced long-time residents to question the neighborhood's role as a black Mecca, seeking instead a more stable Harlem responsive primarily to its own residents. For instance, while much of the native population of Harlem considered themselves to be the true community, many of those who moved to the area as part of gentrification perceived themselves as urban homesteaders who returned to Harlem in order to restore order and cleanliness. Needless to say, this was not met by many lifelong residents with the most endearing sympathies.

The central chapters of this book are devoted to showing how race, social class, and gentrification interact to create an urban experience that both plays down and manages such difference.

It is these dynamics of rich and poor, insider and outsider that influence the way in which people react to external threats to the community. The politics, both internal and external to the community, economic and community development strategies, and the intersection of race and class are all well illustrated.

Harlem Between Heaven and Hell is good study of race, class, and gentrification, in perhaps the most important African American neighborhood in the United States. Much of what Taylor discusses is basic sociology, and the book is particularly strong for those looking for a book that adequately addresses the experience of blacks living in the inner city. For the seasoned reader of urban ethnography, there is, admittedly, little that is new to the literature. If there is a major fault, it is that the emphasis on the African American experience in Harlem means that the experience of other racial and ethnic groups has been somewhat marginalized. The major strengths of the book are found in the blending of art and ethnography as Taylor highlights the significance of artistic expression for the Harlem phenomenon and quotes readily from her many interviews. And of course, the story itself is important reading for anyone interested in the experience of African Americans in New York City.

Fighting for the Farm: Rural America Transformed, edited by **Jane Adams**. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003. 338 pp. \$55.00 cloth. ISBN: 0-8122-3695-5. \$22.50 paper. ISBN: 0-8122-1830-2.

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All economic sectors changed dramatically in the last century as a result of globalization, consolidation, and vertical integration. The agricultural sectors in Canada and the United States are no exception, despite the persistence of petty commodity producers. As with other sectors, the changes that took place

were hugely impacted by state interventions. Those interventions primarily favored large and mobile economic interests. Yet there were periods when both governments implemented policies that attempted to privilege small, rooted producers. *Fighting for the Farm* theorizes and describes the political processes of agricultural transformation in the two countries using insights from anthropology, sociology, economics, history, environmental sciences, and political science.

The agriculture that evolved, creating food deserts in the heartland and ecological disasters in the Imperial Valley of California, was not the inevitable result of market exigencies. Instead, powerful interests demanded and received huge infusions of public dollars that put capital-intensive monoculture on the North American landscape. Sometimes the results of the policies were intentional, as in the Federal Farm Loan Act of the Progressive Era, described by Shulman, which served to meet the credit needs of an affluent class of commercial farmers and prosperous landowners. Sometimes, as in the case of limitations of access to public irrigation water, both large farming corporations and the state ignored the policies. And sometimes, policies that were thought totally unrelated to agriculture, such as monetary policy, drastically changed the structure of agriculture. The chapter by agricultural economist Barry J. Barnett on the U.S. farm financial crisis of the 1980s is the best theorization and analysis of that watershed period that I have read, making clear that the fall, then the rise, of the value of the dollar hugely impacted North American agriculture.

Most of the chapters do an excellent job of showing the intersection of structure and agency, including both powerful actors who alter structures in their own interests and grassroots movements that set up alternative structures and different interpretations of reality. The analysis of discourse of bioengineered food, by Ann Reisner, demonstrates the ability of movements of resistance to confront the vested interests of university researchers and multinational corporations in the contested definition of genetic engineering, and the appropriate areas concern for weighing present and future costs and benefits.

Unlike other books on the structure of agriculture that focus on the protest move-

ments that try to preserve farming as it was or is believed to have been, the authors in this volume analyze actors who are struggling to construct alternative food systems in harmony with humanity and nature. The authors vary on how they understand the relations between civil society and the state, and the degree to which they find the state as a monolithic tool for capital accumulation. The more interesting chapters see the state as the agent and product of the ongoing struggle between legitimation and capital accumulation as the arenas of action—land, air, water, capital, labor, and markets—change.

As a sector, agriculture is particularly spatial. It is thus vulnerable to the vicissitudes of resource degradation and depletion. Yet the thrust of the industrialization of agriculture—from hogs (Constance, Kleiner, and Rikoon) to fruits and vegetables (Rudy and Wells)—is to overcome the limitations of place. As place changes in meaning, so do class relations. Whether a group defines itself as a contractor or employee has legal as well as political implications.

The New Deal, which is discussed from varying perspectives by Gilbert (macro) and by Summers (micro), marked the major shift from policies in favor of specific agricultural interests through special projects to a broad set of agricultural policies justified in terms of equity and justice. They both describe exciting and successful policies that gave political and economic resources to small farmers, particularly African Americans. But the very success of these policies led to immediate backlash, as the old agricultural elite, particularly in the South, flexed their political muscles to roll back anything that even hinted of land reform or sharing of political and economic power. The only surviving agricultural policies are those that support commodity prices and thus hasten the consolidation of ownership and control.

Gilbert's and Summers' chapters represent a real strength of the book—the ability to theorize and analyze from a policy perspective as well as the perspective of everyday life of food producers and consumers. Friedmann, in her essay on envisioning poly-cultural communities, is extremely optimistic that individual decisions around consumption can link with decisions around production that can lead to a more sustainable world. Chapters, by Dudley, who discusses

identity and morality of Midwestern corn and soybean producers, and by DeLind who lays out the contractions of Community Supported Agriculture (a market-civil society organization that presumably links producers and consumers through sharing the risks, the products, and sometimes the work of fruit and vegetable production) suggest that alternatives are not easily implemented, although they are economically and socially possible.

Perhaps the biggest problem with the book is lack of comparison of the impacts of different policies in Canada and the United States at the end of the twentieth century. The more neoliberal approach in Canada, which not only stopped crop and animal subsidies, but ended transportation subsidies as well, resulted in such things as the end of sugar beet production in Canada but also increased the diversity of both farm and non-farm enterprises in the prairie provinces.

Nevertheless, the chapters are well written, taking contrasting theoretical approaches to structural change and social dislocation. And the range of theoretical tools that are implemented moves beyond the oft-heard populists laments and into serious discussion of the intersection of structure and agency in the content and production of the food we eat.

POLITICS, SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, AND THE STATE

Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe, 1850 to 2000, by **Geoff Eley**. Oxford, UK; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. 698 pp. \$74.00 cloth. ISBN: 0-19-503784-7. \$35.00 paper. ISBN: 0-19-504479-7.

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Forging Democracy is a magisterial overview of the history of the European left since the 1860s, with a special focus on its contributions to democratization. The book is sweeping not just in its chronological but also its

geographic scope, dealing seriously with all of Europe, East and West, as well as Britain and Russia/the USSR. A project of this scale must necessarily treat each period, country, and event with the greatest economy, and this is possible only with a sovereign grip of the material. Eley's own earlier contributions to this historical literature and his deep familiarity with the best of the secondary historiography allows him to accomplish this task in a mere (!) 504 pages of text. Considering the decades and even centuries of polemics within and against the left, Eley's book is a small miracle of generosity and judicious balance. Eley acknowledges Eric Hobsbawm as one of his main models and influences. *Forging Democracy* will certainly rank with Hobsbawm's *Age of Extremes* as one of the lasting political histories of the (very) long twentieth century.

The European left is defined here in the broadest possible terms to include everything from moderate Social Democrats through the Bolsheviks, from advocates of clandestine armed struggle to the post 1968 new social movements. Eley does not approve equally of all of these groupings, of course. Though nonsectarian, the book carefully tracks the political and moral errors of the left and does not hesitate to condemn terrorism or Stalinism. And even if the book ends with a series of vignettes of leftists who came of age around World War II and died in 1999–2000, it is neither bitter nor mournful. One leitmotif is that socialism was always the core of the left, but that the left was always larger than socialism, leaving open the possibility for various futures. Indeed, the final chapter is a portrait of the new social movements, which are described as the latest bearers of the ideas of the left.

This brings us to the main theme of the book, which is not the left per se but more specifically its relation to democracy and democratization. The left is not simply defined here via its relationship and commitment to democracy; rather, a central argument concerns the causal relations between the left and democratization. Democracy is defined uncontroversially as involving suffrage rights, civil liberties, and freedom from arrest without trial. Causality between the left and democracy runs in both directions. On the one hand, parliamentary government, civil liberties, and the rule of law favored the

Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews (ISSN 0094-3061) is published bimonthly in January, March, May, July, September, and November by SAGE Publications, 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks, CA 91320, on behalf of the American Sociological Association, 1430 K Street NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20005. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Contemporary Sociology c/o SAGE Publications, Inc., 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks, CA 91320. Copyright © 2011 by Description: Contemporary Sociology (CS) publishes reviews and critical discussions of recent works in sociology and in related disciplines which merit the attention of sociologists. Since not all sociological publications can be reviewed, a selection is made to reflect important trends and issues in the field. Please note that CS does not accept unsolicited reviews. Contemporary sociology - A review. January 2007. Soćiologičeskie Isslədovaniija. Sociologists today are faced with a fundamental dilemma: whether to conceive of the social world as consisting primarily in substances or processes, in static "things" or in dynamic, unfolding relations. Rational-actor and norm-based models, diverse holisms and structuralisms, and statistical "variable" analyses continue implicitly or explicitly to prefer the former point of view.