



Atkinson, W. (2019). Time for Bourdieu: insights and oversights. *Time and Society*, 28(3), 951-970.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X17752280>

Peer reviewed version

Link to published version (if available):  
[10.1177/0961463X17752280](https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X17752280)

[Link to publication record in Explore Bristol Research](#)  
PDF-document

This is the author accepted manuscript (AAM). The final published version (version of record) is available online via SAGE Publications at <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0961463X17752280> . Please refer to any applicable terms of use of the publisher.

## University of Bristol - Explore Bristol Research

### General rights

This document is made available in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite only the published version using the reference above. Full terms of use are available:  
<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-policy/pure/user-guides/ebr-terms/>

## **Time for Bourdieu: Insights and Oversights**

### **Abstract**

This paper explores the role of time in Pierre Bourdieu's social theory with a view to highlighting, and plugging, some of its conceptual gaps. It proceeds by identifying four elements of the social structuring of temporal experience: the temporal structure of consciousness; field rhythms and pace; imposed timings; and time binds. The first two of these Bourdieu brought to the fore, even if there are some aspects of his account in need of further development. The third he posited without tracing through the full conceptual consequences, while the fourth requires some reorientation and additional work to accommodate it. The latter I undertake by elaborating on a few concepts drawn from both Bourdieu's corpus and phenomenology.

### **Introduction**

That time is vital to Pierre Bourdieu's social theory has been pointed out often enough. In commentaries of all shades of sympathy with the man – from Jenkins' (2002) unflattering portrait through Swartz's (1997) more appreciative primer to Wacquant's zealous promotion (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; see also Grenfell, 2006) – his interest in temporality since his earliest essays on Algeria to later writings on the differentiation of classed experience is dutifully flagged. As for Anthony Giddens' (1984) structuration theory and some of its derivatives (e.g. Bhaskar, 1978; Archer, 1995), time was no side-element of social life but woven into the baseline understanding of human beings and the relations between them, even if Bourdieu's contribution has been curiously overlooked in key statements marking the surge of interest in time within sociological circles from the 1980s onwards (e.g. Adam, 1990, 1995,

2004). There has been one key difference from others though: whereas structuration theory and the morphogenic approach have struggled to attract researchers keen to apply and elaborate their propositions in empirical inquiry, Bourdieu's conceptual toolkit has been mobilised extensively to examine myriad facets of the social structuring of time. From studies of economic change (Adkins, 2011) and precarious employment (Author, 1) to investigations of educational inequality (Robson, 2009) and gentrification (Bridge, 2001), the Frenchman's famed theoretical trio of habitus, field and capital have found fresh and varied ways to prove themselves useful to numerous sociologists trying to make sense of temporality.

As powerful and useful as Bourdieu's tools may be, however, there are nagging gaps and blind spots. This is the case generally speaking – elsewhere I have argued that Bourdieu's *modus operandi* in his later writings obscured many themes of explanatory significance and political importance (Author, 2) – but his treatment of time provides a particularly sharp lens through which those limits come in to focus. In what follows, therefore, I aim to take stock of 'genetic structuralism', as Bourdieu (1993a, 2014) himself dubbed his approach, on temporality. This will be done by identifying four entwined – and not necessarily exhaustive – elements of the experience of time and its social structuring and cataloguing Bourdieu's advances and oversights. These elements are: (i) the general temporal structure of consciousness; (ii) timings in and of fields, or their rhythms and pace; (iii) timings imposed by agents in certain fields on people who are not agents in those fields; and (iv) time 'binds' or 'squeeze'. While Bourdieu fruitfully brought the first two to the fore, though not without some omissions, and discussed the third, though without following through the conceptual logic, the fourth requires a slight shift of orientation, and some new concepts, if it is to be adequately grasped.

## **1. The Temporal Structure of Consciousness**

The foundation upon which all else is built is the temporal constitution of conscious experience. Edmund Husserl (1991), the founder of phenomenology, had famously elaborated that what we take to be ‘present’ experience is in fact always stretched forward and backward, that is, fringed by a halo, or horizon, of history and futurity furnishing a sense of continuity. At one end there is retention, the residue of the just-past giving sense to the ‘now’, and at the other there is protention, the sense of the immediately forthcoming inscribed in current sensory impression. Bourdieu, a keen reader of Husserl from his earliest days, absorbed this insight and gave it a distinctly sociological spin. This was done at first in relation to his fieldwork in 1950s Algeria, where he endeavoured to document the disorientation among the native population induced by the imposition by the colonial French state of capitalist modes of time reckoning (Bourdieu, 1963, 1979).

Bourdieu distinguished, on the one hand, the traditional time consciousness of the Algerian peasant rooted in circadian rhythms and the patterning of workdays and holidays given by the ritual calendar. These give the peasant *foresight*, a sense or expectation of the forthcoming (i.e. protention) grounded in recurrent past experience, but they do not concern themselves with a longer span of time to come – they do not ‘colonise the future’, as Giddens (1991) put it, with projects and plans. On the other hand there is the attitude toward time characteristic of the spirit of capitalism: the projection or *forecasting* of possibilities, the actual positing of the future – making it ‘thematic’ in consciousness, as the phenomenologists would say – as something to be considered and mastered. Just as the latter was being foisted on Algerians, however, their deteriorating material conditions – at least among some sections (namely the ‘subproletariat’) – did not furnish the security necessary for stable forecasting.

Later, once Bourdieu had begun to turn his sights on his home nation and develop his core notions of habitus and field, the Husserlian conceptual apparatus was taken up in a new way. Now protention was generalised to become the basic mode in which all people relate to *fields*. The latter, to clarify, consist of multidimensional structures of domination and struggle defined by possession of one or more form of capital, or property securing legitimacy and authority (i.e. misrecognition) in the eyes of those struggling for that capital. The political field, the legal field, the literary field and the bureaucratic field (the state) are just some fields that Bourdieu put under the microscope at different phases of his career (Bourdieu, 1986, 1991, 1996a, 2014), though the class structure itself also forms a field – the ‘social space’ (Bourdieu, 1984) – and he latterly suggested that even families and organisations form micro-fields with their own particular stakes and struggles (Bourdieu, 1998a, 2000a, 2005a; see also author, 2).

Each field has its own doxa – or taken for granted knowledge about what goes on the field (who is who, what one does, etc) – and *illusio* – or belief in the importance of the field’s stakes, as a specific transferral of libidinal energy. Yet each field is also a structure of domination insofar as people possess the capitals securing misrecognition to different degrees, and a structure of struggle insofar as people pursue strategies to maintain or improve their standing in the field. Here is where temporal consciousness comes back into the picture. Possessing a certain amount and type of capital within the field makes certain experiences likely or unlikely, routine or rare, and certain actions and strategies objectively possible or impossible – also factoring in that accumulating capital usually takes time (Bourdieu, 1997). Bourdieu called this probabilistic distribution of experiences and possibilities for the individual the ‘field of possibles’ (1984), or *lusiones* (2000a), and the individual, through time, adjusts to them such that they develop a *sense* of the likely and unlikely, possible and impossible, written into present experience. This ‘feel for the game’, the practical (i.e. unarticulated) sense of the

forthcoming – expectations, anticipations, and so on – is what defines the habitus, and Bourdieu himself equated it with protention.<sup>1</sup> Now, however, he did so in order to reject the idea that practice is guided by thought-out plans or intentional projects of the kind versions of rational choice theory or phenomenology posit (see esp. Bourdieu, 1990), or indeed that Bourdieu himself posited in his earlier analysis of capitalist time-reckoning. We may, through our doings in the world, be projected into the future, but we do not consciously project the future prior to our doings – in this regard Bourdieu is influenced as much by Heidegger (2001) as Husserl.

Recognising the socially conditioned temporal horizon of consciousness as the heart of habitus does indeed undermine any notion that human beings are free-floating, without a past, totally unconstrained, or indeed mechanically reacting to external constraints or enablements. Yet as many have pointed out (e.g. Alexander, 1995; Jenkins, 2002; Sayer, 2005; see also Author 3, 4, 5) there is a sense in which Bourdieu (and Heidegger too) sometimes pushed his case too far. Much of what we do as we press into the future is indeed unaccompanied by any mental representation or positing of its goals (especially at the level of bodily movement), but often enough – and not just in times of crisis, as Bourdieu (and Heidegger too) sometimes conceded – the future does become thematic, i.e. brought to consciousness, represented in the ‘mind’s eye’ and so on. In maybe the most compressed ‘pulse’ of futurity (though it can be more protracted and deliberated), it may take varied forms (pictorial, linguistic), it may extend forward to varying degrees (from a moment’s time to some kind of ‘life plan’), but it does occur, and while it may take the form only of ‘fancying’ – imagining a possibility without committing to it – it is often, as Schutz (1962) put it, accompanied by a ‘voluntative fiat’, or

---

<sup>1</sup> Although the theoretical details of this view were elaborated following research in France, Bourdieu’s (1977, 1990a, 2000a) analysis of gift-giving among the Kabyles of Algeria, in which time between gift and counter-gift – taking into account giver and receiver’s quotients of symbolic capital – is crucial to maintaining or effecting one’s standing, should also be seen through this lens as an adjustment to a field of possibles. It is just that the specific field in question is one marked by a low degree of ‘objectification’ of its stakes, that is to say, maintained through constant face-to-face interaction rather than institutionalised mechanisms.

sense of commitment or, indeed, will. None of this detracts from Bourdieu's point that practice is adjusted to protention, or the sense of what's likely or possible in the field. What we consider, what we commit to and so on are all grounded in that sense, as it manifests in practical awareness of who is who, who does and is likely to do what and so on – it does not imply a 'theorist's eye view' of the field, as Bourdieu believed alternative theories do.

With that issue cleared up, we can make better sense of another way in which time-consciousness is conditioned by *lusiones*. Possession of the major capitals defining the social space – economic, cultural and social capital – defines one's relative distance from necessity, an important element of which is time (Bourdieu, 1984). Recasting some of the insights from Algeria, those for whom paying the bills, keeping their job, earning enough money to get by and so on are more pressing tend to be anchored more in the short-term future, whilst those freer from those exigencies have the luxury to build longer-term projects (see Author 1). This can manifest in modes of childrearing or lifestyles (e.g. approach to diet and exercise), yet it also has a very particular effect amongst those within the intellectual field. The specific condition of the scholar – having the time and leisure to think, reflect and so on (*skhole*) – can, if not checked by reflexivity, lead to the scholastic fallacy of projecting one's own way of thinking and defining the world, as an adaptation to that condition, on to others, as when Sartre thinks everyone is as free as he is or the postmodernists think everyone is as playful and boundary-blurring as they are (Bourdieu, 1990a, 2000a). Nowadays we might question whether academia is quite so leisured, what with creeping pressures to be 'productive' and to have impact coupled with increasing casualisation of employment (Vostal, 2014), which even Bourdieu (1998b) admitted was beginning to envelop higher-level public sector workers, but the point still stands that *homo academicus* inhabits a world unlike others – being paid to read,

write and teach on processes others simply live – and develops dispositions attuned to it which may then bleed into their scholarly output.

## **2. Field Rhythms and Pace**

While temporal consciousness is conditioned by one's specific position in any field, however, the experience and meaning of time is also structured by being a member of a specific field. This is because each field has its own synchrony – its own rhythm and pace – set by several factors. The first is the specific field's sequence of revolutions. Although the cycle of upheaval and consecration affects all fields – from art and politics to families and the social space (especially in the form of lifestyle clashes) – as new players mobilise subversive strategies aimed at toppling the dominant, conservative orthodoxy and establishing different properties as legitimate (see e.g. Bourdieu, 1993b, 1996a, 2008), the battle of the generations, of avant-garde and rear-guard, of the established and the newcomers, attuned to different structures of opportunity and perceptions of what is old and traditional (see Bourdieu, 1993a), takes particular form in each field. This is not to posit an iron law of historical movement either: the dominant – defined by the properties securing misrecognition rather than by specific biological individuals – may, theoretically speaking, deploy conservative strategies fending off or reversing challenges from successive biological generations of artists, politicians and so on, or be short lived, depending on the balance of power, and 'revolutions' themselves may be slow-moving or rapid.

In any case, the movement of the generations conditions one's sense of history ('eras', 'periods'), or of significant moments ('events', revolts) in the game to which one is attuned. It provides a means of situating oneself and others – so many alignments, affinities and homologues across time – and models to be revived or emulated, as well as an additional layer



to the sense of the forthcoming (by seeing a current struggle in the field as like others from the past and anticipating its course on that basis). It also inevitably furnishes, moreover, a sense of one's *trajectory* – of being 'on the rise' or 'on the way out' (with all the nostalgia and resentment that might prompt), 'on the up' or 'losing face', 'the future' or 'the past'. Of course this can be complicated by individual, rather than generational, trajectory: a sudden rise or fall in the field with changing capital stocks can prompt disorientation and ill-ease, as much research on mobility through the social space has begun to chart (see Author 6 for an overview).

A second aspect of field-specific temporality, through which the battle of the social generations, of dominant and dominated, may play out, is the carving up of the undifferentiated flow of time into recurring chunks, signified by certain symbolic markers, with salience to its members: electoral cycles and yearly events (e.g. the budget) in the political and bureaucratic fields, seasons and shows in the field of fashion, semesters and annual conferences in the academic field and so on, but also the domestic routines and celebrations of the familial field (see author 1) and the formal and informal schedules of an organisational field (see Zerubavel, 1979). In his Algerian research Bourdieu (1963) had, in Heideggerian vein, stressed the eminently practical mode of measuring events in time – how many harvests ago something was, for example – among the Kabyles as a means of counterpoising it to the standardised capitalist measurement of time by the clock and calendar being thrust upon them, but even in long-time capitalist social orders the differentiation of multiple fields drawing one's interest and desire people continue, alongside clock time, to think time and events in this way for themselves (good shows/bad shows) and the field generally (when such-and-such happened). They adjust their activity and anticipations accordingly, of course, including as it feeds into a practical sense of timing for strategies and strikes in the struggle for recognition (a good/bad time).

Though the recurrent markers of a field may come to be simply doxic – taken-for-granted, unquestioned – they can become subject to struggle (whether focussing on when an event should be held or even whether it should be a/the significant marker at all) and, indeed, their very genesis is likely to have been infused with struggle and symbolic power. Take, for instance, the struggles over artistic exhibition in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Paris – an example tied to Bourdieu's (1993b, 1996a) analysis of Manet and the field of art (see Clausen, 1987). At first dominated by the Salon de Paris, the highly conservative state-sponsored exhibition initially running annually and taking place over several weeks from late August, the Impressionist revolution in the artistic field spurred challenge and alternatives (the state-sanctioned Salon des Refusés, the Impressionists' own independent exhibitions) aiming to undermine the Salon as the 'event of the year' while recognising its pre-eminence in so doing. Eventually the Salon, facing withdrawal of state support, was stewarded by a collection of artists, but a few years later internal quarrels prompted a split and the emergence of two separate exhibitions – the old Salon and the new Salon de la Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, or 'Nationale' – competing to be the key annual occasion of the artistic field, i.e. the show in which one must have (and work towards having) one's paintings or which one must see (depending on one's position in the field or, among consumers, one's taste). A group of avant-garde artists then founded the Salon d'Automne to counter the residual conservatism of both, its very name, derived from the season of its occurrence, signifying opposition to the orthodoxy (the Salon and Nationale having become Spring events in the meantime) and embodying a distinct sense of timing (since its directors wanted to avoid direct competition with the old shows) while also eventually having the effect of restructuring the artist's perception of significant temporal markers in the year.

There is another aspect of the pacing of field events – beyond the number and frequency of widely-recognised pertinent markers – that Bourdieu, other than in the barest of hints (e.g. Bourdieu, 2000a: 226-7; 2005b), never really considered. This is the general speed at which strategies (or their component steps) and position-takings are or can be enacted and reacted to within a field. A number of factors might play into this, but two in particular, linking Bourdieu to other strands of scholarship on time, are worth flagging. The first is work *intensification*: increasing pressure to be more productive, to work quicker, with more and tighter deadlines (Burchell et al, 2002). Born of the specific doxa, *illusio* and dynamics of the economic field, it might be said to have subsequently bled into other fields – the bureaucratic field, the intellectual field, the media field and so on – due to the dominance of the masters of the economic field within the field of power (the field in which the dominant players across fields vie to impose their principle of misrecognition as the primary principle – see Bourdieu, 1996b) and their allies in the political and bureaucratic fields (Bourdieu, 1998b).<sup>2</sup>

Tied up with work intensification is the second factor affecting the pace of field events: transport and communications technology. The passage from horse and cart to jet plane, and from letters and print media to the internet and social media, famously described as the ‘annihilation of space through time’ (Harvey, 1989) or ‘time-space distancing’ (Giddens, 1984, 1991), has transformed not only the spatial reach of field effects (people can be plugged in to what others are doing at great physical distance), which has the effect of integrating national fields into regional or worldwide spaces of struggle in the same way that earlier phases of technological development integrated local social spaces into national ones (Bourdieu, 2008), and the form strategies can take (a ‘social media campaign’). It has also altered the speed at which players can learn about, respond to and undertake strategies within the field (‘Twitter

---

<sup>2</sup> On the intensification of the intellectual field, for example, see Ogbonna and Harris (2004) and Vostal (2014).

wars', blogging, Instagram pictures of projects and activities, etc.), and with that move through the field (as certain people or events 'go viral' and politicians, sports players, musicians etc. are celebrated or vilified on social media) as well as into and out of the field (especially via migration).

We must be careful not to exaggerate and overlook the real inertia built into fields, however – capital holdings and habitus can no doubt act as buffers against the caprices of social media. Moreover, some might view intensification and the effects of technological development as symptoms of a general 'acceleration' of social life, whether as part of a bombastic philosophy of speed (as in the case of Paul Virilio's work) or a product of more focused sociological analysis (Rosa, 2003; Wajcman, 2015). Bourdieu would be wary of such a blanket thesis, however – perhaps born of a 'temptation to prophesise', as Bourdieu et al (1991) put it, at least in Virilio's case – and certainly the notion of field sensitises us to the plurality of times and speeds others have flagged as a counter argument to totalising claims about spatiotemporal change (e.g. May and Thrift, 2001). Intensification and technology are, after all, likely to effect different fields, and different sections of fields, in different ways and to different degrees. More troubling is the apparent lack of sufficient conceptual tools in Bourdieu's *oeuvre* for rendering the travel over time-space, through specific networks and channels, of field effects – a concern that will become clearer when we consider the next facet of the social structuring of temporal experience.

### **3. Imposed Timings**

There are many elements of a person's perception and use of time that, quite simply, do not stem from their being positioned in a specific field; there are, that is, elements of one's dispositions and practice which are not produced by within-field experience. They are, instead,

produced by strategies and struggles within a specific field, or combination of fields, in which the person is *not* positioned. The schedule of public holidays, the imposition of time zones or daylight savings time, working time regulations, the timetables of schools or organisations one is not an effective agent within, opening times of businesses and even clock time itself are all prominent examples (we might also think of all the knock-on effects of the timings of shows, parliaments and so on for those not directly within the fields of their genesis).

Bourdieu certainly acknowledged this happens – indeed he saw it as fundamental to the process of state-building *qua* monopolisation of the legitimacy to define and categorise the world (Bourdieu, 1998a, 2000a, 2014; see also Hassid and Watson, 2014). The product is ‘minds of state’, or a habitus deeply ingrained with assumptions – including as they relate to the temporal ordering of practice – ultimately rooted in the historical conflicts of the bureaucratic and political fields (since any state policy is the negotiated outcome of manoeuvres for recognition). Moreover, insofar as what goes on in the bureaucratic field filters into specific institutional and organisational fields (schools, hospitals, prisons, firms, transport operators), setting the parameters of what can be done and struggled over there, through what Bourdieu (1996b: 382ff; 2000a: 102ff) called ‘legitimation circuits’ – chains of interdependence and reciprocal recognition between people situated in different fields – it trickles down to more spatially-localised levels of temporal organisation (timetables, operational hours, etc.). The bureaucratic field is not the only source of imposed temporalities, however: the rhythms of fields of economic and cultural production (product launches, service or programming schedules, exhibitions etc.) also impact on the consciousness and practice of their consumers as well as those simply caught up in the web of time-space movements they implicate (e.g. for those living, working and commuting near an exposition or exhibition). People in a multitude of

fields, furthermore, often have direct power over non-field players' time, particularly in the form of setting appointments or hearings (Bourdieu, 2000a: 228).

How exactly does this 'extra-field' experience fit with Bourdieu's general view that habitus is conditioned by, or the incorporation of, the oppositions and lusiones of a field, such that it can be said that habitus only exists in relation to fields (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 18-19, 127ff; Bourdieu, 2000a: 155ff)? Bourdieu himself would probably insist on the manner in which that 'extra-field' experience is translated into the logic of the field in question – how it effects lusiones and strategies – including via tastes and practices adjusted to positions in the social space (making gallery opening times and exhibitions pertinent, for example) (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 105). There is a gap here, however: lusiones are supposed to be set by the distribution of capital alone, yet two people with essentially the same capital holdings will have different objective possibilities, and thus perceived possibilities, before them on account of the temporal organisation of different fields (large and small) they are not players within effecting them or, indeed, the same fields effecting them in different ways or at different times (e.g. regional discrepancies in the roll out of time-related policies). A strategy for one player, or at least a means and time of realising it (their tactics, we might say), will thus not be possible for another, since they will lack the temporal 'affordances', yet Bourdieu seems to have no real conceptual means for grasping this difference even though it is clearly socially conditioned (rather than purely contingent).<sup>3</sup> Bernard Lahire (2015) would see this omission as a symptom of Bourdieu's tendency to work with a reductive image of a person as exclusively a 'being-in-a-field', and other scholars interested in networks, figurations, capillary power, innovation

---

<sup>3</sup> Differences in temporal affordances are not only, therefore, an element of 'singular causal analysis' à la Max Weber (1949), that is, the untangling of all the pertinent factors involved in a specific historical event (e.g. the revolutions and momentous strategies in fields of the kind Bourdieu was interested in), but can also be part of the background set of factors shaping wider 'objective probabilities' that sociology, according to Weber, specialises in mapping out (see Ringer, 1997).

diffusion, mobilities, scapes, flows and the spatiotemporal ordering of practices would happily fill the void (e.g. Thrift, 1981; Giddens, 1984; Appadurai, 1996; Castells, 1996; Urry, 2000, 2007; May and Thrift, 2001; Crossley, 2011).

Rather than capitulate to the rivals and either abandon Bourdieu's concepts or opt for a logically flabby pluralism or eclecticism, however, we can head them off, but it will require two theoretical moves. The first is to expand on Bourdieu's notion of legitimation circuits. These are much more important than his brief and scattered treatments of them would suggest, but they need to be made more encompassing than they currently appear. This is because, logically, it is only through them that objects, symbols, signs and principles of vision and division (including of time) are distributed across time and space into individual lifeworlds. The chains of interaction and movement through which products of field struggles emanate, infused with varying degrees of symbolic power, feed into the constraints and enablements, the possibilities and impossibilities, defining an individual's situation, but also work along routes and channels with their own spatiotemporal pattern. It is only through the patterning of these circuits of symbolic power, for example, that we can identify specific 'social orders' in the global span of human relations, that is, knots of circuits routinely carrying effects from specific fields over a particular band of time-space, distinct from the abstract topological social structures of fields (author 2; cf. Giddens, 1984).<sup>4</sup>

The second move is to make clear that the relationship between fields and these circuits of symbolic power is *dialectical*. The circuits are themselves conditioned by what goes on in a multitude of fields, of course, but the possibilities and impossibilities they yield for individuals, alongside those provided by the lusiones of the game set purely by the distribution of capital,

---

<sup>4</sup> We thus also incorporate Bourdieu's (1999) concern with the international circulation of ideas.

will feed back into the structure of fields by facilitating or limiting strategies and position-takings via the mediation of the horizons constituting the habitus. Charting the distribution of capital within a field is thus a necessary step in explaining any particular play within a field, therefore, and is often efficient, but it does not exhaust the social determinations at work.

Take, for instance, the study undertaken by Cass et al (2003; see also Cass et al, 2005; Urry, 2007) into the role of public transport schedules in compounding ‘exclusion’. Infrequency and lack of night services on local buses (which have been shown elsewhere to be a classed mode of transport: author 5) in small communities are the outcome of a constellation of decisions within fields large and small – the localised bureaucratic field of municipal government (cf. Bourdieu, 2005a), the economic field and so on – with their own specific stakes, doxa, illusion and struggles. Yet they have the effect of making certain activities for people not in those fields more difficult – commuting for particular jobs (including shift work) or education, travel to cultural venues or events,<sup>5</sup> shopping at cheaper supermarkets at a convenient time and so on – and either remove them from the field of possibles or prompt the purchase and upkeep of a car, with all its own financial burdens. Either way their capital accumulation or maintenance in (at least) the social space has been effected, differentiating two people otherwise similarly situated – possibly in only a small manner, for sure, but it could also be a difference that ends up making *the* difference between two trajectories in the long run.<sup>6</sup>

Another example comes from Rotter’s (2016) study of asylum seekers in Scotland. In this case people are subject to the imperatives of members of the bureaucratic and juridical fields laying

---

<sup>5</sup> Bourdieu (1984: 105) did note the differences between big cities like Paris and the provinces on account of ‘objective opportunities for cultural consumption’, which might be taken to include transport and scheduling particularities, but left it at that.

<sup>6</sup> Elsewhere I have discussed similar themes, with more of a focus on space, under the label of ‘motility’, and also questioned Urry’s (2007) claim, building on the research in Cass et al (2003), that control over time should be seen as an aspect of a new form of capital (author, 2).



out the timelines of their cases (interviews, hearings, reviews, etc.), which can drag out over several years. In the meantime they are barred from work – living off state subsidy instead – and housed in a locale of the government’s choosing. Evidently, though the claimants will bring different levels of convertible capital from their home nations (including proficiency with English), this process will have a significant bearing on their nascent position within the UK social space. As time goes on, and they await further information and outcomes (final and interim), that position is exacerbated as opportunities for accruing capital within the social space, and indeed for entering into and becoming effective players within certain fields (such as the UK economic field in the case of entrepreneurs), are foreclosed, including by means of the asylum candidates postponing and deferring possibilities simply because they do not know what the future holds. However – and here is a break with Bourdieu’s (2000a: 229-30) analysis of the protagonist of Kafka’s *The Trial*, with which there are otherwise parallels – Rotter also points out that some of the asylum seekers (perhaps due to their existing capitals) actively negotiate the timings being offered and use the intervening time to accrue legitimated forms of capital in the social space and even prepare for entry into specific fields once the case is approved (e.g. improving their English, enrolling in higher education).

#### **4. Time Binds**

The final element of the social structuring of temporal experience is one which has grown in prominence in recent scholarship even though it has long been a part of everyday life: the experience and management of *competing* schedules and demands on one’s time coming from *the different fields one is in*. This does include ‘moonlighters’ and people occupying positions in multiple fields within the field of power – business, politics, and so on – but much more prominent and pervasive is the articulation of one’s familial field and one’s work-related field(s), whether the latter be a space of struggle within the field of power or an organisational

field or both, through pressures to earn money and desires to fit in one's hobbies or pastimes, related to the social space, are also pertinent. The reason this has become so much more prominent in the past thirty years or so of scholarship is because, due to various factors – including work intensification, technological change (meaning we can always be 'on call'), transformations of masculinity and fatherhood (however socially differentiated that may be; see Dermott, 2008) and, most importantly, feminisation of the workforce – those demands are becoming ever more difficult to manage for more and more people. Hence it has been labelled the 'time bind' (Hochschild, 1997), 'time squeeze' (Southerton, 2003; Southerton and Tomlinson, 2005) or 'time crunch' (Knust and van den Broeck, 1998; van den Scott, 2014) – all labels conveying the sense of pressure and conflict increasingly leaving people feeling 'harried', over-busy, stressed, depressed and so on, the sociological importance of which should not be downplayed.

The degree to which the time-bind is felt, and the manner in which it is experienced, is differentiated within social orders – those at the top of the social space are most likely to report it, and women more so than men (Southerton and Tomlinson, 2005; Sullivan, 2008) – and between them depending on welfare regimes and the household divisions of labour the latter foster (bringing in those circuits of symbolic power again) (Crompton and Lyonette, 2006; Wajcman, 2015). Still, it is a pressure born of tension between fields in individual lives, rather than within one. Again this interplay of multiple games is something Bourdieu did acknowledge, but this time even more fleetingly – in asides, parentheses or endnotes (e.g. Bourdieu, 1990b: 73-4; 1996b: 271; 2000b: 303n8; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 121) – and jarring somewhat with his more programmatic claims that the unit of sociological analysis should be a single field (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 107), subsequently codified into strict methodological principles by later advocates (Grenfell, 2010; Swartz, 2013). If we stick to that

way of doing things alone, then time binds will slip from view. All the emotional fallout dominating people's everyday lives will be much more difficult to capture and explain, since one side of the conflict is obscured, but so too, once again, will be a fuller means of explaining why someone is taking the stance or pursuing the practice they are in relation to one particular field. This is because once we shift our view from what goes on in one field alone to what goes on in a person's lifeworld, as defined by multiple field positionings, it becomes clear that what one does in one field necessarily takes into account what is going on in other fields. In the horizons of perception are practical expectations related to not just one field but at least two, in other words – the sense that pursuing this strategy now, and in this way, in a work-related field would or will have a certain impact on the familial field, for example, or vice versa, modulated by the strength of one's *illusio* in each. We have not just a feel for the game, but a feel for the *games* we are playing (see further author 2).

With this in mind we can, for example, make sense of, and even elaborate on, the various 'temporal strategies' people mobilise to deal with work and family pressures on time that Hochschild (2005) briefly distinguished.<sup>7</sup> First there is 'enduring', or the acceptance that demands on one's time from work – born of the social space (earning enough money) and the field of the firm – will diminish the time and energy that can be spent on family. More prevalent among manual workers, for whom the *illusio* in relation to the family may be stronger relative to work but who read in the fields of possibilities presented by the latter and the social space that they have little choice, this makes for unhappiness in the form of potential decline and painfully readjusted expectations in the game one values over all others. Having said that, there

---

<sup>7</sup> Although Hochschild's research predates the boom of smartphones and related technology, recent research has confirmed that the impact of smartphone usage – checking work or family emails at various times and spaces – essentially follows pre-established preferences in the spatiotemporal balance of attention and desire between employment and family (Derks et al, 2016), which fits with Wajcman's (2015) general thesis that technological development tends to transform the nature of existing social differences rather than erase them.

will be others for whom the forms of recognition and possible trajectories offered by employment offer an escape from a familial field yielding less present or potential recognition, or a form of recognition they desire less, and who thus dedicate more of their time to the former at the expense of the latter (will all its fallout for others).

Next there is 'deferral', or the postponement of particular events pertinent to the family field (e.g. holidays, nights out together) until after projects related to the work-based field have been completed. This implicates a sense of interlocking field timings, not only in playing the rhythms of one field off those of another but in intuiting (more or less successfully) what is an acceptable period of deferral for maintaining one's standing with loved ones given how committed one is to them. Of course, we should also add that the deferral can work the other way – people may defer specific projects and strategies within the employment-related field on the basis of familial events (an ill family member, certain celebrations, having children), with knock-on effects for their success and even possibility – depending, perhaps, on the relative strength of *illusio* in each field.

Then there are the 'busy bees', who manage the competing demands on their attention born of the social space, familial field and work-related field(s) by trying to pack as much in as possible, moving quickly and with little interlude backwards and forwards between moves and position-takings in each structural space (with all the possibilities for misfires and burnout that might generate). The 'delegators', moreover, are those who, with sufficient economic capital, pay others to do care work for them (nannies, tutors, carers, etc.), signifying something of the balance of desires produced by certain social conditions, though Hochschild notes one of the unintended consequences it can bring: children can come to care for and submit to a nanny more readily than parents, making the nanny not only an effective player within the familial

field but a challenge to the relative symbolic capital of parents (who can resort to the defensive strategy of expulsion by firing the nannies, though that is not without its knock-on effects) (see further author 2; Hochschild, 2012).

Lastly, there is what Hochschild terms 'resistance': active negotiation of or battling against demands on time stemming from work-related fields so as to give the family a greater place in one's life, whether by implementing certain rules (e.g. no work emails after 5pm), reducing one's work hours or some other means. This is indicative of the balance of the libido, which may shift depending on changing standing within each implicated field (and certainly has effects on standing in each field, which the individual will anticipate). Hochschild notes its prevalence among more dominant players within the firm she studied, suggesting it may depend on a certain level of cultural, economic and/or firm-specific capital. Indeed, research has suggested that part-time workers rich in cultural capital are more likely to have actively chosen that status while those with fewer resources working part time do so more out of necessity (Author). Either way, of course, while transforming conceptions of fatherhood may mean men are more likely to 'resist' nowadays, the same research also indicates this is, in all probability, a distinctly female temporal strategy insofar as women are much more likely to be working part time for family reasons of some sort. This then raises questions over how far the strategy is best characterised as one of 'resistance' at all, rather than a product of internalised expectations of what women should do with repercussions for their capacity to accumulate capitals in employment-related fields (Bourdieu, 2001; author, 2). The point stands, however, that the strategy is one played out between multiple fields, that is to say, based on a feel for each game and how they bear on one another as well as having effects in more than one struggle for recognition.

None of this means we should do away with the focussed mapping out of stakes and properties pertinent to a specific field, nor even the idea that dispositions, practical sense and habitus are defined relative to fields. Some terminological precision may help, though. Bourdieu (2000b) himself suggested that when referring to an individual as they appear across multiple fields we might talk of their ‘social surface’, which can be taken to mean the totality of their dispositions across spaces of struggle as distinct from those defining their field-specific habitus. Moreover, if there are temporal horizons in relation to specific fields there is also what we might call, after Husserl, the individual’s *world horizon*, the co-givenness of pertinences from one field with those of another knitting together the social surface, since it bears on all the fields and circuits structuring an individual’s lifeworld (see further author 2).

## **Conclusion**

Efforts to slice time into categories and components are legion, and Bourdieu’s work is so voluminous that it is all too easy, no matter how well one thinks one knows it, to overlook what he may have said on a specific topic here or there. I have tried, nevertheless, to catalogue the advances and limitations of ‘genetic structuralism’ on time via four optics. The first two of these were firmly within the comfort zone of Bourdieu’s sociology: the temporal structure of consciousness and the specific timings produced by fields. The former allows us to break with static or ahistorical models of agency by emphasising the ever-presence of the agent’s past in expectations of the future, even if Bourdieu downplayed the conscious projection that gives rise to. The latter, meanwhile, allows us to recognise the plurality of temporal markers in society, where they come from and why they matter to people by rooting them in multiform struggles for recognition, though we also need to trace the differential effects of technology and work intensification on the pace of field events.

Fitting a little less snugly in the usual Bourdieusian framework were the other two aspects of the social structuring of time: imposed timings and time binds. True, there is some acknowledgment from Bourdieu of both phenomena, and we can even find some starting points for rendering them within his writings. To adequately bring them in from the conceptual cold, however, we not only had to do some theoretical work ourselves but switch from looking at what goes on within one field (Bourdieu's own usual approach) to unpicking how multiple fields and their effects shape what goes on in individual lifeworlds. This is a temporary shift of focus rather than a permanent one, dependent upon the research task at hand, and its utility is not confined to the sociology of time. Bourdieu's tools may indeed illuminate components of the social structuring of temporality, therefore, but examination of the latter has also made clear that the former need to be deployed in novel ways if light is to be cast on elements of the social world otherwise hiding in the shadows.

## References

- Adam, B. (1990) *Time and Social Theory*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Adam, B. (1995) *Timewatch*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Adam, B. (2004) *Time*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Adkins, L. (2011) 'Practice as Temporalization' in S. Susen and B.S. Turner (Eds) *The Legacy of Pierre Bourdieu*. London: Anthem Press, pp. 347-65.
- Alexander, J. (1995) *Fin de Siecle Social Theory*. London: Verso.
- Appadurai, A. (1996) *Modernity at Large*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Archer, M. (1995) *Realist Social Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bhaskar, R. (1978) *The Possibility of Naturalism*. London: Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. (1963) 'The Attitude of the Algerian Peasant Toward Time' in J. Pitt-Rivers (Ed.) *Mediterranean Countrymen*. Paris: Mouton and Co, pp. 55-72.

- Bourdieu, P. (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1979) *Algeria 1960*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction*. London: Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986) 'The Force of Law' *Hastings Law Journal*, 38: 209-48.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990a) *The Logic of Practice*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990b) *In Other Words*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991) *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bourdieu, P. (1993a) *Sociology in Question*. London: Sage.
- Bourdieu, P. (1993b) *The Field of Cultural Production*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bourdieu, P. (1996a) *The Rules of Art*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bourdieu, P. (1996b) *The State Nobility*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bourdieu, P. (1997) 'The Forms of Capital' in A. H. Halsey, H. Lauder, P. Brown and A. Wells (Eds) *Education: Culture, Economy, Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 46-58.
- Bourdieu, P. (1998a) *Practical Reason*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bourdieu, P. (1998b) *Acts of Resistance*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bourdieu, P. (1999) 'The Social Conditions of the International Circulation of Ideas' in R. Shusterman (Ed) *Bourdieu: A Critical Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 220-8.
- Bourdieu, P. (2000a) *Pascalian Meditations*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bourdieu, P. (2000b) 'The Biographical Illusion' in P du Gay, J. Evans and P. Redman (Eds) *Identity: A Reader*. London: Sage, pp. 297-303.
- Bourdieu, P. (2001) *Masculine Domination*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bourdieu, P. (2005a) *The Social Structures of the Economy*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bourdieu, P. (2005b) 'Habitus' in J. Hillier and E. Rooksby (Eds) *Habitus: A Sense of Place*. Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 43-9.
- Bourdieu, P. (2008) *The Bachelors' Ball*. Cambridge: Polity.



- Bourdieu, P. (2014) *On the State*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L. (1992) *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bourdieu, P., Chamboredon, J.-C. and Passeron, J.-C. (1991) *The Craft of Sociology*. New York: de Gruyter.
- Bridge, G. (2001) 'Bourdieu, Rational Action and the Time-space Strategy of Gentrification' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 26(2): 205-16.
- Burchell, B., Lapido, D. and Wilkinson, F. (Eds) (2002) *Job Insecurity and Work Intensification*. London: Routledge.
- Cass, N., Shove, E. and Urry, J. (2003) *Changing Infrastructures, Measuring Socio-spatial Inclusion/Exclusion: Final Report to the Department for Transport*. Lancaster: Lancaster University.
- Cass, N., Shove, E. and Urry, J. (2005) 'Social Exclusion, Mobility and Access' *The Sociological Review*, 53(3): 539-55.
- Castells, M. (1996) *The Rise of the Network Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Clausen, M. (1987) *Frantz Jourdain and the Samaritaine*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- Crompton, R. and Lyonette, C. (2006) 'Work-Life 'Balance' in Europe' *Acta Sociologica*, 49(4): 379-93.
- Crossley, N. (2011) *Towards Relational Sociology*. London: Routledge.
- Derks, D., Bakker, A., Peters, P. and van Wingerden, P. (2016) 'Work-Related Smartphone Use, Work-Family Conflict and Family Role Performance' *Human Relations*, 69(5): 1045-68.
- Dermott, E. (2008) *Intimate Fatherhood*. London: Routledge.
- Giddens, A. (1984) *The Constitution of Society*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and Self-Identity*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Grenfell, M. (2006) 'Bourdieu in the Field' *French Cultural Studies*, 17(2): 223-39.

- Grenfell, M. (2010) 'Working with *Habitus* and *Field*' in A. Warde and E. Silva (Eds) *Cultural Analysis and Bourdieu's Legacy*. London: Routledge, pp. 4-27.
- Harvey, D. (1989) *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hassid, J. and Watson, B. (2014) 'State of Mind: Power, Time Zones and Symbolic State Centralization' *Time & Society*, 23(2): 167-94.
- Heidegger, M. (2001) *Being and Time*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hochschild, A. (1997) *The Time Bind*. New York: Henry Holt.
- Hochschild, A. (2005) 'On the Edge of the Time Bind' *Social Research*, 72(2): 339-54.
- Hochschild, A. (2012) *The Outsourced Self*. New York: Metropolitan Books.
- Husserl, E. (1991) *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Jenkins, R. (2002) *Pierre Bourdieu* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). London: Routledge.
- Knulst, W and van den Broeck, A. (1998) 'Do Time-use Surveys Succeed in Measuring 'Busyness'?' *Society and Leisure*, 21(2): 563-72.
- Lahire, B. (2015) 'The Limits of the Field' in M. Hilgers and E. Mangez (Eds) *Bourdieu's Theory of Social Fields*. London: Routledge, pp. 62-101.
- May, J. and Thrift, N. (Eds.) (2001) *TimeSpace*. London: Routledge.
- Ogbonna, E. and Harris, L. (2004) 'Work Intensification and Emotional Labour among UK University Lecturers' *Organization Studies*, 25(7): 1185-1203.
- Ringer, F. (1997) *Max Weber's Methodology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Robson, K. (2009) 'Teenage Time Use as Investment in Cultural Capital' in K. Robson and C. Sanders (Eds) *Quantifying Theory: Pierre Bourdieu*. Dordrecht: Springer, pp. 105-16.
- Rosa, H. (2003) 'Social Acceleration' *Constellations*, 10(1): 3-33.
- Rotter, R. (2016) 'Waiting in the Asylum Determination Process: Just an Empty Interlude?' *Time & Society*, 25(1): 80-101.

- Sayer, A. (2005) *The Moral Significance of Class*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schutz, A. (1962) *Collected Papers, Volume 1*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Southerton, D. (2003) ‘‘Squeezing Time’: Allocating practices, coordinating networks and scheduling society’ *Time & Society*, 12(1): 5-25.
- Southerton, D. and Tomlinson, M. (2005) ‘Pressed for Time – the differential impacts of a ‘time squeeze’ *The Sociological Review*, 53(2): 215-39.
- Sullivan, O. (2008) ‘Busyness, Status Distinction and Consumption Strategies for the Income Rich, Time Poor’ *Time & Society*, 17(1): 5-26.
- Swartz, D. (1997) *Culture and Power*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Swartz, D. (2013) ‘Metaprinciples for Sociological Research in a Bourdieusian Perspective’ in P. Gorski (Ed.) *Bourdieu and Historical Analysis*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 19-35.
- Thrift, N. (1981) ‘Owners’ Time and Own Time’ in A. Pred (Ed.) *Space and Time in Geography*. Lund: CWK Glerup, pp. 56-84.
- Urry, J. (2000) *Sociology Beyond Societies*. London: Routledge.
- Urry, J. (2007) *Mobilities*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Van den Scott, L.-J. (2014) ‘Beyond the Time Crunch: New Directions in the Sociology of Time and Work’ *Sociology Compass*, 8(5): 478-90.
- Vostal, F. (2014) ‘Academic Life in the Fast Lane’ *Time & Society*, 24(1): 71-95.
- Wajcman, J. (2015) *Pressed for Time: The Acceleration of Life in Digital Capitalism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Weber, M. (1949) *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*. New York: The Free Press.
- Zerubavel, E. (1979) *Patterns of Time in Hospital Life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.