

## Pierre Bourdieu's 'political turn'

This dissertation aims to explore whether, in accordance with some often cited accusations, there are, in fact, 'two Bourdieus', and whether, more explicitly, his career can be sharply divided into two different, or even contradicting, periods: into an earlier one, as a social scientist with considerable scientific stature and into a later one, as a publically and politically engaged intellectual.

After performing the theoretical categorisation of the Bourdieuan sociology as well as exploring the theoretical roots and principles of the 'late period', we come to the conclusion that what he has done particularly in the 1990s gives no reason to be perceived as a „political turn” of sorts. However, from the beginning of the 1990s, and more particularly from the second half of the decade onwards, there is an undeniable 'shift of focus' towards a higher visibility in the public sphere, and this also is when he becomes preoccupied with making the findings of his work, very often not clear enough even to his fellow intellectuals, more accessible to a larger public as well.

Thus the dissertation aims to take the hitherto relatively unexplored 'late period' seriously while offering a reconstruction of the outline of the Bourdieuan 'theory of action' specifically with the intention to see whether Bourdieu's objective to encourage social agents to a more or less permanent mobilisation is not already undermined by his very own 'theory of action', which – in the Anglo-Saxon part of the world in particular – has often been subject to accusations of determinism.

Deconstructing such accusations is a key element of the dissertation, as it is crucial to draw a clear line between what is improbable and what is impossible: although, from the perspective of Bourdieu's own social theoretical edifice, inciting the masses to reflexive and collective action does not seem to be impossible, its success nonetheless remains unlikely.

For that matter, Pierre Bourdieu did not feel compelled to offer a thorough theoretical analysis of how and in what conditions agents could potentially become genuine actors. At the end of the dissertation an analysis of the possibilities (first, within the Bourdieuan theoretical framework and second, by invoking Boltanski's pragmatological sociology for instance, outside of it) to incorporate the matter of reflexivity and more or less rational action into the anthropology of agents who are, to a large extent, guided by their previously acquired habituses.

In this perspective, Bourdieu can be seen as a 'tragic hero', as he has always been aware of the likely failure of his public and political activism. Nevertheless, for moral reasons, he has consistently held that the likely failure of a social issue (namely that of the fight against neoliberalism) offers by no means a reason for inaction.