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Forms of Power and their Reproduction

How could we not recognize the enormity of our plan to compare and contrast the structure of the field of establishment schools to the structure of the field of power itself, and to attempt to demonstrate that the first is linked to the second by a relation of structural homology and, thus, by a very particular relation of causal interdependence? The abyss has never been so wide between the empirical data that would be necessary for thoroughly grounding the theory of the field of power that has gradually emerged throughout our prior historical and sociological research (the former devoted primarily to relations between the intellectual field and the field of power in the nineteenth century, the latter to artistic consumption) and those we were able to collect in a series of empirical research projects specifically on France (but, here again, how can one escape the limits of a particular place when one's very intention is to refuse to be satisfied with the vacuous universality of so-called "theoretical" discourse?).

Ars longa, vita brevis: we must resign ourselves to delaying no further in presenting a provisional and approximate description of this complex universe of objective relations of interdependence (established in and through intersecting patterns of domination) among subfields that are both autonomous and bound together by the organic solidarity of a genuine division of the labor of domination. We do so at the cost of a break with the substantialist mode of thought that upholds both theoretical disquisitions on the "dominant class" in the Marxist tradition and studies on the "elite" aimed at providing an empirical response to the question of "who governs."[1] In both cases, in fact, as in the tradition of the prosopography held dear by historians, people privilege *populations*, in other words, sets of agents susceptible to real partitions (with divisions into "fractions of the dominant class" or "sectors" of the "elite") and bound together by real and directly observable interactions or ties ("connections," for example).

It is all the more difficult to make this break because, unless one is satisfied with "theoretical" projects, one can only construct fields scientifically by relying on data that, wedded as they are to populations (management, professors, bishops, artists),

call for ordinary statistical treatment. The chief virtue of correspondence analysis, when you know how to construct the data and read the results according to the logic of the relational mode of thought intrinsic to it, is that it makes it possible to discover systems of relations (among positions, among stances, and between the two spaces so defined). Although inaccessible to the unarmed intuition of ordinary experience, this space of invisible relations is more real than even the most obvious of the immediate facts that constitute commonsense knowledge, such as individuals, groups, and their characteristics, which is where realistic "typologies" stop, and even certain uses of statistics (and correspondence analysis itself), which divide populations into identified classes (by applying constitutive labels), in other words, into substantive units likely to be conceived in and of themselves. Although, at least in this case, it can only be constructed on the basis of populations and their properties, this space is the genuine principle of a simultaneously descriptive and predictive definition of these populations and these properties, redefined in relation to it, that is, relationally. It is indeed only if we think of agents and their accompanying characteristics as strictly relational entities, which arise for both individuals and groups and their properties in their objective relations with other individuals and other groups, with their own specific properties, that we are able to adequately produce and understand the system of relations of opposition and similarity that defines the space of the relevant properties and, at one and the same time, the space of the constructed individuals characterized and positioned by these properties. Unlike the simple and abstract spaces produced by ordinary statistical analysis, the spaces constructed by social science are defined by objective relations among individuals and among properties that are brought together or opposed *in all relevant respects* – from the point of view of their very relation – and are characterized by socio-logically coherent, hence, intelligible, *sets* of properties that are statistically linked (to varying degrees) and practically interchangeable. These properties only function as capital, that is, as a social *power* relation, in and through the field that constitutes them as stakes and instruments of struggle, rescuing them thereby from the meaninglessness and uselessness to which they would be just as necessarily doomed in another field or another state of the same field. More specifically, they are linked by relations, constitutive of the structure of the field, that contribute to determining their efficacy and their value in such a way that, within the field they *contribute* to defining, they are able to produce effects different from the ones they would produce in another field.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE FIELD OF POWER

The field of power is a field of forces structurally determined by the state of the relations of power among forms of power, or different forms of capital. It is also, and inseparably, a field of power struggles among the holders of different forms of power, a gaming space in which those agents and institutions possessing enough specific capital (economic or cultural capital in particular) to be able to occupy the dominant positions within their respective fields confront each other using strategies aimed at preserving or transform-

ing these relations of power. The forces that can be enlisted in these struggles, and the orientation given to them, be it conservative or subversive, depend on what might be called the "exchange rate" (or "conversion rate") that obtains among the different forms of capital, in other words, on the very thing that these strategies aim to preserve or transform (principally through the defense or criticism of representations of the different forms of capital and their legitimacy).

The different forms of capital are specific forms of power that are active in one or another of the fields (of forces and struggles) born of the process of differentiation and autonomization.[2] Within these different gaming spaces, there arise characteristic forms of capital that function as both trumps and stakes. These different forms of capital are themselves stakes in the struggles whose objective is no longer the accumulation of or even the monopoly on a particular form of capital (or power), economic, religious, artistic, etc., as it is in the struggles that play out within each field, but rather the determination of the relative value and magnitude of the different forms of power that can be wielded in the different fields or, if you will, power over the different forms of power or the capital granting power over capital.

This struggle over the power to dictate *the dominant principle of domination*, which leads to a constant state of equilibrium in the partition of power, in other words, to a *division in the labor of domination* (at times intended and conceived as such, and explicitly negotiated), is also a struggle over *the legitimate principle of legitimation* and, inseparably, the legitimate mode of reproduction of the foundations of domination. It can take the form of real face-to-face encounters (as with "palace wars" or armed struggles between temporal and spiritual power holders) or symbolic confrontations such as those in the Middle Ages in which what was at stake was the precedence of *oratores* over *bellatores*, or the struggles played out over the course of the nineteenth century, and still today, in which what is at stake is the preeminence of merit over heredity or gifts).

No power can be satisfied with existing just as power, that is, as brute force, entirely devoid of justification – in a word, arbitrary – and it must thus justify its existence, as well as the form it takes, or at least ensure that the arbitrary nature of its foundation will be misrecognized and thus that it will be recognized as legitimate. Of course the question of legitimacy is inscribed in practical terms in the very existence of concurrent forms of power that, in and through their very confrontation, and in the antithetical, and often irreconcilable, justifications they oppose to each other, inevitably raise the question of their own justification. It follows that *the reproduction strategies* implemented by the bearers of the different forms of capital in their efforts to preserve or increase their patrimony and, correlatively, to maintain or better their position in social space inevitably include symbolic strategies aimed at legitimating the arbitrary foundation of their domination, that is, the form of capital sustaining both their power and the mode of reproduction that is inseparable from it.

The sociodicies through which dominant groups aim to produce "a theodicy of their own privilege," to quote Weber, do not come to us in the form of a unique and fully unified discourse, as the phrase "dominant ideology" would suggest. They are so many points of view on the social world that, as the product of preference (or value) systems originating in the internalization of the structure of the chances for profit objectively inscribed in the amount and structure of one's capital, are differentiated in their grounds and their causes according to the form of capital that needs legitimating as well as its weight in the capital structure (although it is common to all sociodicies that they strive to have inscribed in the *nature* of dominants the foundation of their domination). Landed aristocrats, for example, will be more likely to look to land and blood to ground their necessity as well as their difference with respect to parvenus; new bourgeois "elites" who owe their power to *concours* and diplomas, tend to name merit or natural gifts in direct contrast to the favors and favoritism inscribed in the aristocratic tradition of patronage and clientele.

While the structure of the field of power has undoubtedly included constants throughout the most varied historical configurations, such as, for instance, the fundamental opposition in the division of the labor of domination between temporal and spiritual or cultural power holders – warriors and priests, *bellatores* and *oratores*, businessmen (sometimes called industrial knights) and intellectuals – it depends at any given time on the forms of capital implemented in the struggles for domination and on their relative weight in the structure. And, while this is a case in which the intention to combine theoretical construction and empirical verification reaches its limit, in view of the wide gap between the requirements of object construction and the available data, we can nevertheless attempt to suggest a model of the structure of the field of power as it appears in France today.

To give a first approximation of this structure, we may begin by recalling the results of a previous study (in which statistical constraints compelled us to think in terms of constructed populations) with a simplified form of the diagram of social space proposed in *Distinction* (figure 13). Comparing it to the diagrams representing the space of institutions of higher education (figure 14), we immediately see that the correspondence between the positions occupied by the different occupational categories in social space (according to the synchronically and diachronically defined value of the amount and structure of their capital) and the positions of origin of the establishment school students is nearly perfect, with very few distortions, introduced by adjustments made by the educational institution. To proceed further, we would need to attempt to construct as faithful a representation as possible of the distribution within the field of power of the different fields (and the corresponding powers) of each particular form of power, taking into account all the data likely to provide indices of relative positions, such as the intergenerational (as with so-called "mobility" phenomena) and intragenerational (such as *pantouflage*) flow between positions.

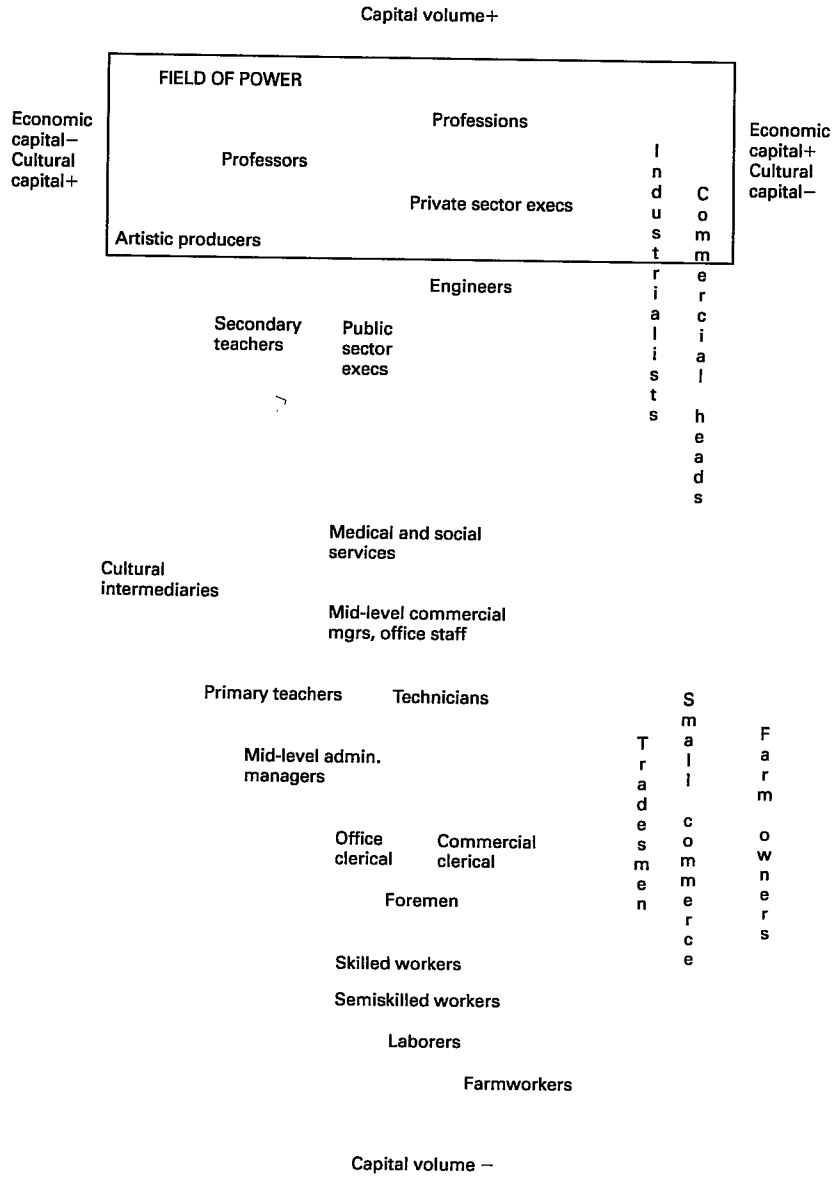

Figure 13 Social space (based on Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. R. Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), pp. 128–9)

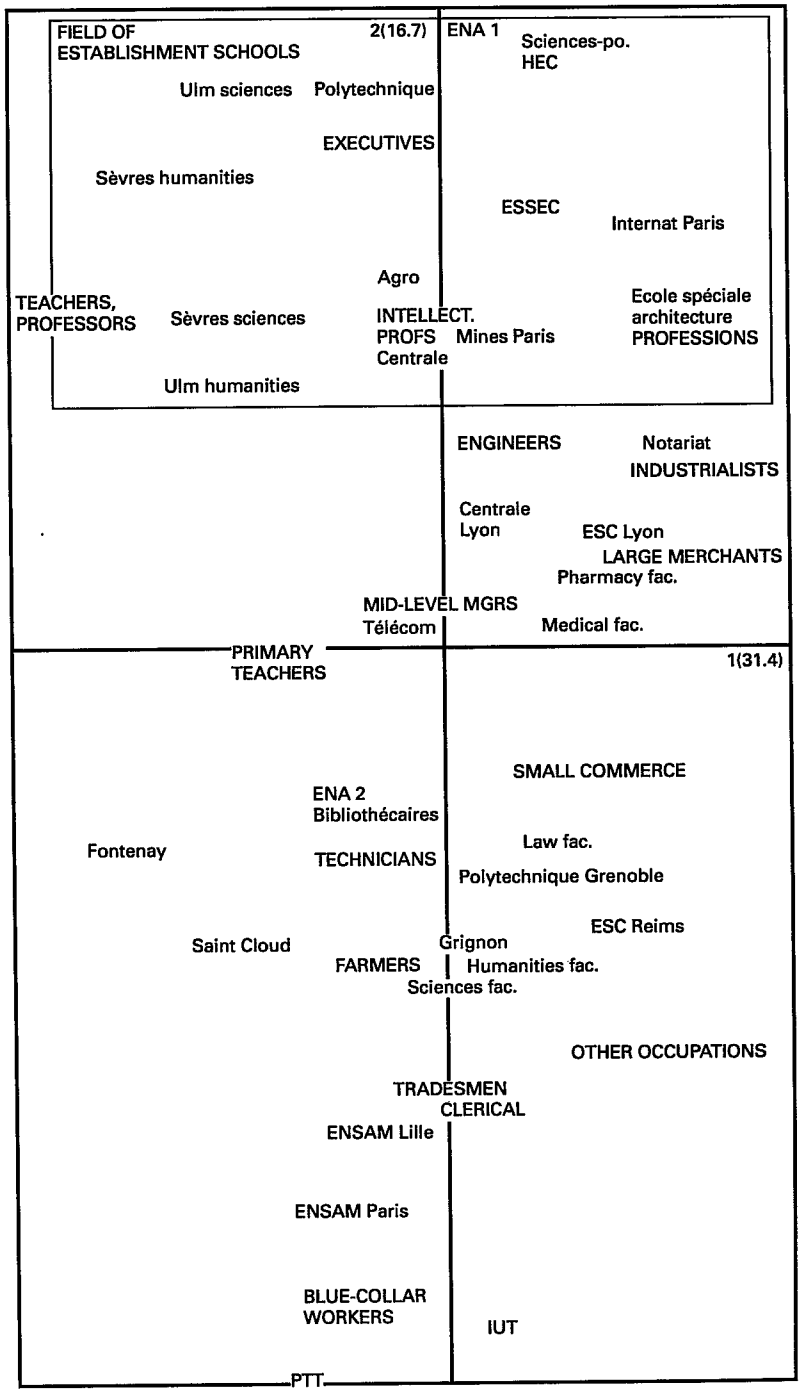

Figure 14 The space of institutions of higher education (n = 84)

In this effort, we may turn to the results of a correspondence analysis done on the entire set of populations we were able to study empirically, these being (proceeding from the economically dominant pole to the economically dominated pole) industrial and commercial heads, Inspecteurs des Finances, Mines engineers, ministry cabinet members, ministry directors, prefects, generals, teachers, and bishops, all characterized by their social origins (which were very carefully analyzed). As figure 15 illustrates, the first factor, which accounts for 31.5 percent of the total inertia, sets bishops and teachers, associated with the lowest origins (farmer, tradesman), apart from corporate heads, associated with the highest positions (board member, banker, large industrialist), and secondarily, from Inspecteurs des Finances, with higher civil servants (Mines engineers and prefects) occupying a central position. The second axis opposes, on one side, bishops – and, to a lesser degree, corporate heads – associated with origins on the side of social space characterized by the preeminence of economic capital over cultural capital (sons of farmers, tradesmen, small-scale merchants) and ties to the private sector, and on the other, generals and, to a lesser degree, Mines engineers, who are strongly associated with origins on the side of the space characterized, in contrast, by the preeminence of cultural capital and ties to the public sector (sons of officers and mid-level managers).

Although this analysis is only of limited value (principally owing to the discrepancies in the categories used for the different populations), it does

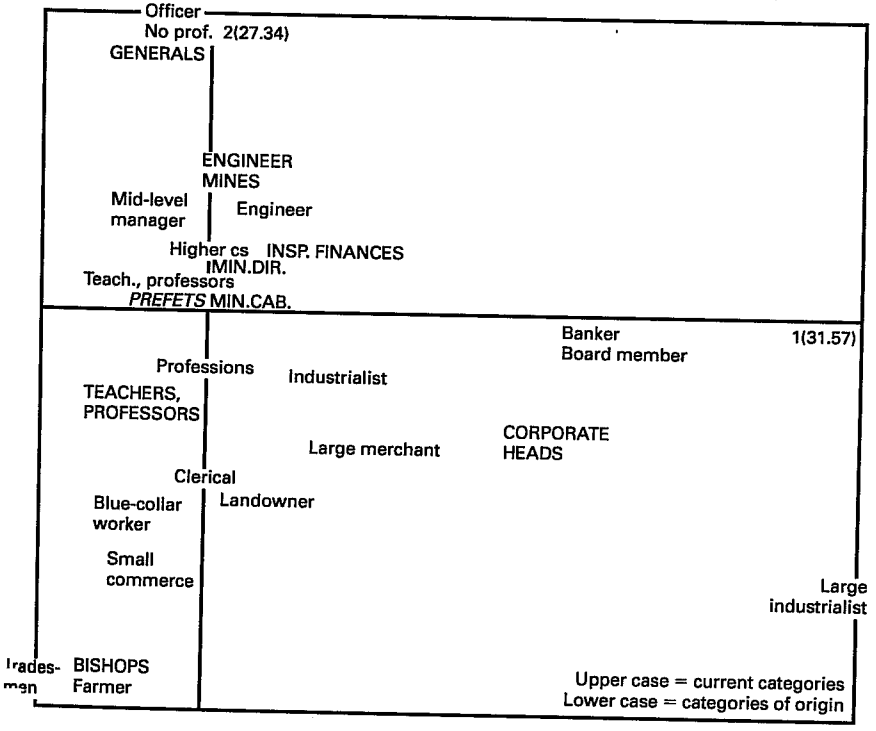

Figure 15 Positions in the field of power (correspondence analysis)

corroborate all of our previous results, both the analysis of inter- and intragenerational flows, which reveal a hierarchy among the fields, and the forms of power or capital that are generated and produced within them. The various fields are distributed within the field of power according to the objective hierarchy of forms of capital, economic and cultural capital in particular, from the economic field to the artistic field, with the administrative and university fields occupying intermediate positions. More specifically, the field of power is organized according to a *chiasmatic structure*. The distribution according to the dominant principle of hierarchization – economic capital – is, as it were, "intersected" by the distribution based on a second principle of hierarchization – cultural capital – in which the different fields line up according to an inverse hierarchy, that is, from the artistic field to the economic field. The field of higher public service owes a number of its properties to the fact that it occupies an intermediate position, which does not mean a neutral one, as is demonstated by, among other things, the fact that intragenerational displacements indisputably move toward the dominant hierarchy; shifts from the administrative field to the economic field, indeed to the private pole of this field, are frequent among higher civil servants and military dignitaries, while movement in the opposite direction is nearly unheard of.

This structural grasp of the field of power makes it possible to see that each of its constituent subfields is organized according to a structure homologous to its own, with, at one pole, the economically or temporally dominant and culturally dominated positions, and at the other, the culturally dominant and economically dominated positions. This obtains in the university field, for example, where the holders of temporal power (or, more accurately, control over the instruments of reproduction), who are often disregarded intellectually, are opposed to the holders of a recognized symbolic capital, who often have no power over institutions. It is also true of the artistic field, where, despite an acceleration in the processes of the consecration of avant-garde artists, related to an institutionalization of the anti-institutional rebellion, it is still possible to oppose those who might be called "Left Bank" artists, who are respected by their peers but are economically and temporally disregarded, to "Right Bank" artists, who combine minimal artistic prestige with sizeable economic profits.[3] And an attempt will be made to show in more detail below that the same form of opposition is found in the economic field itself, with, on one side, "technocratic" chief executives [*patrons*, also boss, Tr.], who are close in this respect to directors in the central administration and members of ministerial cabinets, who owe their position to academic capital and cultural heredity, and whose entire career falls within the public sphere (top state lycées, grandes écoles, high-level public administration, large companies with state ties), and on the other, "family" chief executives, who owe their position to their economic heritage.

The homology between the oppositions observed in different fields (th

field of power, the economic field, the university field, the fields of cultural production) underlies an entire set of effects that people are prevented from seeing if they pay attention only to properties based on condition, and fail to consider the properties based on position that attach themselves to populations and their characteristics because of their location within a space of relations. In fact, in most cases, the different levels of opposition and struggle tend to be superposed, with the result being that agents, in the manner of Baudelaire condemning the "bourgeois artist" and the "bourgeois" in the same breath, may be drawn into fundamentally ambiguous and unstable alliances – such as those that develop between the dominated (relatively speaking) in the field of power and the dominated in the larger social field. The homology between the oppositions constitutive of the different fields (especially between the divisions in each specialized field and the social field as a whole) gives an objective foundation to the homology between the principles of vision and division implemented in each of them and to the generalized use of the cardinal oppositions of ordinary language (high/low, light/heavy, civilized/crude, etc.), whose semantic density and suggestive power derive from the fact that they bear all the isomorphic meanings they receive in all the different universes.

The homology between the specialized fields and the overall social field means that many strategies function as *double plays*, which, while neither expressly conceived as such nor inspired by any kind of *duplicity*, operate in several fields at once – in such a way that they are invested with all the subjective and objective attributes of sincerity, which can greatly enhance their symbolic efficacy. We will mention just one among the many possible examples, which will undoubtedly bring many others to mind by analogy: the case of the magistrates of the Paris Parlement who, in their resistance to royal power, "confuse their privileges with the public good" and, mistaking an "anachronistic court of law" for an English-style parliament, go so far as to make themselves the defenders of the "interests of the people," directly present in their mind in the guise of the "public" that observes their deliberations on "public affairs" and encourages, supports, or censures them.[4] The structural ambiguity evident in the polysemy of a discourse endowed with as many registers as there are current or potential fields of reception – discourse we might call spontaneously polyphonic – sometimes gets separated out and exposed retrospectively. This occurs particularly in the critical situations when a choice must be made between hierarchized loyalties, or in support of reversals in symbolic power relations, both inside and outside the field, and the reforegrounding of those interests inherent in occupying a dominant position (even in a dominated position) that have remained subterraneously active in actions that on the surface are designed to shed doubt on them (processes of the sort often described in the naively finalist language of "recuperation"). And it is again within the logic of the unconscious double play (that is, through the homology between the

classification used in the different fields – here, the academic field and the overall social field – which enables a given pair of adjectives, such as light/heavy, to function, with different connotations, in the different universes) that the *social discrimination* implied in the most irreproachable acts of discernment is most invisibly accomplished.

STRATEGIES OF REPRODUCTION

Having thus sketched out the structure of the field of power, we must now attempt a description of its dynamics according to our knowledge of the specific properties of the different forms of capital, especially with regard to their transmission, and according to the advantages they secure for their holders in the competitive struggles which set them against each other. At the risk of oversimplifying, it can be posited at the outset that the entire logic of the struggle for power over forms of power was modified by the two great changes that affected the dominant modes of reproduction, which, already discernible within the field of establishment schools, must now be grasped within the field of power itself, that is, in the competitive struggles that set the holders of the different forms of capital against each other, particularly within the administrative and economic fields. They are, on the one hand, the increase in the relative importance of academic titles (whether coupled with property or not) with respect to property titles, even in the economic field; on the other hand, among the bearers of cultural capital, the decline of technical titles to the advantage of titles guaranteeing general bureaucratic training.

To understand how these modifications in the "exchange rates" among the different forms of capital affected the functioning of the field of power and the field of establishment schools, to which the former is dialectically linked, the first step is to grasp as such *the system of reproduction strategies* constitutive of a *mode of reproduction* and then proceed to examine how a given capital structure tends to dictate a particular mode of reproduction, characterized by a set of reproduction strategies adapted to the particularities of the forms of capital to be reproduced.

To speak of strategies of reproduction is not to say that the strategies through which dominants manifest their tendency to maintain the status quo are the result of rational calculation or even strategic intent. It is merely to register that many practices that are phenomenally very different are objectively organized in such a way that they contribute to the reproduction of the capital at hand, without having been explicitly designed and instituted with this end in mind. This is because these practices are founded in habitus, which, in the most widely different domains of practice, tends to reproduce the conditions of its own production by producing the objectively coherent and systematically characteristic strategies of a particular mode of

reproduction. Just as the acquired disposition we call "handwriting," that is, a particular way of forming letters, always produces the same "writing" – that is, graphic lines that, despite differences in size, matter, and color related to writing surface (sheet of paper or blackboard) and implement (pencil, pen, or chalk), that is, despite differences of vehicles for the action, have an immediately recognizable affinity of style, or a family resemblance – the practices of a single agent, or, more broadly, the practices of all agents endowed with similar habitus, owe the affinity of style that makes each a metaphor for all the others to the fact that they are the product of the implementation in different fields of the same schemata of perception, thought, and action.

Thus, restoring to scientific analysis the unity that is inscribed in practices, the same concept of reproduction strategy can be used to describe practices that the human sciences apprehend as scattered and separate: *fertility strategies*, for example, extended long-term strategies (since the entire future of a lineage and its patrimony depends upon them) that aim to reduce the number of offspring and, hence, the number of claimants to the patrimony, strategies that may employ both direct methods, such as the various techniques of limiting the birthrate, and indirect methods, for example, postponing or forgoing marriage, which has the dual advantage of both preventing biological reproduction and excluding certain parties from the inheritance, at least in effect (this is the function of the channeling of certain aristocratic and bourgeois children toward the priesthood during the *ancien régime*, and the celibacy of the youngest son in certain peasant traditions);[5] *inheritance strategies*, which aim to ensure the transfer of the patrimony between generations with the least possible loss, among which we should locate (if this is in fact possible using traditional research methods) not only the codified measures of custom and the law, but also all the devices and subterfuges that dominants and their financial advisors are constantly inventing, which extend from the purchase of paintings to various forms of fraud; conscious and unconscious *education strategies* – one particular aspect of which is the scholastic strategies of schooled families and children – extended long-term investments that are not necessarily perceived as such and that cannot be reduced, as the economics of "human capital" would have it, to their strictly economic or even monetary dimension since they aim primarily to produce social agents both capable and worthy of receiving the group inheritance, that is, of being inherited by the group; *strategies* we might call *prophylactic*, designed to maintain the biological heritage of the group by ensuring its members continuous or intermittent preventive care; *purely economic strategies*, either short or long term, such as credit, savings, and investment activity designed to ensure the reproduction of the economic heritage; short-term or long-term *social investment strategies* that are either consciously or unconsciously oriented toward the establishment and maintenance of directly mobilizable and utilizable social relations, that is,

toward the transformation, brought about by the alchemy of exchange, of money, work, time, etc., into lasting *obligations*, either subjectively felt (feelings of gratitude, respect, etc.) or institutionally guaranteed (rights); *marriage strategies*, a particular case of the preceding strategies, which must ensure the biological reproduction of the group without threatening its social reproduction through mismarriages, as well as provide for the maintenance of its social capital through alliance with a group that is at least its equal in all socially relevant respects; and finally, *sociodicy strategies*, which, as we have seen, aim to legitimate domination and its foundation (that is, the type of capital on which it rests) by naturalizing them.

Thus, working back from the *opus operatum*, from practices that reveal themselves to intuition like a data rhapsody, to the *modus operandi*, to the generating and unifying habitus that produces objectively systematic strategies, it is possible to grasp the practical relations that develop continuously among the various reproduction strategies and to understand in particular the strange solidarity among the levels of practice that, rather like the functional substitutes biologists describe, enables marriage strategies, for example, to make up for failed fertility strategies.

Indeed, given that the various reproduction strategies are implemented at different points in a life cycle in an irreversible process, they are also *chronologically articulated*, each one obliged at all times to reckon with the results of the particular strategy that has preceded it or that has a shorter temporal frame. So, for example, in the Béarnaise tradition, marriage strategies were highly dependent on a family's fertility strategies (through the number of claimants to the estate, as well as their sex, in other words, the number of offspring to be endowed with an inheritance or a compensation), on education strategies, the success of which was the prerequisite for the implementation of strategies aimed at distancing girls and younger sons from the inheritance (the former through marriage and the latter through celibacy and emigration), and on purely economic strategies aimed among other things at maintaining or increasing their capital in land, etc. This interdependence extended over several generations; a family might have to agree to heavy self-imposed sacrifices over a long period of time to compensate for the outgoings (at times in land) necessary for "dowering" an overly large family with land or money or to reestablish the material and especially symbolic position of the group in the wake of a mismarriage.

We see the same interdependence today between academic strategies and fertility strategies, and it appears, in fact, that all else being equal, opportunities for getting an education are always closely linked to a lower fertility rate. This is undoubtedly because a larger family, given the numerous expenses it must meet, tends to discourage the drive toward education, but it is also and especially because academic ambition was inscribed from the very beginning in the predisposition toward self-denial in favour of ascension that was at the root of the limitation on fertility. And just as academic strategies must reckon with the results of fertility strategies, which already incorporate the demands of academic investment, marriage strategies are undoubtedly not independent of academic strategies, or, more generally, of reproduction strategies as a whole. We need only think of the transformation of the

strategies that the business bourgeoisie traditionally implemented in marrying its daughters, which, like the concomitant transformation of fertility strategies (which it undoubtedly partially explains), is correlative to a transformation of its objective relations with the educational system. With the progress in women's access to higher education, the mechanisms of self-orientation ("vocation") and selection that produce very socially homogeneous academic groups (faculté or école, discipline, etc.) have tended to insure homogamy at least as effectively, but in a much more unobtrusive manner, as family interventionism, especially family efforts at organizing directly controlled occasions for meeting mates (dances, surprise parties, debutante balls, etc.). This unexpected effect of schooling has undoubtedly contributed more than a little to encouraging families to give up their policy of control (which was difficult to implement anyway) in favor of a laissez-faire attitude, just when the system of the criteria that determined the value of their daughters in the matrimonial market, whether in terms of economic capital (dowry) or symbolic capital in respectability (virginity, appearance, etc.), was being completely redefined.[6] And the reforms in family law instituted throughout the 1970s (under the direction of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, a president who reproduces the entire evolution of the bourgeoisie in a personal trajectory leading from the most traditional fractions, close to Pétainism, to the new bourgeoisie) are the political accompaniment, necessary for adjusting norms to practices, of a transformation of the mode of reproduction in force in the upper bourgeoisie. The new measures concerning, in no particular order, parental authority (replacing paternal authority), spousal equality in matrimonial matters, estate management, divorce, cohabitation, voluntary termination of pregnancy, etc., merely write into law a set of practices whose appearance in the new bourgeoisie had been either authorized, favored, or determined by the transformation of the mode of reproduction.[7]

Yet there is probably nothing that more clearly highlights the need to conceive of the system of strategies of reproduction as such than the example of educational investment, doomed by the division of labor among the disciplines to be the object of only partial and abstract understanding. Economists deserve obvious credit for explicitly raising the question of the relationship between the profits ensured by educational investment and those ensured by economic investment – and its evolution over time. But, in addition to the fact that their measurements of the return on academic investments only account for profits and costs in terms of money, or in units directly convertible into money, such as the cost of going to school and the opportunity cost of the time spent there, they cannot account for the relative importance given by different agents to economic and cultural investment because they do not systematically take into account the *structure* of the differential chances for profit promised to these agents by the different markets as a function of the amount and the structure of their patrimony.[8] Moreover, by failing to consider strategies of academic investment as one of a set of educational strategies and as part of the overall system of reproduction strategies, economists are condemning themselves, through an inevitable paradox, to missing the best hidden and most socially important of educational investments – the domestic transfer of cultural capital. Naive investigations into the relationship between the *ability* for studies and investment in studies become meaningless when we consider the fact that ability, or "gifts," is also the product of an investment in time and cultural capital.[9] We can see why Gary Becker, in his attempt to evaluate the profits of academic investment, could not get beyond

individual monetary yield other than to investigate, following a typically functionalist logic, either the return on educational expenditures for society as a whole (*the social rate of return*)[10] or the contribution that education makes to "national productivity" (*the social gain of education as measured by its effects on national productivity*).[11] This definition of the functions of education, which ignores the contribution that the educational system makes to the reproduction of social structure in sanctioning the hereditary transfer of cultural capital, is in fact implied from the outset in a definition of "human capital" that, despite its "humanist" connotations, remains entrenched in economism and disregards the fact that the economic and social return on academic stock depends on the social capital (also inherited) that may be put to its service.[12]

All agents and all groups do not use all the available reproduction strategies in the same way and to the same degree, and the system of reproduction strategies actually implemented by each agent or group depends in each case on the amount and especially the structure of their patrimony. Different structures of inclinations to invest or, if you will, different *preference systems* or systems of interests are imposed upon agents, primarily through *the structure of the differential chances for profit* that investments are objectively offered by the different social markets. So, for example, the inclination to invest in scholastic work and industriousness does not merely depend on the amount of one's cultural capital; it also depends on the relative weight of this cultural capital in the structure of one's heritage. This becomes clear when we compare the educational investments of clerical workers or primary school teachers to those of the heads of family businesses. In contrast to the former, who tend to concentrate all their investments in the academic market, the latter, whose social success does not depend to the same degree on academic success, invest less "interest" and work in their studies and do not get the same return on their cultural capital. The "interest" that an agent (or a class of agents) brings to her "studies" (which, along with inherited cultural capital, on which it partially depends, is one of the most powerful factors of academic success) depends not only on her current or anticipated academic success (by anticipated is meant her chances of success given her cultural capital), but also on the degree to which her social success depend on her academic success. Of course, agents (or groups) depends less and less on their cultural capital for their reproduction the richer they are in economic capital, and the economic and social return of academic capital depends in many cases on the social (or even economic) capital that allows it to acquire its full value, a dual demonstration of the dominated status of this form of capital.

Thus the structure of the system of reproduction strategies characteristic of a domestic unit depends on the relative value of the profits it can expect from its different investments according to its real power over the different institutionalized mechanisms (such as the economic market, the matrimonial market, and the academic market) able to function as instruments of reproduction that are either currently or potentially available to it as a function of the amount and the structure of its capital. It is the structure of the distribution of power over the instruments of reproduction, in a given state of the dominant definition of what is legitimately transferable and how, that determines the differential return that the different instruments of reproduction are able to offer the investments of the different agents (or classes of agents), hence determining the reproducibility of their patrimony and their social position, thus the structure of their differential inclinations to invest in the different markets.

It follows that any change in the relationship between a person's patrimony (in terms of both amount and structure) and the system of instruments of reproduction, along with the correlative transformation of the system of chances for profit, tends to give rise to a *restructuring* of the system of investment strategies. Those endowed with capital are able to maintain their position in social space (or in the structure of a given field, such as the artistic or scientific field) only at the cost of *reconverting* the forms of capital they hold into forms that are more profitable or more legitimate in the current state of the instruments of reproduction.[13] These reconversions objectively imposed by the need to keep up the value of an inheritance may be subjectively experienced as changes of taste or vocation, in other words, as conversions.

Many of the errors in judgment made by those who naively raise the naive question of "democratization" and the evolution of "social mobility" are a consequence of their failure to acknowledge phenomena of *structural shift* (describing the intergenerational passage from the status of primary teacher to that of a teacher in a collège d'enseignement général [a lesser secondary school in former system, sometimes physically attached to a primary school, Tr.] as "upward mobility," for example, when it is only an apparent move that is in fact destined to maintain the teacher's relative position). In addition, a unidimensional and linear vision of social space (with its image of the "social ladder") purely and simply obscures the fact that the reproduction of social structure may, under certain conditions, require very weak "occupational heredity" (or, if you will, very weak "rigidity"). This is the case whenever agents are only able to maintain their *position* in the social structure at the cost of a reconversion of their capital, in other words, at the cost of a change in *condition* (with the transition from the condition of small landowner to that of low-level civil servant, or from that of a minor tradesman to that of a commercial clerical worker). It is thus necessary to distinguish between *displacements within the space of a single field*, related to the accumulation, positive or negative, of the form of capital that constitutes the specific stakes in the competition that defines it in its own right, and *displacements between fields*, related to the reconversion of a given form of capital into another form, currently in use in another field, with the meaning and value of both classes of displacement being dependent on the objective relations among the different fields, hence on the conversion rates of the different forms of capital and the changes that affect them over time, following struggles among the holders of the different forms of capital.

In social universes in which the dominants must constantly change to stay the same, they necessarily tend to be divided, especially during periods of rapid transformation in the current mode of reproduction, according to the "degrees" (and the forms) of reconversion of their strategies of reproduction. The agents or groups best equipped with the forms of capital giving access to the new instruments of reproduction, who are thus the most likely and most able to undertake a reconversion, are opposed to the agents or groups most closely linked to the threatened form of capital. So, for example, in the period preceding the Revolution of 1789, the lesser aristocrats from the provinces who had neither fortune nor education – or, in the period just prior to the crisis of May 1968, teachers of disciplines directly dependent on recruitment *concours* (grammar, classics, and even philosophy) – were likely to seek to deny or to magically compensate for their economic and social regression through a conservatism born of despair. These two polar positions correspond to two forms of conservative sociodicy, the one that aims above all to legitimate the old mode of reproduction, by saying what formerly went without saying and by transforming *doxa* into *orthodoxy*, and the one that aims to rationalize (in both senses of the term) reconversion by hastening awareness of the transformations and the elaboration of the adapted strategies and by legitimating these new strategies in the eyes of the "integrists."

It is struggles of this kind within the field of power today, and even within the field of economic power, that set against each other agents and groups of agents who are differentiated by the structure of their patrimony, that is, by the profile of the distribution of the different forms (and subforms) of capital they possess, and who consequently turn toward entirely different reproduction strategies. They either give contrasting weight to economic and academic investments, or, as is increasingly the case these days, they are differentiated by the subforms of academic capital they seek to secure in making significantly increased academic investments. Yet we still see within the same economic space the coexistence of the family-controlled transfer of a hereditary right to property, as with the heads of family businesses, and the transfer of a power limited to a lifetime (founded on the academic title) more or less completely guaranteed and controlled by the school (and the state) – which, unlike property titles or titles of nobility, cannot be passed down along hereditary lines.

THE FAMILY MODE OF REPRODUCTION

For family businesses, the strictly economic strategies aimed at ensuring the development of the business are nearly inseparable from the strategies aimed at ensuring the reproduction of the family and especially its integration, one of the principal preconditions for the perpetuation of the family's

power over the business. Whenever a family has complete control over an estate consisting of an agricultural, industrial, or commercial company, the strategies through which it aims to ensure its own reproduction (marriage strategies, fertility strategies, education strategies, succession strategies) tend to be subordinated to the strictly economic strategies aimed at ensuring the reproduction of its economic capital.[14] Since the same ends require the same strategies, we find constants such as a concerted effort toward homogamy and an obsessive fear of mismarriage, a strict attitude toward education and the praise of "family spirit," succession strategies aimed at avoiding the division of the estate, etc. And it would be a simple matter, in each particular case, to bring out everything that, in a given state of a given company at a given point in time, in its rise or its decline, depends upon the reproduction strategies of all the members of a lineage, from the founders on down.

It is hardly necessary to recall the extreme vigilance and rigor with which the great bourgeois dynasties managed their *matrimonial exchanges*. It will suffice to mention one case where the desire to integrate the reproduction strategies of the family group and those of the family business is particularly obvious, this being the marriages between the Gillet family of Lyons (founders of a textile dyeing company that became one of the largest French manmade textile companies, which produced the vice president, in 1972, and president, from 1973 to 1979, of Rhône-Poulenc) and the Motte family of Roubaix, one of the largest textile dynasties, which together orchestrated several considerable financial operations (such as the acquisition or absorption of other companies): Edmond Gillet, born 1873, son of Joseph Gillet, who gave a substantial boost to the family business, married Léonie Motte, daughter of Albert, who was also president of the Mines de Lens Company, while Fernand Motte, Léonie's brother, married Mathilde Balay, daughter of Henri Balay and Marguerite Gillet, sister of Edmond.

But nothing could top the case of the Michelin family for illustrating how marriage strategies and economic strategies are interwoven, how marriage strategies and financial liaisons are superposed, and how the success of marriage strategies contributes to the success of economic strategies and the continued expansion of the business. "Cousins should marry cousins so that the dowry remains in the family," recommended André Michelin (died 1931). His advice was well heeded; *endogamy*, which tends to ensure the integration of the group, enabling it to safeguard its capital as well as the secret of its business dealings and the prestige of the lineage, is a constant in the family. André Michelin and his brother Edouard married two sisters, Sophie and Marie-Thérèse Wolff. Three of Edouard Michelin's six children (Marguerite, Étienne, and Hélène) married children (Jean, Joseph, Hélène) of Jacques Callies, a naval engineer,[15] and Marie Aussédat (whose family owned the Aussédat paper mills); a fourth, Anne, married Robert Puiseux, president, then honorary president and director of the Citroën Corporation (from 1958 to 1970), co-director of the Compagnie Générale des Établissements Michelin from 1938 to 1959 and member of the supervisory board from 1959 on (three other Michelins married Puiseux). François Michelin, currently chief executive, initially co-director of Michelin and Company with his uncle, Robert Puiseux, then sole director and again co-director with François Rollier (son of Petrus Rollier and Marthe Callies, herself a

daughter of Jacques Callies and Marie Aussédat), since 1968 a director of the Citroën Corporation, married Bernadette Montagne; his sister Geneviève married Rémy Montagne (a deputy from the Eure *département* and former mayor of Louviers); his other sister, Marthe, married Marie Montagne, the mayor of Mirabeau. As proof that the principle at the root of reproduction strategies as a whole can be found in the immanent necessities of the position that is to be reproduced, and in the generative and unifying habitus that they form, a high degree of endogamy goes hand in hand with a high concentration of economic activity surrounding a very particular product and the deliberate rejection of the diversification systematically practiced by financial capitalism. So, for example, François Michelin, rejecting any form of diversification that does not stem from "technical logic" and is "simply an expression of a will to power," attributes his success to the fact that his rivals, who were highly diversified and thus had a large number of "alternative solutions" at their disposal, in contrast to his company, for which "the only solution was the tire," "didn't believe in the radial tire and woke up too late," thereby enabling Michelin to capture the largest share of the market.[16]

We must consider in the same vein the fertility strategies behind the fact that very large families (those with seven or more children), completely absent from the top positions at technocratically controlled companies, are found relatively often among the heads of family companies (10 percent; with the average family numbering 3.5 children, compared to 3.1 in technocratically controlled companies and 2.6 in large public companies). Invoking the dispositions favored by Catholic ethics in matters of procreation and birth control is not enough (the explanation, in this case, would itself require an explanation). In fact, the family business frees one from any kind of limit on fertility; on the contrary, it encourages procreation, at least during the expansion phase when growth in the instrument of production corresponds to growth in the lineage, which can thus be gradually absorbed either through the creation of new branches initially financed by the parent company or by the employment of additional children as guarantors or managers. In addition, wealth in children constitutes in and of itself, and also by allowing the propagation of capital through marital alliances, a way of accumulating social capital – which we know to be made up of the sum, always potentially mobilizable, of all the forms of capital possessed by each of the members of the group.

But large families cannot remain so unless they manage to protect themselves from division and the resulting break-up of their estate. This is of course the reason for all the succession strategies aimed at preventing property from leaving the family; we know for example that the textile families of northern France in essence disinherited their daughters, through whom property might be passed on to outsiders, using the fiction of the corporation, which shelters material assets from partition. It is also, and especially, the reason for the education strategies and all the practices (such as family parties and ceremonies) aimed at creating ties of solidarity among all

descendants so that the death of one of the holders of rights to the patrimony will be the occasion not of division but rather of a reorganization of the commonly held concerns. The reasons for the extreme attention given to marriage, especially to the marriages of future company heads, cannot be reduced to the desire to strengthen the business by bringing in economic capital, in the form of dowries or inheritances, and social capital, through the expansion of its network of connections. Seeking to maintain the strictest homogamy undoubtedly also stems from a concern for safeguarding the ethical dispositions regarded as the prerequisite for the economic success of the business and the affirmation of the family's social status. Admitting into the family only those women who are capable of embodying and inculcating respect for bourgeois virtues – the work ethic, an eye for saving, family spirit[17] – fulfills a function entirely similar to the *exclusivism* that leads to the choice of private educational establishments and highly selective meeting places. Indeed, family upbringing, generally quite strict, and schooling, usually entrusted to Jesuits or to English-style institutions such as the École des Roches, are expected above all to inculcate religiously underwritten ethical dispositions – especially, of course, for girls, entrusted to boarding schools such as "Les Oiseaux."

The École des Roches, in Verneuil-sur-Avre, Normandy, was founded in 1899 by Edmond Demolins, "thinker and sociologist," disciple of Frédéric Le Play, friend of the Baron de Coubertin, and a "great admirer of English pedagogical methods" (cf. his works, *Anglo-Saxon Superiority: To What Is It Due?* and *L'Éducation nouvelle*), as Jean-Claude Courbin, grandson of the founder, writes in a booklet published in 1974 on the occasion of the school's seventy-fifth anniversary ("Demolins écrivain et conférencier," in *Edmond Demolins, qui était-ce?*). This same eulogist expresses the entire educational philosophy of the heads of family businesses in a single sentence: "You had to be courageous in that day and age to undertake such a project in a French society then essentially centered around the Napoleonic lycée-barracks and the university-machine that turned out docile and more or less mediocre civil servants." At the end of the 1970s, the École des Roches numbered more than 400 boarding students, both boys and girls (about 120 of whom were foreigners), or about 20 students per class and 12 per lab; the cost for boarding per trimester for the year 1977–8 ranged from 7,205 francs for a student in the *septième* or *sixième* to 10,155 francs for a student in the *terminale*. The school's brochure describes the sumptuous Norman manor where the students live "just like at home" as follows: "A country campus whose only walls are trees, hedges, and the Iton River; sports fields, air, light, squirrels in the pines. Guichardière, les Fougères, la Colline, le Moulin. (...) Generously spaced about the grounds, Roches dormitories house between 12 and 40 children or adolescents each. They live as they would at home in personalized rooms, choosing roommates with similar interests (five or six boys to a room, two or three girls); there are study halls, game rooms, libraries, and meeting rooms. Each house has its own style, its gardens, its tennis courts, and . . . its traditions. When two graduates meet, they introduce themselves as "*Pins* 1924, *Vallon* 1907!" Ever faithful to the glorification of physical activity that the founders, in a

spirit illustrated by Coubertin, intended as a counterweight to the intellectualism of "ace test takers," the school attaches great importance to the most *select* sporting activities (the brochure pictures students fencing and, dressed in very British garb, grey slacks and a dark jacket, leaning over a private airplane sporting the school's coat of arms or leading a horse by the bridle): "Roches boasts a modern gymnasium, an equally large riding area (1,000 square metres), a large number of horses and ponies, a track, soccer and rugby fields, basketball and volleyball courts, eight tennis courts, a go-kart track, a martial arts room, a heated pool, covered in the winter, and even an airfield, all of which give its students the opportunity to participate in all the sports they love and to develop self-control, physical strength, and a sporting mind."

Such a relationship to the educational system – and especially to *public* educational institutions – is inseparable from a view of the world that gives precedence to everything that falls within the realm of the private. The rejection of public education is one aspect of an overall defiance toward the secular state and so-called "republican" social philosophy, a stance that aims to free private domains (private companies, private schools) from the clutches of bureaucratic universalism. Private education is not simply an exclusive education, whose limit is, probably quite frequently, recourse to private home tutors,[18] and a sheltered education, guaranteeing adherence to the cardinal virtues of conservative morality – work, family, and property; it is also a religious education that, through its familial appearance as much as the personalist "philosophy" that permeates it, tends to reduce the public to the private, the social to the personal, the political to the ethical, and the economic to the psychological. In short, it tends to effect a depoliticization that returns to the domain of the most irreducibly singular "actual experience" all the experiences that politicization aims on the contrary to detach from the "person" in his or her singularity in order to make them appear to be common to a class.

Thus, as long as heads of family businesses hold the power to pass down, from person to person, usually, that is, from father to son, a form of power that must be wielded personally by its holder and that requires no competence other than that which can be acquired through direct experience in the family business itself, they have no use for an institution like the school, which only grants its certificates of competence claiming universal validity in exchange for guarantees of ability that also claim to be universal. They are perfectly satisfied with a mode of reproduction in which institutions of secondary or even higher education, passage through which is merely a kind of statutory bourgeois right, are reduced to a function of legitimation. Their sense of owing their success only to their experience and their abilities, acquired on the job, through practice, and their defiance toward all forms of abstract, bookish knowledge hardly lead them to value academic titles or the institution that grants them. When the imperatives of social rank require it, they demand of the educational system only those certificates of good

moral education and social distinction that private education is prepared to provide, or, if truly necessary, guarantees of technical competence that make it possible for the second-generation head to have authority over his technical managers – those conferred by the École Centrale (an institution directly set up to respond to the expectations of the traditional body of heads of businesses), for example, or by the minor engineering schools.[19]

One of their favorite topics of discussion is deploring graduates' lack of skills. So, for example, when asked about the training of his managers, Marcel Fournier, founder and chief executive of the Carrefour company, who, after completing his secondary education at the Collège de Mongré in Villefranche-sur-Saône, worked in the family notions shop, first as a "clerk," than as a "manager," before founding the Carrefour company with Denis Defforey (the first supermarket opened in Annecy in 1960), explains: "They started out as department managers in the previous stores. And (. . .) they learned on the job. We have people of all types. There are some who have only gone through secondary school, and even then, not all of them. Some have gone to business school. There are even one or two Sciences-po graduates. And they all started by working their way up the ladder (. . .). Our desire to see them move up through the ranks, starting at the manual level, certainly kept away some capable young men, the ones who put too much faith in the value of their diplomas and not enough in the value of experience" ("Face-à-face avec Marcel Fournier," by R. Priouret, *Expansion* (June 1973), p. 221). The same views are expressed by André Blanchet, who, after studying at a professional school, which has since become the Diderot technical lycée, began at 17 at Brandt and Fouilleret, manufacturers of industrial electrical equipment, before founding Télémécanique Électrique in 1924 (with his brother Pierre, and with Jules Sarrasin, graduate of Arts et Métiers, and Michel Le Gouellec, of the Institut Électrotechnique de Grenoble): "To me, creativity is innate. Those possessed of it see new products effortlessly take shape in their hands. Of course it's better if they're engineers." If an engineer from a grande école "hasn't got the creative spirit, he won't get one from me; on the other hand, an unschooled man may have this spirit (. . .). The most creative man we ever had – he's retired now – was a former lathe operator who didn't go beyond primary school. He had an extraordinary creative gift" (cf. R. Priouret, *La France et le management* (Paris: Denoël, 1968), pp. 251–2, interview with André Blanchet).

It may be objected that language hostile to diplomas and to those who hold them is no less frequent at the other end of the space of company heads, among the enthusiastic supporters of *man development* at the topmost companies who reject the use of the diploma as the exclusive criterion for recruitment (cf., for example, J. Fontaine, "Les grandes entreprises jugent les grandes écoles," *Expansion* 109 (July – Aug. 1977), pp. 66–71). In fact, such professions of faith are contradicted in a thousand ways. For example, when asked about the value they place on diplomas as a means of gaining access to various positions in their company, these same people (who give the diploma critical weight in recruiting entry-level professional staff) grant first place, as in reality, to Polytechnique and the ENA for management positions, to the ENA and HEC for financial positions, to HEC and the ESSEC for positions in trade, to Centrale for production, and to Sciences-po for personnel administration (ibid., p. 68). And we know, moreover, that the academic properties of managerial staff overall tend to mirror very

closely the properties of their chief executives, who have an increasing tendency to surround themselves with title holders (who usually have identical titles to their own) the more diplomas they themselves possess.[20]

For the heads of family businesses, the nontransferable right of succession provided by the school is merely a last resort, which they attempt to secure either when their business is threatened or when it can no longer provide jobs for all members of the family, or a substitute whose acquisition is only necessary when the right of ownership is not sufficient. Witness the statistics in table 31.

Among these 141 heads of businesses and establishments in the Rhône-Alpes region,[21] we note that academic capital, which tends to increase as ties with the founder weaken, constitutes the nearly obligatory precondition for access (in more than two-thirds of the cases) for those with no such ties. In other words, although academic capital is not absolutely essential for starting up a business, it becomes increasingly necessary when it comes to preserving or enlarging it (usually in the form of law degrees), and it is nearly indispensable for acceding to the helm once the business is fully developed.[22]

Paradoxically enough, the opportunity given to the heads of family businesses to provide positions for their children probably lies behind the decline in the number of these businesses. This is not only due to the increase in employee-related expenses that results from the artificial increase in hereditary "charges" born of the fictitious decrease in the positions earmarked for heirs more or less "capable" of filling them, but also because it enables these heads to take to the absolute limit, that is, to absurdity and failure, all reconversion of at least a portion of their heirs, through recourse to other reproduction strategies, for example, all those strategies that assume the accumulation of academic capital.[23]

Table 31 Educational background of heads of businesses in the Rhône-Alpes region, by status (percent; n = 141)

	Founder	*Heir*	*2nd gen. + heir*	*No relation*	*Head of establ.*	*All*
Below bac	81	50	26	19	15	40
Higher educ., non science	9	28	26	10	9	16
Higher educ., sciences	9	17	39	67	73	40
Higher educ., both		6	9	5	3	4

Source: J. Saglio, "Qui sont les patrons?" *Économie et Humanisme* 236 (July–Aug. 1977), pp. 6–11.

THE SCHOOL-MEDIATED MODE OF REPRODUCTION

In the mode of reproduction characteristic of large bureaucratic companies, the academic title ceases to be a statutory attribute (like a Rothschild's law degree) and becomes instead a genuine *entry pass*: the school – in the guise of the grande école – and the corps, a social group that the school produces apparently *ex nihilo* and, in fact, from properties that are also related to the family, take the place of the family and family ties, with the cooptation of classmates based on school and corps solidarity taking over the role played by nepotism and marital ties in businesses that have the privilege of the transfer of privileges.

We thus note that the proportion of higher education graduates among the heads of the top industrial, commercial, and banking institutions increases markedly when we go from family-controlled companies (that is, companies whose stock is largely held by a particular family) to technocratic companies (that is, companies whose capital is dispersed among a large number of organizations, businesses, or individuals) or nationalized companies. Only 3 percent of the chief executives of family-controlled companies report two or more higher education diplomas, compared to 35 percent of the chief executives of foreign subsidiaries, 73 percent of the chief executives of technocratically controlled companies, and 74 percent of the chief

Table 32 Academic capital of chief executives according to type of control (percent)

	Family control (n = 82)	*Foreign control* (n = 42)	*Technocratic control* (n = 45)	*State control* (n = 31)
Secondary schooling or higher education unfinished	21.5	10.0	4.5	3.0
Exclusively law	18.0	17.0	6.5	16.0
Engineering petite école	19.0	7.0	2.0	–
Humanities, sciences, medicine	4.0	5.0	–	3.0
Centrale, Mines Paris, Nancy, St Étienne	9.0	7.0	15.5	–
Sciences-po	15.0	10.0	38.5	36.0
HEC or other business school	7.5	19.5	2.0	–
Polytechnique only	1.0	14.5	–	10.0
Polytechnique, Mines, Ponts	5.0	10.0	31.0	29.0
Total	100	100	100	100

Because we were unable to precisely determine the type of control for 16 of the companies in the sample, the table includes only 200 companies.

executives of state-controlled companies; the first category more often went to provincial private secondary schools, principally the Collège des Roches (the percentages for provincial private schools overall being 31 percent, 18 percent, 20 percent, and 7 percent). The same pattern of differences is also found for type of title, the proportion of those with the most prestigious titles (such as X-Mines) increasing sharply as we move from "family" businesses to "public" companies.

The strategies used by the grands corps in defending their social capital obey a logic very similar to that of families – which is understandable given that, in both cases, the value of each member depends on the contribution of all the others as well as on the possibility of actually mobilizing the capital held by the group, hence on the real solidarity among the members of the group. Thus, whenever a member of the group is nominated to a prestigious position, the social and symbolic capital of all the others is enhanced and, as the saying goes, "their stocks go up." We could thus draw up a sort of summary of the overall capital of the various corps using the table of equivalences in *social stature* suggested by an experienced observer: "The president of a top national corporation 'is worth' more than a ministerial delegate or a ministry general secretary; a position as general manager of a public company is worth several jobs as division manager in the central administration."[24] It follows that grands corps capital, like family capital, cannot be left to the whims of individual initiative. It can only escape the permanent threat of devaluation and discredit if it is given constant attention and rational management – each corps has a "board of eminent members" headed by a "corps chief," or "corps conscience," who keeps watch on the choices made by *polytechniciens* and "follows the evolution of the class rank of the first and last student to choose membership in the corps."[25]

All reproduction strategies imply a form of *numerus clausus*. They in effect fulfil the functions of inclusion and exclusion that together maintain the corps at a constant size by limiting either the number of its biological products (although only the family is able to control fertility strategies in this way, within certain limits) or the number of individuals entitled to join it (in order to ensure that the latter do not exceed the availability of the positions determining membership in the corps), and by simultaneously excluding a portion of the biological products of the corps (with their consent), who are sent off toward other universes or kept in an ambiguous or reduced state. In the case of the aristocracy of the *ancien régime*, these strategies would include the celibacy of the daughters relegated to religious institutions or the dispossession of the younger sons, whose life was given over to the church. In the "familial" mode of reproduction, responsibility for these adjustments was entrusted to the family; with the school-mediated mode of reproduction, to which "technocratic" heads owe their position, the family no longer has dominion over choices of succession or the power to designate heirs.

The fundamental difference between the two modes of reproduction lies in the *strictly statistical logic* of the school-mediated mode of reproduction. In contrast to the direct transfer of property rights between a holder and the heir he himself designates, the transfer carried out by means of the school rests on the statistical aggregation of the isolated stocks of individual or collective agents, and it guarantees properties to the class as a whole that it withholds from one or another of its elements taken separately.[26] The school can only contribute to the reproduction of the class (in the logical sense of the term) by sacrificing certain members of the class who would be spared by a mode of reproduction that left the family with full power over transfer. The *specific contradiction* of the scholastic mode of reproduction lies in the opposition between the interests of the class that the school serves *statistically* and the interests of the members of the class that it sacrifices, that is, not simply the so-called "failures," but also those who hold titles that "normally" (in other words, in an earlier state of the relationship between titles and jobs) would give them the right to a bourgeois occupation, yet who cannot get their titles honored on the market, usually because they do not originate in the class. As long as the bourgeois family has control over its own social reproduction and is thus able to adjust the number of legitimate claimants to the number of available positions, the overproduction of holders of "bourgeois rights" remains an accident and tends to stay within reasonable limits, given the harsh economic consequences of this transgression. Overproduction, with all the contradictions it implies, becomes a *structural constant* when, with the school-mediated mode of reproduction, theoretically equal chances for obtaining academic titles are made available to all "heirs" (girls as well as boys, older offspring as well as younger), while the access of "non-heirs" to these titles also increases (in absolute terms) – as has been the case in France now for some 20 years or so – and a harsh form of elimination, beginning in the first year of secondary school, gives way to *a gentle style of elimination*, in other words, that is, to a progressive, continuous, and hence slow and costly process, which can only become accepted and recognized provided it allows the number of survivors from the dominated regions of social space to increase.

The strategies that the victims of this stochastic instrument of reproduction can use to fight it, whether individual compensatory strategies or collective strategies for making demands or subverting the established order (of which the May 1968 movement represents a prime example), are one of the most important factors in the transformation of social structures today. On one side lie the individual "catch-up" strategies available only to those whose social capital of inherited connections enables them to make up for their lack of titles or to get the highest possible return on the titles they do possess by choosing sanctuary occupations in the regions of social space that remain more or less unbureaucratized, regions in which social dispositions count for more than academically guaranteed specific "competences." On the other side lie the collective strategies for making demands aimed at increasing

recognition of diplomas and obtaining the compensation guaranteed in an earlier state. Both types combine to favor the creation of a large number of *semibourgeois positions*, originating either in revamped definitions of old positions or in the "invention" of new positions, and designed to save "heirs" bereft of titles from downclassing, and to give "parvenus" compensation corresponding more or less to their devalued titles.

The school-mediated mode of reproduction undoubtedly tolerates a greater distortion in social structure than the familial mode of transfer with its simple procedures of direct transfer; but, given that its transfer mechanisms are doubly hidden, once by the concealment related to aggregate statistics and then by the concealment of the direct transfer of cultural capital, which confounds the statistics, academic transfer compensates for its lesser reproductive return through an increased effectiveness in its concealment of the work of reproduction. The educational system, only apparently very similar to a stochastic system of redistribution that would inevitably lead to a redistribution of positions with each successive generation, functions with the apparent impartiality of a chance drawing that is actually systematically biased, innocently producing effects that are infinitely closer, at any rate, to those produced by the system of direct hereditary transfer than to chance redistribution.[27]

The delimitation of what can legitimately be transferred and the legitimate ways of preserving and transferring it is constantly at stake in both insidious and open struggles. Subversive critics tend to increasingly restrict the sphere of what is legitimately transferable by unveiling both the arbitrary nature of the current mode of transfer and the self-interested motivations of the sociodicies aimed at justifying it. This increase in critical vigilance (to which social science has greatly contributed) and institutional control over transfer (laws governing succession, etc.) is one of the factors that hasten the decline of efficient and economical, yet open, strategies, such as direct transfer, to the benefit of strategies that, like academic investment, effect transfer that is dissimulated, indeed entirely misrecognized as such, and thus perfectly recognized and legitimate, although at the cost of greater waste and a higher price tag.

Yet, while this mode of statistical reproduction may indeed limit a family's direct control, their dispossession remains relative. First, although the families of the top business bourgeoisie may be less well placed to take full advantage of the primarily scholastic mode of reproduction than the bourgeoisie *de robe*[28] of the professions and especially the Parisian higher civil service, they are in a position to transfer a certain amount of cultural capital and also to get the most out of the ever more numerous tailor-made educational institutions that guarantee a form of academic recognition to the dispositions they inculcate, dispositions that are relatively unpromising for success in the strictest academic competitions. Secondly, the diploma is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for access to all dominant positions – starting, obviously, with jobs in family businesses. And finally,

although *self-made men* are increasingly denied access to the directorships of large technocratic or state-run companies (or even to positions in upper management), as we have seen, the academic title is nonetheless almost never enough in and of itself to guarantee access to dominant positions in the economic field. Witness the fact that the heads of state-run companies are nearly all from families related to the business world, by blood or otherwise.

Only 29 percent of the chief executives of technocratically controlled companies and 25 percent of those of nationalized or mixed enterprises (compared to 68.5 percent of the family chief executives) are sons of industrialists, merchants, bankers, or corporate presidents. But ties with the business world are much more important than these figures would suggest: the primary occupation of the father (for example, lawyer, academic, higher civil servant, etc.) may obscure the fact that he comes from a business family. So, for example, Edmond Hannotin, father of Marc Hannotin, honorary Maître des Requêtes in the Conseil d'État, eventually chief executive of the (technocratically controlled) Ciments Français corporation, who, if we can believe the entry in *Who's Who*, is "a lawyer in the Conseil d'État, a member of the appeals court, and a former senator," in fact served on the boards of very large banks and corporations (Crédit Lyonnais, Lyonnaise des Eaux et Éclairage, Chemins de Fer de l'Est, etc.).[29] Similarly, Jacques Donnedieu de Vabres, honorary Maître des Requêtes in the Conseil d'État, eventually chief executive of the (technocratically controlled) Campenon Bernard corporation, is the son of Henri Donnedieu de Vabres, who, classified as an "academic," was in fact a professor of great renown at the law faculté, and Edmée Beigbeder, daughter of David Beigbeder, who served on boards of numerous shipping and mining companies.[30] Robert Bizot, chief executive of Dunlop (a foreign-held company), son of Jean-Jacques Bizot, "Inspecteur des Finances" (and vice-governor of the Banque de France), comes from a long bourgeois line whose known origins go back to the sixteenth century and which has included magistrates, military officers, Inspecteurs des Finances, stockbrokers, and corporate directors. (His brother Alain has been a director of the Crédit Lyonnais since 1973; his uncle Ennemond, who married Marguerite Gillet of the well-known Lyons family, is a director for several companies in the Rhône-Poulenc group and a member of the advisory board of the Banque de France; another of his uncles, Henri, also an Inspecteur des Finances, moved into the private sector at the Comptoir National d'Escompte de Paris, over which he presided before becoming president of the Banque Nationale de Paris. Robert himself married Chantal Paul Renard, the daughter of the cheese manufacturer Paul Renard, and is a director for Fromageries Paul Renard.) Wilfrid Baumgartner, chief executive of Rhône-Poulenc in 1972 and former finance minister, is the son of Amédée Baumgartner, "surgeon," and Mathilde Clamageran, who comes from "a family of well-known nineteenth-century politicians and businessmen";[31] his grandfather, Edouard Baumgartner, had a spinning mill. He married Christiane Mercier, the daughter of Ernest Mercier, former chief engineer of the naval engineering corps, an oil and electricity magnate, who was on 24 boards of directors (as president in eight cases) and who, in 1953, was still director of the Suez Canal corporation, honorary president of Alsthom, and vice-president of the Société Alsacienne de Constructions

Mécaniques. His brother, Richard Baumgartner, married another daughter of Ernest Mercier and in 1972 was chief executive of the Société Alsacienne de Constructions Mécaniques, subsequently known as ALSPI, and the Lille-Bonnières-Colombes corporation, and director of the Compagnie Générale d'Électricité and the Compagnie Française des Pétroles. His other brother, Philippe, physician in Aix-les-Bains, married Geneviève de Lacroix and is related by marriage to the Dollfus family, which controls the textile group Dollfus-Mieg and had shares in the Société Alsacienne de Constructions Mécaniques.[32] We could cite endless analogous examples.

The marked predominance of the top Parisian bourgeoisie *de robe* in all technocratically controlled or state-controlled companies could be explained in part by the fact that – in contrast to the top and mid-level provincial business bourgeoisie, which, expecting little from academic credentials and being only slightly dependent on them, entrusted its children to private schools – it has for generations sent its children to the top lycées in the "fashionable neighbourhoods."[33] In Paris, indeed, while the most traditional elements of the business bourgeoisie entrusted their progeny to the most prestigious private schools, such as the Collège Stanislas or Sainte-Croix de Neuilly, also frequented by the offspring of the top industrial bourgeoisie and the provincial aristocracy, the modernist (and "secular") fractions of the top business bourgeoisie (that is, first and foremost, the Protestant and Jewish bourgeoisies) sent their children to the most "exclusive" public schools. An establishment like Janson de Sailly enjoyed a unique position: joined with Gerson, a private school, it enabled certain Catholic families to combine as it were the "intellectual" advantages of public education with the "moral" assurances of private education.[34] As table 33 shows, the chief executives from families in the professions or higher public service took greatest advantage of the top Parisian lycées, both the top "bourgeois" lycées like Janson and Condorcet, from which they went on in large part to Sciences-po or the law faculté, and the lycées in the Latin Quarter like Louis-le-Grand and Saint-Louis, from which they not only went on to Sciences-po but also to Polytechnique.[35] Thus these categories, distinguished by a more open relationship to the social world, found themselves in a much better position than the top Catholic provincial bourgeoisie to benefit from the opportunities for ascension and reconversion offered by the new mode of reproduction and the new route to access to positions of power opened up by the grandes écoles and especially, after the Second World War, by the École Nationale d'Administration.

FAMILY USES OF THE SCHOOL

We must nevertheless guard against reducing the opposition between the two modes of reproduction to the opposition between recourse to the family and recourse to the school. It is in fact more a question of the difference

Table 33 Secondary schooling of chief executives according to social origin (percent)

	Public schools						Private schools			
Father's occupation	*Janson*	*Condorcet*	*Louis-le-Grand*	*Saint-Louis*	*Other lycée Paris, suburbs*	*Lycée provinces, abroad*	*Collège des Roches, Normandy*	*Stanislas*	*Sainte-Geneviève*	*Other private school, Paris*	*Private school, provinces, abroad*
Farmer, bl. collar, clerical, mid-mgr, tradesman, sm. comm. (n = 30)	–	–	10.0	10.0	23.0	47.0	–	3.0	3.0	6.0	16.5
Exec., director, eng. (n = 26)	11.5	7.5	4.0	11.5	35.0	27.0	–	8.0	19.0	27.0	11.5
Officer, landowner (n = 16)	12.5	–	–	12.5	12.5	56.0	12.5	–	6.0	6.0	12.5
Professions, higher civ. serv. (n = 37)	24.5	11.0	19.0	5.5	19.0	16.0	–	5.5	–	8.0	8.0
Large merchant, industrialist (n = 36)	14.5	6.0	–	3.0	17.0	29.0	9.0	6.0	3.0	20.0	37.0
Large industr., board member, corp. head, banker (n = 57)	24.5	7.0	12.0	9.0	12.5	14.0	10.5	7.0	7.0	19.0	19.0
All	16.5	6.0	9.0	8.0	19.0	26.0	5.5	5.5	6.0	15.5	18.5

Total may exceed 100; the figures represent the percentage of chief executives from the different social classes who attended each of the schools.

between a strictly familial management of the problems of reproduction and a type of familial management that makes use of the school in certain ways in its reproduction strategies. Indeed, in addition to the fact that the school's reproductive action is based on the domestic transfer of cultural capital, the family continues to use the relatively autonomous logic of its own economy, which enables it to combine the capital held by each of its members, in order to accumulate and transfer its wealth. The new mode of appropriation of economic capital makes it possible and even desirable to establish a new form of solidarity among the members of a family. In contrast to those who possess economic heritage, who are as divided as they are united by their common claim to the appropriation of this patrimony, constantly under threat of division and dispersion according to the whims of inheritance and marriages, those who possess diversified, and largely cultural, capital have everything to gain by maintaining the family ties that enable them to benefit from the capital held by each member of the group. Thus a network of family relations can be the locus of an unofficial circulation of capital that enables the networks of official circulation to function and in turn blocks any effects of the latter that would be contrary to family interests.[36] The dialectical relationship between the official and the unofficial, between the familial and the strictly economic networks of capital circulation, here as elsewhere makes it possible to maximize the profits gained through outwardly incompatible systems of demands – combining, for example, the advantages guaranteed by prestigious academic credentials with those afforded by the protections that enable them to yield their full return, or still further, combining the secondary profits provided by matrimonial exchanges between families of company heads with the advantages gained through corporate ties. The "family spirit" and even affection that lend the family its cohesion thus contribute to securing one of the advantages that come with belonging to a family group (without expressly pursuing it as such, of course), namely, a share in the capital whose integrity is guaranteed by the integration of the family, in other words, a share in the sum of the assets of all its members.[37]

We might think of the example of the Debré family, which brings together capital in all its forms: Robert Debré, member of the Institut de France (Académie de Médecine), former professor at the Faculté de Médecine de Paris, married Jeanne Debat-Ponsan, daughter of the painter Edouard Debat-Ponsan and sister of Jacques Debat-Ponsan, recipient of the Prix de Rome in architecture. Following the death of his first wife, Robert Debré married Elisabeth de la Panouse, daughter of Sabine de Wendel (of the well-known iron and steel dynasty) who, from her first marriage to Alphonse de la Bourdonnaye, had six children, including Oriane, married to Yves Guéna, Conseiller d'Etat and former minister. Jacques Debré, Robert's brother, was a graduate of the École Polytechnique, president of the Compagnie Industrielle de Télécommunications, and director of several companies. Germain Debré, his other brother, was an architect. In the following generation, we find Michel Debré, son of

Robert Debré and Jeanne Debat-Ponsan, honorary Maître des Requêtes in the Conseil d'État, former prime minister, member of parliament, married to Anne-Marie Le Maresquier, daughter of Charles Le Maresquier, chief architect for civil construction and national palaces, member of the Institut de France, and sister of both Noël Le Maresquier, architect and member of the Institut, conservator at the Musée Condé de Chantilly, and Pierre Le Maresquier, graduate of the École Normale Supérieure, for a time cultural officer in the French Embassy in Ankara, teacher, Conseiller Technique [grade of higher civil servant, Tr.] and corporate director. Olivier Debré, Michel's brother, is a painter whose work has been exhibited in many salons, galleries, and museums, and Claude Debré, his sister, married Philippe Monod-Broca, surgeon in public hospitals, professor at the Faculté de Médecine de Paris-Sud, son of Raoul Monod, friend of Robert Debré. Jean-Louis Debré, son of Michel Debré, himself a Sciences-po graduate, is a magistrate, and was a Conseiller Technique, then Chargé de mission in the office of Jacques Chirac. This vast web of well-heeled family relations is in no way abstract or theoretical. To quote Robert Debré: "Over the past decades, we have had very active family and social life in our cherished homes in Paris and Tours. Our children and grandchildren often came to visit. Weddings and births followed one after the other. Parents and children remained close (. . .). Later, the children of the third generation were to become more bold. Some began to question authority (. . .). We kept the tradition of gathering everyone together for Christmas dinner. There are so many descendants on both sides that, with several nieces and nephews, we would have more than 80 guests (. . .). We delighted in the personal happiness and professional success of our descendants, who were choosing widely varied paths. Some were professors of medicine or surgery, ministers or generals, and in the next generation we found many diverse talents. I was perhaps most touched by the success of one of my grandchildren at the Internat des Hôpitaux de Paris."[38]

The situation in which stockholders belonging to a single family grant one of their members the right to manage the family portfolio is only one particular case (one in which the profits gained through integration are limited by the particular properties of the specific capital involved) among all the *profit-sharing relationships* in which the capital accumulated by each of the members of the group through the positions held in different institutions and different fields – and particularly capital in social connections – is shared by all, in such a way that individuals have their own shares and all members together have the entire sum. In short, if *social capital* is relatively difficult to reduce to other forms of capital, and particularly to economic capital and cultural capital (whose return it can *increase*), without for all that being completely independent of them, this is because the capital held individually by an individual agent is increased by capital possessed *by* others that depends on the amount of capital held by each of the members of the groups of which that person is a member as well as the degree of intensity of these groups (family, corps, etc.).

The lengthening of the human biological lifespan and the correlative increase in the lifespan help to delay the moment when children inherit from their parents,

putting it off to an age at which, given the decrease in the age at which people marry and have their first child, the children themselves have children who are ready to begin working and having families. It follows that the transfer of part of the patrimony tends to be subordinated to the logic of the affective ties that determine family relationships. As Hervé Le Bras has shown,[39] heirs receive an inheritance (usually between the ages of 50 and 55, that is, during the period when they "set up" their 25 to 30-year-old children) that they may either keep together or partially divide up among their children (in the form of places to live or annuities) according to their goodwill and to the degree to which their children live up to their definition of social excellence. These transformations in the economic functions of the family go hand in hand with a change in the forms of authority within the bourgeois family. The direct, overt authority exercised by the head of the family, also head of a business, keeper and guarantor of the common wealth, has been replaced by a set of relationships of affective dependence founded on "affection," "generosity," and "gratitude," and well designed to fulfill the same functions, but under cover, by generating ties that owe their essential strength to their sentimental and ethical transfiguration.

Just as the two modes of reproduction correspond to two uses of the family rather than to the exclusive use of either the family or the school, they are also distinguished by two uses of the school, or, more precisely, by a privileged use of institutions located in different regions of academic space. Whereas for one group the academic title conferred by the most academic authorities (such as the École Polytechnique) constitutes the condition *sine qua non* for entry into the field of power, the others expect educational institutions at once less academic and less selective, which strengthen inherited dispositions more than they inculcate new skills, to grant them the minimum consecration needed to consecrate vested positions. In the first case the educational institution asserts its autonomy in the nature of the knowledge that it both inculcates and requires, knowledge that can only be acquired through a specific and specifically academic style of learning and that is worth little in worldly markets; in the second case, the school, here much like the institutions to which aristocracies of birth or money have traditionally entrusted their offspring – such as Oxford and Yale, or the École des Roches and the most exclusive Jesuit schools – bestows a consecration that, although granted by the least "academic" academic institutions, still has every appearance of the social neutrality that lends the school its more or less complete autonomy with respect to worldly demands. The social success of Sciences-po, and the ENA, its continuation, can undoubtedly be explained by the fact that these schools provided the families of the upper bourgeoisie – who were the most anxious to avoid locking themselves into the rejection of the state lycée and the grandes écoles that was seen as a sign of good breeding among the upper provincial bourgeoisie – with a way to secure academic legitimation for the transfer of their economic heritage, legitimation that, at least since the end of the nineteenth century, was tend

ing to become increasingly necessary. And all this at the least possible academic cost: on the one hand, the entire logic of the social recruitment of the faculty and student bodies of these institutions predisposed them to recognize the particular type of cultural capital and relationship to culture and language that exclusively define the heritage of the Parisian bourgeoisie; and, on the other hand, the unacknowledged privilege that the business bourgeoisie grants to the dispositions guaranteed by the most worldly academic titles when it has the full power to choose its heirs within the family, or, failing this, within the class, tended to compensate for and readjust the disjustments the school introduces into the correspondence between social hierarchies and academic hierarchies when, as at Polytechnique, it is able to more completely assert its specific logic.

Nothing could more clearly *show* us the contrast between these two academic channels than a photo-comparison of the bodily hexis, make-up, and clothes of the adolescents who have chosen one or the other of them. Or a comparison of the architectural style of the buildings in which they get their education: on the one hand we find the monastic austerity of the great boarding schools (which were until recently exclusively male), such as Saint-Louis and Louis-le-Grand, which are completely closed in on work and study; on the other hand, the openness of the Institut d'Études Politiques, organized around a library and a vast, very modern hall, which offers a striking contrast to Louis-le-Grand's large column-bordered courtyard.[40] Or a comparison of a recorded mathematics or physics oral at the École Polytechnique with a recorded ENA oral such as the one we present here.

In the following transcribed "conversation," a perfectly typical example of the oral exams we were able to observe in 1971, the candidate was to comment upon the following text (inaudible passages are indicated by ellipses):[41] "By contributing to the destruction of structures linked both to nature and to a rejection of historicity, the effects of big cities have been and continue to be largely negative. But what positive aspects might we bring out? First, a more abstract and calculating form of knowledge; secondly, a more varied daily life created by the many demands made on people's attention, varied conditioning, and the experience of different networks of social relations. Finally, the complexity of urban situations, which has supplanted former determinism, gives individual freedom the chance to make of itself what it will within the margin allowed by the play of existing patterns. The rules of the game specify that freedom should also have the chance to let itself be determined according to circumstances. This line of argument does not justify the fear felt by those at the thought that urban life might neutralize creative potential by reducing everything to a kind of conformist grey. In fact, history teaches us quite the opposite: the most noteworthy individuals have come from big cities, or have at least been influenced by them, and cities have been the seat and the repository of revolutionary movements" (Luc Thoré, *Signification du phénomène urbain*, 1965). Following the candidate's oral presentation, the "conversation" begins:[42]

Examiner: "So you seem to favor Thoré's position . . . you've shaded it somewhat. You've quoted Henri Lefebvre; how exactly would you compare the two positions?"

"I think Henri Lefebvre had a much broader view of urban planning . . . For him, a city wasn't just a collection of houses . . . cities overflow, they are vital . . ."

"So Lefebvre credits large cities with several positive attributes. Do you fully agree with him? Aren't there some things you would consider more as liabilities?"

"I think that if I had to be critical of one of these elements . . ."

"And what about the abstract and calculating knowledge?" (allusion to Thoré's text)

". . . Yes, I guess cities can make . . . the game harder, more difficult, and calculating knowledge is the necessary precondition for survival."

"It's a necessary precondition for survival, but it is good in and of itself?"

"Insofar as it extends beyond . . . I think it's a positive step."

"In your view, under what conditions can individual freedom truly flourish in a big city?"

". . ."

"You live in a city. Do you feel that your own individual freedom is at its highest potential?"

"First I think one has to give one's own definition of freedom; I think freedom is the ability to do what you want as long as you don't limit anyone else's. According to this definition, cities give everyone greater freedom . . . Judgments people make of you are much harder to take in a village than in a city."

"Are you sensitive to what people think of you?"

"No, since I live in a city . . ."

". . . Do cities not encourage the rise of the fittest and, conversely, the crushing of the weak?"

"I don't think city life should be seen as a game between the strong and the weak; I think unequal relationships are greater in cities mainly because city dwellers are to a certain extent close and uniform . . . Furthermore, the social differences that develop among the neighborhoods of a city are perhaps less obvious than the distinctions that exist in a village. I'm thinking for example of the village chateau . . . which is still seen by some peasants as a sign of rejection . . ."

"Have you ever had the experience of living in a French village?"

"I'm only familiar with one, a small village in Burgundy . . ."

"Does it have a chateau? What is the current attitude of the residents, and I don't mean the vacationing Parisians, toward the chateau?"

"It's very strange, it's still an attitude of respect mixed with fear and defiance."

"And what does the chateau owner do?"

"He's never there, it's owned by a foreigner . . ."

"You mentioned Parly II twice in your presentation. Do you personally find Parly II to be an example of successful urban planning?"

"I think Parly II represents the coming together of two completely contradictory elements . . . I don't think town planning should be based on malls . . ."

"If you were going to build a mall, where would you locate it in relation to the town? Do you prefer malls or old-style small shops?"

"Personally, I prefer malls . . ."

"Do you feel welcome in Parly II stores?"

". . . [there is] a certain cool attitude in the men's clothing stores."

"A certain cool attitude. And do you find this same coolness in traditional small shops?"

"If I'm a regular client at a particular store, no. If I'm not . . . I feel they're trying either to attract me or to reject me."

"Do you like it when people try to attract you?"

"Personally, no."

"And you don't like attracting other people?"

". . . I think attraction is a natural thing."

"You think it's simply a matter of an inexplicable impulse?"

". . ."

Another examiner: "Do you think town planning should take the existence of social classes into account?"

". . ."

First examiner: "One final question. I'd like to draw your attention to one sentence in the passage in which the author states that cities are the seat of revolutionary change; do you yourself not know of any revolution ferment that has not had its source in large cities?"

"You mean in politics? . . . I can think of the example of . . ."

"Anything more recent?"

"In May of 1968, mid-size cities . . ."

"You don't have to be on the left to be a revolutionary . . . Do big cities favor, shall we say, conservative demands more than towns or the countryside?"

"I think that towns and villages are more likely to adopt so-called conservative demands . . ."

Another examiner: "You mentioned the famous comedian who used to talk about building cities in the countryside. Do you know his name?"

". . ."

". . . Are you interested in comedians?"[43]

"I think they're very useful . . . I like certain kinds of humor, but not all."

"In general?"

"I have a hard time understanding British humor, for example, which seems really cold to me . . ."

"Do you think humor is important in public administration?"

"Not at the office . . . but outside the office, sure."

"Would you be more likely to choose as a friend someone who thought abstractly or someone who reasoned on the concrete plane, if you were looking for the most pleasant relationship?"

". . . the concrete thinker, because . . . I don't think friendship is based on the exchange of ideas . . ."

"The rules of the game mentioned in the text, do they seem important to you, something one should respect? When you play a game, do you go by the rules? Does this annoy you?"

"Normally, when I win, I play by the rules of the game; when I play cards, for instance . . ."

"And are there rules in the game of governing?"

"I don't think the idea of rules of the game works here: there are rules, unwritten rules for functioning . . ."

Final examiner: "This passage says that important people come from cities or have

been influenced by them. Can you think of any French persons of note who have not been influenced by the city?"

"I think . . . I'll mention for example . . ."

"You spoke a few moments ago about small shops. Do you change the stores you frequent often?"

". . . Considering the fact that I just got married and moved, I completely changed where I shop."

"You've mentioned the rules of the game, and in particular the fact that people shouldn't run red lights. When you're in a city, do you never go through red lights?"

"I sometimes run the yellow light."

"Yes, but when you're a pedestrian, do you cross when it's red?"

"Always."

"People say everything in France comes from Paris. You mentioned the Avignon Festival a few minutes ago, but no one ever mentions Marseilles . . . How can we explain the fact that there is a systematic devaluation of everything that goes on in the provinces?"

"I think that in any case, if this devaluation ever did exist, it's less true now . . ."

"Don't you think it's a good idea to send orchestras out from the center into the provinces?"

". . ."

"Doesn't this decentralization of culture seem a positive thing to you?"

"It's entirely positive, and it's necessary . . . I think the Jean-François Paillard orchestra should be established in the provinces and come into Paris, rather than the other way around . . ."

The apparent logic of the "conversation," with its "trick questions" and unpredictable turns, in short, the entire academic ritual of the "mental jousting match," the "a propos," the spirit of repartee, etc., conceals the true function of the examination. We need only make a list of all the information the candidate reveals, about himself, in fact, not to mention the information betrayed by his attitude, to see that the test is indeed a very personal examination, which is rescued from indiscretion (take the questions on attraction, for example) only by the frankness related to the unreality of the academic situation, and which aims either consciously or unconsciously to situate the candidate politically and socially (most of the candidate's sentences are in the first person, very often starting out with "I think").

Another candidate, asked to speak on a passage taken from Simone de Beauvoir in which she mentions one of Grimm's fairy tales, was asked if he had read Grimm and Perrault, if he thought that "it was a good idea to scare young children," if he had "read scary fairy tales" when he was a child, when he thought "children were ready to go to the movies," what he thought of Walt Disney movies, of gerontocracy, whether he knew anyone who lived in a nursing home, whether he was "generally against compromise," "what solution" he could envision for a conflict "arising during a strike in which one side was ready to give four cents when the other side wanted ten." In short, the unreality inscribed in the university game (which is evoked here through the ritual of the explication de texte) conceals both a kind of recruitment interview that combines political questions and personal questions, and a test in deportment, designed to judge "the man," as the committee puts it, in other words, that is, strictly social dispositions, such as the self-assurance needed for dodging uncomfortable questions or admitting ignorance, or the "relaxed yet respectful" attitude that allows a candidate to send a question back into the examiner's court or to respectfully interrupt him before he has finished asking it, or even to casually deflect a difficult subject by taking advantage of the approval granted in advance to the haughty rejection of the laborious inelegance of pedantic concepts and bookish knowledge ("Please don't ask me to define epistemology"). But we must quote from the preface, entitled "Committee Thoughts on Candidates' Performance," of a report on the different sections of the ENA *concours* (ENA, *Épreuves et statistiques des concours de 1969* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1970)): "Above all, candidates who most certainly studied hard, but left no time for reflection or for reading anything but *Le Monde*. They have not stepped back from their intellectual ingurgitations. They lack humor and wit; listening to them, one fears that the civil service could become a thoroughly depressing and overly serious organization. And if high-level public service and the state grands corps should become geometric places full of gloomy 'ace test-takers,' how will they create a contented France? People have forgotten that the conversation portion of the *concours* is not a test of knowledge. Knowledge is judged, let us repeat, in the technical tests. The conversation, along with the first day's essay, is a way of trying to get a feel for the candidate's human qualities, at an age when people are not yet overly concerned about concealing their true selves and when their personalities are developed yet not, we hope, entirely crystallized. As one committee member put it: 'I try to imagine whether I'd like working with the candidate I'm listening to and whether I could completely trust him.' It is thus the man that we are – ambitiously – trying to reach, not the being weighted down with diplomas and scholastic knowledge. The ability to admit one's ignorance, a relaxed yet respectful attitude, the gift of repartee, and a curious mind are all excellent qualities. We will often throw in a highly unusual or technical question so as to shake up a candidate who is either too tightly coiled up in his shell or too annoyingly conceited. This will elicit quotations from writers he hasn't read, or false refinements, or vague formulae whose imprecision gives the examiners a good idea of the vague nature of the candidate's own way of thinking."