I: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SOCIOLOGY: MARX MEETS BOURDIEU

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Fools rush in where angels fear to tread. To critically engage the works of Pierre Bourdieu is a daunting if not foolhardy task. Pierre Bourdieu was and is the greatest sociologist of our era. He is uniquely regarded as a contemporary founding father of sociology, with the stature of Marx, Weber and Durkheim. Like them he is steeped in philosophy, in history, in methodology, and like them he has a developed theory of contemporary society – its reproduction and its dynamics. Furthermore, like them his works are relentlessly empirical ranging from work on photography, painting, literature, sport, to the analysis of contemporary stratification, education, the state, and language. His writings straddle sociology and anthropology, in particular his treatment of peasant family strategies in the villages of the Béarn where he was born, and his Algeria books written during the period of anti-colonial struggles where he began his sociological career. His methods range from sophisticated statistical analysis to in depth interviewing and participant observation. His meta-theoretical innovations, relentlessly applied to different historical contexts and different spheres of society, revolve around the development of a theory of fields, capital and habitus. There has been no sociologist with his originality or scope.

If there is one theme that threads through his work it is the unmasking of domination, and in particular the analysis of symbolic domination – domination that is
not recognized as such. While intellectuals denounce physical violence throughout the world, they do not appreciate that they, too, are the perpetrators of violence, symbolic violence that conceals the taken-for-granted – “doxic” -- domination, incorporated in bodies and language. It is a violence whose legitimate use is monopolized by the state no less than physical violence. In examining both the dominant and the dominated, he turns the spotlight not only on peasants and workers, not only on different fractions of the dominant class and petty bourgeoisie, not only on painters and writers, but also on the academics who perpetuate symbolic violence. Bourdieu reveals what we are up to behind the screens of objectivity and science, and points to the ways we deceive ourselves as well as others. The sociology that we apply to others must equally be applied to ourselves. His insistence on reflexivity is relentless, claiming that its purpose is not to denounce fellow scientists but to liberate them from the scholastic fallacies that spring from the condition under which they produce knowledge, namely their freedom from material necessity. For Bourdieu, to better understand the conditions of the production of knowledge is a condition for producing better knowledge.

But Bourdieu not only turned inward, he also turned outward. Indeed, he turned inward in order to better turn outward. While doggedly defending sociology as science, a science that breaks with common sense, a science that was often inaccessible to common sense, Bourdieu was also the greatest public sociologist of his era – a spokesman on so many important issues not just in France but also in the wider world. He became more outspoken as his career and stature advanced, developing his own magazine, a European review of books, and a popular book series. He was frequently in the public eye, often
attacking the very media that gave him access to publics. He became an unsparing critic of market fundamentalism that was invading and distorting fields of cultural and intellectual production. While much of his sociology is hard to follow, and he seemed to enjoy making it hard to follow, his later more political writings of the 1990s reached polemical force. His best selling book, *The Weight of the World*, was an enormous transcontinental collaborative project that describes the suffering of the dominated classes in the language of the sufferers themselves. Such was his celebrity, his death in 2002 covered the front page of *Le Monde* – he had become a global public sociologist.

It is here, on the grounds of public sociology, that I wish to enter a dialogue with Bourdieu. What does it mean to do public sociology when, as he claimed, the dominated classes do not have the capacity to grasp the sociology of their subjugation and the dominant classes are antagonistic to the message of symbolic violence? How can the publics of a critical sociology extend beyond sociologists and allied intellectuals, an international of intellectuals as he liked to say? The paradox lies in the contradiction between Bourdieu’s theory that suggests that the audience for sociology is severely circumscribed and his committed political practice that shows him to be one of the leading public critics of his time. For Bourdieu what then is the relation between intellectuals and their publics? This question will dominate the whole series of lectures.

*Bourdieu through a Marxist Lens*

To approach the work of Pierre Bourdieu directly is simply impossible. The approach has to be circuitous. He himself always argued that to read an author is to first
place him or her in the context of the field of production – competitors, allies and antagonists who are taken for granted by the author and invisibly shape his or her practice. In *Rules of Art* Bourdieu shows how Flaubert had an uncanny appreciation for the structure of the incipient field of literature, an appreciation that enabled him to bring this field into gestation. Clearly Bourdieu, secretly or even unconsciously, identified with Flaubert in his own project to bring forth a true sociological field, first national and then global.

Yet Bourdieu never undertook an examination of the field of sociology in which he was indeed a if not the central player -- the French field. The nearest he gets is *Homo Academicus* which is an examination of the French academic field as a whole – an examination of the relations among disciplines but not the disciplinary field itself. For all his insistence on field analysis and notwithstanding his all too brief self-analysis of his own separation from philosophy, there are clear limits to Bourdieu’s reflexivity. In his conception of the field of sociology he places himself at the center and all competitors are peremptorily dismissed or relegated to minor footnotes. It is my task here to resurrect a few of those fallen idols, restore their voices so that they can argue back to Bourdieu. These conversations with Bourdieu are my construction of how a succession of now deceased social theorists might engage the claims of Bourdieu. I bring them back to life to meet Bourdieu.

I cannot recreate the entire field of sociology within which Bourdieu was embedded. That would be a task far beyond my capabilities, covering as it would
philosophers, linguists, literary and artistic critics as well as sociologists and anthropologists, indeed the entire French intellectual field. Moreover, it a sign of his Olympian status among the gods of social theory that one can pick almost any major social thinker, starting with Weber, Durkheim and Simmel, and bring him or her into a fruitful dialogue with Bourdieu. So, I have a chosen a distinctive group of social theorists who wander like ghosts through Bourdieu’s opus, because, unlike Bourdieu, they believe the dominated, or some fraction thereof, can indeed, under certain conditions, perceive and appreciate the nature of their own subordination. I am, of course, thinking of the Marxist tradition which Bourdieu engages without so much as recognizing it, even to the point of denying it a place in his intellectual field. In staging these conversations with Bourdieu, I have chosen Marxists with distinctive perspectives on the place awarded to intellectuals in social theory and in public life, namely Gramsci, Fanon, and De Beauvoir. I begin with Marx whose Achilles heel is undoubtedly his absent theory of intellectuals and I end with C Wright Mills who erected a theoretical architecture very similar to Bourdieu’s.

While Marx did not pay serious attention to the question of intellectuals – their place in society or their labor process -- his theory of capitalism, as a self-reproducing and self-destroying system of production, is nonetheless deeply embedded in Bourdieu’s treatment of fields of cultural and intellectual production. The underlying structure of Bourdieu’s is similar to Marx and Engels’s engagement with Hegelian thought laid out in *The German Ideology*, but Bourdieu carries it forward in a very different direction, toward the study of cultural fields rather than the economic field. From Marx we turn to
Gramsci and his theory of intellectuals that turns on the understanding of hegemony – a notion at first glance similar but in the final analysis profoundly different from Bourdieu’s symbolic domination. The third conversation is an attempt to adjudicate between Bourdieu and Gramsci. It examines strategic action within fields conceived in terms of Bourdieu’s widely used metaphor of the game. Here I will invoke my own analysis of workplace games under capitalism and socialism in order to ask under what conditions workers can see through games and beyond games – a possibility of which Bourdieu had only the slightest inkling.

We then turn to Bourdieu’s early writings on Algeria where the silenced antagonist is Frantz Fanon and his theory of the place of intellectuals in anti-colonial struggles, where they can be found supporting the National Bourgeoisie or the revolutionary peasantry. Curiously, in opposition to Fanon, we find Bourdieu to be the more orthodox Marxist, proclaiming the revolutionary potential of the Algerian working class. Though some have traced the continuity of Bourdieu’s writing from his Algerian works onwards, his treatment of the Algerian working class appears to be very different to his treatment of the French working class in his magnum opus, *Distinction*. It is hard to reconcile the two. From Fanon we turn to another meeting, this time between De Beauvoir and Bourdieu around the question of gender domination. Here we see an astonishing convergence around the importance of symbolic power, but De Beauvoir challenges Bourdieu in crediting female intellectuals with the capacity to see through and contend with gender subjugation. Finally, we turn to C Wright Mills whose theories of stratification, politics, publics and intellectuals closely approximate that of Bourdieu. As
the lecture title suggests, he is the American Bourdieu before Bourdieu, and, indeed, we can find many favorable references to Mills in Bourdieu’s writings.

**Bourdieu and The German Ideology**

At the core of Bourdieu’s theoretical project lies the suppression of false oppositions and the elevation of one distinction in particular, that between the *logic of theory* and the *logic of practice*, or as he often says, referring to Marx’s critique of Hegel, the distinction between the things of logic and the logic of things. Concretely, this means that the conditions necessary for the production of scientific knowledge – the academy and its competitive freedoms – are profoundly different from the conditions under which everyday knowledge is produced. There is, therefore, a rupture between everyday knowledge, folk understandings, and scientific or scholastic knowledge. Too often the distinction is broken -- the rupture is ruptured -- from two sides, on the one side by those who project science on to everyday life (Levi-Strauss, economists) as though the people somehow follow the principles discovered in the academy, and on the other side by those who reduce science to everyday knowledge (symbolic interactionists, ethnomethodologists), as though there is nothing other than folk theory, self-understanding. Bourdieu keeps on returning to and deepening the distinction between theory and practice, starting with *Outline of a Theory of Practice* – itself revised a number of times after the first French edition of 1972 before it appears in English in 1977 – followed by *The Logic of Practice* [1980 (1990)] and culminates in *Pascalian Meditations* [1997 (2000)] as his final theoretical overview.
This is the same point Marx and Engels make in *The German Ideology* and the companion piece, *Theses on Feuerbach*. Indeed, the architecture of Bourdieu’s *Pascalian Meditations* bears an uncanny resemblance to these early writings of Marx and Engels, where they settle accounts with their philosophical inheritance, *German Idealism*. In the Hegelian tradition history is the unfolding of consciousness, history is the history of ideas, a self-glorification of the intellectual’s intellect. Marx and Engels express their contempt:

As we hear from German ideologists, Germany has in the last few years gone through an unparalleled revolution. The decomposition of the Hegelian philosophy … has developed into a universal ferment into which all the “powers of the past” are swept. … It was a revolution besides which the French Revolution was child’s play, a world struggle beside which the struggles of the Diadochi appear insignificant. Principles ousted one another, heroes of the mind overthrew each other with unheard-of rapidity and in the three years 1842-45 more of the past was swept away in Germany than at other times in three centuries. All this is supposed to have taken place in the realm of pure thought.(147)

Bourdieu writes in parallel fashion: “It is the typical illusion of the *lector*, who can regard an academic commentary as a political act or the critique of texts as a feat of resistance, and experience revolutions in the order of words as radical revolutions in the order of things” (p.3, PM).

The problem, Marx and Engels say, is that German philosophers have cut themselves off from the world and thus imagine their products are of earth shattering importance. “It has not occurred to any one of these philosophers to inquire into the connection of German philosophy with German reality, the relation of their criticism to their own material surroundings” (149). The root of this self-deception lies with the division of mental and manual labor after which “consciousness can really flatter itself
that it something other than consciousness of existing practice, that it really represents something without representing something real,” (159) and so pure theory is born. The Young Hegelians are no different from their master, opposing one set of phrases to another set of other phrases without ever confronting the “real existing world.” They think they are so radical in bringing Hegel down from heaven to earth, whereas they actually reproduce the Hegelian philosophy, only now instead of some ethereal spirit they worship “man” in idealistic form, species being, and not in his practical existence. Marx and Engels propose, therefore, a real epistemological break, demanding a new point of departure. They insist on starting from real premises of history, that men and women in order to survive have to produce the means of existence (and also have to procreate) and as they do these things they enter into relations with one another. Only out of this practical existence does consciousness emerge.

The parallels with Bourdieu are uncanny! Bourdieu elaborates certain “scholastic fallacies,” visions of the world that are the projections of the intellectuals’ conditions of existence, namely a certain leisureed existence free from material want, what he calls “skholè,” which is none other than an elaboration of Marx’s division of mental and manual labor. Not appreciating the peculiar conditions of their own existence, they tend to universalize their own scholastic point of view as in Habermas’s ideal of undistorted communication or in rational choice theory. The leitmotif of Bourdieu’s entire opus may be found in Marx’s first Thesis on Feuerbach which is also the epigraph for *Outline of a Theory of Practice*:

*The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism (that of Feuerbach included) is that the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the “object or of contemplation”, but not as*
sensuous human activity, practice”, not subjectively. Hence, in contradistinction to materialism, the “active” side was developed abstractly by idealism -- which, of course, does not know real, sensuous activity as such. Feuerbach wants sensuous objects, really distinct from the thought objects, but he does not conceive human activity itself as “objective” activity.

Materialism, à la Feuerbach, adopts a contemplative stance toward the world as an external object, leaving the active stance to idealism, but only “abstractly” since idealism only recognizes ideas, consciousness but not practical activity, which Marx reduced to economic activity, transforming nature into means of existence. Similarly, Bourdieu’s logic of practice is expressly designed to transcend the divide between materialism and idealism – a division that is itself a function of the scholastic condition -- by focusing on “practical activity,” that is production of things, but not just material things, cultural things too.

In other words, where Marx reduces practical activity to economic activity, and on that basis constructs history as a succession of modes of production, Bourdieu extends the idea of practical activity to cultural and intellectual production. This is where Bourdieu draws on Marx but also draws away from Marx. As an analysis of the economy from the standpoint of production, Marx’s theory of capitalism becomes the template for Bourdieu’s analysis of cultural production – literature, painting, journalism, and academic disciplines. What Marx offers is a theory of capitalism as a system that reproduces itself of itself, but in so doing generates a dynamics leading to its self-destruction, a system which also becomes a terrain of struggle. These are, indeed, the elements of Bourdieu’s theory of fields – that focus on social relations that preexist actors, on strategic action of agents seeking to maximize (symbolic) profit -- strategic
action that is shaped first, by the field itself, its “rules,” and, second, by the distribution of field specific capital. As in Marx, so in Bourdieu, strategic action easily becomes struggle to conserve or subvert the dominant powers within any given field.

Where Marx is interested in a *historical succession* of economic fields (modes of production), Bourdieu is interested in the *simultaneous coexistence* of different fields, economic, cultural, political, etc. Therefore, he sees not just one form of capital but a series of field specific capitals and asks questions (but rarely offers answers) about the convertibility of one form of capital into another. There are unelaborated intimations that the economic field dominates other fields but for the most part Bourdieu examines the connection between fields through the sedimented effects of fields on the individual’s habitus, the “perceptions and appreciations” inscribed in the human body and soul. Since Marx is really only concerned with the dynamics of one field, he focuses more on its internal logic rather than the effects on individuals (workers and capitalists) of other fields.

**Economic and Cultural Domination**

The strange parallels continue. In taking the model of Marx’s *Capital* to cultural and political spheres, Bourdieu develops another section in *The German Ideology* -- the famous and much debated passage about the ruling ideas being the ideas of the ruling class.

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental
production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental 
production are subject to it. (Emphasis added. p172)

Marx and Engels are here suggesting that the dominated classes far from developing their own “ideas” (“consciousness”) are “subject” to the ideas of the dominant class. A great deal rides on the meaning of “subject to it” and whether it precludes what Marx describes elsewhere as the development of class consciousness through class struggle. Although I cannot find Bourdieu referring to this passage, nevertheless he frequently refers to the culture of the dominated class as a dominated culture. Moreover, here lies the source of Bourdieu’s criticism of Marxist intellectuals whose conditions of existence lead them to deplore the conditions of the working class, whereas the working class has adapted to those conditions, making a virtue out of a necessity.

Taking the dominant ideology thesis as point of departure one is led, therefore, to examine the production of those ruling ideas of the ruling class – precisely Bourdieu’s project. Distinction distinguishes between different fractions of the dominant class, which has a chiliastic structure dividing those high in economic capital from those high in cultural capital, a distinction between economic accumulation and the production of ideology. In the paragraph following the quote above Marx and Engels make exactly the same point:

The division of labour .. manifests itself also in the ruling class as the division of mental and manual labour, so that inside this class one part appears as thinkers of the class (its active conceptive ideologists, who make the perfecting of the illusion of the class about itself their chief source of livelihood), while the others’ attitude to these ideas and illusions is more passive and receptive, because they are in reality the active members of the class and have less time to make
up the illusions and ideas about themselves. Within this class this cleavage can even develop into a certain opposition and hostility between the two parts…(p.173)

Marx and Engels are describing what Bourdieu analyzes as the struggle between the dominant fraction of the dominant classes and the dominated fraction of the dominant classes.

If Marx and Engels never explore how the “conceptive ideologists create the illusion of the class about itself,” this is the substantive project that absorbs Bourdieu both in the way culture is produced and in the way its transmission and consumption disguises the domination of the dominant classes. Here we come full circle, back to Bourdieu’s adoption of *Capital* as the template for studying the history of the artistic and cultural fields of production -- literature, painting, photography, journalism and so forth. But here lies the paradox. The symbolic power of a cultural product lies in the autonomy of its field of production so that the distinction its consumption bestows is seen to be natural and without class foundation. Bourdieu is adamant in defending this autonomy against distortion by state regulation and, especially, market forces – an autonomy that cements inequality in both consumption and production, an autonomy that supports the illusion that cultural and intellectual production are without conditions, an autonomy that engenders the idea of pure taste and mystifies domination.

Bourdieu justifies the protection of autonomous fields by his utopian belief in extending universal access to the conditions of universality as opposed to valorizing a popular art, which for him is a false art. Indeed popular culture is often the Trojan Horse of market forces, subverting the cultural field. As we shall see, time and again Bourdieu
defends the autonomy of fields as the condition for the production of cultural accomplishments of universal value, yet at the same time this autonomy reproduces and mystifies the domination he denounces.

**What Happened to Exploitation?**

So far I have focused on the way Bourdieu elaborated Marx’s ideas, yet in one fundamental way Bourdieu deviates from Marx in his appropriation of the model of field found in *Das Capital* – specifically in the suppression of the notion of exploitation so central to Marx’s analysis of capitalism. Central to Marx’s analysis of capitalism is the double relation: exploitation (relations of distribution, ownership relations, relations of production) versus production (the labor process, division of labor, relations in production). Bourdieu’s analysis of fields tends to collapse these two relations, reducing division of labor to possession of capital and thus eclipsing the idea of exploitation, which, at least in the Marxian scheme, drives class struggle.

We can see this most obviously in Bourdieu’s one notable analysis of the economy, *The Social Structures of the Economy* – his analysis of the structuring of production and consumption of housing. Here the field of production is presented as a competitive struggle among enterprises, how they carve out distinct markets, national and local, mason built versus industrial housing, appealing thereby to a stratified consumer market. Much of the book is an analysis of how the state structures both production and consumption and thereby creates homologous fields that dovetail into one another. For Bourdieu capital, both economic and symbolic, determines the place of an agent in a field
capital is possessed and accumulated by agents in their competitive struggle, but it bares no relation to any concept of exploitation. Capital is a relation but it is relation among capitalists not between capitalists and workers.

Clearly, Bourdieu’s analysis of the economy is designed to bring into relief its cultural moment, and what better object to do this than housing, which in all societies is simultaneously a material and a cultural object. One could reinsert notions of exploitation back into the production of housing by considering the details of the labor process and there are indeed hints of this in The Social Structures of the Economy. More interesting, however, is the place of exploitation in cultural and intellectual fields. When writing about the second dimension of cultural fields Bourdieu focuses on challenges from avant garde art, he does not see the relationship between the dominant and the subordinate in terms of exploitation but in terms of a struggle to dominate the field by defining its terms.

How can one incorporate a Marxian duality into relations within a field -- a recognition of both domination and exploitation? Here I want to turn to the field of sociology. This is important because, as I said above, for all his concern with reflexivity, Bourdieu never gives serious attention to his own field – the field of sociology. Homo Academicus compares disciplines within the French academic field, demarcating the more heteronomous fields of law and engineering, closely connected to fields beyond the academy, from more autonomous fields in the arts and sciences. Within the latter he offers a status ranking of the disciplines which he suggests is homologous to the prestige and standing of the educational qualifications, itself related to class origins, of the
corresponding students and teachers. Even within the humanities and social sciences, some disciplines are more autonomous than others, so that sociology, as a pariah discipline with oppositional politics, is less likely to be courted by the dominant classes.

If *Homo Academicus* provides one frame for looking at the field of sociology, Bourdieu’s analysis of the scientific field provides a second frame. Here he argues that science advances through competition for symbolic profits within the academic field. At one point in *Pascalian Meditations* he likens competition in the scientific field to guerrilla warfare. But as competition intensifies, there is a concentration of capital in the hands of ever fewer dominant agents. So long as the field is autonomous this is not problematic. There is always renewal and innovation as pretenders to the throne – young successors – challenge incumbents. Whether in *Homo Academicus* or in the analysis of the scientific field exploitation enters at best peripherally.

**The Field of Sociology**

Let us now consider the field of US sociology. How might we introduce the Marxist distinction between the division of labor – the production of different types of knowledge – and “property relations” or the distribution of academic capital within which they develop. First, how might we characterize the division of labor in sociology? We can begin with Bourdieu’s distinction between autonomous and heteronymous poles of a field. That is to say we have to distinguish between the sociology produced for fellow sociologists on the one side and sociology produced for consumption beyond the

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1 “The specificity of the scientific field and the social conditions of the progress of reason.” *Social Science Information* 14(6), 19-47 (1975)
academy on the other -- the academic and extra-academic audience. Bourdieu is suspicious of the latter, fearing its corrupting influence, but nonetheless recognizes that if sociology does not have a wider audience we might as well pack our bags. He certainly lost no opportunity in communicating with broader audiences.

This leads to a second dimension of the division of labor. Bourdieu was scathing about sociologists who were servants of power, experts in the service of the dominant class who produce what we may call policy sociology. Instead, Bourdieu favored addressing broad publics over issues of fundamental significance to society, what we may call a public sociology. The difference is an old one, central to Weber and the Frankfurt School, between, on the one side, instrumental knowledge that takes goals or ends as given and is concerned with the most efficient means to achieve those ends, and on the other side, reflexive knowledge that interrogates goals and ends in a discursive manner, what Max Weber called value discussion. Reflexive knowledge calls into question the foundations of instrumental knowledge -- public sociology raises issues that policy sociology forecloses. The instrumental-reflexive distinction applies not only to the extra-academic audience but also to the hermetically sealed academic world. Here we distinguish between, on the one side, the puzzle solving within competing research programs, which takes for granted the moral, theoretical and methodological assumptions of research programs, that is, the doxa of professional sociology, and, on the other side, critical sociology which examines those assumptions, but doing so first and foremost within the academic setting. Here we find the critical sociology of Gouldner, Mills,
Sorokin, Lynd and others who were indeed very critical of the unstated presumptions of professional sociology. Table 1 represents division of sociological labor.

**TABLE 1: THE DIVISION OF SOCIOLOGICAL LABOR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrumental Knowledge</th>
<th>Academic Audience</th>
<th>Extra-Academic Audience</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PROFessional</td>
<td>POLICY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflexive Knowledge</td>
<td>CRITICAL</td>
<td>PUBLIC</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The first move in the Marxian argument against Bourdieu is to distinguish the division of sociological labor from the distribution of field-specific capital, in this case academic capital. The stakes in the academic game are recognition from one’s peers and in this regard academic capital is very much a function of the ranking of the department in which one is hired and then the ranking of the department in which one is trained. Of course, each individual has his or her own academic capital based on publications, prizes, awards etc. but these are closely related to departmental affiliation. Moreover, preliminary analysis suggests that those who specialize in instrumental knowledge (professional and policy) tend to have been trained in elite departments, whereas those who focus more on reflexive knowledge (critical and public) tend to teach in non-elite departments. There are some interesting cross-overs, faculty from elite departments actively participating in and supporting public sociology and faculty trained in non-elite departments actively advocating and practicing professional sociology. They play an important role in the struggles within the field.
The second move in the Marxian argument against Bourdieu is to recognize the distribution of academic capital as a relation of exploitation. That is to say the prerogatives of doing research in elite departments as well as the commensurately higher pay depends upon the extra burden of work and lower wages of those in non-elite departments. This inequality of work load and reward is justified on the basis of a meritocracy of talent – the best sociologists get distributed to the best departments – but this obscures the exploitative relation within the disciplinary field as a whole as well as the advantages bestowed by department of training. The disparaging of critical and public sociology as poor sociology conceals a relation of exploitation between elite and non-elite departments.

The third move in the argument against Bourdieu is to question his notion of a scientific field, which would be limited to professional sociology. His analysis confines the struggles within the field to competition among researchers and succession struggles between established researchers and the new generation. He would not see beyond the scientific field of professional sociology to the disciplinary field that embraces not just professional and policy sociology but also critical and public sociology, and thus not just elite departments but also non-elite departments. What is at stake here is the very definition of the field – scientific versus disciplinary. He would confine the field to the elite departments where scientific research is concentrated, directing attacks at fellow members of the scientific field who sell their expertise to the state or corporate capital. He does not even entertain the work of public and critical sociology conducted in non-
elite departments. Given his criticisms of activist or organic public sociology, he would
be very critical of the departments where this takes place – the non-elite departments.

From Classification Struggle to Class Struggle

The fourth move against Bourdieu comes with expansion of the scope of the
struggles from succession struggles to struggles between dominant and dominated over
the valorization of different forms of sociology. In the recent debates over public
sociology we see the clash between conservation and subversion strategies. Dominant
groups, sociologists trained in an elite department and teaching in an elite department
have resisted participation in the struggle, relying on their symbolic domination that is
domination that goes unrecognized – they are the talented elite, produce the best
scientific sociology, and thereby give legitimacy to the discipline. They are consecrated
in rituals of affirmation – citation rates, awards, job offers and the like. For them to enter
a classification struggle would give undue recognition to “illegitimate” forms of
sociological knowledge. However, a few elite sociologists have broken rank, entered into
the classification struggle and defended professional and policy sociology against the
invasion of critical and public sociology.

They have adopted various hegemonic strategies in which they present the
interests of the dominant as the interests of all. They argue that sociology is not yet a
mature science and for it to go public with its results would delegitimate the entire field,
adversely affecting all. In the effort to retain control of the discipline professional
sociology claims that it already does public sociology, that is inherently critical, and so
there is no need for any division of labor. A third strategy is to argue that the valorization of public sociology will bring divisive politics into the academy, once again delegitimizing the profession and questioning its scientific pretensions. These are strategies in the Bourdieuan sense in that they are not cynically deployed, indeed, they are not recognized as strategies but simply common sense sprung from dispositions, deeply embedded in the professional habitus. There are, however, offensive and self-conscious strategies that aim to delegitimize public sociology by pathologizing or politicizing it. It is said that public sociology is not a genuine science but a political project of the excluded or of frustrated Marxists. They cite evidence of poor public sociology to support their case, thereby reducing all public and critical sociology to its pathological form. In the extreme form public sociologists become infidels, barbarians at the gates, a danger to sociology and humanity, and some would expel public and critical sociology from the discipline. These shock-troops of professional sociology are usually downwardly mobile, trained in elite departments but finding themselves among the heathen.

On the other side there are subversion strategies that reveal symbolic domination for what it is -- domination. The struggle for public sociology is a struggle for the legitimation of an alternative capital, you might call it a civic capital -- recognition by publics whether they be students who recognize teachers, newspapers who recognize columnists, lay readers who recognize sociology books, or labor movements who recognize the analysis of corporate strategies. The affirmation of academic capital in the name of professional sociology is an attempt to delegitimate public sociology as poor
sociology. To be effective a subversion strategy has to present a hegemonic project of its own. Thus, public sociologists have appealed to the public imagination that inspired our field in its genesis or that inspires its organization elsewhere, and to the moral impetus that prompted so many sociologists to enter the field. Others have tried to develop an alternative conception of science, reflexive and collaborative with publics, here borrowing from developments in the natural sciences. In each case the attempt is to establish the authenticity of public sociology as good sociology. In this regard the struggle is a partial or self-limiting revolution since even public sociologists have an interest in the viability and legitimacy of sociology as a discipline.

Critical sociologists, on the other hand, have often adopted a more aggressive posture, maintaining that professional sociology imposes too severe constraints on public sociology, that professional sociology suffers from a disciplinary chauvinism that is obsessed with the trivial and an obstacle to necessary interdisciplinary approaches, has systematically precluded minority perspectives, and has been corrupted by policy sociology and connections to state power. In response to the accusation that public sociology is political, critical sociologists turn the tables and suggest professional sociology is also a political project. Indeed, the most radical critics, like the radical defenders of pure science, propose that the discipline be divided if professional sociology cannot be transformed.

In this brief sketch of the struggles for public sociology, based on the evidence I have collected, strategies can be read off from the holding of academic capital and the
trajectories within the field, which together influence position in the division of labor and the stances people adopt toward other places in the division of labor. We witness classification struggles over the boundaries of the field, over the definition of the division of labor, over the capitals that can be invoked within the field, classification struggles that are also class struggles between a dominant group that is the beneficiary of exploitation defending the status quo and an insurgent exploited that asserts a counter-hegemonic project around public and critical sociology. This I think has to be Marx retort to Bourdieu’s extension of *Capital*.

**Conclusion: The Paradoxes of Pierre Bourdieu**

How might Bourdieu respond to this description of struggle in US sociology? He might agree with my analysis, but the Bourdieu who is committed to the autonomy of the scientific field would be horrified by the state of affairs it describes! He would be horrified by the intervention of critical and public sociologists with limited academic capital trying to valorize an alternative capital – civic capital. His own conception of sociology was confined to the scientific field not the disciplinary field upon which it rests. Thus, Bourdieu dreams of sociology being an autonomous field like mathematics in which producers’ sole consumers are their competitors:

> Autonomy is achieved by constructing a sort of “ivory tower” inside of which people judge, criticize, and even fight each other, but with the appropriate weapons – properly scientific instruments, techniques and methods. (*On Television*, p.61)

Yet, and here is the first paradox, a few years later, Bourdieu writes:

> I run the risk of shocking those who, opting for the cosy virtuousness of confinement within their ivory tower, see intervention outside the academic sphere as a dangerous failing of that famous
'axiological neutrality’ which is wrongly identified with scientific objectivity … But I am convinced that we must at all costs bring the achievements of science and scholarship into public debate, from which they are tragically absent. (*Firing Back*, p.)

How can one reconcile these two seemingly opposed positions? Have times changed so much in the few years between these books? Or are these reactions to two different situations: a defense of the autonomous science against its popularization by amateurs, doxosophers, on the one hand, and an aggressive public attack against the mythologies of neoliberalism on the other hand? It would seem that Bourdieu’s interventionism is to precisely defend the autonomy of scientific practice against media, market and state, which brings him into alliance with other groups fending off similar attacks. Bourdieu wants his cake and eat it, he wants an interventionist autonomy.

We should not forget, however, that Bourdieu is writing from France, and one should be careful not to commit the sin of allodoxia -- transposing his views directly onto the US scene. On the one hand, he is himself perched high up in the academic world – as high as it gets – and therefore one would expect him to adopt an elitist stance, but on the other hand sociology has never been as professionalized in France as it is in the United States. It has always been more vulnerable to invasion, corruption and appropriation. Bourdieu’s aggressive defense of the autonomy of sociology is a defense against heathen of both types: those underlaborers with less academic capital as well as the doxosophers of the media and other public intellectuals who think they know best.

Still, autonomy is not simply the pursuit of knowledge for knowledge’s sake – although it is that. In the case of sociology, if properly pursued, autonomy guarantees the
advance of science and, according to Bourdieu, this necessarily leads to the
demystification of domination, if not within the sociological field itself, then certainly
within the wider society. Ultimately, the restriction of the sociological field to those with
the resources and time to conduct serious research is justified by the subversive impact of
sociology on the wider world. But then one must asking who is listening to this sociology
of domination – to whom is Bourdieu talking? Can his intended audience even hear him,
and if they can hear him can they appreciate or grasp what he is saying? In the next
lecture we examine this second paradox, the paradox of sociology’s absent publics, by
considering a second conversation, one between Antonio Gramsci and Pierre Bourdieu.

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