Academia A publication of the
Higher Education
Policy Network

Homo academicus and the analysis of intellectual fields

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Abstract

In Homo academics, Bourdieu proposed an epistemological reflection that is of interest to both further researches on the object itself as well as the practice of sociology in general. Secondly, he proposed a map of the university world in France, the various forms of capital that organise it and the most customary types of career paths. Despite the national basis of his analysis, Bourdieu insisted that it could be extended beyond France. Thirdly, he offered an explanation of a historical event that spilled over from the university campus, yet one in which the university played a major role; the uprising of May '68 showed how a historic event that partially destabilised the social order occurred. Epistemological, structural and historical orders - these are the angles from which Homo academicus shall be read. This paper addresses Homo academicus' scientific insights into the academic and intellectual world.

Homo academicus[*] was a difficult book for Pierre Bourdieu to write, although he did not work on it alone. The research was conducted together with Yvette Delsault (2002: 229-230), a very close collaborator at the time. Bourdieu offered to list Delsault as the book's co-author, but she turned the offer down because she disagreed with its final tone, considering it too "violent" and "male" to associate her name with. Yet, Delsault recognised that the book was produced with enormous methodological precaution, as Bourdieu insisted in the interview between them. *Homo academicus* is a work on two fronts: human, all too human, on the one hand, and scientifically well controlled, on the other. The first aspect is not analysed here; this would require a sociology of the sociology of the academic world advocated by Bourdieu, regarding whether or not the academic world is strongly indebted to the author's position and trajectory and whether or not the methodological tools and concepts Bourdieu used are best suited for tackling this undertaking. This paper addresses the second aspect, i.e. Bourdieu's scientific insights into the academic and intellectual world.

Turning empirical individuals into epistemic ones

Bourdieu explained that analysing reality from a sociological point of view means reformulating it according to certain relevant parameters; this allows all individuals to be classified according to identical criteria. Of course, there are many ways to classify individuals in an analytical scientific framework. Bourdieu took this scientific pluralism for granted in the process of constructing names in sociology. These names are not like ordinary ones; they do not designate *empirical individuals* with their complex

personalities that are difficult to sift through in a series of predicates. A scientific name designates a series of properties that produce effects in a field. Bourdieu thus called agents *epistemic individuals.* The difference between empirical and epistemic individuals is helpful in understanding how scientific concepts are distinguished from the epithets of ordinary language. Two empirical individuals are separated by proper nouns that provide no information about their differences. A scientific concept groups together diverse empirical individuals that share a series of features that make them equivalent from that point of view as agents within a plane of reality. The scientific concept renames the empirical individual and turns it into an effective agent in a social space, i.e., an epistemic individual.

Society in general and the academic world in particular teem with classifications, starting with university posts, which consecrate individuals as professors or lecturers. Yet, behind these common nouns are individuals with different properties: one may have a genuine scientific influence, while another is a university administrator and a third spends his time on journalistic interventions. In reality, the common appellation encompasses very different properties and interests in divergent social worlds. They have the same "names", but have different competences and devote themselves to different realities (HA, 63). These names are not trivial - they sustain social hierarchies, e.g., it is assumed that professors know more than assistant lecturers do or that researchers are guided by scientific requirements: perhaps they are guided by the demands of local university policy and spend more time on social contacts than reading and publishing. Thus, a scientific name allows reality to be viewed differently from that which current classifications permit. Furthermore, these classifications are in conflict, since each agent seeks to impose those that best suit his or her own interests. In the case

of academia, Bourdieu suggests that the lack of shared references - and cacophonous multiplication of different parameters of judgement - for ranking merit acts as a shared defence system that allows subjects to ignore their true positions by resorting to the system of classification that best allows them to save face in terms of themselves and others (HA, 104).

Does this mean that epistemic individuals allow us to see a societal reality that would be obscured in everyday life? Bourdieu's answer is yes and no. The positive response is provided by the very subjects under analysis, who sometimes recognise planes of their existence in the sociologist's explanations. These usually go unnoticed, since individuals are oriented, without too much reflexive distance, towards everyday urgencies (HA, 38). If he had paused at this point in his argument, Bourdieu would have considered that his scientific construction would reveal the truth of the world, with the sole reservation being that we must not confuse what is revealed by the analysis with the agents' conscious intention.

So where is the awareness that the sociological perspective is a construct that, as such, does not attempt to mirror the nature of society? At two levels: first, epistemic individuals become continuous discrete properties and separate features that in reality are not distributed so precisely. In other words, epistemic individuals do not overlap completely with empirical individuals, as if the latter were a repeatable and interchangeable example of the kind contained in the sociological concept. Bourdieu (HA, 40-41) does not indicate it, but he comes very close to one of the central ideas of Jean-Claude Passeron's epistemology (2006: 89-123). Sociological names are logical

mixes that designate a series of general traits[1] as common nouns on the one hand, yet on the other, are only valuable - if they are not to become empirically empty concepts - when they refer to a series of research operations situated in time and space[2]. In short, the names imposed by sociologists - in their epistemic renaming of empirical individuals - are not the only legitimate ones.

In addition, sociologists, especially when studying their own universe, must take precautions to clarify the three types of bias that inevitably accompany their research. This clarification is inexhaustible and therefore never reaches the point in which it becomes possible to contemplate all partial perspectives of the world without taking part in any. First, because of the biases from their own social and scientific trajectories, which Bourdieu (2001, 2004) attempted to finish analysing in the last book he published and his course on science; second, because of the assumptions implicit in the concepts employed, e.g., someone who confuses social determination with a lack of lucidity (the agent as a mere carrier of structures) cannot understand the concept of *habitus*, which starts from the thesis that we have variable degrees of understanding of our determinations and partial means of calculation for following, countering or opposing our social determinations. Therefore, one assumption (a philosophical idea of freedom: freedom as absolute non-conditioning) lies behind many of the criticisms levelled by those who do not understand the philosophical assumptions of the notion of *habitus* and believe that it functions as a tyrannical clamp that strangles all creativity and all lucidity in subjects. Third, researchers should renounce the use of science to influence the

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[1] Agents with capital structure dominated by academic power.

[2] And in that sense, they serve as proper nouns: *these* concepts to analyse *those* subjects, after having analysed them along *these* guidelines.

scientific world and promote their own interests. This is the case, said Bourdieu (HA, 29-30), of a work by Raymond Boudon in which he denounced French celebrities and flattered international (mainly American) ones, without revealing what was at stake (his own stock would rise if his vision of the good and the bad rankings triumphed) or stopping for an instant to examine empirically whether reality resisted his analysis (something that Bourdieu believed happens when, e.g., the researchers least valued by French scientists are those with the greatest impact on the very international *Citation Index*).

Distances and proximities in the field of academic power

Faculties in conflict

Two kinds of capital (economic and cultural) organise the field of power. University professors are closer to the latter: the dominated pole in the field of power. This pole is also internally divided between the sectors that depend the most on the culture market (e.g., writers and journalists) and those who, like academics, have institutional support. The distances between the two sectors depend on their historical circumstances. Their separation was at a peak from the late nineteenth century - a period in which the gap between academic and political power grew - until the period between the two world wars in the twentieth century. After that, growth in the student population made it necessary to recruit less academic teachers from the cultural and journalistic professions. In fact, Bourdieu insisted that each period could be studied according to the relationships that existed between the academic and cultural worlds, whose indicators could be found in comparing the social and academic origins of the populations of the

two territories, the steps between one field and another, the meeting places and the way in which the two populations conceive their success[3].

The division between the economic and cultural capital that structures the field of power is reproduced within each faculty and among them all. That is, from one minute to the next, Bourdieu seems to reason as if each situation contained the same principles of differentiation as those with which the sociologist constructs his object...and nothing more. Bourdieu was a great admirer of Gottfried W. Leibniz, who argued in *Monadologie* (§ 56) that the whole universe is expressed within each substance and that a mirror of the whole of reality can be contemplated by looking into it. Therefore, if we had an infinite perspective and knew all the circumstances surrounding a concrete being, we could predict the direction of his or her future trajectory. Reality would lose its historical character and become the monotonous reiteration of identical principles of differentiation regardless of time, space or place and when such differentiations do not occur, it would be because our knowledge of reality is incomplete. Undoubtedly, Bourdieu could have argued that he is only logically developing the principles he chose for constructing the object of study, although other perspectives would be possible. As noted above, this stance would be consistent with the reading here of his epistemological introduction[4].

Returning to Bourdieu's analysis, the field of the university reproduces the field of power and thus, science faculties are dominated from the temporal (political and

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[3]According to a study cited by Alain Girard, writers usually have a more charismatic vision of success, whereas professors attribute it to their teachers and families.

[4] In any case, readers have a right to doubt the constant resort to homologies (every reality has internal divisions that overlap with the internal divisions of others) and wonder whether sociological work does not serve as an example for certain metaphysics. In that case, the criticisms levelled against Passeron Jean-Claude (2006: 310-311) without mentioning him by name would be completely justified. See a balanced, critical consideration of the use of the *Análisis de Correspondencias Múltiples* in *Homo academicus* in Baranger (2009: 71-72).

economic) viewpoint by the medicine and law faculties, i.e., the faculties closest to the field of economic power *tout court*; when the hierarchy is scientific, the relationships are reversed. The faculties of arts lie halfway between the two. Bourdieu shows how each position recruits the human types needed to maintain its stability. Institutions are ways of generating similar *habitus*. The faculty of medicine transmits knowledge, but also a way of life in accordance with its dominant values, which reveals the Catholic preponderance in the corps. Law professors come mostly from the bourgeoisie and tend to accumulate posts at the university, in politics and even in business. In contrast, regardless of whether they come from the middle or working classes or the university arena itself, the professors tend to consecrate themselves to the institution to which they owe their upward social mobility. In short, those who invest the most in scientific life tend to celibacy, whereas university students who go into politics or the world of capital are accompanied by an extended family as a sign of their social integration.

Furthermore, each faculty has its own definition of research activities. This is one of the points that demonstrates the empirical fruitfulness of Bourdieu's analytical model. The coexistence of different definitions of research is a classic topic in the sociology of knowledge. As Randall Collins (2000: 523-569, 874-877) explained, research in the sciences with one sole paradigm allows collective concentration on a problem (the "rapid-discovery sciences"). Research goes hand in hand with technological innovations, which become the criteria of good scientific work. Mathematical notation allowed a common language to be created and to some extent resolved the ever delicate question of how to translate empirical results linguistically. Teamwork became possible and the technological concentration of activity allowed for a relative indifference to

theoretical issues. At sometimes there is a vivid theoretical awareness of the work of scientific teams, while at others, intellectual work is reduced to retrospectively producing the results obtained with technologies.

Bourdieu believed that this model, which originates in the natural sciences, has invaded all scientific activity and homogenised very dissimilar realities, which each faculty redefines. Many researchers are merely patrons who spend their lives chasing funding - and cultivating social capital – so that others may conduct research. Thus, scientific life is more like managing a clientele and the connections with the political and economic networks that allow it to be maintained. The logic of social capital prevails over research problems. This is the profile of the tolerant patron, heir to social capital networks (families, universities), who masks his or her lack of effective commitment to science with politically and theoretically antidogmatic professions (firmly defining something controversial must be avoided when social capital is being cultivated) and is mainly concerned about the quality of his or her contacts (be they students or places where resources can be found). The students' scientific and intellectual education is less important than the promise of a managed career. Therefore, to be able to enter these recruitment networks, one needs to show that one shares the group's values: social origin - forming part of a good family – is one criterion and enthusiastic docility towards group integration is another (HA, 79). Above all in medicine and law, co-optation does not promote scientific skills, but rather global modes of being, habits. These faculties, which recruit by implicit curricula, are more socially selective than those in which the required competencies are more formalised and not transmitted

through familiar pedagogical action, such as is the case of the sciences.[5] The various faculties and different poles within them (more spiritual or temporal) confront the dilemma of either producing socially integrated agents to perform established functions or being guided by the logic of scientific rationality. Social responsibility and scientific responsibility face off in a zero sum game. The higher one is, the lower the other. It goes without saying that Bourdieu's position lies far from the radical critiques of the power of science that, based on diverse ideological sources (ranging from the extreme left to the extreme right), were inflated in May '68 and configured the postmodern nebulae towards which Bourdieu was always enormous hostile.

The powers and the arts

As an example of conflict between the two types of power, Bourdieu focused on the faculties of arts in 1967. In them, Bourdieu assumed his model would be revealed in all its purity, since it is much more difficult to find in other faculties (HA, 106). In the arts, there is a more marked division between those who concentrate on scientific and cultural work and those who control university policy (administration, incorporation of lecturers and grant-holders). Bourdieu extended this universe according to his theoretical vision. Since French Universities are centralized and hierarchical, most of the population analyzed comes from Paris from the greatest institutions and most prestigious professors. Thus, Bourdieu sought to reproduce the structure of the reality studied with his universe, shunning random or "snowball" selection (which ends up

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[5] Bourdieu's passion for sociology, which is the enemy of inspired essayism, derived from a belief in a shared scientific rationality, but also from an egalitarian social commitment to those who could only resort to their academic efforts to produce discourses on reality. See Bourdieu (1980: 11).

rewarding the most mundane forms of prestige). Random selection would give equal representation to individuals with very different powers and thus create equivalent properties that are not equally "valued" by the academic field. Moreover, Bourdieu insisted that power relationships are not understood through individuals, but rather by analysing all the efficient properties in the field and their differential distribution.

Bourdieu did not explain how the population studied in this extremely hierachised universe could survive in the lower echelons. The basic assumption is none other than the existence of an academic society in which those on the bottom and those on top pursue the same thing, according to identical criteria. Those who do not register on the dominant academic hierarchies, have no relevant information to offer the Bourdieu analysis, except the testimony of their lack of success, which amounts to the same thing. These discourses of rationalisation prevent the existence of a shared evaluation system that would require everyone to know his or her true position. But perhaps one might think that Bourdieu did not contemplate the plural forms of life at the university.

Insofar as institutional power is concerned, Bourdieu's methodological option is reasonable: the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Paris has more influence than a head of a *department* and it is absurd to bestow the properties of both with the same weight in a study. If the question is intellectual reputation, it also cannot be denied that it is concentrated in those who cross a certain threshold (e.g., more than five mentions in the *Citation Index*).[6] Another question is whether scientific prestige can be measured in this manner, as Bourdieu believes. Is having peer recognition - which is what the

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[6] Based on the population of university professors in Paris, Bourdieu (HA, 101) retained those who have at least two of the properties set out in detail as follows: as far as university power is concerned, membership in the *Institute de France*, the board of examiners for the *agrégation*, the *École Normale Supérieure* and the Universities Consultative Committee. As far as scientific power is concerned, membership in the CNRS commission between 1963 and 1967. And as regards scientific power: more than five mentions in the *Citation Index*.

Citation Index reflects - for a certain time, equivalent to productive intellectual work? On this point Bourdieu comes very close to Randall Collins (2000: 85-87), who believes that only a series of individuals (those who access the centre of the attention space) representing a position (between three and six faculties are in conflict, otherwise there is no possibility of common points of discussion) monopolise intellectual attention in a period. The rest can be discarded, although Collins acknowledges that several intellectual giants were largely unrecognised in their day (Moreno Pestaña, 2009). Whether or not one believes that the networks of intellectual productivity are being confused with networks of notoriety in contemporary times – which is a little more than dubious[7] - it is true that Bourdieu provided a very limited map of academic and intellectual passions and that another selection of the population - and another theoretical framework - would provide a very different view of university life and its agents' institutional and intellectual libido.

How does purely academic power function, according to Bourdieu's model? By occupying positions that determine other subjects' access to certain posts. The individuals most gifted with university capital, who are often poorly esteemed as scientists, establish their clienteles by exchanging services with one another. Often these relationships begin at the *École Normale Supérieure*, the centre of socialisation of the elite French university, which does not exist in other countries. Age differentiates holders of academic power, since attaining positions of power takes time, respect for the logical order of succession and refraining from haste. Competition, Bourdieu insists, is the condition of the order, since those who compete accept a shared value and moreover, are the dominant poles that regulate competition.

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[7] Bourdieu is aware of the problem, as shown by footnote 8 on p. 104 of *Homo academicus*, although he decides not to pay much attention to it.

How do the dominant poles regulate university competition? By toying with hopes of and access times to posts. To achieve this, the possibilities of access must be restricted, so that the agents can form reasonable, circumscribed expectations (a scant possibility attracts almost no one) that are – very importantly - relatively vague, so that the patron can manipulate the contenders (the more contenders, the more power for the patron). The contenders are in a position of infantilisation and subordination to a power without defined rules, which thus places them in a state of permanent anxiety, in addition to inciting them to submit even further to the patron in order to unseat other contenders.

University patrons – there are those who scientifically train their disciples and help them publish, but they are in the minority - must move between two extremes in which the sources of their power may dry up. On the one hand, they must not place too many roadblocks to their students' independence if they do not want to lose the power of attraction, yet on the other hand, they cannot throw their students into adult university life too early, unless they want the work of infantilisation not to produce its inculcatory effect, which would consequently lead to an autonomous competitor disputing their clientele. University patrons - no matter how poor they may be as scientific mentors - attract the brightest students, who are also the closest, socially speaking. The circle of reproduction is closed: professors tend to be recruited from those who understand the game, pick suitable thesis topics and patrons, know how to wait during their professional careers (assuming the dependence and even humiliations of infantilisation, with its consequent restrictions on other areas of life), are able to wait (because they have the financial, family and institutional means to do so) and know how to provide their degree tutor intellectual, yet above all social proof that they will be worthy disciples.

This is the university *habitus* in the locus closest to power and with it comes intellectual conservatism, the enemy of everything aside from academic "reliability" (*le sérieux*), i.e., the practical consensus that allows an academic and intellectual equilibrium between the different poles of power. Institutional networks, moreover, require that time be invested in them through the supervision of theses, attendance at conferences, membership on examining boards, participation in journals and on top of this, invitations proffered to colleagues and the acceptance of their invitations. This allows the group time to bestow institutional recognition, but obviously prevents attending to intellectual output, a condition of scientific recognition. Academic power is thus a time-based power that occupies a space that, in principle, was conceived for intellectual output. Aware of its imposture, academic power never stops perceiving itself as fragile and hence, its occasional aggressiveness towards scientific creators.

Bourdieu explains that blind adherence to an academic institution comes largely from the social properties of those who populate it. Recruited from among the petty bourgeoisie with no cultural capital other than that provided by the institution, satisfied with their status, these producers' favourite output are manuals of synthesis that serve on the one hand to reinforce social capital networks - by recognising "contributions" from colleagues - and on the other, to provide an outlet for the output needed to triumph in competitive exams. It is thus a question of an intellectual output that allows one to rise in the hierarchy of professors while it is being produced, not to mention the lucrative economic benefits generated.

At the time and place Bourdieu studied, the university locus closest to the scientific pole tended to be in new disciplines (sociology, ethnology) or marginal ones, i.e., those in which there were fewer controls on access and fewer routines that inculcated practices.

Their institutional settings were the *Collège de France* and *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales*. The low teaching load allowed for scientific exploration and the establishment of their own work plans, in accordance with the dominant scientific debates. Disputes over the attention space, as Randall Collins would say, motivate agents within a setting that allows very few consecrations. Bourdieu considered that this risky game can only be played by a population that, confronted with the population of professors, appears to be more favoured, socially speaking (HA, 143). This confirms a "law" (which Bourdieu holds in great theoretical esteem) that restricts the propensity to risk to the disposition of more capital, since scientists and intellectual creators do not receive a great deal of institutional reward (Bourdieu points out the weakness at the university of Althusser, Foucault and Barthes at that time).

Does Bourdieu's description have general sociological value or is it restricted to the period he studied? As a work plan it is not useless. Jumping to another time and place, the historical sociology of the Hellenistic schools formulated by Michel Foucault (2001: 111-112) offers an interesting clue for linking social origin with the mode of practicing philosophy and/or religion. Hellenistic schools spread the practices of reflecting on life itself that the Athenian world reserved for a certain elite. Obviously, there was a cultural and economic threshold below which it was highly unlikely - if not impossible - to partake in intellectual life. Once that threshold was crossed, two poles could be distinguished: one, often occupied by people of humble origin, focussed on ritual practices of a religious kind in which sectarian affiliation and the observance of worship took precedence over the work of individual transformation and philosophical output; the other pole abounded with the wealthy classes at a greater distance from ritual practices; these classes were more creative in subjective modification and cultural

creation. Bourdieu would say that the process described by Foucault has a more general value: the dominated classes acquire more security in better coded and more closely defined cultural settings; the dominant classes can afford a more relaxed relationship with the culture because of their cultural capital and a precociously acquired sense of orientation. However, as Foucault insisted and any moderately complex historical analysis would show, it would be a mistake to turn a certain trend into an ideal dogmatic type, which would presume the rigidity of the lower middle classes through dogma and religiosity and the complex capabilities of the culturally and economically privileged classes through philosophy and creativity. The Epicureans were originally made up of the popular classes; they ostentatiously distanced themselves from religion and produced a sophisticated philosophy. Moreover, the Hellenistic schools' philosophical reflections were often accompanied by very intense religious and ritual practices. Similarly, mass organisations (monasteries, boarding schools, academic ghettos, "Stalinist" communist parties) composed of permanent mass rites capable of homogenising their populations' social properties have contributed as much, if not more intellectual creativity than bohemia has.

Thus, while Bourdieu's trend shows its heuristic value in other fields, it should be counterpoised, as he himself demanded (HA 149), against more complex and varied studies on the relationships among social properties, academic position and cultural output. This would require, we insist once again, another kind of selection of the population studied (tailored in *Homo academicus* to institutional consecration and peer recognition) and of course, deeper and broader studies on how cultural life is connected to an individual's social resources.

A complicity functions in the background between the two powers - scientific and the university - despite their separation. Firstly, because they structure the field of the possible on the basis of the justification that the other's weaknesses provides. University power is reinforced in the compulsive and often intellectually inane search for innovation that characterises many cultural and scientific vanguards. Cultural producers, in turn, are justified in everything that is not academic and have their counter model in a court-like university life and reiterative intellectual output.

Beyond the two powers lies scientific and cultural creation. Intellectual recognition does not immediately ensure the creative quality of a work. This is measured by its ability to retain its interest as we move away from the cultural space and time segment in which it was produced. Intellectual reputation is measured in the short term; creativity requires connecting to problems defined by an intellectual field with a long history. Often, worldly prestige is merely an offering in step with the times. With its great potential for the sociology of intellectuals, the heuristic value of the distinction formulated by Bourdieu (1998: 236) between short-cycle products (which meet the expectations set...and conclude with them) and long-cycle products (which subsist at the time of emergence and continue to produce effects even when the cultural contexts in which they were conceived disappears) can only be assumed with these caveats. Peer recognition has its brilliant potential (being recognised by the intellectually consecrated), but also its possible downside (becoming mere reproducers of an ideology with scientific signs that respond to a non-scientific demand). Bourdieu showed that this is happening more and more due to the growing influence of the consecration of journalism in intellectual life. Scientific appearances allow the conquest of an audience made up of students and professors alert to cultural trends and - given their low level of

expertise - incapable of comprehending the nuances and demands of scientific work. To satisfy them, researchers assume an essayistic style and share with journalism a repulsion for academic pedantry. The conquest of an audience for such products increasingly requires the complicity of cultural journalism and the world of publishing. In these conditions, dialogue with the intellectual tradition and scientific vanguard - conditions for genuinely creative work in the humanities - can be counterproductive to connecting with broad audiences.

In turn, the colonisation of scientific life does not proceed solely from the culture market, but also from the administrative world. Commissioned research requires developing skills to attract public and private funds and the corporate governance of research groups, as well as adapting to experts who evaluate the results, lines of work and methodologies.

In short, the university campus is the locus of competition between plural powers. Because the fields need to deal with the outside world, the pressure of external powers on them redefines their borders: demographic changes require retaining or encouraging the order of succession; the culture industry imposes scientific models and the administrative management of the industrial research practices of intellectual output.

The sociological explanation of the event

After the map, the narration. Although universal values are claimed or identified with causes beyond its medium, a university always acts according to the logic of its own field and its options are always and inevitably signs that guide its colleagues and contenders. May '68 was the result of changes in the academic world that largely arose

from the crisis caused by the booming number of university students and consequently lecturers during the 1960s. This boom did not produce identical effects across all disciplines, for the simple reason that there was no unified higher education area and each local market had its own hierarchies and values (HA, 180). The effects, therefore, require a description of circumstances, which demonstrates what was mentioned above: Bourdieu's hypothesis about society does not run roughshod over its peculiarities, even though they contain complications - the existence of hierarchies different from those perceived when the social field is viewed from the top - regarding the most schematic versions of Bourdieu's view of the social space.

The less firmly established academic disciplines had fewer staff reserves adapted to the institutional order. The pace of succession ceased to function as envisaged and two types of actors entered the game. First, individuals who had followed the orthodox route of access and discovered that their promotion no longer gave them what they had hoped for: many saw their careers stall and did not have access to the posts they expected. Second were the individuals, particularly in less academic subjects, who were appointed without the corresponding training and resented the impositions of the established order. Thus, the complicities were ruptured by two different and incompatible criteria: the defence of ancient privileges and those who contested the phases and rhythms that used to set the pace of access thereto. Neither of these groups suggested the programme Bourdieu wanted: "An order in which recruitment and professional advancement depend only upon the criteria of productivity and educational and scientific efficiency" (HA, 205).

The crisis in the education system affected society as a whole, firstly, because of education's increasingly important role in reproducing the class system and secondly,

because of the distance between the academics' hopes - nourished by an earlier system of demands and rewards – and the effective rewards, fewer than expected, which created an atmosphere of widespread revolt. The frustration was greater among those from dominant groups, although the effects of the devaluation of diplomas were more pronounced among working-class students. However, the latter do not judge the world in the same way that the dominant class does, firstly, because they have more tolerance for frustration and secondly, because the working classes' local markets, which do not all function from the perspective of the *écoles*, still value what statistical analysis may consider an objective devaluation (HA, 214). In any case, the crisis of the offspring of the bourgeoisie found echoes among fractions of the middle classes with similar feelings and even among young workers or farmers frustrated by the meagre fruits of primary or secondary education. Although it had different effects according to class, the crisis of diplomas unified heterogeneous populations.[8]

Multiple dynamics came together in the faculties of arts: the new disciplines offered there were the particular refuge of, first, young bourgeoisies with low educational achievements and high aspirations, and, second, middle-class students who could not get into other degree programmes and had little social capital to enable them to capitalise on their diplomas and professors appointed rapidly without the mandatory training in university submission. Agents from different fields found themselves in homologous positions, but the distance between the son of a teacher and that of an intellectual who has only precarious access to higher education is enormous. These misleading identifications only exist during a crisis; afterwards, when the social order is

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[8] Louis Gruel (2004) has criticised Bourdieu's explicative model, insisting first, on the inexistence of the devaluation of diplomas, second, on the university world's poor grasp of the rebellion and third, on the nature of the crisis as the intergenerational transmission of a universal culture.

re-imposed, each pursues its respective, often conflicting objectives. Crises produce emotionally dense communities capable of bringing together people who would ordinarily be separated (HA, 229), something that the theory of rational action is incapable of grasping.

Communication between the distant populations that characterised the crisis provided Bourdieu with a rich sociological phenomenology of revolutionary experience. First, existences were synchronised between the dominant and dominated classes, which play in different worlds. Since the dominant class plays in more fields than the dominated class does, the latter tend to be more sincere, more deeply committed to their life choices. Those on top above, however, must always be true to more complex loyalties, which requires them to lead "parallel lives". When the end of the crisis reveals this multiplicity of references, the sense of betrayal will overwhelm the dominated class. Secondly, and related to this, the actors' representation dissolves societal complexity and sums it up in two camps: us and them, the rulers and the ruled, the basic outline of all Zhdanovisms. The crisis brutally economises symbolic differentiations and retranslates them into political terms. The internal dynamics of social worlds, which can radically separate two individuals, are abolished, bringing together socially heterogeneous agents and separating other, much closer ones. Thirdly, far from being a mere swindle, a revolutionary situation dissolves the usual relationship with the world: the past does not seem to weigh (dissolved in a euphoric ritual interaction), nor does the future impose a calculating conduct on the present. Therefore, the revolutionary experience does not appeal to everyone equally. Those who are most firmly established view it as the Apocalypse and a relapse into barbarism, while those who are the least integrated - no matter how young or least benefited by the system - tend to sympathise

with the opportunities it presents. Fourthly, the eruption of revolutionary situations favours those who are versed in managing political events and know how to semantically condense widely dispersed positions. In the end, despite the claim of spontaneity, May '68 favoured those who were trained in the far-left political apparatus, which had lacked an audience until then. Like many analysts, Bourdieu found the aggressive, disrespectful style of the leaders of May '68 to be part of the culture of the dominant "rabble" that according to Perry Anderson (1998: 86) controls capitalism today.

Conclusion

A reading of Bourdieu's work reveals its enormous power of inspiration, which is always accompanied by several reservations: at the epistemological level, it recognises the legitimate plurality of scientific approaches, which follows logically from his differentiation between the empirical and epistemic individual, and at the structural level, the theory of homology between social worlds serves as a heuristic tool and not a mechanical metaphysic that strangles empirical work, e.g., believing that the world at the Parisian intellectual summit serves to reveal the realities of university, intellectual or scientific life.

At the historical level, Bourdieu explained the crisis as the situational conjunction of different dynamics, capable of producing novelties at different levels of persistence. As a model it is flawless. But of course, it may be objected to if the academic world as he studied it (at the heights of full professors) helps us understand the events of May '68.

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