

Academics' perceptions of the influence of the university environment on the practice of the academic profession: case study in a Greek university

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ABSTRACT

This study, which is part of a larger ongoing work, utilizing the concepts of "scientific field", "scientific capital" and "symbolic power" from Pierre Bourdieu's theory, as a framework of theoretical presuppositions and heuristics of understanding in the analysis of the data, aims to investigate the perceptions of a Professor (informant) in a Greek university regarding the influence of the university field and the constraints it imposes on the "practice of the academic profession" through the dialectical relationship between teaching and research work. The research was conducted using the biographical narrative interview. The results of the study showed that the university field has a significant impact on the academic profession. It was further shown that administrative positions, progression through the ranks and the immense, profound importance of the research rather than teaching dimension of the academic' roles are crucial parameters in the practice of the academic profession.

KEY WORDS

Biographical research, biographical narrative interview, biographical narrative analysis, scientific field

RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude, qui fait partie d'un travail plus large en cours, utilisant les concepts de « champ scientifique », de « capital scientifique » et de « pouvoir symbolique » de la théorie de Pierre Bourdieu, comme cadre de présupposés théoriques et d'heuristiques de compréhension dans l'analyse des données, vise à enquêter sur les perceptions d'un professeur (informateur) dans une université grecque concernant l'influence du champ universitaire et les contraintes qu'il impose à la « pratique de la profession académique » à travers la relation dialectique entre l'enseignement et le travail de recherche. La recherche a été menée à l'aide de l'interview narrative biographique. Les résultats de l'étude ont montré que le domaine universitaire a un impact significatif sur la profession académique. Il a également été démontré que les postes administratifs, la progression dans les classements et l'importance immense et profonde de la

dimension recherche plutôt qu'enseignement du rôle des universitaires sont des paramètres cruciaux dans l'exercice de la profession universitaire.

MOTS CLÉS

Recherche biographique, entretien narratif biographique, analyse narrative biographique, domaine scientifique

INTRODUCTION

Biographical research, as a scientific method, creates a framework for the study and comparison of subjective-individual and collective-intersubjective, historical-social reality. It thus places individual biographical data in a dialogue with their historical and social contexts and therefore biographies are treated more as a social 'formation' than as material for accessing a subjective perspective (Tsiolis, 2010).

The interpretive reconstruction of the biographical interview identifies the multitude of subjective structures of action and interpretation, as well as bio-historical and biographical elements and discourses that are structurally linked, enabling the researcher to simultaneously trace the 'subject positions' assumed by the narrator in the process of the narrative act, his shifts to different positions within the same or different, superimposed Discourses, as well as his ability to reflect, reframe his memories and change his perspective towards his life story (Archer, 2003; Giddens, 1984/2004; Riessman, 2008; Tsiolis & Siouti, 2013). In this way, biography is understood as a "social creation/construction, which 'constitutes both the social reality and the subjects' worlds of knowledge and experience, and which is continually confirmed and transformed in the context of the dialectical relationship between knowledge and experiences of life history and the norms presented by society" (Fischer-Rosenthal & Rosenthal, 1997, p. 138).

In this paper we attempted to study perceptions about the impact of the academic field in a Greek University on the research and teaching work of one of the professors who took part in the research, through biographical narrative interview followed by biographical narrative analysis. Through this research effort, we highlighted the critical points that the informant highlights and that influence, to some extent, the outcome of his academic work while revealing the structural characteristics of the field under study. After all, in social research with qualitative characteristics, the path through which the researcher enters, knows and learns about the social world under study is also an indication of the structure and characteristics, hierarchies and relationships inherent within it, which give the particular research field its intrinsic features. (Angrosino, 1989; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Denzin, 1997; Savvakis & Tzanakis, 2004). The object of the interviews was to trace the influence of the educational and scientific path of these teachers on their educational views, as well as their perceptions of the ways in which the university field influences the practice of their work, with the aim of seeking to make sense of their discourse in a biographical perspective (Grawitz, 1981). This topic is important as studies on higher education faculty and the academic field, both in Greece and abroad, constitute only a limited literature mainly in the field of qualitative research¹, despite the important historical - social and scientific role of the university community over time. According to Palios & Kyriazi

¹In Greece, the research that has been carried out in the university field is concentrated in two main thematic axes: a) the study of the presence of women faculty members in the university field and the factors that create and reinforce the difficulties they face in practicing their profession in this field and b) the study of institutional changes in the university field and their impact on the academic profession.

(1999), the study and analysis of this professional group is an extremely difficult task for both methodological and substantive reasons, which are related to social representations, stereotypes and prejudices in relation to academics. According to Rasis (2010, p. 8), if we want to understand the research deficit in this field, we should look for it in the insider knowledge of the function and role of Higher Education Institutions which does not seem to feed scientific curiosity caused by the unknown, but contributes to social scientists' fear of the possible exposure of academic life to public scrutiny and especially to the concern of the potentially negative influence of such a move on their own professional career.

THEORETICAL REMARKS

This work was carried out in the 'scientific field' (a concept derived from Pierre Bourdieu's concept of field) of a Greek University. The field can be defined as "a network of objective relations between positions". From this perspective, the concept of field contributes to the conception of social reality and the social world in terms of relations. Each field (academic, artistic, political, etc.) is a space of struggles in which social actors (dominant and dominated) try to maintain or change the distribution of forms of capital peculiar to it (Bourdieu, 1992, p. 45). The concept of the 'scientific field' marks a social space or world of actions and contestation in which 'dominant and dominated' actors try to maintain or change the distribution of the forms of capital characteristic of it (Bourdieu, 1992, p. 45). In other words, a 'game' takes place in the field. All participants in the field must believe in the game they are playing, and its existence and continuation presupposes a total and unconditional 'investment' (investissement) in it, as well as in its stakes (Bourdieu, 1992, pp. 45-46). The scientific field is a social field with power relations between acting subjects, stakes, benefits, interests and strategies. It is a site of competition aimed at the 'monopoly' of scientific prestige, that is, the ability of the acting subject to speak or act legitimately for science, which is socially recognized in a defined agency (Bourdieu 1992, p. 86). The right of entry into the 'scientific field' for newcomers is the sufficiency of appropriated theoretical resources in the form of 'scientific capital' (Bourdieu, 2007a, p. 119). This capital is a particular kind of symbolic capital, founded in acts of knowledge and recognition by all the peer competitors within the scientific field in which they are involved. Furthermore, according to Bourdieu, symbolic power is a form of power exercised over bodies: "...directly, and as if by magic, outside any bodily compulsion, as a switch, that is, with a minimum waste of energy" (Bourdieu, 2007b, p. 86). It is an invisible power that requires the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subjected to it or even that they exercise it (Bourdieu 1999, p. 238). Scientific-type symbolic power is only exercised on acting subjects (in this case the actors within the scientific field of the university in question) who possess those perceptual categories that allow them to know and acknowledge it, while it cannot be exercised on the public unless it has been validated by other scientists who tacitly control access to the 'general public', mainly through popularization (Bourdieu 2007b, pp. 128-129).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS - METHODOLOGY

In this paper we have attempted to answer the following key research question: What are the narrator's perceptions of the influence of the university field on the academic profession?

At the methodological level, the biographical approach was chosen, which emphasizes the perspective of the acting subjects and the subjective perception of social phenomena (Mertens, 2005; Plummer, 2000; Schütze, 1983; Solomou et al., 2016; Tsiolis, 2006, 2010).

The research was conducted using the biographical narrative interview (Beverley, 2005; Josselson & Lieblich, 1993; Ochberg, 1994; Rosenthal, 2006; Schütze, 1983). The process of interpretive approach and analysis of the biographical texts was based on the principle of 'case reconstruction' (Fallrekonstruktion) and the logic of the abductive process (abductive procedure), (Oevermann, Tilmann, & Konau, 1980; Tsiolis, 2006, 2014). The reconstructive interpretation of the interaction texts, as they emerged within the narrative act of the narrative biographical interview, allowed us to discover rules that form the interaction texts as objective meaning structures, which reflect the latent meaning structures of the interaction itself. Through thorough narrative analysis we understood that cognitive representations of the world can only be encountered at a second level of reality, which lies, as it were, below the level of latent meaning structures (Oevermann et al., 1980). In the process of the main narrative phase in the biographical narrative interview, we asked the informant to narrate his/her life story by recalling personal experiences, and events in which he/she was personally involved in the context of his/her educational and academic career. Then within the phases of the follow-up questions, we tried to trace the critical factors that influence the structuring and practice of the academic profession. Following the principle of inductive reasoning, we processed the narrative biographical interview within our conceptual and theoretical framework (Bourdieu), which we transformed and extended based on the processing of the generated data. Utilizing the principle of multilevel analysis, we focused on the Thematic, Structural/Morphological levels as well as on the level of dialogical analysis and the interaction between the narrator and the interviewer. In order to move towards the principle of 'case reconstruction', according to which each narrative "ought to be considered in its entirety, in its complexity and as the crystallization of a dynamic process of production" (Tsiolis, 2006, 2014), we analyzed our material through the stages of setting out and analyzing the biographical data in chronological order, uncovering and examining the textual structure of the biographical narrative, Structural Description and Analytical Abstraction (Oevermann et al., 1980; Tsiolis, 2006, 2014). The results of the research showed that social and cultural capital, historical and educational context, and university context are critical factors in the formation and practice of the academic profession. In order to narrate his perceptions of the influence of the university field on the practice of the academic profession, the informant thematized his narrative based on the following axes which formed the narrative units respectively during the process of the narrative biographical analysis of his interview:

1. The pedagogical attitude of the academic
2. The research at the university.
3. The attitude of peers towards the informant regarding his/her pedagogical and research practice.
4. The impact of administrative position on academic work.
5. The maladministration of the Greek university.
6. Progression through the ranks and its relation to the pedagogical work of the academic.
7. The influence of the University on teaching practice.

RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

Following the main narrative phase within the biographical narrative interview and within the side narratives, we asked the informant to talk to us about the influence, if any, that the university field has on the practice of academia.

The narrator reflected retrospectively on the need for the narrative ego to position itself in the context of interaction with the interviewer. The narrative that emerged in response to this question served as an opportunity to reveal the unique way of subjectifying the objectified

structures, the intervention of the acting ego of the informant on the structures and the way it constructs its biographical coherence by utilizing ruptures and discontinuities as elements that construct decision making. Through an examination of the course of his career path the interaction of the scientific capital he has incorporated with external structures was traced, thus developing his practices. This capital is a particular kind of symbolic capital, founded on acts of knowledge and recognition by all peer competitors within the scientific field in which they are involved. (Bourdieu, 2007a, p. 130).

The pedagogical stance of the academic

On the issue of the pedagogical stance of the academic the narrator argues that: *“Well, the basic thing, assuming that from a certain point onwards maturity comes into things, I absolutely believe, because it's not obvious that what I'm about to say is common sense, in fact I had seen this in the university session, the university doesn't exist without students. There is a research centre, but a university does not exist without students... our responsibility is that we are here for the students.... So, these are gifted children or diligent children, however, they are not lazy, they are not stupid. The hardest working Greeks... So, we come to the first year and we are now coming to the fifth year. And we see that a student with this performance has actually given up his studies. What do we do with him? Do we stigmatize him? Do we throw him overboard? Do we consider him lazy? What do we consider him... I consider, him one of those children that you can help, do you have the door open for him to come to you and say, 'Excuse me sir, help me, something happened to me'? Or is the door closed and you say 1 to 1:05 every day and then I disappear and take my bag, do my business in Athens. So, you have to find him and you have to be interested in finding him. I have colleagues who hate students. Half the session, the time we were there, they were saying, half my colleagues were saying we should get rid of the students, shouldn't we have problems. And I was saying, why don't you go to a research center, where you're great scientists? Not to have students, and they're giving you a hard time? Here we are at the university. That's our job, to admonish the kids, in our opinion, if they are doing wrong... You have to be there for the student, and you have to be strict. Well, to be able to inspire a student, ... to be able to find their problem and inspire them is an obligation, it's not a favour, it's an obligation”.*

The informant's narrative focuses on the position of the Professor and the former Dean in terms of the pedagogical responsibility that faculty members have in terms of the progress and academic development of students. He explicitly states that his beliefs do not reflect the common understanding of his peers. In this way, the voice of ‘others’ is quoted in opposition to that of the narrator. By focusing on the cognitive abilities of the incoming students in his department, he depicts a strong educational profile capable of developing in turn into a strong academic development and identity. The narrator blames any failure in this trajectory on either the failure of the educational system to properly guide the student population in their academic choices and decisions, or on the negligence of the university's faculty in responding to the needs of students at multiple levels of transition. The narrator's positioning of faculty members' pedagogical responsibility is reminiscent of Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning, where the instructor is essentially the ‘facilitator’ of a person's learning cycle. To this can be added the role of the teacher, who helps individuals to reflect on their ‘theories of action’ (Finger & Asun, 2000). Any efforts to improve or even strengthen students' motivation and the development of actions for academic integration contribute substantially to the strengthening and success of academic goals. The explicit assumption of the necessity of students for the sustainability of universities converses with and illuminates the irrefutable assumption of the decisive contribution of teachers to the successful or unsuccessful academic development of students. Through this narrative construction of explicit and negated assumptions within the present of the narrative act, the narrator, from the position of Professor and former Rector,

stigmatizes those peers who 'hate' students and seem to seek a university free of them. The accentuation of 'we' in this passage does not connote an identification of views but implies a good knowledge of the university field which allows the narrator to make a particularly sharp statement, refuting all those who exert symbolic violence on the newcomers by wishing to exclude them from the academic and political processes and osmosis of the university field (Bourdieu, 2007b, p. 92 & 1999, p. 69).

Research at the University

In relation to research at the University, the narrator claims that: *“The other position is what research are we going to do? For whom will we do the research and why will we do the research... I am in a position to know that 80% of problems of automation and being competitive etc. in any Greek industry, 80% can be solved with technology 2 generations older, which means almost zero cost. And yet it is bought expensively. So, on the one hand I believe, and it is my very deep conviction, that education can only be pupil- or student- centered, and on the other hand I believe that we need extroversion in research, of course we will be compared with the large research groups abroad, but our aim should be to be able to solve problems in Greek society and industry. We have not yet managed to do that...the university has not yet managed to get very close to society, I am referring to the technological side of the university. And this is first of all due to a perception held by many people, that I don't want to get into trouble, I have my own laboratory etc., that I don't want outside trouble, to get involved in stuff, and especially with the situation that Greek industry is in, that it was in... This is where the other issue comes in. Everyone's research activity is meaningful not only in terms of what we said before, but also in terms of how it comes back to education. That is, your scientific improvement must return to education, that is, the better you become, the better you must enrich your course, etc. And you have to find ways to do it. For me, do you remember what I told you? How I started out? What my first positive experiences were? It's because young professors came in, in the first few years, I experienced a very warm relationship, professor-student relationship. I wanted that to continue, I wanted to do that myself. And that's what characterized my philosophy of education...”*

As the narrative unfolds, the informant thematizes the dimensions of the academic profession by drawing on his stock of biographical experience from his time as a student. From the point in time of the narrative act, he tries to reconstruct a coherent picture of the academic role by incorporating experiences and attitudes of the self that correspond to the structure of those elements that he recognizes as a coherent and solid academic identity. At the same time as the narrator attempts to reconstruct a coherent image of his set of practices as an academic teacher and science scholar and project it towards an unfamiliar 'other' (interviewer), he proposes this content as a generalized model of the representation of the academic as both teacher and researcher. The above narrative quotation clearly demonstrates the importance of 'participatory objectification' as a position of the researcher, which according to Bourdieu (2003, p. 282) aims to objectify the subjective relationship with the subject and is one of the preconditions of genuine scientific objectification. In the rest of his narrative, the informant, provides several pieces of 'contextual information' about the conditions that hamper the development of applied research and its connection with Greek society and industry, criticizing the attitude of some peers who flee in order not to get involved with the difficulties of interfacing with Greek industry. In this way, he addresses negative attitudes and behaviors that he assesses as responsible for the state of the relationship between the university, society and industry. It expresses a clear differentiation from academic practices that are not congruent with extramural applied research, as a strategy to optimize the image of Greek industry, society and its university. In the conclusion of his narrative in this passage, he argues that the academic as a researcher should promote the co-evolutionary connection of the university with society while

enriching its teaching practice. The academic field in the narrator's assertions, is outlined as a space of conflict between the peers mainly at the level of different perceptions regarding the research and teaching dimension of their work. This positioning is consistent with Bourdieu's position according to which within the scientific field a scientific struggle takes place, defined as "... an armed struggle between opponents who possess weapons the more powerful and effective, the more important the scientific capital that has been collectively accumulated within the field and by the field (hence as habitus in each of the social actors) and who agree at least to invoke, as a kind of final arbitration, the verdict of experience, that is, of the real" (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 38). The narrator, drawing on the stock of his biographical experience during his student years, now explicitly states that the way he integrated the attitudes of teachers who came from abroad defined his pedagogical identity and characterized his philosophy of education. The voices of those peers who argue for absolute distance versus an all-round approach to students find the narrator in disagreement and also evaluating this attitude not as pedagogical but as an attitude of avoidance of responsibility on the part of some academics. In this passage the narrator addresses the interviewer inviting her to consider a retrospective of what he has narrated about his student experiences "About me, do you remember what I told you?" as if seeking verification from the interviewer-observer position of the consistency he feels and expresses that his present attitude has with his past attitude. That of the young student who was attracted to the openness of the newcomer professors and so gave it meaning within himself as the appropriate stable collective model of the attitude and position of the academic teacher.

Peers' attitudes towards the informant regarding his/her pedagogical and research practice

In response to the interviewer's question about the peers' view of the informant's pedagogical and research practice, the informant claims that: "*In relation to the opinion of my peers I will just give an objective criterion because I cannot have any other. I will answer indirectly because I also want to have an objective criterion. I have always started my academic career in a competitive way. I never found myself in a beneficial, transitional, arrangement. So in all my evaluations, starting from Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor, the decisions of the electoral college were if not unanimously positive, there were maybe some absences, I never had a negative vote, uh, but there the main element of a relatively positive acceptance was my election to the office of Dean, where let's say, I know because these things were known, that let's say in my department, the acceptance was over 85%. That is the data I have. And the students, the students always had a positive view of me. I base that on the evaluation papers. I'm talking about teaching, I'm not talking about other things. I don't care about the evaluation papers. Because I, at least in the last two grades that I was elected to, I brought to the attention of the electoral college the students' evaluation papers, which was not necessary..., it wasn't required, but I said, 'Guys, this is what the students have told me, take it and evaluate it'. So, I can say that there is a positive appreciation in general*".

The informant's response moves retrospectively by briefly describing those elements of the competitive course and the appreciation of his work by a significant number of colleagues. After all, to become established within a field, one must establish discourses within it; to triumph within it, one must act so that arguments, proofs and rejections triumph within it (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 35). The trajectory of his advancement is initially linked not to the current beneficial transitional provisions but to the evaluation of his scientific capital in positions where his peers had failed to distinguish themselves. And this in the narrative retrospective from the position of the expert scientist to that of assistant professor is the element that he is careful to emphasize evaluatively. Through a chronological positioning of the biographical journey of a young scientist, who moves, over a period of twenty years from the position of a specialist scientist to the rank of Professor, we hear in his narrative the value that the difficulties and experiences that enrich scientific capital have for him, his professors' appreciation of him, the

evaluations he goes through in order to reach the highest ranks of academic advancement. Therefore, we can assume that the narrator reflects on the personal value system in relation to the entry, progression and development of the academic by objectifying the correlation of academic path and appreciation that he himself has incorporated in his academic habitus. Therefore, in the informant's opinion, for the academic's pedagogical and research practice to be seen by all the members of the field as significant, it must be open to constant evaluation, with a clear struggle to acquire high scientific capital which moves differentially and not co-dependently with institutions that facilitate or benefit academics while calling into question, in the absence of evaluative criteria, the quality of all their practices.

The impact of administrative position on academic work

The informant claims that the impact of an administrative position such as that of the Dean in relation to teaching and research work is a critical stake. As he also argues: *“The Rector's tenure had a dramatic effect on research work. Then the former director retired, and I became the director of the laboratory. For four years when I was upstairs [meaning the deanery building], I would come in about an hour in the afternoon. This laboratory is the largest in the Department of Electrical Engineering, it was about to be disbanded. The sacrifice was too great. Very great, and graduate students that I was supervising were suffering along with me. Along with me, the other faculty members were almost disbanded because it was a great sacrifice at the research level. A great sacrifice. So, there's no way now to go up there if you want to do something, de facto, and have your lab in full ... there's no way. And people have to take that into account. Do you know what it's like to spend four years not being able to sit down and write a paper? Do you know what that means? And it changes the context of the relationship with students. The way you see students now, the perspective you see students from, is, you're forced to see them differently. You have to see them all, you have to see them not only from the educational and the research side, you have to see them from the personal and from the ideological and from the political side... But this shift to another position, view, then works on the teacher who returns extremely well-equipped. Experiences are tremendous and I believe they help a person if he wants to take advantage of them to become better at the level of management of people too... Obviously I do not regret it, and not only do I not regret it but after an amazing life experience, which enabled me to say that I tried to do something too, I know where I failed, however I did not remain uninvolved. I tried for the University, where I grew up, so to speak, and to which I owe everything, I tried to do something, with whatever strength I had, okay I know where I failed... but I tried without self-interest”*.

The informant sees his move to a position of such importance as a great sacrifice in terms of the researcher's role which functions as a validation of his identity within the academic community since the symbolic capital of a researcher, hence the acceptance of his scientific work, depends in part on the symbolic capital of his laboratory (Bourdieu, 2007a, p. 134). The scientific paper is the means of demonstrating the active scientific dialogue between the academic and the community within which he or she operates and the extent to which he or she treats his or her science. And the degree of this competence is constantly judged by peers. The disruption, even if only partial in terms of time and quality, of the symbolic capital that his research dimension carries, which at the same time contributes to the definition of his discursive value, his contribution to the progress of research, the symbolic benefits between collaborations, combined with the high stakes of the dean's tenure, causes contingency in the structure of the correlation of forces within the field. On the other side of the inverse proportion between research and extra-academic work, the informant argues that viewing and managing students from the position of dean enhances and enriches pedagogical practice. In other words, the “having” of a high-stake extra-academic position that confers scientific status, is, for the informant, associated with the privilege of improving pedagogical practice. Thus, the narrator

inscribes in his or her biographical stock the dean's tenure “as an investment strategy aimed at maximizing the specific, social and scientific benefits provided by the field, determined by the relationship between position and predisposition” (Bourdieu, 2007a, p. 137) and transferred as a gain in the lecturer-teaching relationship within the university field. The coincidental synchronicity in the identity construction of the young academic and the fledgling university seems to be a latent coherent matrix in the narrator's reasoning and decisions. His sense of positioning seems to be similar to the sense he implies in his words: “I have tried my best for the University in which I was born” i.e., what Bourdieu argues for those who are born into the game and have the privilege of “empathy” (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 33). It is through this sense of 'belonging' to the academic field of the university in question that the narrator justifies his dean's tenure as the explicit version of an endeavor that, despite mistakes and failures, he defines as a scientific loyalty, as a selfless interest and as an interest in selflessness (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 35), since “...to exist scientifically means to have something extra, according to the perceptual categories in force in the field, namely for colleagues (to have contributed something). It means to be (positively) distinguished by some distinguished contribution” (Bourdieu, 2007a, p. 129).

The maladministration of the Greek university

The informant describes the maladministration of the Greek university as follows: “*There are colleagues who resent the existence of students, they are tired of students. This in itself is in absolute contradiction to the concept of the university... Everyone wants postgraduate students because postgraduate students do the research. They're the ones who tear themselves apart for research, of course with the supervision of senior members. How can you have graduate students if you don't have undergraduates who you are preparing for graduate studies? So, if you want only graduate students, that is, students who are doing their master's or doctoral work, it means a research center without undergraduate studies; the big problems, the big difficulties, are with undergraduate students. Graduate students do not create problems. But how can you have graduate students if you don't prepare them; the researcher is prepared from the first year, if not from high school... So, you want graduate students, but you don't want to have undergraduates. That in itself is a contradiction, apart from the big contradiction that a university doesn't exist without students and this contradiction is of course linked to the change in the university in recent years. First of all, there are reasons for this. One reason is that we have far more students than we can educate. This is indeed a burden. We have students who, although they succeed at university, and even at a very high level of achievement, are pushed by social reality to drop out. Let's say a mistake on the part of students is that, because it is not only on the part of, let's say, teaching staff, when you have given up, you have to get up and leave. You don't have to burden yourself and the institution.... The university cannot be a theatre of conflict between people who have given up etc. But the main issue is that the importance of the educational work has been very much downgraded. Let's say in faculty members' promotions, when a faculty member is up for advancement, rarely will the electoral college ask, “son, what are you teaching? How many students do you have? What dissertations have you done? What educational accomplishments?”. They will only ask how many papers you have, how many citations you have? So, his educational work has shifted to being a side hustle and we have to deal with the research work, with our funding which is not there to bring in money, and the educational work is a burden and it weighs on us even more when we also have ten times more students than we can educate. This is a malaise in the university, a big one. Whereas if the main pillar of faculty members' evaluation and career progression was their educational work, the questions would be “bring me my child the books you have worked on, bring me exams to see, tell me what the failure rate is”. Here we have reached the point where if a teacher has a failure rate above 80% he is considered good and strict and the one who falls below 80%*

is considered a joke, which is the exact opposite of what should be happening. Only if you fail as a professor can you have, say, a 90% failure rate in the exams, it means that the students did not understand something. They can't all be idiots or simpletons or lazy. In other words, it has translated the educational work into a burden, a burden, which is the main malady in the university today”.

In response to the interviewer's reframing question on the issue of the value of teaching and the disagreement on this among academics, the informant explicitly claims that some academic teachers resent the existence of students. At this point of re-statement in relation to the phenomenon of discomfort, the informant makes it clear that this attitude applies to first year students and not to postgraduate students who are the ones who do the research, they are the ones who tear themselves apart for research. At this level we can assume that the association of academics with postgraduate students is a choice, a social investment strategy aimed at maximizing specific, social and scientific benefits since, according to Bourdieu, the symbolic capital of a professor contributes to the definition of his or her discursive value, his or her rarity, and the extent to which it is generally associated with his or her contribution to the progress of research (Bourdieu 2007a, p. 131). Moreover, within a field of scientific exchange, peer recognition acts as a validation of scientific capital therefore “the competence and libido scientifica” (Bourdieu 2007a, p. 119) of graduate students reinforce and the symbolic capital of the field's masters. The element that the informant seems to believe is crucial for the necessity and value of the teaching practice is the preparation of the undergraduate students, their training, their initiation into scientific practices such as that of the researcher. In this way a research workforce is ensured within the field which in turn contributes to the increase of scientific capital within the academic field. The informant therefore agrees with the value that his peers attach to working with postgraduate students whose work contributes to increasing the symbolic capital of the professors as well as the academic field as long as the research competence and appetite for work of the incoming researchers is linked to the selflessness of the teaching work. The pedagogical strategy of focusing on enhancing the research potential of the academic field is perhaps a 'product of the history' of the informant's own education (Bourdieu, 2006, p. 90) which is embedded in his/her biographical stock as an individual practice and proposed as a collective practice if we consider his/her career in the academic field. The informant came as an undergraduate student to the academic field of the university in question and he was initiated into the field of research where he was always committed to the development of his own scientific capital and that of the field within which he studied and worked. Besides, as Bourdieu points out, the scientist is an embodied scientific field, whose cognitive structures are homologous to the structure of the field and therefore constantly adapted to the expectations inscribed in the field (Bourdieu 2007a, p. 99). The informant's academic habitus incorporates all the academic practices of his own academic teachers, his high school teachers who brought him into contact with applied research and therefore he sees the passing on of research thinking as a necessary condition in the teaching practice of teachers and academics. Unravelling his thinking on his peers' ungenerous attitude towards undergraduate students, the informant raises the issue of the increase in the admission rate in recent years as well as the issue of the stagnant attendance of students who have dropped out. To this initial statement of absolute disagreement with colleagues who do not deal with undergraduate students is added an implicit and perhaps irrefutable admission that the university does not exist without (undergraduate) students but at the same time its existence is put at high risk if the ratio of admissions to graduates is not redefined politically, ideologically and socially. This position is in substantial agreement with several studies that capture the issue of stagnant enrolment in all countries despite the differences in academic environments (Cabrera et al., 1992; Sandler, 2000; Tinto 1975, 1988). Delay and drop-out seem to be linked to policies related to widening participation and the creation of 'mass' higher education systems. For the informant, the criterion of high level

research work that emerges as an essential factor for the advancement of academics up the academic levels together with the need to secure funding are strong constraints on the enrichment of teaching practice. Moreover, the logic underlying scholarly conflicts cannot be understood without focusing on the duality of the principles underlying the domination. The sciences depend on two kinds of resources, the purely scientific resources, which are primarily embedded, and the necessary economic resources. Thus, competing with each other, researchers have to fight to gain their particular means of production in a field where both kinds of scientific capital are active (Bourdieu 2007a, p. 134). The maladministration of the university - in the informant's understanding - is linked to the transformation of educational work into a side job the result of a deafening side effect of the cacophony between the political-institutional but also the pedagogical and individual dimensions. In his attempt to reflectively identify the discontent of a section of academics towards undergraduate students the informant sometimes moves to the individual responsibility of the acting subjects and sometimes to that of structures and institutions. And this is justified by the fact that the biographical stock of this particular academic is constituted through the integration of words that summarize the chronological chain of the successive positions he has occupied within the academic field of the university in question and the corresponding symbolic capital he has acquired. The essential importance of teaching for the new student, the contribution of the researcher in increasing the scientific capital of the professors, of himself and of the scientific field within which he develops, the distinction and recognition of the academic through recognition by his peers, the extra-academic capital of the deanship, are transformed into practical concepts that are uttered in the context of the interview as ways of exercising and realizing the scientific work and may sound sometimes normal and reproductive and sometimes eccentric and risky.

Progression up the ranks and its relation to the pedagogical work of the Academic

The informant uses the adjectives deprecatory and evaluate the effect of the processes of progression through the ranks in relation to the pedagogical work, negatively. Specifically, he argues that: *“The factors, in relation to advancement through the grades work in relation to the importance, of teaching and pedagogical practice in a completely deconstructive and invalidating manner. And the nice thing is that this is generally diagnosed, as far as I know because I haven't read them all, by the external evaluations² of departments. It tells you guys your educational work you can tell us, your research work we see on Google citations, ISI etc. Your educational work guys. How about with a lot of students etc.? There is a negative comment from external evaluators. I think this is very interesting. With some colleagues we are still discussing, but it will be a big change that may bring conflicts, the issue of evaluation of educational work to be put in the university by laws. To have an institutional role”*.

Based on the above assertions, we assume that the narrator understands the mechanism of evaluation as procedural in the shaping and reconstruction of the academic identity and its practices, since as he has recounted in previous sections, he spent his academic life being continuously evaluated. By objectifying the subjective version of assessment as a constitutive norm of academic and professional life, he develops the belief that assessment embedded in the university's organizational chart can rewrite the value of educational work in the academic field despite any conflicts it may bring. The common wish of competitors to conform to the real is an implicit contract that grounds and governs the work of objectification. The scientist is an embodied scientific field where his cognitive structures are homologous to the structure and constantly adapted to the expectations inscribed in the scientific field (Bourdieu, 2007a, p. 99).

²Academic institutions continue to use research and publications as a factor in assessing teaching effectiveness (Seldin 1984), but this practice has been criticized internationally (Aubrecht, 1984; Centra, 1993).

The impact of the University on teaching practice

The informant's answer to the interviewer's question about whether the university influences pedagogical practice is strongly in the affirmative. The informant argues that: *"The university influences the way a professor teaches. It does. That is, the common perception does have an effect; and it has been having more and more of an effect lately because the great advantage with new technologies is that things are no longer hidden. In the meantime, a great subcutaneous, so to speak, achievement that has been made is that students now, in one way or another, filter what they say, what they speak. Which means that nothing is hidden under the sun anymore. I mean, if I am inadequate that will be known. So, these things are going around, too. It's the age, which sometimes of course ends up in man-eating, it's the age of great, shall we say, transparency, but I put it in quotes. For me, this has a positive balance; that is, you can hardly be fooled anymore. So public opinion is having an effect. Sometimes it can have a negative effect, but it does have an effect. But that's where I make the big criticism of the students. The students also had and now they don't have it, they had the great weapon to enter an election³, it was imposed by law, and give their opinion of the teaching ability, educational competence of the professor being evaluated, without a vote⁴. Well, they never did! And they left, let's say, this place, not to be discussed, 'Did any students come, son?', 'No, he didn't', 'Let's move on'. Get in there, say who this man is, say what notes he gave you. This evaluation that I couldn't understand why the young man disparages it, the evaluation I say for his student who is evaluated, for his professor who is, evaluated, this enormous power to make him better, to ..., even to stop his progress if he is inadequate. At least they came to me and said a couple of words"*.

Based on the narrator's views, we can assume that the element of evaluation is the one that actually influences the quality and degree of competence of academic teachers' pedagogical practice. Essentially his discourse revolves not around the impact of the university but how the university could impact by reconstructing its basic identity and focusing on the importance of its existence which is teaching students, emphasizing the formation of their academic identity and preparing and creating researchers. For this reason, it emphasizes the need for all the members of the academic community to redefine the meaning of assessment. For the informant, evaluation is the measure of the development of the whole field. As it indeed worked in his perception, for his course to always have the security of competence and completeness across all his discourses and practices. And this is his own stake.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper, through the biographical narrative interview and biographical narrative analysis, we tried to explore academics' perceptions of how the university field influences the academic profession. The crucial parameters captured through the narrative act of interviewing, in relation to this particular issue, emerge from the narrative version of the informant's academic

³Internal Regulations of the university in question, No. 64 "Preparation of the register and constitution of electoral bodies" (Government Gazette 3899/25-10-2019 Vol. B).

⁴In paragraph 4 of article 12 of Law 1268/1982 and paragraph 8 of article 12 of Law 1404/1983, the following subparagraph is added: "The representatives of students pupils or students shall be invited to the meetings of the collective bodies of the institutions by means of invitations, which shall either be delivered to them or posted on a notice board of the secretaries' office in the department they attend" Law No. 3027/28 - 6 -2002, Article 3, paragraph 30. Ministerial Decision No. 63557/B1 (Government Gazette 1062/14-7-2004 Vol. B).

development and the emergence of the principles that govern his or her scholarly practices through the tracing essentially of the system of conscious and non-conscious, transposed generative dispositions as generalized and embedded at the practical level. Essentially, the informant's biopic is a reflective point of view of his perceptions, allowing us to gain knowledge of the constraints that can be exerted on the scientific 'subject' through its inextricable links with the empirical 'subject', that is, its interests, its beliefs, its preconceptions and all that it has to 'break through' in order to be 'constituted'. The research data revealed that the university field has a significant impact on the practice of the academic profession and is reflected as a space of conflict between peers mainly at the level of their perceptions and practices in relation to the teaching dimension of their role. The often used metaphor of higher education as an ivory tower suggests that academia is a quiet place, far from the struggles of everyday life and free of stress and conflict. But colleges and universities are made up of individuals who have been trained to evaluate others and themselves, to reason and through the analysis of their reasons to find flaws in the logic of others' thinking (Davis, 2021, p. 1-3). It further emerged that even a partial disruption, in the time and quality of the symbolic capital of research, which also contributes to the determination of its distinct value, its contribution to the progress of research, the symbolic benefits between collaborations, combined with the high stakes of managerial positions, causes contingency in the structure of the correlation of forces within the field. The 'intensive having' of an administrative position with high stakes for scientific standing only makes sense as a strategy for improving pedagogical practice. The issue of the increase in the admission rate in recent years and the stagnation in the attendance of students who have given up, as well as the transformation of educational work into a side job, are critical parameters in the performance of the academic profession. Evaluation as a constitutive norm of academic and professional life, embedded in the organizational chart of the university, can rewrite the value of the educational work in the academic field. It is the element of evaluation that essentially affects the quality and degree of competence of the pedagogical practice of academic teachers.

Therefore, based on the informant's perceptions as captured narratively during the biographical narrative interview process and analyzed in the biographical narrative analysis:

- i. The power relations between the occupants of the university field, the stakes, the benefits, the struggles, and the distribution of the two types of capital (extra-academic and scientific) have a decisive influence on the practice of the academic profession (Bourdieu, 1992, p. 86 & 2007a, pp. 83 & 133).
- ii. The degree of heteronomy which manifests itself in the direct expression of external problems - mainly political - within the scientific field creates conditions of contingency and high risk for the academic project (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 26).
- iii. The strategies that enhance the degree of autonomy of the field, such as that of extroversion of the research, research work, the enhancement of the teaching process and the evaluation of academic practices, constitute those constitutive rules that provide the necessary freedom' for the scientific field to develop its own necessity, its own logic, its own law (Bourdieu, 2007a, p. 112).

In fact, the possibilities available to the scientific subject and those of its object are one and the same. And this is nowhere else seen with such clarity as when research acquires as its object, the scientific field itself, i.e., the true subject of scientific knowledge (Bourdieu, 2006, pp. 320-321). The powerful narrative that runs along the lines of myth in higher education is that a good researcher is a good teacher (Arreola, 1984). Within the cultural capital of the university field, it is reflected as a strong position that research and knowledge production is correlated with effective teaching (Geis, 1984). The conflict has developed because, the academic profession is about research, teaching and tenure in administrative- extra-academic positions, but funding is the result of research work (Aleomoni, 1984). As Seldin, (1984) states, the conflict within

academia resembles the conflict between the worldviews and values on which people believe their behaviour is based (espoused theory), and those worldviews and values that are ultimately implied or derived from their behaviour and action (theory-in-use) (Argyris, Putnam, & McLain Smith, 1985).

Therefore, there should be those changes in the culture of the university field that imply a more integrated position on teaching through multiple methods of assessment (Arreola, 1984; Kreber, 2002). It is likely that the conflict over the issue of assessment within the university field will never be eliminated. After all, conflict in organizations is a healthy condition (Hatch, 1997). As occupants of the academic field envision an ideal environment with perfectly tailored assessment methods, but live in a real world, their positions on mission, validity and accountability will conflict. However, through the struggles within the field - as revealed by the informant's narrative - healthy aspects of conflict can be detected that echo issues of assessment for the purpose of improving the department, faculty, teaching and research practices and therefore the culture of the university (Waller, 2004, p. 9-11). Besides, following Barcan's (1996) claims, scholarly practices are often confrontational and contested in their deep structures, even in their most collegial and friendly ones. They arise from a delicate and sensitive interplay between consensual and contradictory knowledge - between the underlying set of paradigms or assumptions that can be taken as true at any historical moment for a particular community of scientists and the always open-to-contradiction claims of any scientist at any moment in the context of those paradigms. As Bourdieu (1988) puts it, the academic field is "that place of permanent rivalry about the truth of the social world and of the academic world itself".

After all, as Birnbaum (1988) characteristically argues: "*In the academic field the fires of conflict will always exist. Our job is to decide whether to pour oil or water on them*".

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