Shamus Rahman KHAN, 2011, *Privilege. The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School*, Princeton & Oxford, Princeton University Press, 232 p.

Sylvain Bordiec

Édition électronique

URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/ress/2438>

DOI : 10.4000/ress.2438

ISSN : 1663-4446

Éditeur

Librairie Droz

Édition imprimée

Date de publication : 1 juin 2013

Pagination : 238-240

ISBN : 978-2-600-01749-7

ISSN : 0048-8046

Référence électronique

Sylvain Bordiec, « Shamus Rahman KHAN, 2011, *Privilege. The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School*, Princeton & Oxford, Princeton University Press, 232 p. », *Revue européenne des sciences sociales* [En ligne], 51-1 | 2013, mis en ligne le 10 mai 2013, consulté le 22 septembre 2020. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/ress/2438> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/ress.2438>

Ce document a été généré automatiquement le 22 septembre 2020.

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- 1 Ten years before his one year's investigation to St. Paul's School, the author has been a student in this elite college which was created in 1855. It's in the continuity of a familial upward social mobility the author entered into this institution, encouraged by an Irish mother and by a father who was born in Pakistan and who knew poverty before he became a doctor. Khan comes back here as a sociologist having got theoretical tools to think about the implications of his religious culture, skin colour and social origins in his St. Paul's experience. Observations and interviews with students, staff and faculty members constitute his main data : "Ethnography allows us to see the culture in ways that surveys can not" (p. 204). That's being said, it's about the elite culture. To study it, the author mobilizes the Pierre Bourdieu's theory about the social's embodiment by individuals. Like Bourdieu, Khan considers that Sociology of Elites is a relevant field of study to understand the inequalities between men and women, between white and non white and, as well, between wealthy and poor. In the 2000's, these persistent inequalities in industrial societies take place in democracies in which values of meritocracy have imposed in the same time that the individuals triumphed above the collectives. These considerations guide the exploration of St. Paul's School the author invites us to enlighten the way that "the new elite" (p. 11) is prepared to rule the world.
- 2 In the introduction and then in the first chapter titled "The new elite", the author replaces St. Paul's School into the American history of the elites colleges. According to Khan, until a few decades ago, such institutions served to "the masters of our economy and government" to pass their "power on the next generation" (p. 12). Then, from

1960, this type of institutions has been opening to non rich and non white adolescents. Now inheritance and class solidarity are not anymore sufficient to access to the top of the social hierarchy.

- 3 A second chapter titled "Finding one's place" teaches us that St. Paul aims to develop among students act skills. In this Episcopalian school, we can suppose that these possibilities of development are linked to the characteristics of the faculty and staff members. However, Khan restricts himself to consider that St. Paul adults "instill in elite students their importance of their lives and their worthiness" (p. 65) without paying a real attention to the religious, social, racial and gender properties of these different people.
- 4 A third chapter titled "The ease of privilege" explores the lessons of ease – "the true mark of privilege that is essential to be an elite" (p. 112) –, which organize the life at St. Paul. Thus, "meals are obviously a training session" (p. 79). The "good behavior" students learn to adopt in this situation would be one of the specific cultural resources that St. Paul gives through "repeated experiences" (p. 82). Unfortunately, such descriptions don't allow understanding the extent to which it differs from the familial and school lessons they benefited in the past. Here the skills seem not to transfer (p. 91) on the contrary of what happens for the *Grandes Écoles* students in France studied by Pierre Bourdieu in his book *State Nobility* and who developed dispositions that advantage them before they entered into these institutions. Moreover "learning the lessons demand that students remake themselves... most of students are happy to do so..." (p. 112). Khan asserts more than he proves this deletion of the past.
- 5 In the fourth chapter, "Gender and the performance of privilege" (p. 35), the author focuses on the links between the embodiments of privilege displaying the right corporeal marks of belonging and sexuality. The author makes a point of that "girls must regulate their sexuality. But such regulation is the opposite of ease" (p. 40). These tensions reveal that the girls and the boys are unequal in the struggle to belong to the school.
- 6 The fifth and last chapter titled "Learning Beowulf and Jaws" is about the kind of intellectual work which is valued at St. Paul. Students are asked to be "omnivorous" (p. 151) and to think big. However, according to the author "most of students do as little as possible" (p. 179). This general weak involvement doesn't prevent them to believe in their intellectual power, which is favored by the efforts the institution makes – it has a budget of 178 000 dollars per person for its 500 students – to cultivate the sense of their self-importance. Khan seems to intend to show that the principal skill which is learned by students at St. Paul is the capacity to give the impression that they work hard and consequently they deserve their dominant positions. The difficulties black people and girls sometimes encounter to find the "good way" of being in this school leads Khan to emphasize the racial and gender obstacles to the ease (p. 187).
- 7 In the conclusion, the author claims that "by becoming more democratic, the elite have undercut the power of the weak within our nation" (p. 199). Admittedly, St. Paul contributes to this process but it's not its primary generator. If through this ethnography Khan contributes to the knowledge of how elites "have adapted to the changing landscape of the twenty first century" (p. 193), perhaps doesn't he pay enough attention to the fact that it is the elites themselves who make and perpetuate the social rules. Viewed in this light, this school exists to protect their advantaged positions. The Khan's ethnography recalls us the sociological study of the genesis of

this type of protective institutions remains to do. If the author raises as well crucial questions about the minds shaping of the elites, his perception of the transformation power of these colleges seems overestimated. By considering that student remake themselves, he puts into question the theoretical knowledge of the temporal interdependence between the socialization sequences during the individual's biographies. For this former student at St. Paul, the difficulty of the epistemological rupture is enormous, what reveals his inclination to consider that this institution is so particular that it's able to convert its students to a new vision of the world. His analysis would have earned to use the "fields theory" of Pierre Bourdieu, a theory which allows considering the implications of the inscription of St. Paul's School in the field of the American educational institutions. Which effects above their future life have some students when they are unable to embody the ease ? This very question is significant of the new ways of reflection that Khan draws about the conditions of social success in our – exclusively from an official point of view – opened societies.

AUTEURS

SYLVAIN BORDIEC

Université Paris 8 Vincennes-Saint-Denis – CSU