

From critical sociology to public intellectual: Pierre Bourdieu and politics

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Abstract. By the late 1990s, Pierre Bourdieu had become the primary public intellectual of major social scientific status at the head of the anti-globalization movement that emerged in France and in other Western European countries. This article discusses how Bourdieu became a leading public intellectual, a role that seems to contrast with his early years as a professional sociologist. It explores what seemed to change in Bourdieu's activities and outlook as sociologist and what seems to have remained constant. It identifies several institutional conditions that seemed necessary for Bourdieu to be able to play the kind of public intellectual role he did in his later years. Bourdieu's movement from a peripheral position to a central location in the French intellectual field, the changing character of the field itself, the growing influence of the mass media in French political and cultural life, the failures of the French Socialists in power, a cultural legacy of leading critical intellectuals in France, a unifying national issue of globalization, and the political conjuncture in 1995 all intersected in ways that opened a path for Bourdieu to choose new and more frequent forms of political action. His responses to that combination of factors at different moments reveal both a striking continuity in desire to preserve the autonomy of intellectual life and a change in view and strategy on how best to do that. The article concludes with a brief evaluation of Bourdieu's public intellectual role.

From social science to politics¹

On December 12, 1995 Pierre Bourdieu, France's leading public intellectual in recent years until his untimely death in 2002, took up a megaphone and addressed striking railroad employees at the Lyon train station rally culminating the largest street demonstrations in Paris since May 1968. He proclaimed solidarity of French intellectuals with the striking workers. There he delivered what was to become his famous "Against the Destruction of a Civilization"² speech, in which he spoke not to the particular grievances of the strikers but argued that they represented something more fundamental, more far reaching, and that was the defense of a type of social security that had been protected, albeit imperfectly, by the traditional welfare state. Bourdieu

would develop and reiterate this theme across a wide range of public protests and social unrest over the next seven years. He became a strong advocate for the protection of pensions, job security, open access to higher education, and other provisions of the welfare state that were achievements of social struggles earlier in the twentieth century. He argued against social security budget cuts and scaling back welfare provision in the name of free markets and international competition. He began to sign public petitions, participate in demonstrations, editorialize in newspapers, grant more interviews, appear on television, and work overtly with political protest groups. He became the primary public intellectual of major scientific status at the head of the anti-globalization movement that emerged in France and other Western European countries in the 1990s. His death in January 2002 prompted public acknowledgment from all sectors of French society ranging from intellectuals and grassroots activists to the French president and prime minister. Much of the press throughout Western Europe (and several U.S. newspapers) eulogized his death with comments from leading intellectuals of many countries. Numerous conferences and publications have since been organized in recognition of his work.

Bourdieu (along with Jean-Claude Passeron) had achieved some fame already in the mid-1960s with the publication of *The Inheritors*.³ Yet this did not lead him to assume an active public intellectual role so typical of many French intellectuals. Indeed, Bourdieu was a sharp critic of Jean-Paul Sartre and other French intellectuals who sought high visibility in the political and media arenas. In fact, his later years of public political activism seem to contrast with the earlier years of following a professional career as a social scientific researcher. Bourdieu was of course a critic in his early career but one whose attention focused largely on the field of professional sociology. Indeed Bourdieu's relative silence during the May 1968 student uprising was conspicuous for virtually all other leading French sociologists at the time took public positions regarding the student movement.⁴ Bourdieu clearly became a kind of public intellectual that he had not been earlier. A change had occurred in both form and frequency of highly visible political engagements.

Furthermore, this new political activism seemed at odds with earlier views Bourdieu had expressed regarding the role that a social scientific intellectual should pursue. Indeed, he had voiced early in his career sharp criticism of certain forms of political activism by intellectuals.

After all, was it not Bourdieu who had been highly critical in his earlier writings of the "total intellectual" role played by Sartre? Had not Bourdieu been quite dismissive of much of Sartre's political activism in his later years as irresponsible, opportunistic, and ineffective?⁵ Was it not Bourdieu who had been sharply critical of sociologists who in his view played to the demands of the mass media?⁶ And was it not Bourdieu who stressed the importance of sociology as a scientific discipline rather than a form of intellectual entertainment? Had not Bourdieu stressed in his early writings the importance of building up sociology as a science rather than using it as a form of political activism?⁷ Thus, a striking paradox emerged between Bourdieu's sharp criticism of media intellectuals in the past and his own sudden high media visibility in his later years. Bourdieu both sharply criticized and paradoxically enhanced that kind of intellectual practice. And the political activism of his later years also seemed to mark a change in view of the political responsibilities of the social scientist. Reluctant in his early years to play a highly visible political role, Bourdieu comes to express more forthrightly the view that the social scientist has an important public political function to fulfill.

To be sure, Bourdieu had on a few occasions made highly visible political statements. He had joined Foucault in protesting the Russian clamp down on Solidarity in Poland in 1981. He had supported the French comedian Coluche's right to enter the 1981 electoral race against the Socialist Mitterrand for the presidency. On a couple of occasions during the 1984–1990 period, he played the role of expert by preparing reports on educational reform for the French Socialist leadership in government. But in comparison to the public political activism of Michel Foucault, and particularly Jean-Paul Sartre, and the customary appearance on French television of many other leading French intellectuals, Bourdieu had been strikingly absent from the front stage of the Parisian French intellectual politics prior to the 1990s.

Criticism of Bourdieu's activism

The December 1995 strikes in France created an intense national debate over social security and the legitimacy of the strikes. By taking a highly public position in support of the strikes and by helping to organize a petition of intellectuals in support of the strikers, Bourdieu placed himself right at the center of the national debate. By the late

nineties, particularly beginning in 1998, Bourdieu himself came under sharp attack in the French media for his political stances opposing government policies. Indeed the subsequent debate sometimes reduced to whether one was against or for Bourdieu!⁸ One can find in the popular press numerous personal attacks as well as highly polemical denunciations of both his sociological research and political activism.⁹

Three broad types of criticisms appeared. First, did these recent political activities in the 1990s, particularly since December 1995, represent a new career strategy by Bourdieu? Had Pierre Bourdieu, professor of sociology at the Collège de France, suddenly "discovered" politics as some seemed to believe? Were there in fact two Bourdieus: the political activist of his later years and the professional sociologist of his earlier period?

Second, had he finally realized his life-long dream of becoming another Jean-Paul Sartre or Michel Foucault? Was his recent public political visibility motivated by a drive for personal grandeur? Was it personal strategy driven by desire for intellectual notoriety and power? Did he in fact desire to become just the kind of "total intellectual" or "media intellectual" he himself denounced or sharply criticized in his earlier work?

Third, some critics suggested that the recent high visibility political activism simply bore out an underlying ideological agenda that had characterized Bourdieu's work from the very beginning and compromised its scientific integrity. They questioned the very scientific status of his work. This criticism came largely from disgruntled former disciples who broke with Bourdieu in the 1980s.¹⁰ Nonetheless, did not this new political activity contradict his claims for the intellectual integrity of the role of the sociologist he had long advocated separate from politics and his longstanding criticism of media intellectuals? Was his sociology merely a form of political opportunism as this group of critics charge?

Toward a field explanatory framework

I think the answers to these critical questions are a good deal more complex than the questions themselves seem to suggest. None of them individually suggests a satisfactory answer. Indeed, they seem to be searching for a very non-sociological explanation of Bourdieu's later

years. They focus on Bourdieu the individual abstracted from the social context in which he lived and worked. The explanatory framework I sketch out below is rather different. It stresses context, or in Bourdieu's terminology, "fields" of cultural and political life as well as personal choice. This article argues that changes in Bourdieu's position within the French intellectual field, and changes within the intellectual field itself and in relation to economic and political fields set the stage for Bourdieu's strategic choices in political involvement. Bourdieu's experience of those changes leads him to shift emphasis in the way he understands the relationship between sociology and politics. What I offer is a cultural/political field explanation rather than a personal/psychological one, an explanation in which personal intellectual strategy is framed and modified in changing institutional settings.¹¹

This article discusses how Bourdieu became a leading public intellectual, a role that seems to contrast with his early years as a professional sociologist. It explores what seemed to change in Bourdieu's activities and outlook as sociologist and what seems to have remained constant. It identifies several institutional conditions that seemed necessary for Bourdieu to be able to play the kind of public intellectual role he did in his later years. It examines his changing position from the margins to the center of the French intellectual field. It identifies key changes within the French intellectual field itself. These positional changes shape the career and political trajectory Bourdieu follows. The article concludes with a brief evaluation of Bourdieu's public intellectual role.

The early years: Building legitimation for critical social scientific research

This article argues that several key factors together help explain the public intellectual role Bourdieu took on in his later years. An apparent change occurred in the form and frequency of Bourdieu's political engagements and how he understood them in terms of the vocation of a social scientist. We begin by looking at the early years of his career when there was little highly visible political activism.

For sociology as a scientific craft

Prior to the 1980s and 1990s, Bourdieu rarely made public political declarations in the tradition of Parisian intellectuals. His efforts during

the 1960s and 1970s focused on developing a critical social scientific research orientation as distinct from the academic sociology taught in the universities and the media-oriented pop sociology that flourished in French intellectual circles. Sociology at that time (1950s and 1960s) was a dominated discipline.¹² There was little specialized training and few programs existed in sociology. It was either taught as strictly academic theory akin to social philosophy or practiced as applied empirical research with little connection to theory.¹³ Teaching and research in sociology hardly represented an attractive career option for promising graduates of the Ecole Normale Supérieure in the 1950s and early 1960s. What was needed, according to Bourdieu,¹⁴ was to build up the scientific legitimation of sociology rather than join in the widespread leftist political public activism in France against capitalism and imperialism at that time.

In this early period, Bourdieu seemed to believe that he could distinguish between internal intellectual field struggles and external political struggles and could focus on the internal struggles in an effort to build up the scientific status of sociology in France. Enhancing intellectual autonomy from outside forces would be an enduring theme throughout his career and we see below that much of his later political activism seems rooted in this basic concern. He wanted to transform sociology into a rigorous research enterprise that would be critical though not prophetic, theoretical though empirically researchable, and scientific though not positivist.¹⁵ To that end he devoted his energies to creating a research center (Center for European Sociology), to founding and directing a sociological journal (*Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*), and to forming a network of researchers who would institutionalize and legitimize his vision for sociological inquiry.

Bourdieu's later years brought change not only in his activities but also in his view of the relationship between science and politics. In his early writings,¹⁶ he argues that there should be a clear separation between sociology as a science and politics as distinct arenas of struggle. The first task of sociological analysis is to break with received views of the social world, including political views, and to develop its own scientific analysis of the social world.¹⁷ If sociology were to become a legitimate science, then it needed to develop an autonomous set of intellectual practices distinct from external constraints. The sociologist was not to take marching orders from political parties or interest groups. Bourdieu, as someone on the political left in France, was sharply critical of the "fellow traveler" posture adopted by Sartre, for a while, vis-à-vis

the French Communist Party. Sociology was to establish its own intellectual agenda.

Nor was sociology to be a form of social or moral philosophy. Sociologists were not philosophers or moralists who were called to offer prophetic insights on all the important issues of the day. Bourdieu rejected the kind of intellectual activist role that Sartre played. Sociology was a scientific craft that constructed a distinct type of knowledge that was empirical (though not positivist) and critical (though not intellectualist). And the sociologist was called to exercise this craft, not embrace some prophetic leadership role for society.

Politics nevertheless

Yet, even Bourdieu's earliest work has a political dimension.¹⁸ While drawing a sharp distinction between politics and the scientific work of sociology, Bourdieu insisted on the political relevance of sociology. He reasoned as follows. Sociology is to be the study of power. Since effective exercise of power requires legitimation, the practice of sociological research has the effect of unmasking and debunking hidden, taken-for-granted power relations shaping social life. Quoting from the French philosopher of science Gaston Bachelard, who wrote that "there is science of the hidden," Bourdieu says that by demasking taken-for-granted power relations "genuine scientific research embodies a threat for the 'social order.'"¹⁹ Scientific research exposes the hidden interests of the established powers.²⁰ Once power relations are exposed, new possibilities for individual and collective arrangements become possible.

Such a view of science suggests a key role that the sociologist can play in modern societies: "The sociologist unveils and therefore intervenes in the force relations between groups and classes and he can even contribute to the modification of those relations."²¹ That a critical social science can potentially modify relations between social classes amounts to a strong claim for the power of sociological knowledge in modern stratified societies and for the vocation of the social scientist as intellectual. Indeed, a normative vision for the political effects of social scientific research characterizes Bourdieu's sociological project.²² And a sociology of intellectuals informs Bourdieu's reflexive practice of the sociological craft.

Choice of research topic for Bourdieu always had political significance. "Acts of social scientific research," as suggested by the title of Bourdieu's journal, are to be "acts of conquest" against the taken-for-granted understandings of social hierarchies and therefore are fundamentally "political acts." In this respect, he follows Max Weber who argues that choice of research topic is informed by ethical and political considerations.²³ For Bourdieu, choice of research topics is guided by moral and political considerations: inequality, suffering, and domination. His early Algerian work on peasant attitudes toward time spoke critically of French colonialism and efforts to modernize traditional communities.²⁴ His two earliest "political" texts, "Révolution dans la révolution" and "Les sous-prolétaires Algériens,"²⁵ spoke directly to the colonial situation and French military involvement in Algeria as he documents some of the destructive effects of colonialism and the struggle for independence and raises the important political sociology issue of conditions that create political consciousness and action.

*The Inheritors*²⁶ contributed to the growing critical consciousness of class inequalities in French higher education during the May 1968 student movement. *Reproduction*²⁷ informed a generation of labor leaders and activists as well as students, teachers, and sociologists of the subtle inequalities in education. Early work on public opinion emphasizes a sharp division between political professionals and lay persons over who actually produces political opinion.²⁸ This early work inaugurates a political sociology theme that is developed later: the social closure of French political life to only those with the requisite cultural capital and social competence to participate.²⁹ Later work would likewise focus on important public concerns. *The State Nobility*³⁰ would document the increasing social elitism of French higher education and *The Weight of the World*³¹ would focus on social exclusion and suffering precipitated by the retracting welfare state.

Yet, the focus of Bourdieu's early work was one of doing good science, albeit with a political dimension. He rarely signed political tracts, appeared on radio or television, joined in street demonstrations, editorialized in French newspapers – all activities that characterized many leading French intellectuals. Yet these forms of political expression Bourdieu himself would eventually employ to some degree. Clearly something changed for Bourdieu in the 1990s. We turn to a brief exploration of key factors contributing to that change.

From periphery to center

A first important factor was a change in institutional context where Bourdieu worked. In Bourdieu's own conceptual terminology, he shifted positions within the French intellectual field from a position of marginal obscurity in social scientific research to one of increasing institutional centrality and individual visibility.

Bourdieu made his career in research not in university teaching and career advancement up the traditional academic ladder in France.³² He accumulated intellectual prestige from his extensive critical social scientific investigations and publications not teaching or institutional leadership. He did virtually no applied work for industry or government. In Bourdieu's intellectual field terminology, he invested entirely in the culturally intensive sector of the field of cultural production, that is, the restricted cultural markets in which cultural production is done largely for peers and enjoys a high degree of autonomy from external economic, political, and cultural forces.

These efforts were institutionally successful. He shifted from a periphery position in a fairly low-status intellectual enterprise (sociology) in France in the late 1950s and early 1960s to a central and leading position at one of the most prestigious intellectual institutions in France, the Collège de France in 1981.³³ The social sciences in France also improved in stature in France during the 1960s and 1970s. They expanded considerably in funding and recruitment of researchers, teachers, and particularly students.³⁴ Bourdieu's professional career was aided by the rising fortunes of his discipline.

One could hardly imagine Bourdieu playing the leading public intellectual role in the 1990s without having first made this institutional shift in the French intellectual field. Entry into the Collège represented a very important step in securing the scientific legitimation of his work, which was the focus of his efforts in the early phase of his career. The Collège provided him institutional resources (he founded a second research center there) and considerable symbolic capital. Bourdieu's popularity increased especially among researchers and specialists. The Collège also secured for him a prestigious institutional position from which he would be able to speak beyond the community of intellectual peers.

Access to the Collège was made possible by his tremendous publication output, such as *Distinction* (1979), *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1972), and *The Logic of Practice* (1980), all now considered classics in twentieth-century sociology.³⁵ His review *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, started in 1975, came to be seen as a highly innovative and respected social scientific publication. Later works, such as *The State Nobility* (1989) also brought considerable media attention. But the 1993 publication of *The Weight of the World* brought a new media visibility that surpassed all previous efforts.

His central position in the French scientific community was further solidified in 1993 with the French National Center for Scientific Research (Centre national de recherche scientifique – CNRS) Gold Medal award by which the French scientific community gave special recognition to sociology as a science and to Bourdieu as its most recognized spokesperson.³⁶ This contributed further to his intellectual prestige and gave him more scientific authority and symbolic power.

Intellectual field change

Bourdieu's shift from a marginal to a central position within the French intellectual field is an obvious factor in his preparation for a public intellectual role. No less significant were changes within the French intellectual field itself.

A shift in the French intellectual field occurred with the death of Foucault in 1984. Foucault's death opened up a space for another to emerge as the leading critical intellectual in France. Public political activism for a French intellectual is unremarkable in a country where there is a left-oriented political and intellectual culture that demands it. Indeed, the practice dates back to Emile Zola.³⁷ Sartre had made intellectual political activism a virtual rite of necessity for French left intellectuals after World War II. Foucault emerged after Sartre continuing the tradition, if in altered form, of the French intellectual field being organized around a few superstars. But after Foucault's death an empty space was created in the French intellectual field. Yet, it was not absolutely certain that someone would emerge to take Foucault's place and continue the practice in its traditional form. The distinctly French tradition of the public intellectual, epitomized by Sartre and Foucault, had come under attack both in conception and institutional conditions. Many argued – or hoped – that this leading intellectual tradition

was rapidly coming to an end.³⁸ Had not increased intellectual specialization and the displacement of the humanities by science in relative importance in French education undercut the traditional cultural base for the public intellectual in France? Had not Foucault followed a “specific intellectual” model of limited, specialized involvements in selected public issues, such as prison reform, rather than imitating the “total intellectual” model of speaking on all the issues of the day, as idealized by Sartre?

Moreover, an empty space in an intellectual field does not guarantee a seat. Following Foucault's death there was speculation in the French media about who if anyone might rise to take his place. Bourdieu did not immediately assume the leading position; indeed, it was by no means clear that Bourdieu would emerge as the leading one. Following Foucault's death there was a period of flux in which several intellectuals competed for public attention. Other potential candidates, such as Jacques Derrida, already had considerable media visibility but none with the stature of Sartre or Foucault. Other conditions would have to be met before Bourdieu could become a successful candidate and before the leading intellectual tradition would even continue in the form Bourdieu came to express it.

Increasing media orientation of French intellectual life

Not only did Bourdieu change position within the French intellectual field, but the field itself also changed in a way that led Bourdieu to devote greater attention to struggles external to the research community. Expanding cultural markets weakened the institutional base of the critical intellectual tradition. French higher education expanded considerably in the post-World War II period, creating many more highly educated French men and women who could look forward to teaching positions than had traditionally been the case. Many highly educated individuals who might have sought careers in secondary and university teaching no longer saw those as attractive labor markets. Rapidly expanding opportunities in the mass media, management, advertising, etc. became alternative options.

All of this contributed to the growth of cultural markets beyond the traditional purview of university elites. This growth in possibilities for both cultural consumption and production beyond the walls of the university changed the structure of power and control of cultural life in

France. Prior to the 1960s, the university professor could enter into public debate under controlled conditions where he could exercise some control over the mode of transmission and reception of his views. The rapid expansion and diversification of cultural markets changed all of that. Symbolized by the events of May 1968, the traditional monopolizing power for the academic intellectual was lost.³⁹ French cultural and political life became more mass media oriented when the number of potential competitors in the public arena increased considerably, where television came to play a greater role, and where journalists were increasingly the ones who shaped the form and content of intellectual debate in France. Numerous highly educated French men and women broke down the traditional boundaries between the university, government administration and private and public enterprise by taking on multiple roles of teacher, consultant, journalist, etc.⁴⁰ Growing numbers of academics began orienting their writing toward high visibility media outlets. In Bourdieu's view, intellectual work became increasingly corrupted by being oriented toward the media rather than scholarly peer review groups.⁴¹ Whereas the traditional critical intellectual had been rooted in the elite academic culture of Ecole Nationale Supérieure (ENS), the new participants in public debate were increasingly graduates of Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA) and Institut des Sciences Politiques (Paris) who shared cultural orientations more favorable to markets and rational management. There also emerged a number of policy-oriented think tanks, such as the Foundation Saint Simon, that cultivated close contact between corporate executives, senior government officials, journalists, and a broad range of policy consultants. Gone was the largely uncontested critical discourse of the political left intellectual and the institutional order that had fostered it.

The role of the mass media, particularly television, became vastly more important in French political life over the last thirty years. Bourdieu saw increasing interrelations between politics and the media, between the journalistic field and the political field. His research colleague Patrick Champagne documented that increasingly tight nexus, leading him to refer to the "journalistic-political field."⁴² Champagne's work shows that this media/political arena became increasingly insulated from external influences and conflicts as it grew more and more homogeneous sociologically and unified ideologically. By a kind of "circular logic," politicians and journalists feed off of each other: both react to public issues they themselves have constructed, often through opinion polling.

Bourdieu himself analyzed this evolution in some of his work, as have others, such as Régis Debray whose denunciation of the media orientation of many French intellectuals follows in many respects Bourdieu's views.⁴³ In this newly developing intellectual market the implicit critical dimension of the scholarly social scientific text becomes eclipsed by other contenders more able to attract attention in the new arena of public debate.

Change in political context

Globalization becomes a national issue

A number of changes in the political and economic context also helped set the stage for Bourdieu's increasing public activism. A change in political and economic conditions created a new context in which Bourdieu developed his sharp criticism of neoliberalism and globalization. The attack against welfare state provision by Margaret Thatcher in England and Ronald Reagan in the United States spread to Western Europe. To Bourdieu's considerable disgust even the Socialists in France began to advocate market-oriented reforms that would reduce both the size and responsibilities of the welfare state. The year 1983 could be described as an about-face in French political economic policy. The Mitterrand government shifted abruptly away from the traditional *dirigist* tradition of economic policy characteristic of the Fifth Republic. It began dismantling with considerable rapidity some of the centralized power of the French state. The 1982 nationalizations gave way to the 1983 policy of privatization. Even firms remaining under government control were held to standards of profitable performance. Significant private sector policy initiatives increased. Restructuring of French industry created massive layoffs that were to be absorbed largely through early retirements with benefits.

Although traditionally critical of centralized and bureaucratized state power, Bourdieu came to view the new era of globalization and fiscal constraints on state spending as even more threatening to the well-being of communities. It was not just that Bourdieu stepped in to fill a gap in French intellectual space left by the death of Foucault in 1984. The issue of globalization had become a major issue in the France of the 1990s. No other single issue had so galvanized France since the events of May 1968. Early in the 1990s, the French became obsessed with globalization. There were prominent factory closings. Bookstores were filled with book titles on the subject. Television programs and

news regularly featured the issue. José Bové and the direct political action of the peasant movement and protests received high media visibility. Bourdieu attended Bové's trial in July 2000 and offered his support. Globalization became in France not just a matter of intellectual debate but also the source of considerable social agitation. Thus, Bourdieu did not just fill a gap in the intellectual arena in the 1990s. He entered the arena on a hotly debated issue. Globalization became a unifying national issue making it easier for intellectuals to find an issue on which they could speak and expect to be heard. Without a unifying national issue like globalization, Bourdieu's political engagements in his later years might well have been quite different.

Massive political mobilization in 1995

Late 1995 was a period of intense labor agitation in France. A broad range of labor unrest, particularly in the public sector, and demonstrations in the universities generated the most significant political crisis in France since May 1968. The strikes were precipitated by the Juppe plan, named after Alain Juppe who was then the Prime Minister, and who attempted a reform of the French social security system and a modification of the retirement benefits for employees of the Parisian transportation system (RATP) and French railroad employees (SNCF). Salaries of public service employees had already been frozen and other measures limited or decreased the traditional benefits granted to public service employees. Massive railway employee strikes broke out and soon spread throughout the public sector bringing France to a standstill. The political crisis gave new life to the more radical political and labor union elements that rapidly gathered new support. Bourdieu supported the strikes.

In November of that year, a public petition with a list of signatures of prominent French intellectuals around the review *Esprit* and the Foundation Saint Simon – including the sociologist Alain Touraine – came out in support of the leadership of the socialist-oriented labor union Confédération Fédérale des Travailleurs (CFDT) that supported the Juppe plan. Bourdieu was furious that his long-standing antagonist *Esprit* had come out against the strikes. He mobilized and published a second list of signatures appearing in early December supporting the strikes. These events seemed to mark the beginning of a series of highly visible, media catching public appearances by Bourdieu that continued in a variety of forms until his death in January 2002. In the minds of

many observers in the French media this period seemed to mark the beginning of a very “political” Bourdieu.

The massive political mobilization in France in 1995 in response to erosion of public policies upholding traditional welfare state functions is very important for understanding the visibility that Bourdieu achieved in his later years as a public intellectual. Bourdieu could intervene politically with a considerable amount of symbolic capital not available to him in earlier years. He was mobilized by a social movement that made it possible for him to intervene politically in ways not possible in earlier years.⁴⁴ And intervene he did. He began to sign petitions, participate in demonstrations, editorialize in newspapers, appear on television, and work overtly with political protest groups.⁴⁵ He became France's leading public intellectual.

Conjuncture of research and political issues

Another contributing factor to the rise of Bourdieu as a leading public intellectual was the conjuncture that occurred between the kinds of burning public issues that emerged during the 1990s and Bourdieu's own research. Bourdieu's attack on neoliberalism not only took the form of polemical essays and public declarations. It was also based on sociological research.

His support for the strikes in 1995, and the kinds of issues they represented, was anticipated already in his 1993 publication of *The Weight of the World*. In that research he documented the social suffering of those left unprotected by the vicissitudes of markets and by explicit public policy by state planners who had increasingly become practitioners of neo-liberal ideology. *Weight of the World* documents extensive testimony of the social effects of reduced welfare state protection. It amounted to a stinging indictment of Socialist government policies focused on so-called fiscal responsibility rather than maintaining and fortifying traditional state welfare and safety net functions that corresponded to the long-standing demands of the left parties.

In 2000 Bourdieu published *Les structures sociales de l'économie*⁴⁶ (earlier portions of this book had already appeared in *Actes*), in which he deconstructs neo-liberal economic discourse by showing that the housing market for individual dwellings is in fact shaped by politics.

The book offers a polemical attack against neo-classical economics by arguing that economic phenomena are always embedded in broad social and political phenomena. The individual decision to purchase a dwelling is not simply individual, but brings into play a whole range of social and political conditions that make it possible or impossible. Thus, housing provision is not simply a product of invisible market forces, as technocratic and neoliberal discourse would have it, but results from political decision making and political interests that Bourdieu wishes to highlight. Against the determinism of market necessity, Bourdieu attempts to create a broader debate on the idea that markets are socially constructed and, albeit constraining, are always open to some political alternative.⁴⁷ This research makes it possible for him to intervene politically as an expert, having investigated the social effects of neoliberal policy in France.

Personal experience, reflection, and choice

Changes in his institutional position and social/political context only partially explain Bourdieu's rapid ascendancy to the public intellectual position that seemed to many to be in line with that previously held by Sartre and Foucault. Personal experience, reflection and choice in both research and in relationship to the Mitterrand presidency shaped a change in view and strategy of relations between sociology and politics, a change in the form of strategic action Bourdieu believed a critical sociologist should take.

Personal experience from Weight of the World research

The experience of researching social suffering and exclusion in preparation for *The Weight of the World* (1993) sensitized Bourdieu to the plight of those most affected by cutbacks in welfare state provision. His research in *The Weight of the World* undoubtedly sharpened his awareness of the disenfranchised and marginalized individuals and groups who experienced directly the dislocation, precariousness, and constraints imposed by reduced state social services. This research experience gave him a new appreciation of their plight and motivated him to give voice to these social groups he finds without effective representation in the national debate over economic and political policies. The tremendous success of the book, both in terms of sales (it sold over 100,000 copies) and public debate and media attention it provoked,

brought to Bourdieu a new level of public visibility as a public intellectual. Theater groups staged performances based on the book's ethnographic exploration of social suffering. This success seemed to open up for Bourdieu the possibility of a new and effective political role based on his scientific authority. It suggested the possibility of new more direct forms of political engagement that had not been possible before and he seized that opportunity.

Disillusionment with the political left in power during 1980s and 1990s

Bourdieu had always been on the political left and hence in the political opposition during the center-right governments of the Fifth Republic up until the election of Mitterrand in 1981. The arrival of the socialist-communist coalition to power in 1981 opened the possibility of a more effective rapport of communication between left intellectuals and the new left government; it created the possibility of implementing the ideal of more rational and scientific based public policy, less governed by parochial economic and political interests. During the Mitterrand years Bourdieu did contribute two different reports on education. In 1985 he published the Collège de France report "Propositions pour un enseignement de l'avenir," in response to the request by Mitterrand that the Collège reflect on the fundamental principles of education for the future.⁴⁸ Along with François Gros, Bourdieu presided over a commission set up by the socialist minister of education, Lionel Jospin, on the contents of education and published its report "Principles pour une réflexion sur les contenus d'enseignement" in 1989.⁴⁹ Thus, on a few occasions during the 1980s, Bourdieu functioned as an expert advising political authority under a socialist government. But one could hardly characterize him as assuming a major advisory role to the left government. Bourdieu himself was far too critical of power and too fearful of falling into a kind of intellectual servitude role to political leadership to join in any official way the Mitterrand government.⁵⁰ Indeed, he proved to be a sharp critic of the various left governments formed under Mitterrand and later in "co-habitation" with the center-right leadership of Jacques Chirac under the Mitterrand presidency. He supported the French comedian Coluche's right to run against Mitterrand in the 1981 elections and joined Foucault in a public rebuke of the newly elected regime for its slow response in protesting the Soviet sponsored military crackdown of Solidarity in Poland. But more and more he became disillusioned with the left government and increasingly came to the conclusion that it was

no better able than the right to hear the voice of reason and science. The political class of the left socialist government was as socially and ideologically closed as was that of the previous center-right regimes.⁵¹ He became increasingly disillusioned with the French socialists and this personal disillusionment helps explain and prepare for the public intellectual role he would play in the 1990s.

A shift in view and strategy

Personal experience of having researched the social effects of neo-liberal economic policies in France and growing disillusionment with the left government under Mitterrand led him to modify his view of the political effects of critical social research. The ideal that a sociology of power would unmask, debunk, expose power relations and therefore lead to their transformation came to appear overly optimistic.⁵² This ideal guided the work on the French elite system of the grandes écoles culminating in the 1989 publication of *The State Nobility*. That research exposed as never before the power relations buttressing the elite system of the grandes écoles. The book received considerable media attention but no significant response from French socialist political leadership. No significant reform of the grandes écoles was undertaken in response to their increasingly class-based character, in recruitment, curriculum, and pedagogy, that Bourdieu critically documented. Something more needed to be done.⁵³ Although Bourdieu never backed away from the debunking ideal of critical social science as an act of resistance, we begin to see him seek out more direct forms of political intervention and work increasingly towards developing collective expressions of intellectual criticism of existing power arrangements.

We observe a shift in intellectual strategy from one of trying to speak to a left government as an expert to one of developing a “collective intellectual” strategy (see later pages) that would reaffirm and defend the autonomy of intellectual work from political powers and speak forcefully and critically of abuse of political power in whatever form.

Disillusionment with the socialists in power led him to reaffirm even more strongly the idea of intellectual autonomy. His disillusionment with attempting to have a direct impact on public policy formulation with the socialists, particularly in education, led him to reassert the importance of intellectuals as a moral force in society, whose function

is to call to order, to hold accountable the actions of political leadership.

While critical of the “total intellectual” role played by Sartre, Bourdieu nonetheless valued the critical intellectual tradition dating back to Zola. Part of his willingness to assume this kind of public intellectual role was in response to the apparent decline of the critical intellectual tradition in France. The image of the leading public intellectual in France thrived during the Cold War period. Situated on the political left, most French intellectuals carved out a distinct identity as critics of colonialism and capitalist imperialism. Algeria and Vietnam were rallying issues for the left. But with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 marking the end of the Cold War, a growing number of French intellectuals came to argue that the time for the role of the “critical intellectual” was over and that it was now time to defend and manage markets and democracy better. A growing number of intellectuals began cultivating more cooperative relationships with political and economic leadership and the mass media, in such roles as advisor, expert, political analyst, and television commentator.

This shift in orientation for many intellectuals was made easier by the loss of political legitimacy of the left parties. Scandals, failed initiatives and economic crisis plagued various governments under the Mitterrand presidency. Socialist party leadership during the Mitterrand presidency had adopted a number of macro-economic policies of accommodation to international financial markets. Socialists therefore became less able to rally support around their traditional role of ideological resistance toward capitalist trends. This kind of economic realism Bourdieu would sharply contest as spineless abdication to the forces of globalization.

Bourdieu devoted more and more time and attention in later years to giving organizational expression to intellectuals. This shift in strategy reaffirms an old theme in his career – the need to protect the autonomy of the intellectual field from outside economic, political, and religious forces. This theme becomes more important in his later years because he sees that autonomy threatened by a new and growing media-oriented intelligentsia.

Unlike in the early years when Bourdieu was willing to distinguish between internal and external struggles and focus on the former, his concern and activities in his later years suggests he no longer believes

this to be possible. Bourdieu's analysis of the changing relation of the intellectual field to outside political and economic constraints led him to conclude that an intellectual/political strategy focused entirely on internal issues was no longer viable. The distinction between internal and external struggles became less convincing.⁵⁴ The autonomy of intellectual life became more and more threatened by the mass media and by the much more diverse cultural markets. Bourdieu as a consultant came to the conclusion that to defend the former he must also challenge the latter. Thus, despite a change in type and frequency of public activism, there was continuity in the kind of concern expressed. The same concern for intellectual autonomy remains, but it is as if his intellectual concern must now be fought out in the larger public arena, not just within peer networks. Moreover, this shift in view and particularly strategy is facilitated by Bourdieu's change in position in the intellectual field from the periphery to the center.

As a consequence, we observe a shift in intellectual strategy. We see evidence of this shift in strategy in his publications appearing in the early 1990s. He starts publishing small paperbacks that are accessible to a broader audience in terms of price and writing style and that are collections of interviews, short speeches, and essays devoted largely to criticism of neoliberal globalization as a central theme.⁵⁵ This strategy brings a wide readership beyond the university as well as within, but they also provoke a sharp debate in the French media.

He also comes to support occasionally high profile forms of protest against established powers. Believing that the arena of public discourse had become narrowly framed by the logic of neo-classical economic assumptions, Bourdieu tried to find ways to break through that cage of economic determinism. He supported the French comedian Coluche's right to be a candidate opposing Mitterrand in the 1981 presidential elections not because Bourdieu thought Coluche to be presidential material but as a way of calling attention to the cloistered world of French political leadership and its assumptions.⁵⁶ He also looked to the work of artists, such as Karl Karus and Hans Hakke, as privileged sources of creative intervention to expose the enclosed world of political leadership and discourse.⁵⁷ And he attended the trial of José Bové.

One can also observe the shift in strategy as he devotes more and more energy to developing the idea of an organizational means for the "collective intellectual." The idea was not entirely new; one can find

expressions of it in the late 1980s.⁵⁸ The 1992 postscript "For the corporatism of the universal" to *The Rules of Art* appears as a kind of manifesto that outlines an activist strategy that he would more and more employ throughout the 1990s. It defines an activist role for the "scientific intellectual" that he sees going back to the example set by Emile Zola during the Dreyfus Affair. Bourdieu calls for the collective organization of intellectuals, a call that "takes a normative position based on the conviction that it is possible to use knowledge of the logic of the functioning of the fields of cultural production to draw up a realistic programme for the collective action of intellectuals."⁵⁹ Here the work of social science is presented in strikingly instrumentalist terms as a tool for the political efficacy of intellectuals.

Why does Bourdieu make this direct appeal? Because he thinks the intellectual field in general is threatened increasingly in two ways. First, it is threatened by the interpenetration of art and money. Marketing criteria and sales have come to replace genuine intellectual criteria in publishing. Even the *avant garde* chases after commercial success rather than maintaining its traditional disregard of commercial criteria.⁶⁰ Hence the return to the familiar theme of working to enhance and preserve intellectual autonomy. What differs this time is the focus that no longer centers exclusively on the internal world of intellectuals. The internal and external worlds have become fused because of the second reason Bourdieu sees for the need to develop collective action by intellectuals. This changes the institutional focus of his intellectual politics.

The second reason is the degree of closure of the arena of public debate. The arena of public debate within the field of power is increasingly monopolized by technocrats and journalists pushing out artists, writers, and scientists. As a consequence, public policy discussion and formulation have come to be framed by neoliberal economic assumptions. Bourdieu's response in "For the corporatism of the universal" is to call for an organized corporatist response among intellectuals to defend their interests within the intellectual field and to reintroduce the values of reason and science within public debate. The arena of public debate is treated like a cultural field where critical and scientific intellectuals should try to recapture some of the terrain lost to the technocratic and administrative elites.⁶¹

Bourdieu tries to implement this "realpolitik" of the collective intellectual in several practical ways. He creates in 1989 his own European

review of books, *Liber*, in an effort to develop a European intellectual tradition modeled on the Encyclopedists of the Enlightenment. *Liber* was to disseminate to a large readership a broad range of literary, artistic, and scientific avant garde works not readily available because of language barriers, slowness of translations, national traditions, etc.⁶² It appears first as a supplement to four major European newspapers but then, because of financial constraints, becomes a supplement to *Actes* and continues until 1998.

In 1992 he issues a call, "Appel à la communauté des universitaires et des chercheurs," to the university and research communities that leads to the creation of the Association de réflexion sur les enseignements supérieurs et la recherche (ARESER). Bourdieu presides over the association and Christophe Charle, Professor of History at the University of Paris and a former student, becomes the managing coordinator. The association publishes in 1997 *Quelques diagnostics and remèdes urgents pour une université en péril*.⁶³ The book brings together a number of documents, papers and recommendations that call for increased financial and human resources to meet the needs of an increasingly heterogeneous public and a reorganization of work that would enhance more local control. The association also sponsors a number of meetings on educational policy. In conjunction with this group Bourdieu publishes in the 1990s some opinion pieces in the national press showing his ongoing concern for educational reform.

He creates in June 1993 the Comité international de soutien aux intellectuels algériens (CISIA) to offer support to Algerian intellectuals threatened by the civil war in that country. That same year he participates in the International Parliament of Writers in Strasbourg and initiates a petition to organize a "critical opposition to power," to offer "solidarity with writers under threat," and to set up "a place of reflection for new forms of activism."⁶⁴ The strategy of organizing international conferences of intellectuals becomes a favorite one of Bourdieu and he participates in several right up until just before death. In 1995, he organizes Raisons d'agir ("Reasons to act"), a group of progressive social scientists who share similar critical views of neo-liberal public policies as a way of counter acting those conservative think tanks, such as the Foundation Saint-Simon, that celebrate market mechanisms. In the same year he launches a publishing venture that eventually assumes the same name. It represents an attempt to regain control over the conditions of intellectual production from growing commercial interests in the French publishing world. It is designed to

bring sociological analyses of contemporary civic issues to a broader public. The first publication in 1996 was his own bestseller and controversial *On Television*.⁶⁵ A broad and sharply critical debate breaks out in the French press over Bourdieu's criticism of television journalism. In the April 8, 1998 issue of *Le Monde* he publishes his famous "Pour une gauche de gauche" in which he criticizes "la troïka neo-liberal Blair-Jospin-Schroder" and the socialist government under Lionel Jospin for betraying the ideals of the left. The article is cosigned with Christophe Charle, Frédéric Lebaron, Gérard Mauger, and Bernard Lacroix and was elaborated within the framework of Raisons d'agir group. The op-ed piece elicits considerable debate in the French press and an avalanche of written correspondence. The Raisons d'agir group publishes regularly in *Le monde diplomatique* and in numerous other publications.⁶⁶

Bourdieu's criticism of media journalism

The forgoing discussion helps explain Bourdieu's attack on media journalism that generated much of the criticism of his political activism in the late 1990s. His sharply focused criticism of neo-liberal bias in media journalism in his little "red book," *On Television*,⁶⁷ was a major publishing coup and provoked sharp debate over the role of the mass media in France. It sold over 140,000 copies and was for several months at the top of the bestseller list in France. The book placed Bourdieu at the center of a national debate over the role of the mass media in France, particularly television journalism. Sharply critical of the celebrity-making machine of the media, the book had the paradoxical effect of making Bourdieu himself all the more a celebrity. Bourdieu was not against journalism per se, even though some of his sharpest criticism suggested as much. Indeed, he attributed to journalism the important function of keeping the claims and actions of political leadership under public scrutiny and thereby holding political leaders accountable for their actions or inactions. Rather, it was his defense of the autonomy of the intellectual field and criticism of the closure of public discourse that motivated his attack. He believed that the intellectual field was rapidly being undermined by the invasion of a media-oriented intelligentsia where intellectual prestige was determined more and more by media visibility than by traditional peer group review in professional publications. At the same time the terms of public discourse were becoming narrowly framed by neo-liberal economic terminology and assumptions. Although a long-time critic

of media-oriented intellectuals whom he dismissed as superficial, without enduring intellectual qualities, and as contributing to a kind of “cultural fast food” shopping and consumption, Bourdieu became increasingly convinced that the marketing orientation of cultural and political life had so advanced that it had become virtually impossible for alternative viewpoints to gain a fair public hearing. He viewed the arena of public debate as increasingly monopolized by technocrats and journalists, pushing out artists, writers, and scientists. The voices of grassroots activists, immigrants, the unemployed, and labor activists were too easily dismissed as “irrational” and “unrealistic” in the climate of globalization and austerity that were justified in the neo-liberal language of financial necessities. The language of “flexibility” and “fiscal responsibility” were presented as the rational and necessary steps to take when in fact they were but euphemized ways of justifying unemployment, reduced retirement and medical benefits, etc. He denounced as the “neo-liberal scourge” the euphemized language of financial rigor and efficiency that he saw harboring the market interests of dominant groups. And the voices of those most directly affected by those policies were seldom listened to and generally dismissed as representing vested corporatist, sectoral interests rather than genuine needs of the common good. Against this Bourdieu proclaimed an emphatic “no” and much his political activism of his later years can be seen as a series of protests against the rigid neo-liberal framing of public discourse.

Conclusion

Bourdieu came to believe in the urgency of assuming a public role as a critical intellectual and social scientist to speak forcefully against the neo-liberal discourse that he believed had come to exercise a powerful censoring effect on public debate. The form and frequency of his political activism changed significantly from that of his early years. He found himself increasingly in the paradoxical position of assuming a high-profile public intellectual role for which he himself had expressed strong reservations. Indeed, Pierre Carles’s documentary movie on Bourdieu’s political work, “Sociology as a Martial Art,” was a surprise commercial success in 2000–2001, bringing Bourdieu unprecedented visibility. He had become a public intellectual celebrity. Yet, as one scene in Carles’s movie suggests, some of the celebrity visibility seemed to be more of an embarrassment than a relished experience for Bourdieu. More importantly, he believed that his more direct political

involvements did not compromise his rigorous and objective practice of sociology as a science. In his words, the challenge was to “think politics without thinking politically.”

It is difficult to offer a precise measure of the impact Bourdieu had as a public intellectual during the 1995 crisis and subsequently. In the short term, some indicators suggest that the impact was substantial. Clearly, Bourdieu brought considerable “symbolic capital” to the movement.⁶⁸ By signing the petition supporting the strikes, he brought to the movement the prestige of the Collège de France, of his scientific reputation, of his moral force from having previously spoken forcefully to the issue of social exclusion and suffering with the 1993 publication of *The Weight of the World*, and of the relative rarity of his name appearing on public petitions. The petition would be sometimes referred to simply as the “Bourdieu” list. How Bourdieu’s name, signature, and perceived support were used by activists during the strikes, and subsequently, would be a fascinating if difficult study to carry out. But as Michel Offerlé⁶⁹ notes, there is considerable anecdotal evidence of activists using the “support of Bourdieu” to rally support in meetings.

It of course is too soon to assess what if any enduring effects the anti-globalization movement in France and Bourdieu’s prominent position within it will have on French public policy. For a short time at least, it represented a formidable force providing some check to further erosion of welfare safety-net functions by the French state. But his efforts appear to have been more “acts of resistance” than successful reorientations of public policies in France. The shift to increasing reliance on market mechanisms for the delivery of public goods and services in France continues, although perhaps at a different rate and in a different way from what they would have if Bourdieu and the social movement of the 1990s had never occurred.⁷⁰

It is striking that Bourdieu, who was often accused by critics of being a deterministic reproduction thinker, saw in neo-liberal globalization a powerful threat to traditional welfare arrangements but not one whose success was a foregone conclusion. Consistent with his constructionist view of social life, even those seemingly powerful economic forces grew out of collective struggles in which actors had some choice in the matter. Bourdieu’s own political activism in his later years demonstrated that fundamental faith he had in resistance to domination. The reproduction of forces of domination could be successfully and strategically resisted in certain times and places.

Whether Bourdieu's efforts, and those of the social movement he helped lead, end up being only a blip on the ascending curve toward increasing market determination of the distribution of public goods and services or a more significant alternation in that pattern remains of course to be seen. It would be premature to draw a conclusion, although the fascination with markets and the taken-for-granted view of their determining constraints seems hardly to have run its course. If several years from now the 1995 social movement appears to have been nothing more than a short-lived political event, then there would be no harsher critic than Bourdieu himself, who, reflecting on the significance of May 1968 in France, credited the 1968 crisis with having little significant effect on the most fundamental structures of domination in modern France.⁷¹

Far from sheer personal ambition to become another Sartre or Foucault, Bourdieu's rise to the role of leading French and European public intellectual grew out of a conjuncture of institutional influences and changes that set the stage for personal choice. This article identified several such key factors. Bourdieu's choice to meet strikers on December 5, 1995, his publication in 1996 of a blitzing critique of TV journalism, his choice to show solidarity with José Bové and the anti-globalization movement, for example, were made possible by a series of changes in the French intellectual field and Bourdieu's own position within it. Bourdieu's movement from a peripheral position to a central location in the French intellectual field, the changing character of the field itself, the growing influence of the mass media in French political and cultural life, the failures of the French Socialists in power, a cultural legacy of leading critical intellectuals in France, a unifying national issue of globalization, and the political conjuncture in 1995 all intersected in ways that opened a path for Bourdieu to choose new and more frequent forms of political action. His responses to that combination of factors at different moments reveal both a striking continuity in desire to preserve the autonomy of intellectual life and a change in view and strategy on how best to do that.

Contrary to the widespread media view that Bourdieu had suddenly become "political" during his later years in the anti-globalization movement, Bourdieu expresses ongoing interest in politics throughout his career. Indeed, Bourdieu confronted at least three burning national crises in his lifetime, but in only one did he come to play a leading public intellectual role: the Algerian war, the university crisis of May 1968, and the crisis of the welfare state in the 1990s. He offered a

political response to all three but the forms of those responses differed. He responded as a professional sociologist through his research and writing identifying key political issues that shaped each of those crises. But only in the case of the latter did he also come to play a public intellectual role. We have explored in this article how his move from the periphery to a central position in the French intellectual field endowed him with a symbolic capital to lead a social movement in a way that he could not have done in Algeria or during May 68. At different times, with different resources, and from different locations with the French intellectual field, Bourdieu addressed national political issues throughout his career.

The Bourdieu case is instructive for further reflection on what conditions are likely to transform particular intellectuals into leading public figures. It calls for a comparative study of leading public intellectuals in different national contexts. Even in France and even more than Foucault before him, Bourdieu touched the political sentiments of thousands of grassroots activists, labor leaders, undocumented migrants, peasants, teachers, transit employees, homeless advocates, gays and lesbians, a wide range of individuals and groups who benefited least from the triumphal forces of globalization and privatization of the public sector. He brought to their diverse concerns a sense that within the distant and august halls of French science and high culture they had been heard, understood, and their cause defended. For a few short years, Bourdieu made history as the leading public intellectual in France and Western Europe. But this accomplishment was not entirely of his own choosing.

Notes

1. A shorter version of this article was delivered as a lecture at the City University of New York Graduate Center, May 9, 2003. I wish to thank Cynthia Fuchs Epstein and David Lavin for making that possible. I also wish to thank David Karen, Niilo Kauppi, Frédéric Lebaron, Elliot Weininger, Vera Zolberg, and an anonymous reviewer for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this article.
2. Pierre Bourdieu, "Against the Destruction of a Civilization," in *Acts of Resistance*, 1995), 24–28.
3. Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *The Inheritors: French Students and their Relation to Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979).
4. Some of his sociological work, however, had been a contributing factor to French student leader political awareness in May 1968. *The Inheritors* informed their political analysis of the French university situation and contributed to a more

politicized view among many French university students of university conditions. In addition, Bourdieu and several colleagues at the Center for European Sociology drafted in 1968 a statement regarding the strike. See Pierre Bourdieu, "Appel à l'organisation d'états généraux de l'enseignement et de la recherche," in *Interventions, 1961–2001. Science sociale et action politique* (Marseille: Agone, 1968), 63–68. But he did not participate in the May 68 demonstrations as did Foucault. He did not publish analyses of the May 1968 events in the immediate aftermath as did Raymond Boudon and Alain Touraine, nor did he editorialize in the French press on the significance of the events as many French intellectuals did. His analyses would come later in Pierre Bourdieu, Luc Boltanski, and Pascal Maldidier, "La Défense du Corps," *Social Science Information* 10 4 (1971); and in Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), but only as elements of analyses focused on the French university teaching profession.

5. A key difference between the political activism of Bourdieu and that of Sartre is that Bourdieu entered the political arena with an intellectual practice directly related to the issues he spoke to politically, whereas Sartre as philosopher and literary figure did not. Bourdieu's defense of the welfare state against privatization stemmed in part from what he learned while researching the negative social and economic effects on those most directly affected by downsizing the welfare safety net. See Pierre Bourdieu et al., *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society*, trans. Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, et al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999 [1993]) and Pierre Bourdieu, *les structures sociales de l'économie* (Paris: Edition du Seuil, 2000). Another key difference is that, whereas Sartre in his later years was used by radical left groups as a kind of figurehead, Bourdieu was able to mobilize in his later years key radical left constituencies in protest against welfare state cutbacks.
6. Pierre Bourdieu, "Sociologies des mythologies et mythologies de sociologues," *Les temps modernes* 211, no. December (1963).
7. See Pierre Bourdieu, Jean-Claude Chamboredon, and Jean-Claude Passeron, *The Craft of Sociology: Epistemological Preliminaries*, trans. Richard Nice, 2nd edition (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991 [1968]).
8. See Pierre Mounier, *Pierre Bourdieu, une introduction*, ed. Hugues Jallou, *Une introduction* (Paris: Pocket/La Découverte, 2001), 233.
9. For example, one can find featured in the October 1998 issue of *The Magazine Littéraire* expressions of the popular criticisms of Bourdieu's political activities in the late 1990s.
10. See, for example, Jeannine Verdès-Leroux, *Le savant et la politique. Essai sur le terrorisme sociologique de Pierre Bourdieu* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1998).
11. This explanatory perspective overlaps to some extent with that of Louis Pinto, *Pierre Bourdieu et la théorie du monde social* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1998).
12. See David Swartz, *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), for a brief description of French sociology during the period.
13. Bourdieu's early institutional mentor, Raymond Aron, was an important exception to these early patterns. Aron wrote a column for the French newspaper *Le Figaro* while teaching at the Sorbonne.
14. Bourdieu, Chamboredon, and Passeron, *The Craft of Sociology: Epistemological Preliminaries*.
15. Indeed, Bourdieu set out an ambitious program of nothing less than setting sociology on firm epistemological grounds and developing an approach to the

study of the social world that seemed no less ambitious than that of Emile Durkheim at the beginning of the twentieth century. The parallel to Durkheim has been drawn by several observers, such as Michel Offerlé, *Engagement sociologique: Pierre Bourdieu en politique, Regards sur l'actualité* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1999), and Loïc J.-D. Wacquant, "The Structure and Logic of Bourdieu's Sociology," in *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, ed. Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc J.-D. Wacquant (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

16. Bourdieu, Chamboredon, and Passeron, *The Craft of Sociology: Epistemological Preliminaries*.
17. One central theme in *The Craft of Sociology* was epistemological, not political, at least in the usual sense of that distinction. Sociology needed to be set up on firm epistemological grounds as a science. But, as Wacquant points out in Wacquant, "The Structure and Logic of Bourdieu's Sociology," 50, for Bourdieu, "even epistemology is fundamentally political." Bourdieu writes in Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977 [1972]), 165: "The theory of knowledge is a dimension of political theory because the specifically symbolic power to impose the principles of construction of reality in particular social reality is a major dimension of political power." In other words, the cognitive is political.
18. Indeed, this is the view shared by many who have examined closely the ensemble of Bourdieu's writings and political activities. See, for example, Craig Calhoun, "Pierre Bourdieu, the Centrality of the Social, and the Possibility of Politics," in *Bourdieu: Le colloq Cerisy*, ed. J. DuBois, P. Durant, and Y. Winkin (Paris: Seuil, forthcoming); Philippe Fritsch, "Introduction," in *Propos sur le Champ Politique*, ed. Pierre Bourdieu (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2000), 26; Gérard Mauger, "L'Engagement sociologique," *Critique*, no. 579–580 (1995); and Wacquant, "The Structure and Logic of Bourdieu's Sociology," 47–59. This is also the view of Frank Poupeau (personal communication, Paris, June 2002) who is one of the editors of the most complete set of Bourdieu's political writings.
19. Pierre Bourdieu and Otto Hahn, "La théorie," *VH 101 2*, no. Summer (1970): 15–59–62. Also see Swartz, *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*, 249–255.
20. In a particularly pointed formulation of this idea of the political effects of science, Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (London: Sage, 1977), 218, write: "If there is no science but of the hidden, then the science of society is, per se, critical, without the scientist who chooses science ever having to choose to make a critique: the hidden is, in this case, a secret, and a well-kept one, even when no one is commissioned to keep it, because it contributes to the reproduction of a 'social order' based on concealment of the most efficacious mechanisms of its reproduction and thereby serves the interests of those who have a vested interest in the conservation of that order." My thanks to Elliot Weinger for reminding me of this passage.
21. Bourdieu and Hahn, "La théorie," 20. See D. Swartz, *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*, 247–269 for a discussion of how Bourdieu thinks that the sociologist, armed with the tools of critical science, can and should have a responsibility for playing a key role in modern political life.
22. A fuller presentation of Bourdieu's normative vision is beyond the scope of this article but his vision calls for protecting the autonomy of the scientific field from the distorting effects of politics, while simultaneously orienting one's scientific research so that it will have the maximum effect in the public arena. It also calls

for a reflexive practice of sociology, one that does not import the logic of political struggle into the scientific arena yet is able to produce symbolic effects that can shape political life. See Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc J.-D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992); and Swartz, *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*, for a fuller discussion.

23. Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber*, ed. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1970). Bourdieu is sharply critical, however, of the "ethical neutrality" often attributed to Weber. "The ideal of 'ethical neutrality,'" he writes in Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, 218, is but "a mere non-aggression pact with the established order."
24. Pierre Bourdieu, "The Attitude of the Algerian Peasant Toward Time," in *Mediterranean Countrymen*, ed. Jesse Pitt-Rivers (Paris and The Hague: Mouton, 1964); and Pierre Bourdieu, *Algeria 1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).
25. Pierre Bourdieu, "Révolution dans la révolution," *Esprit* 1, no. January (1961); Pierre Bourdieu, "Les sous-prolétaires algériens," *Les temps modernes*, no. 199 (1962).
26. Bourdieu and Passeron, *The Inheritors: French Students and their Relation to Culture*.
27. Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*.
28. See Pierre Bourdieu, "L'opinion publique n'existe pas," *Noroi* 155–156 (1971); Pierre Bourdieu, "Les doxosophes," *Minuit* 1, no. November (1972).
29. See Pierre Bourdieu, "Questions de politique," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 16, no. September (1977); and Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984 [1979]), 463–511.
30. Pierre Bourdieu, *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*, trans. Lauretta C. Clough (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996 [1989]).
31. Bourdieu et al., *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society*.
32. Although an agrégé, Bourdieu never defended a doctoral thesis, which was a prerequisite (a necessary but not sufficient condition) for obtaining a chair in the French university at that time.
33. The Collège stands at the summit of the research sector of French intellectual life. Bourdieu was elected to the Chair of Sociology, a position held earlier by Marcel Mauss and Raymond Aron.
34. This was the golden age of post-World War II French sociology. The social sciences captured much of the attraction that had previously been accorded to philosophy and the humanities. Anthropologist Lévi-Strauss emerged to become a significant opposing intellectual reference in France to the philosopher/literary figure Sartre. Bourdieu recounts in Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays Toward a Reflexive Sociology* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 3–33; and Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990 [1980]), 1–21, how the success of Lévi-Strauss was important in shaping Bourdieu's intellectual outlook. Bourdieu used structuralism, as did many other aspiring French social scientists of the period, as a strategy for legitimating his intellectual identity as a social scientist against the dominating literary/humanist/philosophical culture represented by Sartre. See Pierre Bourdieu, "The Berber House," in *Rules and Meanings*, ed. Mary Douglas (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), as one particularly direct expression of Lévi-Strauss's structuralism on Bourdieu's early work.
35. An International Sociological Association survey placed *Distinction* as the 6th most important social scientific work of the twentieth century. *The Logic of Practice* was ranked 4th and *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* 48th. The only other French thinkers to make it into the top 50 were Emile Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (13th), *The Division of Labor in Society* (34th), *The Rules of Sociological Method* (35th), and Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (16th). *Contemporary Sociology* (May 1996) reviewed *Outline of a Theory of Practice* as one of the 10 most influential books of the past 25 years.
36. Lévi-Strauss is the only other social scientist to have received this coveted award.
37. See Christophe Charle, *Naissance des "intellectuels," 1880–1900, Le sens commun* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1990).
38. This was the view, for example, of Raymond Boudon (personal communication, Paris 1988).
39. This point is suggested by Mounier, *Pierre Bourdieu, une introduction*, 217–218.
40. See Luc Boltanski, "L'espace positionnel, multiplicité des positions institutionnelles et habitus de classe," *Revue française de sociologie* 14 1 (1973).
41. Anecdotal reports suggest that it was becoming more acceptable, indeed viewed positively, by a growing number of French academics (particularly those teaching within political science institutes), to write for and appear in the mass media. Attitudes had changed considerably from the days when Raymond Aron's appointment at the Sorbonne had caused concern among some French scholars precisely because Aron wrote a column for *Le Figaro*.
42. Patrick Champagne, *Faire l'opinion. Le nouvel espace politique* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1979).
43. See Pierre Bourdieu, "The Market of Symbolic Goods," *Poetics* 14, no. April (1985); Pierre Bourdieu, *On Television* (New York: New Press, 1998 [1996]); and Régis Debray, *Teachers, Writers, Celebrities: the Intellectuals of Modern France* (London: Verso, 1981).
44. It is ironical that Bourdieu, whose sociological investigations had not focused on social movements, as for example had his rival Alain Touraine, became in his later years politically catalyzed by a social movement just as the movement itself was enhanced by Bourdieu's presence.
45. This is not to suggest that Bourdieu became in his later years a "mediacra" shutting from one public appearance to another in the manner of some French intellectuals. Bourdieu in fact was very selective in his public appearances; he turned down many more invitations than he accepted.
46. Bourdieu, *Les structures sociales de l'économie*.
47. There is a certain irony here in contrasting Bourdieu's political aims with some of the criticism traditionally leveled against Bourdieu's sociological theory of action. Many critics have charged his sociology with being too deterministic. Yet Bourdieu's attacks against neo-liberalism seem precisely to call attention to the determining forces of globalization and to raise the hope and possibility of choosing some alternative course of action rather than their sublime acceptance.
48. Bourdieu later sharply criticized the way this report was used by Mitterrand largely to legitimate his presidential campaign in 1988 rather than adopting any substantial reforms proposed by the report.
49. Bourdieu agreed to work with the commission, despite his frustration with the first report, because of his respect for the socialist prime minister Michel Rocard (personal communication, Franck Poupeau, Paris, June 2002).
50. In this respect, he was quite different from Anthony Giddens who agreed to play a formal role in Tony Blair's labor government in the United Kingdom.

51. His reluctance to break totally with the regime before the early 1990s can be seen in the famous statement "La vertu civile" that he wrote in September 1988 in *Le monde*, in which he comes to the support of the prime minister Michel Rocard for the way Rocard handled the movement for independence in New Caledonia. The statement, however, also reflects a growing concern of his relationship to the Mitterrand presidency, a concern that asks what conditions can be created or under what conditions is it likely that the voice of science and rationality will be heard by political leaders. This theme shows both his growing skepticism and lingering hope for the French left at the end of the 1980s and very early 1990s to do something different.
52. Indicative of Bourdieu's changing consciousness regarding the political vocation of the sociologist is his observation that the professionalization of sociology as science resulted in the loss of the classical political function emphasized by the early social theorists. Bourdieu writes: "In fact, one can say, to simplify a little, that the social sciences paid dearly to gain recognition as science (which remains contested): by a self censure that constitutes a veritable self mutilation, sociologists – beginning with me, who frequently denounced the temptation of social prophesying and philosophizing – refused all opportunity to propose 'ideal and global' representations of the social world, as if such would signal a lack of sufficient embrace of scientific morality and thereby discredit the author." Pierre Bourdieu, *Propos sur le Champ Politique* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2000), 104. Here Bourdieu speaks of that loss in terms of a regrettable sacrifice both personally and professionally. By the late 1980s, he no longer accepts this "scientific abdication, which ruins political conviction," and argues that "the time has come when scholars are needed to intervene in politics, with all their competence, to impose utopias based in truth and rationality." Bourdieu, *Propos sur le Champ Politique*, 104–105 (my translation).
53. I recall a conversation with Bourdieu in Paris in 1993, when in response to my query about the reception of *The State Nobility* he shrugged and pointed out that while nothing significant had happened in France, by contrast, the book was receiving considerable attention in Germany.
54. Pinto, *Pierre Bourdieu et la théorie du monde social*, 182–183, makes a similar point.
55. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Acts of Resistance. Against the Tyranny of the Market*, trans. Richard Nice (New York: The New Press, 1998); and Pierre Bourdieu, *Firing Back: Against the Tyranny of the Market*, trans. Loïc Wacquant (New York: New Press, 2003 [2001]).
56. Personal communication, Paris 1992.
57. See Pierre Bourdieu and Hans Haacke, *Free Exchange*, trans. Hans Haacke and Randal Johnson (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995 [1994]). I am indebted to Gérard Mauger (personal communication, Paris, June 2002) for bringing to my attention how much Bourdieu looked to the artist world as a way of breaking through the taken-for-granted assumptions of power relations.
58. See Pierre Bourdieu, "The Corporatism of the Universal: The Role of Intellectuals in the Modern World," *Telos* 81, no. Fall (1989) and Pierre Bourdieu, "Pour une Internationale des intellectuels," in *Interventions, 1961–2001. Science sociale & action politique* (Marseille: Agone, 2002 [1989]).
59. Pierre Bourdieu, "For a Corporatism of the Universal," in *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 399–348.
60. Pierre Bourdieu, "Une révolution conservatrice dans l'édition," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 126–127 (1999).
61. See Pierre Bourdieu, "Le pouvoir n'est plus rue-d'Ulm mais à l'ENA," *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 9–15 March 1989, where Bourdieu indicates that underlying the monopolizing power of corporate and administrative elites is a shift in power from the Ecole Normale Supérieure (formative site of traditional intellectuals, such as Sartre, Foucault and Bourdieu himself) toward the Ecole Nationale d'Administration (formative site of senior public and private managers in France today).
62. Pierre Bourdieu, *Interventions, 1961–2002. Science sociale et action politique* (Marseille: Agone, 2002), 253.
63. ARESER, *Quelques diagnostics et remèdes urgents pour une université en péril* (Paris: Liber-Raisons D'Agir, 1997).
64. Pierre Bourdieu, "Un parlement des écrivains pour quoi faire?" in *Interventions, 1961–2001. Science sociale & action politique* (Marseille: Agone, 2002), 289–292; and Bourdieu, *Interventions, 1961–2002. Science sociale et action politique*, 254.
65. Bourdieu, *On Television*.
66. See the Raisons d'agir website for both a history and current agenda of political actions since Bourdieu's death: www.raisonsdagir.org.
67. Bourdieu, *On Television*.
68. Julien Duval et al., *Le "décembre" des intellectuels français* (Paris: Liber-Raisons D'Agir, 1998), 60–61.
69. Offerlé, *Engagement sociologique: Pierre Bourdieu en politique*.
70. I write this in the summer of 2003 when again large street demonstrations respond to a new initiative by the Chirac center right government to implement similar kinds of welfare state reforms as were proposed in 1995.
71. In a brief reflection published in 1983 in *Lire*, Bourdieu assesses the significance of May 1968 as entirely of the "symbolic order" with "hardly no effect on the political field." See Bourdieu, *Interventions, 1961–2002. Science sociale et action politique*, 62.