



History and Social Theory

Peter Burke

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* A new, fully updated edition of a now classic text. * The text has been completely revised to take into account developments of the past 14 years, since History and Social Theory was first published. * Topics which have been added and that are now treated in depth include globalization, postcolonialism and social capital.

History and Social Theory Details

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From Reader Review History and Social Theory for online ebook

Mark Bowles says

Theorists and Historians

A. This book answers 2 simple questions- what is the use of social history to historians and what is the use of history to social theorists? [1]

B. A Dialogue of the deaf

1. Sociology: a study of human society with emphasis on generalizations [2]
2. History: is a study of plural societies examining the differences and changes over time
3. Historians and sociologists, for the most part, do not speak the same language. As Braudel put it "a dialogue of the deaf" [3]
4. How did this opposition between history & theory develop & how was it overcome?
5. The answer is in the next section looking at 3 periods: mid-18th, mid-19th, & 1920s

C. The Differentiation of History and Theory

1. The first social theorists arose in the 18th [4]
 - a) Montesquieu, Spirit of the Laws
 - b) John Millar, Observation on the Distinction of Ranks
 - c) Adam Ferguson, Essay on the History of Civil Society
 - d) Adam Smith, Wealth of Nations
 - e) Thomas Malthus, Essay on the Principle of Population
 - f) They distinguished 4 types of society based on their subsistence (hunting, raising of animals, agriculture, commerce)
 - g) They escaped from traditional history of politics and war.
2. In the 19th historians were moving away from social theory and social history [5]
 - a) Political history recovered its domain with Ranke
 - b) Ranke's emphasis on original documents made social history look unprofessional [6]
 - c) Dilthey & Croce believed that sociology was only a pseudo-science [7]
 - d) Toqueville, Marx, & Gustav Schmoller were unusual in that they combined theory with historical situations [8]
3. At the turn of the 20th Social theorists had an interest in history, yet dismissed what the historians were writing about [10]
 - a) Vilfredo Pareto, Treatise on General Society
 - b) Emile Durkheim, was intent on carving out the new discipline of sociology by distinguishing it from sociology, philosophy, and psychology.
 - c) Max Weber drew on history in his social theory

D. The Dismissal of the Past

1. After 1920 social theorists turned away from the past [11]
2. Economists were drawn into a pure economic model
3. Psychologists turned from the library to the laboratory [12]
4. Sociologists began to take their data from society.
5. This dismissal had a price because sooner or later the past had to be studied [14]

E. The Rise of Social History

1. Max Weber makes his studies between Protestantism and Capitalism around 1900 [15]
2. Karl Lamprecht attempted to break the dominance of social history. He was most successful in the U.S. and France
 - a) Lamprecht's views were adopted by F.J. Turner and Robinson in America
 - b) Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch criticized traditional history in France. Later, Braudel carried on their

views [16]

F. The Convergence of Theory and History

1. In the 1960's social theorists and social historians began to produce a great number of books [18]

2. What are the reasons for this convergence?

a) Sociologists returning to fieldwork in underdeveloped countries began to examine change over time or history [19]

b) Historians had a massive shift of interest away from traditional political history

3. According to Peter Burke "Without the convergence of history and theory we are unable to understand either the past or the present."

4. Despite the convergence there is a tendency to fragment and debate models and methods [21]

. Social Theory and Social Change

A. Structuralism and functionalism have been criticized because they fail to account for change.

B. This chapter examines change [130]

C. Spencer's Model: evolutionary model

1. Gradual social change occurs through evolution. There is a shift from the simple to the complex [132]

2. In the traditional society there is a change from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft or community to a large impersonal society

3. In the traditional society people are hostile to change. In a modern society change is considered progress [133]

4. The culture of traditional societies are religious and mystical, modern societies are described as scientific and rational

5. Problems with this model

a) Societies do not always move in terms of increasing complexity. The case of the late Roman Empire exemplifies regression with the Barbarian invasions [136]

b) This model is criticized because all change is considered inherent to the system. The Black Death was not inherent.

D. Marx's Model

1. This is the revolutionary model in which societies depend on economic systems (modes of production) and contain internal conflicts which lead to revolutions [141]

2. Sequence of the forms of society tribal, slave, feudal, capitalist, socialist, communist

3. There is place for change in the "wrong" direction or refeudalization

4. There is place for external factors influencing change (ex. the re-opening of the Mediterranean)

5. Thus Marx meets historians criticisms better than Spencer

E. Conclusion

1. Burke wants historians to take social theory more seriously

2. Theory can never be 'applied' to the past.

3. What theory can do is to suggest new questions for historians to ask about their period

4. A good historian and a good theorist are those who are open to new ideas [165]

R Hanida says

huhujibjuuhi

Kelly says

The book addresses itself to professional historians and people in the "hard" social sciences, and basically tries to get them to talk to each other instead of putting "Kick Me!" signs on each other's backs and pantsing each other at recess to try to get each other's attention. Each chapter is dedicated to trying to get them to realize that they have a lot to learn from each other and crossing the department divides.

This thesis seems very dated now (though it was only written in 1990), since the history profession is absolutely suffused with theory now. Everywhere you freaking look, historians are writing from inside some system or another, and many of the theorists he talks about how are required history reading. There's a whole chapter called "central concepts" where he tries to introduce people like Foucault, Durkenheim, Bahktin and Mannheim and I couldn't stop laughing. As if historians could avoid them now if they tried! So either this book was really influential or it came out right in the period where everything was changing.

However, I still think this piece is a very useful introduction to a lot of theories. There were many in here that I had *not* heard of, or hadn't thought of using in the particular ways that he suggests. He's very good at picking out certain historical situations and showing how theory or at least "concepts" have been instrumental in highlighting certain things that hadn't been obvious before. He is also very good at pointing out the major flaws of each theory and not at all suggesting that anyone swallow these things whole, but perhaps try bits out here and there just to get a new perspective. I am a very good person to be reading that right now. I've been reading a crap ton of theory as I start to conceptualize my thesis, and had basically come to the realization that I hate theory and it should all die in a fire. So Burke's writing really reminded me to take a step back and remember again why it is helpful, and just how much theory that we now think of as an integral part of history is actually theory. For example, concepts like "social roles" and "mentalities" or even nationalist theory did not come out of history, but rather from sociologists and anthropologists, even if very famous historians have made these concepts their own.

Recommended to all frustrated history graduate students like me. Or just ones that maybe need a trip back to the basics to refresh their memories about what this stuff actually is about without all the frills added by professionals trying to get tenure.

Johan Persson says

Peter Burke argumenterar för att låta historisk och sociologisk/samhällsvetenskaplig teori befrukta varandra, en tes som antagligen var mer revolutionerande 1992 än den är idag. De korta kapitlen om olika centrala teoretiska koncept är dock en bra introduktion.

Nono Warsono says

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anis Ahmad says

bagus,

buku ini menginspirasi saya tentang beberapa hal, salah satunya adalah tentang hakikat dari belajar, yakni cara paling efektif untuk memahami sesuatu adalah dengan mengajarkannya, ya iya lah, soalnya saya kan seorang pendidik, thanx mr burke

Ruhat alp says

Modern tarihçiliğin doğuşundan kuram ve modellere, merkez-çevre ilişkilerinden hegemonya ve iktidar kavramına kadar modern tarihçiliğin önemli noktalarını derinen, çok faydalı bir kitap. Bir tarihçi kesinlikle okumalı ve okumamısa ona kızı dahi verilmemeli kanımca. Ne kadar anlattım hiiiihi!

Lauren says

General historiography and social theory - how social scientists can share information to assist each others' research. I read this during graduate school a few years back, but I remember being impressed with it at the time.

Daeng says

Baru berputar di bab 1 dan 2... :((

Osikubi says

Only an introduction
