

## THE KABYLE PARADIGM

Dénes NÉMEDI

Eötvös Loránd University, Institute of Sociology  
Budapest, Pázmány P. sétány 1/a. H-1117; e-mail: dnemedi@ludens.elte.hu

**Abstract:** The Algerian experience was very important in the formation of Bourdieu's social theory. The recently published fragments of an autobiography and L. Addi's analysis of Bourdieu's anthropological theory allow a more detailed evaluation of the contribution of Kabyle ethnology to the Bourdieusian conceptualization of the society. The concepts of habitus and social capital both have their origin in the analysis of Kabyle peasant economy while they are central to the examination of the reproduction of modern French society. In this way, Bourdieu reduces the differences of modern and archaic society. This difference was constitutive of classical social theory. Bourdieu's social theory shares the 'timelessness' of much modern social theory, including that of Parsons.

**Keywords:** Bourdieu, anthropology, modern social theory

During the past two decades Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) represented one of the most characteristic sociological views. In 1987 it was still possible that he was only mentioned by a volume discussing 'current' sociology (Giddens and Turner 1987), or that he was not even mentioned by a series of Alexander's lectures published in the same year (Alexander 1987). It can be rarely done today.<sup>1</sup> As to the trend represented by Bourdieu (or, rather, what kind of label may be attached to the trend represented by him) there is a relatively great uncertainty. Ansart (1990), surveying the contemporary French authors, considers Bourdieu as a representative of genetic structuralism. Martucelli (1999), who characterizes the authors analyzed by one term each, has chosen 'habitus' for this purpose in the case of Bourdieu. The same label is used by Ritzer (1992). Balog has chosen the theory of practice for the purpose (Balog 2001) similarly to the co-authors (Cornelia Bohn and Alois Hahn) of the collection edited by Kaesler (1999). The listing could be continued. The great variety does not only suggest that Bourdieu's oeuvre was complex, but also that it was received in many different ways. Perhaps even the question can be raised that the multiplicity of labeling may represent contradictory trends hidden in Bourdieu's approach. Here, however, I do not wish to discuss this question. I only wish to state that common sociological opinion considers Bourdieu a representative of a characteristic approach, different from other contemporary trends. It is also known that Bourdieu's immediate circle of associates and disciples constitute a separate group organizationally as well as of their network of contacts, and of academic ideology within French sociology. In this respect one could

<sup>1</sup> But one should see for instance (Morel et al. 1999) and (Haller 1999).

discuss whether the set of academic beliefs of a group, striving to compactness, to the purity of doctrine and to unconditional loyalty to the founder may be considered as an autonomous paradigm. I do not, however, wish to discuss this issue either. Here I would only like to call attention to some specificities of the development of Bourdieu's theory *à propos* of two newly published books, Bourdieu's autobiographical fragment edited posthumously (Bourdieu 2004) and an analysis dealing with his Algerian contacts (Addi 2002).

It is commonly known that Bourdieu repeatedly dealt with the Algerian society. He was against the war waged for the maintenance of French rule, he was sympathetic to the idea of an independent Algeria, but he was not of the view that forces participating in this war and in similar ones fought against colonial powers represented a universal liberating potential. As it is also pointed out by Addi (2002: 60 and *infra*), Bourdieu, differently from many of his contemporaries, had no illusions concerning Algerian nationalism, and he never said that some kind of influence transforming society could set out from the Third World.

As a young graduate he himself was a soldier in Algeria: at first he served as patrol at an arsenal, next he became a clerk at the headquarters (Bourdieu 2004: 54–57). Still as a soldier he began to deal with the sociology of Algeria, and the outcome was his first minor comprehensive book, not indicating any particular claim for theory (*Sociologie de l'Algérie*, 1958). Next he published two papers on the social effects of colonisation and capitalist transformation, as well as on the sub-proletariat (*Le Déracinement. La crise de l'agriculture traditionnelle*, 1964; *Travail et Travailleurs en Algérie*, 1964).<sup>2</sup> He collected material to these writings already as an assistant to the University of Algiers, commissioned by the INSEE, the statistical institute he later on strongly criticized. These writings presented what were the consequences of the penetration of capitalist relations in a pre-capitalist society, where these relations were not embedded. Thus far these writings fit well into the critical trend of sociology that began to process the problems of the Third World in the sixties. But *these* important 'Algerian' studies did not play a central role in the development of his set of concepts. It is not these 'Algerian' works that had brought fame and acknowledgement as a sociologist for Bourdieu but the books dealing with the school system and higher education, also published in 1964 (*Les Étudiants et leurs études; Les Héritiers*).

The turn of the seventies and eighties, as it can be seen by now, was the peak of Bourdieu's career. His 'Algerian' writings, different in nature from those mentioned above, are very important in the shaping of his theory. Today they are among the most often quoted writings in international literature. Two interrelated books should be mentioned. The first one is a relatively short work written in French in 1972 (*Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique précédée de trois études d'ethnologie kabyle*), the 'final' version of which was published in 1980, utilising the additions he had done for the English and German editions as *Le sens pratique (The Logic of Practice*, Bourdieu 1990). The second one is his major work, studying the space of classes and lifestyles,

2 He processed his Algerian experiences in a book published in 1977 and already using his characteristic set of concepts: *Algérie 60*.

*La distinction*<sup>3</sup> which reached the book market in 1979, almost simultaneously with *Le sens pratique*. These two ‘Algerian’, more exactly ‘Kabyle’ books did not analyze the collision of capitalism and traditional society any more, but it dealt with the Kabyle peasantry, the group of Algerian society preserving pre-capitalist structures and relatively least affected by capitalism.

Field work for the books was done at the time when he was an assistant in Algiers. That work was not without dangers. Once, as he wrote, he walked to the edge of the forest in a Kabyle village (where he was guest of a Catholic monastery, that of the ‘White Fathers’): “je vais, le long d’un chemin au-dessus du monastère, jusqu’à un petit bosquet où je trouve un vieux Kabyle, visage mince, nez aquilin, magnifique moustache blanche – il me rappelle mon grand-père maternel –, occupé à faire sécher des figues sur des claies d’osier; je commence à parler avec lui à propos du rituel et de *lakhraf*, la saison des figues fraîches et des combats... Soudain, il me paraît bizarrement nerveux. Un coup de feu éclate, tout proche, et, tout en restant très courtois, il s’éclipse rapidement.” (Bourdieu 2004: 66–67) (One may read about the *lakhraf* in the chapter of *The Logic of Practice* on the calendar.) No doubt Bourdieu wrote about this archaic world with sympathy and that, too, in a way that in *these* analyses the external world – such as the Arab environment, the colonial capitalism of the coast, French conquerors and missionaries – did not even figure. This separation of the modern and the traditional may be observed in a large part of literature on ethnology and anthropology. In the case of Bourdieu, however, turning towards the traditional world was faintly motivated by an autobiographical element as well. As he writes in his reminiscences, he recalled Béarn (his native land) during his field work among the Kabyles. “cette unité sociale que l’on appelle ici *adhrum* ou là *thakharrubth* a-t-elle plus de «réalité» que l’entité vaguement défini qu’en Béarn on nomme *lou besiat*, l’ensemble des voisins, *lous besis* ...?” (Bourdieu 2004: 80) This personal background, though it rarely emerges, seems to be an important factor in the interpretation of the Kabyle experience.

The Kabyle studies are important for theoretical sociology because it was there where Bourdieu elaborated the two concepts constituting the backbone of his theory: the concepts of habitus and symbolic capital. They were supplemented by the concept of the field in the analyses dealing with French topics. The three interlinked concepts (difficult to separate habitus and symbolic capital from each other) constitute the core of his theory. One may be inclined to write that they are the fundamental elements of Bourdieu’s paradigm, but according to the accepted meaning of the term paradigm it is latent, representing an unconscious, or not necessarily conscious structure, whereas these concepts are highly manifest and consciously used elements that are to be precisely and recurrently used by the loyal disciples.

3 “...j’ai pu passé insensiblement et très naturellement de l’analyse de la culture berbère à l’analyse de la culture scolaire (j’ai d’ailleurs fait coexister pratiquement les deux activités entre 1965 et 1975, puisque je travaillais à la fois à ce qui devait conduire d’une part à *La distinction* et d’autre part au *Sens pratique*, deux livres complémentaires qui font le bilan de toute cette période): la plupart des concepts autour desquels se sont organisés les travaux de sociologie de l’éducation et de la culture que j’ai menés ou dirigés, ... sont nés d’une généralisation des acquis des travaux ethnologiques et sociologiques que j’avais réalisés en Algérie ...” (Bourdieu 1987: 34).

The Kabyle origin of Bourdieu's theory is not just a detail of biography. Bourdieu wished to reshape contemporary modern sociology with the help of these concepts. He wished to renew the sociological analysis of *modern* society with the help of an ethnological theory elaborated on the basis of an *archaic* world, as it was recurrently stressed by Lahouari Addi in his book mentioned above. Anyone may get convinced about it who would read parallel *La distinction* and *Le sens pratique*, the two books close to each other in time. Even at the first sight there is some paradox in it.

It is very frequent in the history of sociology, that the analysis of the archaic, the traditional, and in the case of some authors the primitive social conditions play an important role in theory-making. The examples are rather obvious: in Comte's construct of the philosophy of history it was the theological period that constituted the positive counterpoint of modernity. The assumed Asiatic mode of production was important to Marx to the understanding of capitalism in one variant of his theoretical construct. For Spencer the characteristic features of the industrial society became manifest when compared to the military one. Everyone knows Durkheim's mechanical solidarity as contrasted to the organic one, or Tönnies's community contrasted to society, and so on. Modern examples may also be found. I would particularly mention Habermas among them, who, when analyzing the separation of the life world and the system (this is an important element of his theory of communicative action) had chosen the presentation of those, not specifically identified archaic societies where, so-to-say, social reproduction took place fully through the structures of the life world. In brief: the archaic and traditional figure as counterpoints in the classical sociological tradition, as the *different* one, against which the characteristics of modern society, the subject of sociology, would be more sharply manifest.

With Bourdieu it is not exactly the case. As far as the fundamental theoretical structure is concerned, it is the *similarity* of the archaic and the modern that comes to the foreground.<sup>4</sup> His thinking in this respect was perhaps influenced by Lévi-Strauss's structuralist ethnology (playing a constituent role in the shaping of Bourdieu's thinking, though he always tried to project it as of secondary importance) which was also in quest of universal human structures. Of course, on another level the difference between 'distant' archaic cultures and modern culture remained a basic fact with Lévi-Strauss (see for example *La pensée sauvage*, published in 1962). I am of the view that a paradigmatic feature of Bourdieu's theory is the denial of the difference between the archaic and the modern in some sense. The words 'in some sense' are important: it is known that Bourdieu analyzed with great care and thoroughness everything in which the Kabyle archaic world differed from the French one. If, however, following Bourdieu's advice one understands archaic reproduction, the theoretical model arranged around the concepts of *habitus* and *capital* constituting the backbone of that knowledge, that model can be applied equally well for the presentation of Kabylia as well as France.<sup>5</sup>

In *Le sens pratique* Bourdieu introduced the concept of habitus theoretically as the general generating principle of practice. "The conditionings associated with a

4 "Bourdieu soumet la société moderne à la logique de la société traditionnelle ..." (Addi 2002: 164).

5 "À travers la Kabylie, Bourdieu discerne les logiques profondes et cachées à l'oeuvre dans la société française ... Ici et là, les mêmes mécanismes marquent la reproduction sociale ..." (Addi 2002: 110).

particular class of conditions of existence produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor." (Bourdieu 1990: 53) Several wordings of this thought can be found in Bourdieu. The Kabyles are not mentioned in the chapter from which the above quotation was taken. It is the characteristic actor of modern societies about whom he writes that "this is not because agents consciously adjust their aspirations to an exact evaluation of their chances of success", but their actions are governed by their dispositions – the habitus – evolved as a result of their preliminary adjustment to possibilities and impossibilities (Bourdieu 1990: 54). Habitus, so to say, creates individual and collective practices based on schemes that are the products of history, and that are "deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action" (Bourdieu 1990: 54). I do not carry on.

Another chapter of *Le sens pratique* sheds light on the sociologist's experience on which the concept of habitus and the theoretical field evolving around it fed. Habitus does not only mean ideal, moral, or technical dispositions, but also bodily posture and trends of bodily behavior. The basic model was the different bodily posture of the two genders in Kabylia. "In short, the specifically feminine virtue, *lah'ia*, modesty, restraint, reserve, orients the whole female body downwards, towards the ground, the inside, the house, whereas male excellence, *nif*, is asserted in movement upwards, outwards, towards other men." (Bourdieu 1990: 70) Bodily posture is the primary element of habitus, the body as an 'analogical operator', an *opérateur analogique* creates equivalence among the various practices, hence the reproduction of the (Kabyle) world. (Bourdieu 1990: 71) *Nif*, the Kabyle honor is the model of habitus and the experienced source of the concept. (Addi 2002: 80 and *infra*)

The 'Kabyle origin' of the extended concept of capital is also known. Here the situation is somewhat different from the case of habitus. As it was shown Bourdieu introduced habitus as a general organizing principle of behavior, a structured structure, or a structure to be structured, only to demonstrate it on an anthropological material. The concept of symbolic capital was introduced by Bourdieu to be able to interpret the apparently 'irrational' practices of the Kabyles.<sup>6</sup> Anthropology is inclined to explain them with the meaningless concept of tradition. Not so Bourdieu, "In an economy which is defined by the refusal to recognize the 'objective' truth of 'economic' practices, that is, the law of 'naked self-interest' and egoistic calculation, even 'economic' capital cannot act unless it succeeds in being recognized through a conversion that can render unrecognizable the true principle of efficacy. Symbolic capital is this denied capital, recognized as legitimate that is, misrecognized as capital..." (Bourdieu 1990: 118). One would be inclined to continue the reasoning in

6 See the repeatedly used example of the mason returning from France: Bourdieu 1990: 114.

the sense that symbolic capital is the operational mode of capital observable in traditional economies, and modern, market economy is distinguished by the very fact that it pronounces the truth about capital, in other words it is made to be recognized in its pure economic reality. But that would be Marx and not Bourdieu.

The theoretical framework of *La distinction* originated more or less at the same time as *Le sens pratique* and its class analysis was based on the extended – that is not purely economic – concept of capital. Bourdieu, who did not willingly embark on the precise and scholastic definition of his theoretical concepts, offered a definition of his concept of capital in harmony with his empirical studies in a paper published in German and English in 1983 and inaccessible in French for a long time, which generalized the non-economic interpretation of capital. “It is in fact impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory.” After the generally known polemic with economics he closed his argumentation for the extension of the concept of capital as follows: “A general science of the economy of practices, capable of reappropriating the totality of the practices which, although objectively economic, are not and cannot be socially recognized as economic, and which can be performed only at the cost of a whole labor of dissimulation or, more precisely, *euphemization*, must endeavor to grasp capital and profit in all their forms” (Bourdieu 1986: 242–243). Summing up economic, cultural and social capital in *one* concept of capital is, after all, the transposition of Kabyle lessons into modernity: the conversion of different kinds of capital is just as much a precondition of social reproduction in one world as in another one. “So it is by drawing up a comprehensive balance-sheet of symbolic profits, without forgetting the indifferencedness of the symbolic and the material components of a family’s wealth, that it becomes possible to grasp the economic rationality of conduct which economism dismisses as absurd.” (Bourdieu 1990: 120) This sentence refers to the Kabyle peasant who purchases a pair of oxen at a high price he would have to sell subsequently at a low one (a favored and repeatedly quoted example of Bourdieu). But it is equally true for the space of ‘modern’ lifestyles in which the behavior of actors is just as much irrational from a ‘purely’ economic point of view, as the behavior of the Kabyle peasant investing into oxen unnecessarily.

Summing up: the conceptual pair of habitus and capital, constituting the core of Bourdieu’s theory is strange from the angle of classical sociology, because it transposes categories used for the analysis of archaic society to the analysis of modern society.<sup>7</sup> This tuning down of the difference between archaic and modern may be interpreted as a paradigmatic element of Bourdieu’s sociology (in the sense of distinguishing the level of statements, concepts and theses from the paradigmatic level of non-explicit theoretical commitments and choices).

The relativization of the difference between modern and traditional in the above sense – the ‘Kabyle paradigm’ – has several consequences. I consider two of them

7 No doubt the third central concept, ‘field’ is not part of the ‘Kabyle paradigm’, and Bourdieu does not use it systematically in his analyses of Kabyle topics (Addi 2002: 26). It is also beyond doubt, however, that field is not used as a category specific to modernity and he does not attempt to build a kind of traditional/modern dichotomy around the category of field.

important in the context of our topic. On the one hand, I mean the relativization of the separation and differentiation of the institutional spheres of society and of social sciences. On the other hand, the problem and the difficulties of the definition of the standpoint from which 'social criticism' is practiced.

As it was repeatedly stressed by Bourdieu, if economic practice (the circulation of economic capital) is only one specific case of practices, of the circulation of different kinds of capital, then the task of social sciences is to create the general economic science of practices, which would, however, be not an economic science in the disciplinary sense of the term.<sup>8</sup> If the most important terrain of capital accumulation is the accumulation of symbolic capital then even action appearing to be most free of interest would follow a kind of economic logic (not in the common sense of the term). If one wishes to explore the correspondences among the various practices, then they "require us to abandon the economic/non-economic dichotomy which makes it impossible to see the science of 'economic' practices as a particular case of a science capable of treating all practices..." (Bourdieu 1990: 122). This wording reflects Bourdieu's claim for the science of practices imagined by him to be the integrator of social sciences. This is linked to the claim that the 'essential' dichotomies constituting the specific social sciences should be relativized, too: not just the dichotomy of economy and non-economy (culture), but also that of politics and non-politics. It is worth digressing on this problem in a couple of lines.

Challenging the autonomy of politics and knowledge related to politics was not only manifest in that Bourdieu and his school had been conducting a stubborn struggle against public opinion polls and public opinion as a scholarly subject (not always with the best chosen means and best founded arguments), denying for instance the meaningfulness of distinguishing between public and private constituent for politics and political thinking. The introduction of the concept of 'symbolic violence' was also important in this respect. One again has to return to Kabylia. A gift may not necessarily establish symmetrical relations. In this respect Mauss preceded Bourdieu and the latter one acknowledged it at several places: exchanging gifts may just as well be the reproduction of relations between equals based on mutuality, as the creator of dominant statuses and as the scene of ruthless struggle for dominance (Mauss 1983 [1925]). Bourdieu speaks about symbolic violence: about violence because the relationships are characterized by inequality, oppression and abuse, and it is symbolic because violence does not appear as such but as gift, obliging another one and gratitude. "If the pre-capitalist economy is the site *par excellence* of symbolic violence, this is because the only way that relations of domination can be set up within it, maintained or restored, is through strategies which, if they are not to destroy themselves by revealing their true nature, must be disguised, transfigured, in a word, euphemized." (Bourdieu 1990: 126) If it would seem that at this point Bourdieu made a definite distinction between traditional (disguised) and modern ('not transfigured', in this sense political) rule, one should remember that at an earlier stage and *not* in the

<sup>8</sup> There is no road leading to economic science from the general economic science of practices; in other words, it is not just that Bourdieu did not have a specific theory or a theoretical sketch of economics (which is natural) but even that it cannot be indicated what economic science would be compatible to Bourdieu's theory (see Addi 2002).

context of Kabyle ethnological works, he saw the same euphemization at work when he demonstrated how the republican educational rhetoric ‘euphemized’ the reproduction of inequalities. Bourdieu is a Mauss reversed: while the latter one expected that the modern renewal of the spirit of gift (of selfless giving) would strengthen the idea of social reform and alleviate inequalities, Bourdieu discovered that the apparently selfless transfer of knowledge is the most effective mode of reproduction of social inequalities. Bourdieu’s conceptualization of ‘symbolic violence’ (as it can be observed in the analysis of the structures of knowledge transfer), excludes the existence of an autonomous discourse, dealing with politics as a system of legitimate violence.

Bourdieu is regarded as a critical sociologist, for with a few exceptions his works demonstrate with exceptional clarity inequality and symbolic violence where direct experience finds openness, good intentions and equality. It is usual to ask – as it is done by Addi – what is the basis of criticism, of ‘exposing’ unjust conditions and oppression if those involved do not feel being oppressed (Addi 2002: 166). The problem is open to manipulative use, I admit, and usually the missing sense of being oppressed is explained by ‘manipulation’, too. The question however, indicates a real problem, to be responded to by an author who represents a critical stand in some sense of the term.

Though apparently this question has led away from the opening topic, from the special consequences of the ‘Kabyle paradigm’, it is only apparent. I think that those who relativize the difference between the traditional and modern conditions (as it is done by Bourdieu), to whom the economic and the social, the political and the non-political are intermingled would only make their job more difficult in the given respect. Approaches that consider the modern condition different from the traditional one in some essential aspects that discover cleavages in the social fabric find it easier to define a base point of criticism. Habermas may be a good example to the contrary: assuming that the separation of life world and system is a basic characteristic of modernity, would facilitate finding the supports of a critical stand in the communicative mechanisms of life world. Bourdieu had made his own position more difficult. It is worth therefore to see how he had defined his position in relation to his subject and how he attempted to find the basis of criticism.

Bourdieu’s recurrent topic was that sociology had to avoid the trap of both the objectivist (positivist?) as well as the subjective (understanding?) approaches. That was demanded by the theory of habitus. If, as he wrote in a digression quoted earlier, habitus was the sum total of dispositions, a principle organizing practices, at the same time it was objectively regulated, in other words it was not a product of rules in the sense of explicit regulations then an external observer has to fail (because he is unable to understand the practical aspect) as well as the student wishing to take up the position of the actor, to ‘understand’ him (because practical logic governing habitus is objectively structured and it is not governed by subjective aims). “The *habitus*, a product of history, produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history.” (Bourdieu 1990: 54) What kind of epistemic position would be able to grasp this duality, alternating between the positions of objective observer and subjective participant?

This dilemma returns in a slightly different form when Bourdieu discusses the system of Kabyle marriage. Here the problem is that observed reality (the actual practice of marriage) does not seem to correspond to prescribed reality (to the practice of marriage as prescribed by the manifest rules). The repeatedly applied concept of 'objective strategy' serves to solve similar problems. It is governed by habitus: "If each stage in the sequence of ordered and oriented actions that constitute objective strategies can appear to be determined by anticipation of the future..., it is because the practices that are generated by the *habitus* and are governed by the past conditions of production of their generative principle are adapted in advance to the objective conditions whenever the conditions ... have remained identical, or similar..." (Bourdieu 1990: 62) The sense of practice constituting the essence of habitus, is able (in the given example) to conclude marriages that are most advantageous to the family (from the angle of enlarging symbolic capital), which, next is projected with the help of the corresponding euphemization as fitting to the manifest rules (that is being close to the principle of marriage concluded between paternal parallel cousins). "Practical kin make marriages; official kin celebrate them." (Bourdieu 1990: 168) In this case it would be the observer who would discover the strategic element in marriage, while the interpreter of statements would remain prisoner of the euphemizing discourse (as the one who would literally take in the republican school ideology and would not recognize the reproductive mechanism that operated in that school). Surely the thing can be interpreted the other way round: 'practical kin', that is marriage strategy can be 'known' by those only who are competent practitioners whereas such persons actually cannot understand their own practice according to the assumptions contained in the concepts of habitus and practical logic, for an 'epistemic' understanding would endanger the accumulation of symbolic capital which is the sense of the whole practice. And, once again, vice versa. There is no place for someone who understands the structure of strategies as well as the meaning of the accompanying symbolism. This missing place would be the home of a critical sociologist.

In his late autobiography interestingly Bourdieu is inclined to attribute greater emphasis to the subjective, 'interpreting' or 'understanding' standpoint. The sociologist's work, he wrote, is made characterized by which is called 'intuition', which is perhaps nothing else but scientific usage of social experience (Bourdieu 2004: 85). Linking to this remark he writes about the interrelationship between his ethnological experiences in Algeria and his family ones of Béarn. Once again, this is not a new element in him: already in the *Sens pratique* he put a paper on marriage strategies of Béarn before the Kabyle case studies (Bourdieu 1990: 147 and *infra*), wishing to indicate the connection between the two kinds of sociological experiences. The reason why he laid greater stress on subjective, interpreting experience (but did not use the term 'understanding') towards the end of his life is perhaps that he put the question of the possibility of a critical sociology resolutely at that time.

After the *Homo academicus*, published in 1984, Bourdieu was increasingly preoccupied with the question whether a critical sociology was possible and if yes, from what basis. The *Homo academicus* provoked the question, for Bourdieu wrote in it about his own group of the university teachers. Under these conditions he could not accept the apparently objectivist stand of the external observer. In his volume of

interviews (*Réponses*) published in 1992, this point was also touched on. When his interlocutor raised that he had stood for the autonomy of the intellectual field (*champ intellectuel*) with increasing resolution, Bourdieu answered that sociology needed autonomy because “l’efficacité politique qu’elle peut détenir tient à son autorité proprement scientifique, c’est-à-dire à son autonomie.” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 161) Autonomy is the prop of what Bourdieu called the ‘politics of intellectual liberty’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 163), in other words, the creation of the freedom of science, and, based on it, of supporting reforms to be implemented in the interest of rationality. In his autobiography he wrote surprisingly the following in relation to the Sartrean myth of intellectuals: “il faut le [the myth of intellectuals] défendre à tout prix, envers et contre tous, et peut-être avant tout contre une interprétation sociologiste de la description sociologique du monde intellectuel...” (Bourdieu 2004: 40) Would this be the last word of the sociology of Bourdieu in which he warned the intellectuals to beware of taking seriously the critique of the world of intellectuals by Bourdieu?

The ‘politics of intellectual liberty’ represents old and honorable ideals. Their precondition, however, is that science and the intellectuals should by their own strength free themselves from the system of symbolic violence, from the circulation of the different kinds of capital, the cultivators of science, the intellectuals should get rid of (but how?) that habitus that is a precondition to their participation in the reproduction of violence and hence of their survival. The ‘Kabyle paradigm’ does not offer a key to understanding how this self-liberation of the intellect is possible, and this is the essence. Bourdieu could not get any further in this respect than declaring nice and familiar principles.

In order to see how Bourdieu’s ‘Kabyle paradigm’ can be located among the theoretical efforts of the last third of the 20th century, it should be seen what were Bourdieu’s manifested strategic intentions with the introduction of the new theoretical categories? He never hid those intentions. In his autobiographical notes he spoke very critically about the French sociology of the fifties. He stated on the one hand that it was the pariah of specializations at that time and had little acknowledgement as against ethnology having high prestige in those days (Bourdieu 2004: 51–53). Did the attraction of the more appreciated specialization play some role in shaping Bourdieu’s interest (and that he had set out from the approach evolved by Lévi-Strauss)? In his autobiographical writing Bourdieu gladly presented himself as a person doing research and working hard, even though he was marginalized and almost persecuted.<sup>9</sup> (See for instance: Bourdieu 2004: 32 and *infra*.) Accordingly his place would be in the pariah-phase. After Sartre’s brief influence however, (Bourdieu 2004: 21) Bourdieu also came under the influence of structuralist ethnology of rapidly growing popularity. The fashion of ‘structuralism’ also had a role in his becoming a noted person, and involuntarily he also adjusted himself to fashion.

Characterizing the condition of sociology in the fifties he considered fragmentation into specializations as its main feature and problem (Bourdieu 2004: 46–47). His

9 This scheme of autobiographical history of the main hero being constantly on the periphery and pushed into the defensive is less plausible, obviously it does not help much in the interpretation of the ‘Kabyle paradigm’.

theoretical innovation was directed towards the elaboration of a set of categories linking the different areas of sociological research. Surely this is banal, after all what else could be the task of theory but bringing together the fields of research? The intention to synthesize, however, was much stronger in the case of Bourdieu than of the majority of theoretical sociologists (such as Alain Touraine who can be regarded as his competitor to some extent in France).

The nature of this synthesizing intention is that may help approach the understanding of the theoretical significance of the 'Kabyle paradigm'. I have already dwelt on one element of 'synthesis': this is the implied denial of disciplinary articulation, and the integration of subject matter of economic science, political science and sociology/ethnology around the theoretical core of habitus/capital. Institutionally it was manifest in the inter-disciplinary nature of the periodical, the *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, governed by Bourdieu.

The possible synthesis by Bourdieu should be somehow located in the field of the sociology of the period. At the time of Bourdieu's rise and acknowledgement as a theoretical sociologist, that is in the second part in the sixties and in the early seventies the theoretical paradigm and that of the structure of research represented by Parsons–Merton–Lazarsfeld began to break up all over the world. Bourdieu held a rather poor opinion about this paradigm, it is revealed also by the fact that he had not a single good word to say about Jean Stoezel, its main French representative (who was primarily committed to Lazarsfeld's methodological paradigm).<sup>10</sup>

Parsons, constituting the theoretical core practically does not even appear in Bourdieu's sociology. Presumably he knew Parsons very superficially and did not consider him worth talking about. Yet, his sociology unambiguously fits into the framework of the sociology that emerged after the major change implemented by Parsons, primarily because of its curious 'timelessness'. His intention to integrate social sciences relates him to Parsons (or at least to the Parsons of the *Working Papers*). An exact localization of Bourdieu's 'Kabyle paradigm' also requires the understanding of the essence of the paradigmatic change that can be labeled with Parsons' name. Earlier reference was made to the significant role played by the analysis of traditional or archaic societies in the significant theories of sociology. In the 20th century, when sociology as a university discipline evolved (when certain elements of the discourse related to 'society' and to the 'social issue' were shaped into a legitimate discourse, linked to the university) the main problem discussed manifestly was still an issue originating from the 19th century. One of the fundamental issues of the 19th century was the conflict between the emerging new world (capitalist, market, liberal, democratic, positive, etc.) and the traditional social elements. The achievement of the first part of the 20th century was that this issue was transformed into the problem of university science. Naturally this happened far more significantly in European sociology than in the American one working under different conditions, but there too the focal issue was the disintegration of traditional ties, disorganization and reorganization related to industrialization and urbanization. In this sense the sociology

<sup>10</sup> In his autobiography he wrote about Lazarsfeld as well, who toughly lectured him on methodology at a personal meeting in 1966 à propos his book entitled *L'amour de l'art*, and its memory clearly hurt him even at the end of his life (Bourdieu 2004: 97).

of the first part of the 20th century was a *historical one*. It made a major historical rearrangement<sup>11</sup> into a university topic. Therefore it may, perhaps be stated that it is not (only) distinguished from the sociology of the second part of the 20th century by its qualitative and empirical nature less in the current sense of the term (as it is commonly mentioned after Lazarsfeld), but also that time, historical difference played an important role in it. Here the term *time* does not refer to some process, but to *difference*, as I have indicated it above: to the difference between traditional and modern, pre-capitalist and capitalist, mechanical and organic, and between community and society.<sup>12</sup>

Parsons represented a paradigmatic turn in this sense. Though it is true that *The Structure of Social Action* relied on the most characteristic figures (Durkheim, Weber, but Parsons also considered Simmel who was ultimately left out of that piece) of the early 20th century, but he transformed their statements into an entirely new model. At Parsons this model was the model of the actor governed by aims, values and norms. Time in the sense used above was eliminated from this model: this actor was an actor in general. For Parsons the problem was not the issue and origin of the modern rational model of action, as in the case of Weber, but of human action in general. In the case of Parsons, as it is commonly known, this model of action was supplemented by a model of system that could be linked to it better or worse, which, again dealt with systemic problems in general and not with modernity as a systemic problem.

Here Parsons stands as an emblematic figure and not as a creator of a model or paradigm, as a great initiator. It can be demonstrated (but not within the framework of this paper) that the paradigm of the actor governed by norm and of the functionally integrated system fitted well into the opportunities and needs of the factory of empirical social science research gradually evolving from the thirties onwards. Naturally the emblematic figure of this factory was Paul Lazarsfeld, but again he was not the only one who would have created this paradigm. There had been a transformation influenced by many sources and different kinds of institutional and social factors. The image of sociology was reshaped, because this kind of ‘timelessness’ was a common feature of theoretical trends of sociology at war against each other and incompatible on the level of manifested statements. Strictly speaking the two theories of Parsons (that of action and system) are also incompatible on the level of statements, but they fit well on the paradigmatic one. The competitors of Parsonsism, like symbolic interactionism, Homans’ theory of exchange, and the later appearing phenomenological sociology all strove to achieve a general quality, corresponding to ‘timelessness’ in a special sense.

The theoretical place of the ‘Kabyle paradigm’ becomes clear in this context. Bourdieu has undoubtedly created a theory of action with building the explanatory scheme of action on the conceptual pair of habitus/capital that differed from that of Parsons. As it was seen above, those categories (aims, means, situation, norms and

11 The term ‘rearrangement’ is unclear. I consider the term ‘emergence of capitalism’ the correct one. But it became a central issue manifestly only in German sociology, elsewhere it was differently worded, therefore one has to stick to the less precise wording.

12 In this sense elements that are *different in historical time* may *coexist in calendar time*: the elements of mechanical solidarity may be present in a society based on fundamentally organic solidarity.

assessment linking them) that constitute the Parsonsian model are simply meaningless in the Bourdieusian model of action. No doubt this model is capable to interpret more precisely the specific conscious unconsciousness of human action than the competing explanations. Yet it is just the 'Kabyle paradigm', the general nature of the concepts of habitus and capital, the transfer of the conceptual scheme elaborated in Kabyle ethnology into the sociology of modernity show that in this respect Bourdieu did not quit the paradigm that emerged in the middle of the 20th century.

Naturally and rightly Bourdieu considers his own theory as a specific and unique one (that is the only valid one). He always sharply distinguished his approach from those who started to challenge the theoretical and research model of Parsons–Merton–Lazarsfeld more or less parallel to him. These delimitations usually do not represent an explicit and detailed criticism of the competing models. He did not usually mention for instance Touraine's theory of collective action (even the author's name hardly occurred though in the field where Bourdieu had been moving about he was the other most visible person). He recurrently criticized the theory of rational decisions, and in this case his criticism was truly of the content, after all the theory of habitus systematically refuted the presumptions of the theory of rational decisions. There are certain superficial similarities between Bourdieu's theory of field and Luhmann's theory of system. Bourdieu was satisfied to briefly state that fundamentally the two theories had nothing to do with each other (for instance Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 78), and it is true. He was more preoccupied with Habermas, and he sensed that Habermas had been the real rival of his theory. He devoted an entire book to the refutation of the language theory serving the basis of Habermas' theory (*Ce que parler veut dire. L'économie des échanges linguistiques*, 1982), but he was consistently inclined to refute considerations of the philosophy of language by empirical arguments. "Quoi qu'en dit Habermas, la raison elle-même à une histoire: elle n'est pas tombée du ciel, dans notre pensée ou notre langage." (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 163)

No matter what Bourdieu may say, there is something in common between his 'Kabyle paradigm' and the rival models rejected by him despite all essential and visible differences. And it is that all of them have defined themselves in comparison to the Parsonsian paradigm,<sup>13</sup> taking over its 'timelessness',<sup>14</sup> more specifically adapting Parsons' breaking away from the curious time perspective of earlier sociology.

I consider this issue as the most important one in relation to the sociological paradigm of the second half of the 20th century. I am of the view that a major transformation of formulating questions and of thinking had taken place sometime in the power field of Harvard and Columbia. It may be put that way that the sociology being shaped there and subsequently conquering the world has domesticated the issue of social modernity. While modernity was a problem, a hurting wound, and a doubtful development for the previous academic sociology (it was the heritage of 19th-century thinking transposed in university discourse), in the second half of the 20th century modernity was at home in the most diverse sociological models, and has become a

13 I do have some doubts as to whether this is also true regarding Habermas.

14 "... la sociologie de Bourdieu est autant universelle qu'atemporelle." (Addi 2002: 23)

natural condition of man. In the universe of sociological paradigms with a semblance of chaos it has remained some kind of a common basis (confirmed by the fact that unity continued to be much more obvious for the paradigms of empirical research – for a long time).

The question continues to be the same in the early 21st century, namely whether the growth of dissatisfaction concerning the condition of sociology, observable at the end of the last century (Nicos Mouzelis: *Sociological Theory: What Went Wrong?*) was accompanied by changes of the basic paradigmatic attitude.

### REFERENCES

- Addi, L. (2002): *Sociologie et anthropologie chez Pierre Bourdieu. Le paradigme anthropologique kabyle et ses conséquences théoriques*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Alexander, J.C. (1987): *Twenty Lectures: Sociological Theory since World War II*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Ansart, P. (1990): *Les sociologies contemporaines*, Paris: Seuil.
- Balog, A. (2001): *Neue Entwicklungen in der soziologischen Theorie*. Stuttgart: Lucius & Lucius.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986): The Forms of Capital. In Richardson, J.G. (ed.): *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood Press, 241–258.
- Bourdieu, P. (1987): *Choses dites*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990): *The Logic of Practice*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (2004): *Esquisse pour une auto-analyse*. Paris: Raisons d’agir Éditions.
- Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L.J.D. (1992): *Réponses. Pour une anthropologie réflexive*. Paris: Seuil.
- Giddens, A. and Turner, J.H. eds. (1987): *Social Theory Today*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Haller, M. (1999): *Soziologische Theorie im systematisch-kritischen Vergleich*. Opladen: Leske + Budrich.
- Kaesler, D. ed. (1999): *Klassiker der Soziologie*. Vol. 2. München: Beck.
- Martucelli, D. (1999): *Sociologies de la modernité. L’itinéraire du XXe siècle*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Mauss, M. (1983[1925]): Essai sur le don. Forme et raison de l’échange dans les sociétés archaïques. In Mauss, M.: *Sociologie et anthropologie*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 145–279.
- Morel, J., Bauer E., Meleghy, T. et al. (1999): *Soziologische Theorie. Abriß der Ansätze ihrer Hauptvertreter*. München–Wien: Oldenbourg.
- Ritzer, G. (1992): *Sociological Theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.